

ular

Churchill in World War I

A vivid and frank account of an Australian in Vietnam

THIS is the fascinating story by a retired Australian army officer of his tours of duty in South Vietnam. It is a difficult book to review because the results of this long struggle are still with us and have bitten deep into the Australian psyche. I would therefore like to reverse the usual order of things and introduce the author's final summing-up at the beginning: "I still believe that we should have been a force in South Vietnam, but I think that the allied powers pushed troops into



Winston S. Churchill. Minerva. times. Churchill, the swashbuckler, the war-horse, the one-time Indian Army officer, saved the Government's bacon when he spoke in the House against those with whom "on the general drift of world affairs" he found himself in full agreement. About 300 Indians had been killed and 2000 wounded during anti-British violence at Amritsar in India, when a British general ordered his troops to fire on a crowd of unarmed civilians. "A Government Commission," declared General Dyer, "has been appointed to inquire into the circumstances of the Amritsar massacre."

Reviews and Letters



published in... Unfortunately it is fiction for the viewer who, as a boy, was aboard the Dunera, his possession extracts of the

REBEL WITH A CAUSE. The Autobiography of Hans Eysenck, W. H. Allen & Co. Illustrated. 310pp. \$34.95. Reviewer: BERN BRENT.



Intelligence



BOOKS, TRAVEL

Mikhail Gorbachev was appointed General Secretary of the Communist Party last year and became the eighth leader of the Soviet Union. He is in his 50s and, under the Soviet system of government, is expected to lead his country into the third millennium. Schmidt-Hauer, a journalist who lived in Moscow as a correspondent for many years, has written an interesting account of Gorbachev's rise.

GORBACHEV, The Path to Power. By Christian Schmidt-Hauer. I. B. Tauris. 218pp. \$50. Reviewer: BERN BRENT.



Mikhail Gorbachev: economic skills

one of the industrialised world. Sovietologists have countless examples of actual deterioration of conditions verifiable in data. There is a loss of industrial productivity and quality that, the author estimates, has caused productivity to drop 62 in 1980.

It is evident that if anyone can do it, it is a country where market-economy has been inert after nearly 70 years of centralized planning. It is a country where everyday commodities are in an accepted state of shortage.

His shape...

How the Royals made hard times on the South Coast

DIARIES OF LORD LOUIS MONTBATTEN, 1920-1922: with the Prince of Wales. By Philip Ziegler. Collins. \$39.95. **P, The Man Behind the Myth.** By Unity Hall. Michael Books. 154pp. \$24.95.



AFTER YEARS: Wollongong during the Great Depression. By Richardson. Hale & I. Illust. 256pp. \$29.95.

er: BRENT. It is... as in Australia.

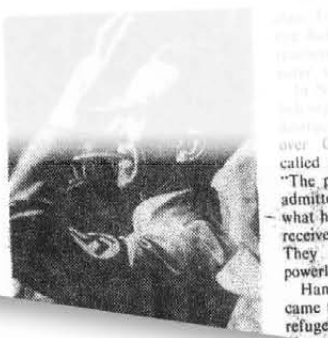
Nazis, propaganand and persuas

Bern Brent Canberra 2013



and conviction by an... with a Labour background. His ministerial duties as Home Secretary, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Minister of Aviation as well as leader of the newly-created Democratic Party, brings to his subject which is well known to the literary and academic circles usually found among political commentators.

Truman's second president



In later life Truman considered his second Senate nomination in 1939 to have been a greater miracle than his surprise win against Dewey in the presidential stakes nearly a decade later. With Pendergast in jail, the Democratic machine had fallen apart. But a

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Reviews and Letters

Intelligence

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BEFORE psychologist Hans Eysenck launches into his biography, he tells us of his high school days of biographies: they are only what memory recalls and what the writer wants to say by the end of the book.

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The Soviets' New

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BOOKS, TRAVEL

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Propaganda and Persuasion

Bern Brent Canberra 2013

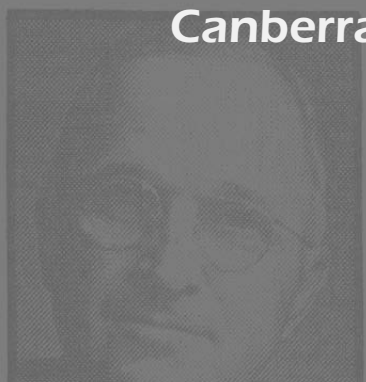
PROPAGANDA. Ed. by Welch, Croom Helm. \$31.25. MONTH OF NOVEMBER. Hanneke Zundorfer. Books. 182 pp. \$20.95

and conviction by an author with a Labour background. In his ministerial duties as Home Secretary, Minister of Aviation and Minister of the newly-created Democratic Party, brings a wealth of experience and understanding to his subject which is well served by the literary and academic examples usually found among political writers.



class. This eye. But teachers sister, to In November destroyed over G called a "The police admitted what had received. They were powerless. Hann came to refugees

ALF a century ago the Great Depression left his mark through the industrialised Western world. It was a time of great social and political upheaval in many countries. Australia was no exception. The people when approached by the economic State party organisation. In later life Truman considered his second Senate nomination in 1939 to have been a greater miracle than his surprise win against Dewey in the presidential stakes nearly a decade later. With Pendergast in jail, the Democratic



Truman's second president

FOREWORD

Perusing the book reviews in Saturday's Canberra Times was always a pleasure. After my retirement I thought this would be an agreeable part-time occupation. So I found my way to the literary editor's office of the Canberra Times which was then in the city. She did not welcome me with open arms – I suppose Susan had retirees with identical proposals darkening her door weekly – but suggested that I see her a week hence.

When I turned up at her office at the appointed time, she was nowhere to be seen. Her assistant did not know where she was or how long she would be away. So I left and dropped into an adjacent bookshop. There I began to browse among the bookshelves. Which is where I stumbled into the literary editor doing the same.

There was little she could do but take me up to her office. She continued to be evasive until I pointed out that I was not asking her to sign a contract. After reading my review, she was at liberty to criticise it and suggest I return the following year. Thereupon she asked me to choose a volume from a couple of hundred books on the shelves in her office and write a review of about 500 words.

The book I chose is the first review book in this collection. When I handed it in some days later, she published it without an alteration. Indeed, during the ten years of reviewing over a hundred books, I have never had any one of them 'edited' before printing even though the literary editor at the time had two successors during the years of my book reviewing

To someone who liked to read, my part-time job was a labour of love. I chose the books that interested me – mostly non-fiction – and I was not only paid but allowed to keep them.

In the end I got a little weary of reviewing. I had taken to lead lighting and carpentry and, besides, a new policy of the Canberra Times gave review preference to Australian authors. The bulk of the review books now consisted of local fiction, much of it of little appeal to me. Many significant overseas publications had disappeared from the review shelves. It was an additional incentive to discontinue.

After some hesitation I added my infrequent letters-to-editors to the collection of reviews. A High Court Judge wrote during the course of his public life that he didn't know whether he was a double bass or a violin or just an occasional clinking cymbal. My letters to editors were certainly no more than 'occasional clinking'.

The reviews and letters illuminate a period of history now largely left behind. When my old friend Peter flew around the world a decade after the war, such air fare cost the equivalent of an average yearly salary. Today it is not much more than a couple of weeks average wage before income tax. Graham Greene, Christopher Isherwood, George Orwell and Arthur Koestler, authors familiar to every reader in the English-speaking world only a generation ago, have disappeared. The Second World War and its aftermath - hundreds of thousands of European immigrants in Australia - are no longer the topic of debate. Gorbachev is still alive but the Soviet Union, the threatening enigma wrapped in a riddle before the war and the cold war adversary after the war, is no more.

I consulted encyclopaedias when typing reviews. Newspaper journalists were still given sufficient time to research and compose their stories. Coal was the solution, not the problem. 'Climate', 'environment', 'budget' and 'globalization' were not yet part of the vocabulary of Middle Australia. The appearance of the Muslim faith in western countries had already begun but went largely unnoticed. Mao's Great Leap Forward was no more than a still-born embryo.

My father in his reminiscences insisted that the world had changed more in his life-time than during the three centuries preceding him. It seems to me that this rapid change of events is a sign of our times and it is interesting to cast a glance occasionally at the world of yesterday.

P.S. My Quadrant article 'Saigon As War Loomed' at the end of this collection, does not really belong here. However, although it illustrates a segment of my 1938 -1968 reminiscences, it was written and published after the 'Thirty Years' recollections were assembled. So I decided to include these South Vietnam jottings as an afterthought.

Reviews

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LIFE BUBBLES ON IN WEST BERLIN

29 December 1979

THE SIEGE OF BERLIN, by Mark Arnold-Forster, Collins, 171pp. \$18.95.

Berlin, the largest city in Germany, lies more than a 160 kilometres inside the Iron Curtain. Depending on one's point of view, it is the capital of the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) or a citadel of western democracy with close ties to the Federal German Republic (West Germany). With the Wall dividing the city, it is of course both.

While not one of the older European cities, Berlin's early days pre-date Sydney's by 500 years.

About 50 years ago, during the inter-war period, it reached its peak as a hub of creative activity: Bertolt Brecht opened with his 'Threepenny Opera'; Erich Maria Remarque found a daily prepared to print his 'All Quiet On The Western Front'; Erich Kaestner's Emil met up with his detectives who kept villain Grundeis under observation; and Christopher Isherwood mixed prairie oysters in Sally Bowles's bedsitter on the Kurfürstendamm.

Einstein defended his General Theory at the Prussian Academy of Sciences there; Gropius designed workers' houses for Siemens; Fallada wrote 'Little Man, What Now?', one of the classics of the depression; Franz Kafka settled there in the final year of his life; Vladimir Nabokov had his first slim volume published there; Arthur Koestler, one-time science editor with one of the Berlin newspapers, had not yet written his first novel. Marlene Dietrich sang the much earthier original version of 'Falling In Love Again' in the film 'Der Blaue Engel' and an unemployed Swedish actress by the name of Greta Garbo was offered a part in another film.

In the last of the free Reichstag elections, with more than 600,000 unemployed in Berlin alone and before the senile Hindenburg nominated Hitler Chancellor, nearly three out of every four Berliners voted against the Nazis. The destruction of the city began with the burning of the books there on March 10, 1933. It ended on May 2,

1945, when one-sixth of all the wartime rubble in Germany lay in Berlin.

The post-war development of West Berlin is the subject of this book. There was the blockade of 1948-49. Initiated by the Soviet Union, it was aimed not at the whole of Berlin but at those sectors of the city occupied by Britain, France and the United States. It resulted in the airlift and the defeat of the Soviet attempt to squeeze the Western allies out of Berlin. It lasted for nearly a year. Some years later the East German workers' revolt broke out in East Berlin, on June 17, 1953. On the wages front the workers won, but they lost their freedom at the cost of many lives.

In August, 1961, the Berlin Wall went up. It ended the Berlin crisis which had been precipitated by Khrushchev. The Wall stopped the exodus of people to West Berlin and from there to West Germany. Khrushchev admitted at the time that in the month before the Wall was built more than 30,000 of the best and most capable people had left the country via East Berlin. It was the type of situation our part of the world is not unfamiliar with.

Benefits of the Wall

The Wall has benefited the German Democratic Republic enormously. The GDR has made tremendous strides in economic development. According to a World Bank report quoted in 'The Siege of Berlin', the 1974 per capita income was higher than that of Britain.

Arnold-Forster points out that the Wall has also helped the West. The hundreds of thousands of refugees arriving in West Berlin day in, day out were an unsettling influence and a constant international irritant.

The one-year airlift 30 years ago takes up a lion's share of the book. While the breaking of the blockade was an important milestone along the way, there were also other significant events. The political evolvment around the principle of a western presence in Berlin leading to the acceptance by all parties of the present status quo in West Berlin has been a long and painful process.

There is little about Khrushchev's role in the Berlin Crisis of 1958 to 1962. It was the time when Dulles, Acheson and Macmillan were

active in the Berlin negotiations. None are mentioned. There was the U2 incident and its effect on Eisenhower and Berlin. There is not a word about this. There was Kennedy and the Vienna Conference. It is not in the story. The Hallstein Doctrine and its bearing on Berlin, Willy Brandt, who had been Mayor of West Berlin before he became Chancellor in 1969 and therefore had a good understanding of the Berlin problem, the Helsinki Agreement, for which the status of Berlin had to be settled first- these matters are given only very perfunctory treatment.

Today West Berlin has a population 10 times that of Canberra. Its status is now guaranteed by Britain, France, the Soviet Union and the United States.

Pleasant city

It is perhaps the pleasantest city in Germany. The Berliners certainly think so. Robyn Archer in her recent presentation at the Playhouse of 'Tonight: Lola Blau' also made that point. She parodied a popular postwar German ditty about a suitcase perpetually left behind in Berlin to serve as an excuse for revisiting the place whenever nostalgia strikes.

With dozens of museums and art galleries in West Berlin alone, with seven symphony and chamber orchestras, the Berlin Philharmonic among them, with more than 20 theatres, with jazz cellars crammed with students, a casino where American roulette tables have not yet penetrated, with a vigorous and varied night lift, the West Berliners have retained their reputation for elegance, tolerance and cosmopolitan worldliness.

The notion of West Berlin as a hemmed-in island of brick and mortar is as inaccurate as the vision of everlasting heat, dust and flies of the Australian landscape. West Berlin has lakes to sail on, rivers to swim in, woods to walk in, bus stops for Asian students to wait at, an unemployment problem and more than 100,000 foreign guest workers to do the jobs that West Berliners don't like doing.

Far front tourist land where visitors board coaches to take them sightseeing to East Berlin, West Berlin housewives at their suburban greengrocers buy tomatoes from Holland, oranges from South Africa, grapefruit from California, melons from Greece, bananas

from Panama, cherries from Hungary, jonathan apples from Italy, plums from Spain and strawberries from West Germany. It looks as though the siege is over.

AN INTERESTING STORY POORLY TOLD

27 October 1979

THE DUNERA INTERNEES. By Benzion Patkin.
Cassell Australia. Illustrated. 185 pp. \$12.95

A neglected aspect of migration to Australia has been opened up with the publication of this book. It deals with events nearly 40 years ago when, on 3 September, 1940, the troopship Dunera steamed into Port Phillip Bay and disembarked some of her prisoners from Germany, Austria and Italy. There were about 3,000 captives, nearly all of whom had been interned in Britain, put on the Dunera, and sent to Australia for safe keeping.

Some of the internees had been Italian residents in Britain. Others were German merchant marine crews. About 2,000 men were refugees from Nazi oppression or German nationals who had chosen not to leave Britain and return to Germany at the outbreak of war.

During the eight weeks at sea, food and water were scarce and quarters were grossly overcrowded. The prisoners who were kept below decks most of the time, had most of their possessions taken from them by the British Army guards. The ship was torpedoed two days out of Liverpool but escaped damage. Upon arrival in Melbourne and Sydney, the prisoners were put on trains and deposited in prison camps in the back-blocks of Victoria and New South Wales.

The London Home office investigating each case soon changed the "enemy alien" status of most of the internees to that of "friendly alien". Had they not been transported to Australia, they would have been released from internment. Most of the other internees in

Britain returned to work-bench, school, office and factory floor. But the Dunera internees were in Australia. The Australian authorities' considered view was that while they could return to Britain to be released there, they could not be released, even temporarily, in Australia.

And so it happened that 2,000 enemies of Hitler, more than three quarters of them Jewish, found themselves behind barbed wire in Australia for nearly 18 months. Their camp song, sung to the tune of Auld Lang Syne, was: "We're here, because we're here...." Apart from a handful who were found berths by the British Home Office representative to return to Britain, they remained locked up until Pearl Harbor and the Japanese invasion of Malaya jolted the prism through which Australian politicians were then looking at the world.

Benzion Patkin's "The Dunera Internees" is a limited account of the events which is often emotional and not very representative of the outlook and attitudes of the internees at the time. The book suffers from that decline in editorial responsibility complained of during the recent literary awards dinner in Canberra. The text is disjointed, there are spelling mistakes and some of the captions of the plates are wrong. More importantly, the account is riddled with inaccuracies.

Thus, it was not because the British authorities had become "panicky" with the "indiscriminate bombing of English Cities" that they introduced wholesale internment. Not very many bombs had fallen on Britain by June 1940. It was the time of the Fifth Column syndrome. The Fifth Column slogan was taken up enthusiastically by the popular press in May and June, 1940, when Holland, Belgium and France fell to Hitler's blitzkrieg. It served to explain to a puzzled population the disaster on the Western Front. The British Government decision to intern all non-naturalized residents from enemy countries was an understandable knee-jerk reaction under the circumstances. An invasion seemed imminent. There would be time to "sort them out" later.

The mistake, admitted by the British government at a later stage, was to put these men on ships and transport them overseas. When

the “sorting out” was done, the Dunera internees were in Australia, among them the Arondora Star survivors who had left hundreds of their fellow internees at the bottom of Irish Sea. Others were to drown on their journey back to Britain.

There is the story of the U-boat which, having fired two torpedoes at the Dunera which missed, picked up letters addressed to internees in Britain floating among debris thrown overboard during the attack, and radioed all other U-boats in the vicinity to let the Dunera pass. It is a good story based on a book published in Germany after the war. Unfortunately it is fiction. This reviewer, who as a boy of 17 was aboard the Dunera, has in his possession extracts of the log of the U 56, commanded by Lieutenant Harms (not Clerque), which fired the torpedoes. No such debris was thrown overboard, sighted or picked up.

Accounts of the trip included in Patkin’s book contain such passages as “they [the internees] were...in the hands of a savage, murderous and villainous band of soldiers...”. While the naval personnel were scrupulously correct, the British escorts were not the finest examples of British soldiery. Officers and NCOs were court martialled upon their return to Britain. Some had been at Dunkirk. Most of them were thieving villains alright. To them the prisoners were enemy aliens from the country which had just given them a drubbing. But “savage” and “murderous” they were not.

The book relates an episode aboard the Dunera when a ‘prisoner-of-war’ was caught attempting to escape in Cape Town in a British Army uniform: “we could hear the terrible sound of the whiplash, accompanied by the agonizing screams of a tortured human being...”. I have never heard of this incident. There were no prisoners-of-war on Dunera. Pending evidence to the contrary, I do not believe the story as it stands.

In the book there are some very funny pencil sketches, some amusing tales and descriptions of life aboard the ship and in prison camp. There are also some pages which struck me as being bigoted and distinctly un-funny. I could not warm to this book. It is pity that an interesting and worthwhile story has been so mutilated in the telling that nothing but a mangled caricature remains.

ABSORBING YARN ON ALTERNATIVE WAR

13 July 1980

THE MOSCOW OPTION. By David Downing. New English Library. 254pp. \$16.15.

Some time ago there was a debate in the correspondence columns of The Canberra Times about the question whether Stalingrad or D-Day was the beginning of the end of World War II. It was agreed that without the one there would not have been the other. This line of reasoning can of course be pursued ad infinitum.

Thus, one could go back to World War I: if the German General Staff had not smuggled Lenin into Russia there would have been neither a successful October Revolution nor a separate Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty with Germany. Russia would have held on a few months longer and Germany would have collapsed a few months earlier. President Wilson would not have sanctioned Versailles where Germany got back some of her own Brest-Litovsk medicine. Without the Versailles obligations the Weimar Republic could have survived to become a peaceful and respected member of the League of Nations.

This is the stuff dreams are made of. Such a book is 'The Moscow Option' except that the dream turns into a nightmare. It is the story of an alternative World War II, of 18 months of global conflict as it might have happened as the result of unexpected rain and fog at Hitler's headquarters one day in August, 1941.

One recalls that the first months of 1941 had been difficult for Britain and the Commonwealth countries. The Blitz of Britain continued. The Battle of the Atlantic was not going well. British, Australian and New Zealand troops had evacuated Greece and Crete. Rommel had arrived in North Africa, Tobruk was isolated and Libya was in Axis hands. In June Hitler invaded Russia. At the end of the year the United States came into the war.

Downing's story begins around the time when Fadden asks for the Australian garrison in Tobruk to be relieved. The German armies

stand deep in Russia. Hitler's plane crash lands at his personal headquarters in East Prussia killing Field-Marshal Keitel. Hitler does not awake from a coma until the following year.

With the leader out of the way, the German generals are now able to follow their own inclinations. They concentrate all their resources for a single thrust towards Moscow. This has momentous military and political consequences. Moscow, the nerve centre of the Red Army, falls. The German forces set up winter quarters in Russia. There is a five-month "phoney war" on the Eastern front resulting in a doubling of strength of the Luftwaffe in the Mediterranean. Downing incorporates Pearl Harbour and the Coral Sea Battle into his story but, in addition, Japan captures the ports of Vladivostok and bombs United States installations, among them the Panama Canal locks.

One of the casualties of David Downing's alternative war is the Bogart-Bergman film 'Casablanca' of which all prints are destroyed during a Japanese raid on Hollywood. It is not recorded whether the score and composer of 'As Time Goes By' meet a similar fate.

Upon reading this account it seemed to me that with all the disasters of 'The Moscow Option', 'Good Night, Irene' would have been a most appropriate tune to make the hit parade that year. But it all comes good in the end and Hitler's transcontinental blitzkrieg misfires.

Time has indeed gone by, but the oil remains. One prays that in the 21st century writers with an historical bent will be publishing versions of an alternative peace in the 1980s as fascinating as this story about an alternative war. This is an absorbing yarn not only for those who had a Summer of 42 but also for readers interested in observing how the past fashions the future.

THE INTELLIGENCE WAR

15 June 1980

SPY! By Richard Deacon with Nigel West, British Broadcasting Corporation. 190pp. Illustrated. \$17.95.

WHEN it comes to spies and spying, reading about the escapades of a James Bond or an aging spook coming in from the cold cannot hold a candle to the real thing such as these stories of modern espionage. Over the years countless war films have conditioned us to seeing a World War II enemy perpetually outfought, outgunned and outmanoeuvred. It was not really so. It took many years for the combined military might of the Allies to finally stop and defeat the German Army.

In the intelligence war, however, Germany did not come near the winning post even though she landed some major intelligence coups. There are a number of reasons for this. Hitler had trained his military in offensive warfare which, according to Clausewitz, is "complete in itself". Intelligence is useful but not essential.

While the 'leadership-principle' of the Third Reich provided the fuel of faith which made soldiers fight to the death, it tended to analyse and assess incoming intelligence on the basis of ideology rather than reality. Whenever facts and reason clashed with ideology, facts and reason lost out.

In addition Admiral Canaris, the Chief of German Military Intelligence, though an arch conservative, was no admirer of Hitler. He is reported to have said at the beginning of the war that a defeat of Germany would be terrible, but that a victory of Germany would be more terrible still. Some of his biographers believe that this view, ostensibly expressed in jest to his staff, was the keynote of his subsequent professional performance.

The situation of the British was different. Their lack of trained men and machines could not be overcome quickly. To be able to successfully parry a blow it is essential to know when and where it is coming. Good military, scientific and political intelligence is vital to defence. It is not just a desirable adjunct.

The British World War II intelligence effort yielded some very spectacular successes. Among them was the breaking of the top secret wireless code of the German High Command. This contributed immeasurably to the victories of the battles of Britain and the Atlantic. A facet of that particular undertaking is related in one of the stories in 'Spy!' It is a remarkable collection of researches into the activities of several spies most of whom operated during the last war. Three were English, two German, one American and one Ukrainian.

They are stories of triumph and disaster, of daring and foolhardiness. No writer of spy fiction could have got away with the plots and situations if he wanted to retain a measure of credibility.

There is the beautiful Tokyo nightclub hostess who is really a Japanese police plant. The bait is taken by the German Embassy press attache. It is the year of Pearl Harbour. On her way to his bed her undercover training pays off and she catches him flagrantly running his Soviet Russian spy ring. And that is the end of Richard Sorge.

At the beginning of the war two British Holland-based secret service officers are responsible for operations on the Continent. They are straight out of a Wodehouse novel: monocle, spats, ex-Indian Army. With Holland still neutral, they are lured into a Nazi secret police trap on the Dutch-German border, bailed up by the houseguest they have recently dined and wined. As a result the whole British network in Europe is wiped out.

There are the life and times of a British agent who was never caught: the extraordinarily brave and resourceful Cynthia getting the goods in Spain and Poland, France and America. And also the German spy who, having been parachuted into Britain in 1940, kept radio contact with Hamburg until April 1945. During that time he was sent over £80,000 and awarded the Iron Cross. But he had been 'turned' after capture and, incredibly, was sending messages under the supervision of the London 'Twenty Committee'. The name of that committee was derived from the Roman 'twenty', XX, the double cross.

The two stories set in the post-war era relate to the activities of

a hired political assassin who managed to escape to the West with his wife and a British Admiralty clerk who sold secret documents to his Russian blackmailers.

This book is published in conjunction with the BBC television series 'Spy!' which has not been shown in Canberra. No matter: sight unseen, I am convinced that, once again, the book is better than the film.

RICHEST REICH OF ALL

*THE FOURTH AND RICHEST REICH! By Hartrich.
Collier Macmillan. 302pp. \$12.95.*

This is an overview of the rags-to-riches story of post-war West Germany, as seen by an American financial journalist. Modern German history leads along the sociological and political turning points of 1848, 1871, World War I, 1933, to 1945. Progress was hindered by the fixation of external politics on expansion. In internal politics there was the conflict between the demands of the State and the rights of the individual.

Defeat and the traumatic experiences of the Nazi regime led to a fundamental re-assessment of political, social and economic mores after 1945. The post-war West German State showed a new internationalism in external affairs and a revival of liberalism in social and economic pursuits. In West Germany's first national elections for Federal parliament Adenauer and his Christian Democratic Union confounded the experts and defeated Schumacher's Social Democrats. Both leaders had proven anti-Nazi records. Schumacher had spent 12 years in a concentration camp. Adenauer had been Lord Mayor of Cologne from 1917 to 1933 when he was removed from office.

Germany's recent turbulent history seems to have immunised the voter against extremist politics of the left or right. The Christian Democratic Union tempered its free market economy with a very

extensive social security system. The Social Democrats, who came to government in 1966, no longer thought in terms of creating new society but of improving the existing one. A tendency of the electorate to prefer a three-party system is evident. Although there were 10 parties in the Bundestag in 1949, only three parties have been represented there since 1961. Government has been almost constantly a coalition government.

Chancellor Adenauer and his economics minister Professor Erhard, regarded as the chief architect of the “economic miracle”, were an unbeatable team for many years. Some people say that Adenauer gave his minister carte blanche. Erhard, however, protested vigorously about undue interference from the Chancellor.

West Germany is now the third biggest trading nation in the world. How did this come about? The one time “economic miracle” slogan of the media was not uniformly popular in Germany, ignoring, as it did, the product of intelligent planning, management and sheer hard yakka.

Even so, a number of fortuitous circumstances were certainly present. The Marshall Plan supplied almost \$4,000 million in goods and credit to the stagnant economy. The Russian blockade of Berlin pushed West Germany into the Western European defence system. The Korean War caused the discovery of the large pool of cheap skilled labour in West Germany.

Organised labour and management co-existed with less bitterness and strife than in other western countries. Trade unions are represented on the boards of many companies. The co-operation of labour has been responsible for the acceptance of automation because it made industry more competitive in the world market.

The Bundesrepublik is certainly “the richest Germany in the long history of Europe”. West Germany’s economic policy is also her foreign policy. In today’s world, industrial capacity, modern technology, knowhow and competitiveness are likely to further a nation’s interest more effectively than an arsenal of weapons. Hartrich records an OECD survey showing that West Germany “maintained the highest rate of expenditures on research and development of all industrial nations”. Primary resources are a

useful asset. But countries like Japan and Holland have hardly any. What they have, however, is a highly-trained workforce at all levels. Human resources are a very necessary ingredient of rising living standards.

This is an eminently readable account of 30 years' development from the point of view of an American with long experience of the West German scene. These days West Germany too suffers from inflation and unemployment. The story does not deal with this nor with the difficulties of a free market economy within the constraints of the Common Market. But it's a success story all the same.

GUIDED TOUR THROUGH A KOESTLER COLLECTION

BRICKS TO BABEL. By Arthur Koestler. Hutchinson. Illust. 697pp. \$33.05

Now in his seventies, Arthur Koestler has published in an 'omnibus' a selection from his writings and provides a guided tour "deciding where to stop for a closer look". Koestler reached war-time Britain after the fall of France. Hungarian born, he had been a Vienna Polytechnic drop-out, a pioneer in Palestine, a science editor in Germany, and a foreign correspondent in Soviet Russia and France. At the time of Spanish Civil War he had spent three months in a Seville prison, condemned to death.

George Orwell was a friend of Koestler's and helped him in his transition into becoming a writer who made Britain the fulcrum of his life.

His autobiographical writings analyse the anti-authoritarian indignation of his student days. He is not quite sure whether it was the search for utopia or his revulsion against a polluted society that turned him into a rebel. He was in good company. Many young writers of the thirties became Marxists and believed in a God that eventually failed them. Looking back, Koestler says that an over-

sensitivity to injustice and a craving for utopias may be signs of a neurotic disposition, but that total adjustment to a deformed society will create deformed individuals.

Eventually Koestler turned away from questions of political morality and returned to his first love: science. And just as he attacked totalitarian political systems in the past, so he now objects to scientific thinking that ignores experiences which cannot be quantified or reproduced in the laboratory.

The anthology displays extraordinary versatility and Koestler has become prescribed or recommended reading for Australian students in a number of disciplines. In 1968 he visited Australia as a guest of the Victorian Section of Amnesty International.

A favourite occupation of Koestler's is to demolish holy cows of popular beliefs. One of these is the notion that wars and violence are due, primarily, to selfishness and greed. But, throughout our history "vast populations (have been) slaughtered in unselfish loyalty to... a flag, a leader, a religious faith or a political conviction prepared not only to kill but also to die 'for good, bad or completely harebrained causes',"

Why is this so? One of the major handicaps to progress appear to be two wildly dissimilar growth curves during the course of evolution of our species. We have had spectacular successes in conquering nature but have made singularly little progress in the handling of inter-human relationships. Our emotive faculties have not kept up with the rate of development of our capacity to reason and analyse. Evolution has been shown to have made many mistakes, and Koestler's view is that there is undoubtedly a streak of madness running through the history of our species.

Is science really a purely rational pursuit? Emerson supposedly said "were I to hold the truth in my hand, I would let it go for the positive joy of seeking" and Koehler's chimpanzee was so delighted about having discovered how to fit two sticks together to reach a banana outside his cage, that he "kept repeating the trick and forgot to eat the banana."

Koestler was one of the first who, together with C. P. Snow, deplored the lack of links between the humanities and the natural

sciences. A realisation of this situation has resulted in reforms within our Australian secondary education systems. The omnibus contains extracts from his best-known novels and essays such as 'Darkness at Noon', 'The Yogi and the Commissar'.

A review of a 700-page anthology can attempt to convey only the aroma of this banquet of many courses. A writer for all seasons, Koestler has given us books which will endure as classics of our time.

MUDDLE AND INCOMPETENCE

COLLAR THE LOT!: How Britain interned and expelled its wartime refugees. By Peter and Leni Gillman. Quartet. 334pp. Illustrated. \$25.95.

Before the first year of World War II was over, Britain had suddenly embarked on a policy of wholesale internment of Germans and Austrians and resumed a practice discontinued a century previously: the transportation of prisoners.

At the beginning of the war Britain had within her shores a good number of Germans and Austrians, mostly refugees sympathetic to the Allied cause. When war began, tribunals had been set up and less than 1 per cent of those interviewed were interned. But in May, 1940, it was decided to intern all. We now know that the Fifth Column in Western Europe was almost entirely mythical. At the time, however, there were many tales of enemy soldiers in nun's habit supported by Fifth Columnists sabotaging defence by infiltration and bribery. Most ships sailed for Canada. One, the *Dunera*, arrived in Australia. More than 600 internees died when their ship, bound for Canada, was sunk.

The title of this book, 'Collar The Lot', is a phrase used by Churchill when he became Prime Minister. He was referring specifically to the internment of Italian fascists as Italy entered the war. MI5 had warned of "desperate characters" who would use "gangster

methods". Now the authorities interned Italians on their lists. Among them was Landucci, an Italian waiter at a Manchester hotel for 30 years. He explained to the policeman that he belonged to the Manchester branch of the Fascio solely because he owned a small patch of land in southern Italy. "Before being taken away, Landucci opened a bottle of wine, handed glasses to his wife, daughter and the detective constable, and drank the toast 'Bugger the Fascio'." Landucci and many others were to drown when the ship on which he was deported was torpedoed. The detective constable became Chief Commissioner of the London Metropolitan Police and has described this incident as "one of the most formative of my career".

The transportation overseas of internees began in July, 1940. Some internees were embarked without further ado. Some had been lured aboard with written promises that were not kept, such as the undertaking that their wives would sail with them. Some had volunteered to be the first to be transported overseas. The internees aboard the ships included boys of 16, invalids, skilled tradesmen in work of national importance, scientists, employers of British labour and men whose sons were serving with the British armed forces.

The Canadians who had expected parachutists, spies and saboteurs discovered "schoolboys, undergraduates, priests and rabbis". A Canadian High Commission man in London noted in his diary: "I now hear that the ferocious internees whom the British Government begged us on bended knees to take to Canada to save this country from their nefarious activities are mostly anti-Nazi refugees".

After the Dunera had sailed for Australia he storm broke. Questions were asked in Parliament. The War Office declined responsibility. The Foreign Office knew nothing about it. The Home Office had apparently not even been informed, Wholesale internment and transportation ceased

Canada began to release some of their internees a year before Australia did. Here all were kept guarded behind barbed wire for 18 months.

Of the internees who arrived in Australia, some returned to Britain during the war. Of these more than 40 drowned. Some migrated

to the United States or to Israel. Some returned to Germany and Austria after the war. Many of those released eventually joined the Australian army and remained in Australia.

To me the most telling aspect brought out in this well-researched study of the war's sideshows is not the injustice done to many people and the needless loss of life; that's war. It is the incompetence, ignorance and inefficiency of the bodies responsible for the implementation of government policy. The Home Office, the Foreign Office, the War Office, MI5, M16, the Joint Intelligence Committee, all were involved.

A contemporary Foreign Office report referred to MI5 in terms of "utter failure in vetting individuals ... lack of experience ... stupidity ... poor organization ...".

A more laudable aspect of the affair is not forgotten in this account. It was possible in the dark days of August and September 1940 for the Home Secretary to speak in the House of Commons of "regrettable and deplorable things ... policy of internment... inevitable haste ... mistakes ... stupidity ... muddle ...". Such an attitude stands in stark contrast to the "never-apologise-never-explain" approach of some of our politicians.

For those interested in contemporary history this book is an example of investigative journalism at its best.

ANOTHER SIDE OF RUSSIA

6 February 1983

RUSSIAN JOURNAL. By Andrea Lee. Faber and Faber. 239pp. \$26.95.

RUSSIA DIES LAUGHING. Edited by Z. Dolgopova. Illustrated by JAK. Andrea Deutsch. 125pp. \$12.95.

The first book under review is the "personal landscape" of a young American who, together with her husband, spent some time

in Moscow and Leningrad as an exchange student. This book is not a guided tour through the usual landmarks. There are only minimal glimpses of Red Square, the Moscow subway, Kremlin Domes, and May Day parades with banners reading THE SOVIET PEOPLE HEARTFULLY SUPPORT PEACE-LOVING LENINIST FOREIGN POLICY OF THE SOVIET UNION.

The journal deals mainly with people encountered during a year's stay. There is a singer trained for opera who didn't make it in opera, sings in nightclubs and moonlights as a taxi driver. There are women "painted, pencilled and dyed" who work for Mosfilm. There is the aged congregation of an Orthodox Easter service, soldiers on crowd control during a fireworks display, artists and their hangers-on.

Excellent pen sketches introduce us to members of the young Moscow "smart set", the Mishas and Petyas, Sashas and Slavas. They smell of foreign-currency stores eau de Rochas, admire each other's Spanish espadrilles and desert boots, discuss Mick Jagger and Bianca and listen to Russian restaurant favourites like 'Rah! Rah! Rasputin' and 'Money, Money, Money'. One wonders: are these people as clothes-conscious as portrayed? Do they really see the West almost exclusively in terms of material comforts? Is this attitude a reflection of the chronicler or merely the understandable reaction to an economic system that doesn't deliver the goods?

Only once does the keeper of the journal report a more fundamental view by a young Russian guest smuggled into an American Embassy hop. The Russian student envies his hosts "the freedom with which you move. You're not worried about what anybody might say. Russians couldn't move like that."

The scenic descriptions of a Moscow spring include some memorable prose: stalking the first nightingales, of the season in the Lenin Hills; approaching the dachas on the out skirts of town through "fields that ... had been seas of mud dotted with gray heaps of melting ice now shaggy with buttercups" past "tips of twigs swollen with clustering buds..."

This is an interesting glimpse of Moscow and Leningrad. To be sure, it is not an all-embracing picture. It is not meant to be. But

Soviet Russia is no longer the enigma it once was. The off-beat characters portrayed are proof that life in Moscow need not be as dreary as it is often cracked up to be. Of course, it helps to be a temporary inhabitant from elsewhere.

The second book about the Soviet Union is by a Russian emigré now in Australia and records a battery of jokes circulating in contemporary Russia. It is obvious that the Russians can laugh about themselves. Most stories are funny, some very much so. A few are crude enough to curl the hairs of a latter-day Long John Silver. Here are a couple that won't:

An expedition of scientists from Moscow, lost in an African jungle, falls into the hands of cannibals. They are brought before the chief. "This one into the pot, that one into the pot", says the chief. "But leave this one alone: we studied together at Moscow University".

A drunk stops a passerby in the street: "tell me, mate, where is the othersideofthestreet?"

"Over there," the passerby points across the road.

"Now, don't be silly", the drunk gets angry, "They just sent me here from over there".

GEMS FROM A PROTEAN INTELLECT

29 January 1983

KOESTLER, A BIOGRAPHY. By Iain Hamilton. Secker & Warburg. 389pp. \$35.00.

It must be difficult to research the life of a well-known author like Arthur Koestler. Not only is he still writing, but he has bared 35 years of his life in four solid autobiographical volumes. In addition, this biography follows the recent publication of Koestler's 700-page omnibus which contains segments selected from the output of a lifetime, put into chronological context in conjunction with his commentary. Iain Hamilton's biography of Koestler has therefore a

déjà-vu quality and there is very little of substance that is new.

True, there are some pertinent and amusing anecdotes, culled from reminiscences, letters and diaries of his wife, his former wives and his friends. But such personal idiosyncracies as being difficult to live with, drinking too much, taking offence easily and being faithful to his Cynara in his own fashion, are hardly vital building blocks from which biographies are made. Indeed, the gems in this biography are extracts from Koestler's own writings.

Born early this century, puzzled in his youth by the unsolved riddle of infinity and eternity, he left his native Hungary for Vienna to enrol in science studies. He never graduated and became a footloose journalist where the pre-World War II action was.

He was in Palestine in the '20s and became a science editor in Weimar Republic Berlin. He toured Stalin's Soviet Union as a newspaper correspondent and was a prisoner in Franco's Spain during the Civil War, condemned to death as a spy. In France at the outbreak of war, he was interned as an undesirable alien. These sojourns turned out to be stepping stones on the way to Britain, where he was to make his home.

Koestler's first novel, 'The Gladiators', was completed before the war. It dealt with the Roman Spartacus Revolt 2,000 years ago and pointed to obvious parallels between that period and the breakdown of traditional values of this century. When 'Darkness at Noon' was first published, the novel which made his name, Koestler, a recent war-time arrival in Britain, was still in Pentonville Prison having his bona fides investigated.

There are paragraphs from Koestler's early essays and novels which probe questions of our times with extraordinary clarity and insight. His pungent aphorisms, humourous parables and brilliant analogies make his prose a delight.

In 'The Yogi and the Commissar' he examined the strategies of the two proponents for change to a better society. They approach the problem from two completely different directions, advocating "change from within" and "change from without". This leads to the ends-and-means debate which is still crisp, luminous and refreshingly relevant even though published over 30 years ago.

Koestler's friend Malraux had once written that "a life is worth nothing, but nothing is worth a life". Koestler regards this as a truism, whether the road be paved with quotations from Rousseau or Marx, Christ or Mohammed.

If one believes, as people will in politics, that one's adversary will be the ruin of the country, the alternative approach will lead to that adversary being "blackened, purged, censored, deported, liquidated". Koestler adds that the other form of the dilemma, non-resistance to, say the bubonic plague, leads equally to disaster.

Since the 1950s Koestler's writing and research reflect his change of interest from questions of political morality to those of science and philosophy. He has written about questions of creativity in science and arts and about the pathology of the human mind.

In the last decades his itinerary has included yoga and zen buddhism, phenomena of extra-sensory perception, investigations of the history of modern astronomy and other great discoveries, capital punishment, humour and wit, the effect of hallucinogenic drugs, Darwinian dogma and England's "cold class war".

Old age has brought a degree of literary respectability, the CBE, and other honours. I should like to conclude this review with the citation which accompanied his honorary Doctorate of Law from Queen's University, Ontario.

" ... incisive critic of a powerful ideology which he had the courage both to espouse and to renounce; who has concentrated his gift of imagination, scientific insight, and compassion to explore how in his inner ways a man may outface cynical violence and all assaults upon the body and the mind; who lived undefeated at the storm centres of the corrupt and disastrous years and came to a new home with his haunting sense of wonder unimpaired, and resolutely led his writing in a clear arc from 'Darkness at Noon' to 'The Act of Creation' ..." Surely a worthy accolade for any writer.

A PROVERB FOR EVERY SEASON

19 March 1983

THE CONCISE OXFORD DICTIONARY OF PROVERBS. Edited by J. A. Simpson. Oxford University Press. 256pp. \$19.99. Reviewed 19 July, 1983.

THERE are many ways to add to one's store of wisdom: live four score years and ten; enrol for double majors in philosophy; circumnavigate Australia in one-man canoe. A simpler but effective short-cut to the same end is the perusal of a dictionary of proverbs.

Proverbs used to be vehicles for expressing unquestioned moral truths. This dictionary does not, therefore, delve only into the etymological and historical background of each proverb listed. It should offer useful assistance to anyone dithering over decisions during life's many verisimilitudes. A non-random selection of some proverbs illustrates that valid choices are available for most situations:

He who hesitates is lost. Look before you leap. There is safety in numbers. Too many cooks spoil the broth. He travels fastest who travels alone. He that will not when he may, when he will he shall have nay. All things come to him who waits.

Should the path taken on the basis of advice contained in this dictionary lead to disaster, there is always Murphy's Law to explain the bum steer: If anything can go wrong, it will! Prospective air travellers will be interested in the genesis of this piece of wisdom. According to the dictionary, it originated in an aircraft laboratory and in its embryonic form read thus: If an aircraft part can be installed incorrectly, somebody will install it that way one day.

The dictionary is also a treasure trove of suitable proverbs for prospective speechmakers, coming in handy at public service farewell luncheons, Friday afternoon Happy Hour morale-booster-announcements, Promotion Appeal Committee hearings, and departmental Christmas party addresses. From the B section alone, there are:

It is better to travel hopefully, than to arrive. Birds of a feather flock together. Blue are the hills that are far away. The bread never falls but on its buttered side. 'Tis Better to have loved and lost, than never to have loved at all. Better to be safe than sorry, The Best-laid schemes of mice and men gang oft agley.

On such occasions it is well to remember – to take a leaf out of this book – that “the opera ain’t over ‘til the fat lady sings”.

INTRODUCTION TO CENSORSHIP ISSUES

9 June 1983

CENSORSHIP. By Melvin Berger. Franklin Watts. Illustrated. 84pp. \$9.95.

This book about censorship deals with the control of communication between people. It is an interesting topic in an age concerned with the generation gap and changing communication values.

With the influence of the media as it is, should we prescribe what can or cannot be seen in the cinema or on television or read in magazines and newspapers? If there are limitations, what are the guidelines and who will determine them? What is the definition of obscenity? If this is related to community mores, which particular communities are we to use as a standard of reference and how much divergence from the “mean” should we allow?

There is also the conundrum of the degree of permissible advocacy of forceful overthrow of government in a society like ours that, unlike dictatorships, has provisions for a legal opposition to assume leadership. In such a society, freedom of speech and press exists not only for the supporters of government but also for its foes.

Are there any limits to the freedom of the press? The film ‘Absence of Malice’ shown in Canberra recently gave an apt illustration of one facet of this problem and its application to the American scene. Indeed, one mild criticism by a Canberra reviewer of this Well-produced and thought-provoking book, is the somewhat

parochial approach in its discussion of contemporary questions of censorship.

Even so, when one reads about the beginnings of American movie censorship, the rise and fall of the Hays Office, and the evolution of the American Production Code, one cannot remain ignorant of the influence of such censorship on the rest of the Western world.

In Australia it is not 50 years ago that reproductions of Modigliani nudes were confiscated, that books by Joyce, Huxley, Hemingway and Lawrence were banned, and that the NSW Government classified Remarque's 'All Quiet on the Western Front' as obscene. In the immediate post-war years many of our own writers suffered a similar fate and book shops were not allowed to sell 'We Were the Rats', 'Love Me Sailor', 'Power Without Glory', and 'The Art of Rosaleen Norton'.

While our battles involving literary censorship are mostly behind us, the censorship of films and TV seems to concern itself with the range of sexual conduct rather than a matter which, in this reviewer's opinion, poses a real danger to our society: the recurring portrayal of violence and brutality.

This reasonably-priced book is a popular presentation of an interesting issue which might also serve as a fruitful basis of discussion within the framework of upper secondary studies.

HIS MAJESTY'S MOST LOYAL INTERNEES

26 February 1983

THE DUNERA SCANDAL. By Cyril Pearl. 229pp.

Illustrated, Angus and Robertson. 234pp. \$14.95

This story deals with events during World War II when Britain resumed a practice discontinued a century previously: transportation of prisoners. Most were sent to Canada but one ship, the Dunera, sailed for Australia. The story of the prolonged internment of more than 2,500 men friendly to the Allied cause is pieced together from

official records, parliamentary debates, and the diaries, letters, verses and reminiscences of people involved.

At the beginning of the war Britain had within her shores a good number of Germans and Austrians who were refugees from Nazi oppression. When France was defeated in May, 1940, Britain displayed symptoms of spy mania endemic in all besieged communities and interned all as a temporary measure.

School children and students, anti-Nazi writers and skilled tradesmen, social democrats and one-time trade unionists, former concentration camp victims: all were put into camps.

Such indiscriminate internment was not only disruptive to the war effort but it soon became evident that it was nonsense to put under lock and key the very people who were highly motivated towards Hitler's defeat.

We left in search for liberty
The country of our birth.
We thought to live in Britain was
The finest thing on earth.
You gave us hospitality
When we gave guarantees.
And now we are His Majesty's
Most loyal internees.

When the indiscriminate internment policy ceased suddenly three weeks after it had begun, thousands had been shipped overseas. The Dunera was en route to Australia with about 3,000 prisoners, more than 2,500 of them residents of Britain who had suddenly been interned.

The porthole is the polar star we follow.
In it the skyline seems to sink and soar.
First one feels filled with lead, and then feels hollow.
As the horizon lifts and falls once more...

A U-boat attacked but the two torpedoes exploded off target. On short rations and locked into overcrowded holds, the internees were occasionally roughed up by British Pioneer Corps guards who systematically pilfered their belongings.

On the evidence presented in the story, the Lieutenant-Colonel commanding the prisoners' guards was not only a liar and a fool but a thoroughly bad egg. He and others in his command were court-martialled upon return to Britain.

By the time the Dunera reached Australia, Britain had begun to release from internment men like those who were now put behind barbed wire in the backblocks of Victoria and New South Wales. They were kept there, sometimes for years, even though they would have been free men had they not been sent to Australia "by mistake".

Screeching parakeets – rainbows in miniature
Dissect the grey horizon,
Dry, as the palate on the morning after,
Is the land.

The fiction that these internees were dangerous could not be maintained for long by the Australian authorities. The official obstacle to even a temporary release of an internee in Australia – waiting for shipping to return to Britain or joining the Australian armed services for continuing studies or taking a job – lay in the fact that he had no landing permit.

It was a Catch-22 situation: an internee was not entitled to apply for a landing permit because he was an internee. But without it, so he was told, he could not be released in Australia.

Thorns outside not as sharp
As those of cold ferocious steel,
Strung on a weary wire
Which enclose us – symbol, Symbol?

A number of organisations put the internees' case to the Australian authorities. The future Archdeacon of the Riverina wrote: "we want fighting men ... we need skilled men ... there are many behind barbed wire ... whose most fervent hopes are in British victory". All such appeals fell on deaf ears.

The internees were well aware that theirs was only a minor sideshow when rated with world events, but as the anniversary of their incarceration approached there were many who began to lose patience.

Each man is a corpse, as he sits
Decaying and doubting his wits ...
Others tried to pour oil on troubled waters.
Let those who fret in pretty discontent,
Of grievances and wrongs, of stale mishap
Be petulant in pain nor see the gap
Between injustice done and justice meant

Meanwhile camp “universities” were set up by the internees. Courses on politics and art, theology and engineering, comparative literature, astronomy, philosophy, and a host of modern and ancient languages were all well attended. Teenagers were able to prepare for matriculation examinations. The Australian Students Christian Movement were the main suppliers of books.

There was a camp newspaper, the ‘Boomerang’. Camp money bore the motto “we’re here because we’re here because ...” in barbed wire loops. Latrine cleaners received top emoluments of five shillings a week. Pie-in-the-sky was considered by the internees to be ample recompense for VIPs like camp leaders, hut captains, members of the camp court, et al.

Relations with the Australian garrison guards were excellent. Among other plays and revues, they attended the Christmas 1940 musical show ‘Snow White Joins Up’. It was wishful thinking. Another year was to pass before the first 250 men were released for fruit-picking in the Goulburn Valley.

Here we are, free in a free country.
Peach fluff on our arms, pear stalks in our ears.
Carrying ladders that seem to reach to doom.

The fruitpickers subsequently volunteered for army service and were formed into an Employment Coy, a pseudonym for Labour Corps. Throughout the war, all applications for transfer to more active units were turned down. It was not the most efficient use of fit young men and middle-aged people with technical skills.

Before the war was over more than a thousand Dunera internees had opted to return to Britain. Forty-seven of these lost their lives at sea. About 130 Zionists went to Palestine which was then a British Mandate. More than 900 who chose to remain in Australia after the

war were finally given their Landing Permit.

This is the fourth book about “His Majesty’s Most Loyal Internees” but it is the first that concentrates on the Australia contingent in a reasonably balanced manner. Despite somewhat ragged and jumpy editing it is an interesting story vividly told.

BISMARCK REASSESSED

14 August 1983

*BISMARCK: By Edward Crankshaw. Macmillan.
Illustrated. 451pp. \$11.95*

This is a new biography of Prince von Bismarck, imperial Chancellor of the Second Reich and supreme political virtuoso of his age. Bismarck was born in 1815, the year of Waterloo, when the old pre- Napoleonic conglomeration of 338 German kingdoms, principalities, duchies, free cities and bishoprics was replaced by a confederation of 38 States. When he died at the close of the century the maps had been redrawn and the German Empire, then in existence for more than two decades, had become the strongest industrial power in Europe.

After law studies and military service Bismarck joined the state service. Although an arch-conservative at heart, he rejected the concept of an absolute monarchy. Unlike the Russian Czar, whose word was law, the Prussian king had no objections to a free press. After the 1848 revolution the newly-established Diet provided a further forum for criticism of the government.

In time Bismarck was appointed Prussia’s representative at a reconstituted federal Diet and was to become minister-president and foreign minister. It was in the Diet that he gave the speech that was to dog him for the rest of his life: “.... the great questions of the day will be decided not by speeches and majority votes ... but by iron and blood”.

Thus he was labeled as a man of violence and some historians have protested that this evaluation is unfair. Crankshaw does not agree with them for, after all, true to his creed, Bismarck was soon to make war repeatedly.

It may be the German States, caught up in the Industrial Revolution and impelled by the needs of trade, would have unified in any case. But when they did, Bismarck was at the helm and it was his doing. After the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71 his goals that Prussia should be great, that Prussia should be Germany, and that Germany ought to dominate Europe, had been achieved. Although he was never interested in the subjugation of non German nations, his career was to be haloed for evermore by “the iron radiance of a million bayonets”.

For all that, Bismarck was far ahead of his time when he introduced social security to Germany. His Sickness Insurance Law, Accident Insurance Law and Old Age Insurance Law were legislative milestones and it was years before the rest of the Western world caught up. Historians will forever discuss his motives. It is generally held that he pioneered these measures to cut the ground from under the feet of the Social Democrats.

Bismarck’s last years of office are said to have demonstrated “consistent skill and perspicuity unsurpassed in diplomatic history”. Crankshaw does not agree. In his assessment, Bismarck’s words and actions reflected such incoherence of political thinking and self-contradictions that he believes Bismarck’s reputation for perversity was really the outcome of “an inability to think in abstract terms”. He concedes that Bismarck showed genius when dealing with the “concrete and immediate”.

Crankshaw’s portrait of the “Iron Chancellor” is sympathetic if none too flattering. Bismarck’s considerable literary skills are never in doubt and if his reminiscences have to be read with more than one grain of salt this, for elder statesmen, is probably par for the course.

EXTRAORDINARY TALES

16 October 1983

RIPLEY'S BELIEVE IT OR NOT! BOOK OF CHANCE. Ed by Patrick G. Crean. Ripley Books. Illust. 333pp. \$14.95.

'Believe It or Not' tales are familiar to newspaper readers and picture-theatre goers of yesteryear. This is a good collection to pick up and peruse at random. One can begin and finish in the middle without loss of continuity.

Of some special interest to readers in Australia could be the incident at a Sydney race meeting when three horses ran a triple dead heat and finished dead heat again when the race was rerun. There are also such relevant tidbits as the sales price of Jackson Pollock's paintings in the '50s — rarely more than \$1,000 — and the fact that Qatar, Kuwait, Liechtenstein and United Arab Emirates are among the 10 countries in the world ahead of Austria in per-capita riches.

Unsuccessful authors will be comforted by the news that the odds against finding a publisher in the United States are 3,333 to 1. Indeed, Daniel Defoe had to take his 'Robinson Crusoe' manuscript to 20 publishers, Dostoevsky wrote 'Crime and Punishment' to pay gambling debts, and Shakespeare never did have a complete play published in his lifetime.

The visual arts are well represented. Auguste Rodin, creator of the National Gallery's 'Burghers of Calais', was rejected three times by the Ecole des Beaux-Arts for lack of talent; Picasso left 44,111 pictures, sculptures, ceramics, drawings, etchings and lithographs, and 'Le Bateau', a painting by Matisse, was once displayed at the New York Museum of Modern Art for 47 days before someone noticed that it was hanging upside down.

An American book of this genre must include Hollywood: the piano player in 'Casablanca' never did play 'As Time Goes By'. He was a singer who couldn't play a note. The Wizard of Oz got his name from the letters of the author's bottom file drawer, O-Z, and

Gable's famous line in 'Gone With The Wind', "Frankly, my dear. I don't give a damn", collected a \$5,000 fine from the American censorship authorities.

The first 20 moves in chess can have 169,518,829,100,544,000,000,000,000 variations. In a round of golf the chances against a hole in one are 43,000 to 1. The odds against a bridge deal with the 13 cards of the same suit in each hand are

2,235,197,406,895,366,368,301,560,000 to 1. Yet, on Christmas Day, 1965, in Louisville, Kentucky, Mrs Cunningham, Mrs Shontz, Mrs Long, and Mrs Black, sat down to play bridge and ... Believe it or Not!

THE ANGUISH OF VIETNAM'S REFUGEES

1 October 1983

REFUGEE. The Vietnamese Experience. Ed. Lesleyanne Hawthorne. O.U.P. 330pp. \$14.95.

This is the story of 20 Vietnamese who, during the last six years, decided to leave their country. Nineteen are now in Australia. One is still in Vietnam. He didn't succeed. He was caught. Two unusual features make this book particularly interesting. The editor, an Australian teacher of English to Vietnamese migrants, selected not the most dramatic but the most typical of the hundreds of stories she listened to or recorded. In addition, she let the refugees tell their own stories and, save for some surgery to grammar and syntax, resisted the temptation to transform their accounts into "journalese". The occasional translations into English were done by other Vietnamese.

Thus, this unique collection of stories describes life before the end of the war, life after the war, escape, camps in Asia, and impressions of the first year or two of living in Australia.

The people relating their experiences make up a cross-section that does not tally with the popular image of Vietnamese refugees

being either well-heeled Chinese or those who were closely allied with the former regime. Most belong to neither category. Soldier and civilian, Catholic and Buddhist, raw country boy and polished French educated matron, semi-skilled tradesman and professional, Vietnamese, Vietnamese-Chinese, Chinese, the long the short and the tall, all are represented.

The specter of the refugee is not new in the history of mankind. In the 19th century a few would have reached our shores from Ireland and post '48 revolutionary Europe. The explorer Leichhardt was a military deserter from Germany, a refugee of sorts. But in this century Australia remained relatively untouched by the exodus of refugees from Turkey, Russia, Spain, Germany and Austria until the end of World War II.

On the whole, the Vietnamese refugees have been accepted well by the Australian population. Their willingness to work, and work hard, is not in question. At the same time, they have a harder row to hoe than the post-war migrants who preceded them. Their situation differs markedly in two important aspects: the disappearance of the 30-year post-war manpower shortage and their non-European heritage. What impels a Vietnamese in Vietnam to make these fearsome decisions, elect such terrible options, and risk life and limb in an endeavour that has no guaranteed happy ending?

This book provides 20 answers. To be sure these refugees are not random samples of the Vietnamese people. Inevitably they would tend to be those with spirit enterprise, stamina, foresight and ability. While it is not possible to encapsulate their stories within the limits of a few sentences, one is surprised to discover an apparent common denominator: When the war finished they had not wanted to leave their country. They arrived at that decision only after a long period of reflection and mental anguish.

Leslyanne Hawthorne touches upon a valid conundrum, which is "to what extent people have the right to leave a situation they find is intolerable, and expect the rest of the world to take them in?" It is a reasonable train of thought which she follows up by asking us: "what would you have done in their situation?" Unless one has had personal contact with recent arrivals from Vietnam, this question cannot really be answered without reading 'Refugee'.

NET OF BAKSHEESH

USSR: Secrets of a Corrupt Society. By Konstantin Simis. J. M. Dent. 216pp. \$24.95.

When the Soviet leader, Mr Andropov, began his campaign to stamp out corruption and laziness, the chances are that a copy of this book was in his Kremlin office. Its author, a lawyer and former researcher at a prestigious Moscow government department, researched the widespread corruption in his country and smuggled a draft abroad. Found out, he accepted an offer he couldn't refuse: emigration in lieu of "camps".

There are many examples of corruption in high places, particularly in the Trans-Caucasian and Asian republics. Simis explains why all this corruption occurs. Since all material benefits and perquisites go with the job, holders of office are extremely sensitive to pressure from the party hierarchy where all power lies. Its functionaries are appointed and its decision always ratified by the unanimous votes of the elected soviets.

Because of the low salaries of many people official eyes are often closed to questionable practices. Without doctors and driving instructors, teachers and technicians, store managers and sanitary inspectors accepting goods and services from people who are dependent on them, they could not make do.

Corruption in small-town communities has become so ingrained that people who are otherwise honest folk no longer consider it wrong or immoral to give or accept produce and products from state farms and enterprises in exchange for documentation necessary for moving to another town or flat, have one's car passed for registration, have building plans validated or friends stay for longer than three days.

Simis shows how scrupulously honest executives tried to reform corrupt practices and failed. From the village collective in Siberia to Moscow suburbia, the Soviet people are enmeshed in a net of baksheesh from the cradle to the grave.

Corruption also has its root in the inequities of an economic theory

put into practice. Since production and distribution of goods takes place as the result of administrative decisions by the state authorities rather than as the result of free market forces, all commercial activity outside this state-controlled economy is illegal.

This reviewer has no means of checking on the veracity of the incredible stories in this astounding and fascinating book. If they are not factual and the product of a fertile imagination, then Konstantin Simis must be the greatest teller of fairy tales since Hans Christian Anderson.

BRITAIN'S COLONIAL TWILIGHT

23 April 1983

TALES FROM THE SOUTH CHINA SEAS. Ed.

Charles Allen. Andres Deutsch. Illust. 240pp. \$32.95.

This is a fascinating collection of reminiscences from survivors of Britain's colonial past who spent their working lives on the fringes of the South China Sea, the pre-war setting of many a Somerset Maugham short story, today's Malaysia and Singapore.

No attempts are made to debate the issue of colonialism or to balance the accounts of colonisers with the colonised. These are simple unvarnished tales of how men and women did a job and met problems as best they could among an attractive population of many races in a beautiful part of the world.

Most of the British public servants, traders, planters and seafarers went East because of family connections, because they met someone who knew someone, or because they just liked the idea of going. Positions in the public service were offered on the basis of competitive examination but the view is held that appointments to banks and commercial undertakings were made on the basis of "not much topside and a lot of old school tie". To be good at sports was an important qualification.

Marriage during the first eight to 10 years of service was not

sanctioned, the unstated reason being that the young newcomer was expected to get to know the job and the country without the distraction of married life. Borrowing money was equally taboo and, like unauthorised marriage, led to instant dismissal. Once fired, one could not find another job. In this respect the East was like one big company town.

Up country the District Officer who provided the top layer of government was sometimes also the harbor master, health officer, coroner, chief of police and magistrate dispensing justice rather than law. With the improvement of communications and increasing centralisation of government, many of his responsibilities were gradually taken over by independent departments. The Public Works Department, the Education Department, Electricity Supply and Telegraph Services became major bureaucracies and in time diminished the power of the DO.

Planters had a hard life, especially in Borneo, where hours were long and often began at 4:30 in the morning. Most caught malaria sooner or later. Life became very difficult indeed when the price of rubber fell from five shillings a pound in 1925 to a penny a pound in 1932.

In the Malaysian part of Borneo the natives are not Malay but Ibans, Melanaus, Kayas, Kadazan, among others. In Sarawak, the Land of the White Rajahs, the relationships between the tuans and the locals were much more informal than on the Malay peninsula. This was Rajah policy. While touring the district "there was no question of setting up half a dozen tents as ... in Africa". Government officers passing through a region usually stayed in longhouses with their native hosts, who were regarded by their British overnight guests as "nature's gentlemen".

The chronicles of these colonial times, having lived through the chaos of wartime defeat and, often, imprisonment, relate the difficulties of adjustment after liberation. The Emergency brought about the metamorphosis of former ally and friend into bitter enemy. The 10-year struggle finally came to a successful conclusion when the military advances meshed with the social, economic and political measures that led to self-government and independence.

Merdeka caused little immediate change for those in trade and commerce but for the British administrators it signified the end. They left behind a reasonably peaceful and prosperous country. If as rulers they had been “sometimes pompous and stupid”, they had also been “dedicated, intrinsically good and incorruptible”.

HARRY M.'S PROGRESS

9 November 1983

MY STORY: HARRY M. MILLER. As told to Denis O'Brien. Macmillan Australia. Illust. 322pp \$18.95.

This is the gospel of Harry M. Miller, according to Miller. Entrepreneur, impressario and ex-Long Bay inmate, he tells his story with wit, humour, gusto and aplomb.

Miller grew up in New Zealand. His father died when Miller was quite young and his mother regularly beat the living daylights out of him. Eventually he was looked after in an Institution for Jewish orphans. Once out of school he worked on a dairy farm, on ships and on the wharf. He didn't like any of it very much.

He finally found his metier in selling and sales promotion and proved a fast learner in whatever job he was assigned to. In time he branched out into the entertainment industry. Having cut his teeth in the world of New Zealand business he graduated to the more commodious pastures of the other Australasian isle where his talents for wheeling and dealing were given wider scope.

Very soon Harry M. Miller became a producer and sponsor in big-time show biz. In this world of hype and hyperbole, where star performers may stipulate instant bank-cheque payments for a night's show as a precondition for appearing the next day, neither oral nor written agreements seem to carry much contractual weight.

Blowing his trumpet and drumming his drum, Miller is at his sidesplitting best telling anecdotal stories against himself.

If his *modus vivendi* is a little unpredictable, his rules rarely Queensberry's and his games seldom according to Hoyle, he will call a spade a spade, one of his maxims being: "you have to make sure that everyone you sell to pays on the knocker and everyone you buy from waits".

Witty, overbearing, flashy, charismatic, energetic, quick-tempered, his style brought success which brought esteem which brought prestigious government appointments, many of them honorary and time-consuming. Requested to organise the Queen's Silver Jubilee celebrations in Australia, he prized from the British authorities for display in Australia a collection of exhibits such as the Queen's Glass Coach, crowns, swords and furniture, all high on his "ooh-aah" scale.

Miller's description of his 'Dunmore' property, which is such an obvious source of joy and satisfaction to him, provides a refreshing counterpoint to his other entrepreneurial activities. Liberal applications of city businessman's know-how to the traditional ways on working the land seem to have borne fruit.

The last three chapters of this autobiography are concerned with the Computicket fiasco and Miller's eventual arraignment, conviction and imprisonment. Some heavy editing might have improved the presentation of these events. As it is, his endeavours to justify and explain himself are not effective and displays of self-pity do not sit well with a reader who has just perused the stories of his many successful peccadillos and shenanigans.

THE PROBLEMS OF CUTTING GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES

*WASTE AWAY. By Leslie Chapman. Chatto & Windus.
216 pp. \$25.75.*

In these days of razor gangs, this book comes as a useful adjunct to the problems of government cost-cutting. Together with its

predecessor, 'Your Disobedient Servant', it shows how public enterprises may waste taxpayers' money and what should be done to detect and curtail such waste.

Of course the public sector differs from the private sector in that it exists primarily to give a service rather than make a profit. But community resources are not infinite and waste in one area means either a diminished service, a cut in another area, or demand for additional funds through increased taxation.

Chapman, retired from the British Civil Service, is not concerned with waste arising from unsuccessful government policies. His gospel preaches the curtailment of waste in the old-fashioned sense: the unnecessary use of taxpayers' moneys arising from mismanagement. He locks horns not with policy issues but with the inefficient execution of policy.

To be sure, his is a study of some of the public service operations in Britain. But while it may be difficult to imagine some of his more hair-raising examples occurring in the Lucky Country, it would take a brave man to assert that none of his illustrations of wasteful practices could possibly be applicable at federal, State or local-government level.

In the UK the public sector disposes about half of the community's total resources. In Australia the proportion, while significantly less, is still a very sizeable slice of our national wealth. Enormous savings can be made not necessarily by reducing staff but by the introduction of practices which might well cut across old and time-worn ways of doing things.

Every large-scale undertaking displays some tendency towards resistance to change. Chapman has found that media publicity which incorporates hard factual evidence of waste is a far more effective tool for change than the customary reports to the top.

Objections by a public authority to a prospective cost-effective inquiry on the grounds of unacceptable expense are counted by the author's observation that he cannot recall a single case where the cost of such an inquiry would not have been recouped within a few months as the result of savings arising from it. He adds the additional rider than an often-heard public service management defence, "the

unions will never stand for it", is nothing but a last-ditch stand when 'there are no rational and factual arguments left.'

Chapman says that the British experience of direct negotiation with trade-union representatives has shown that, while not 'wildly enthusiastic' about cost-cutting proposals, they are "never willfully obstructive".

I searched in vain in "Waste Away" for a mention of the annual rite observed in many areas of our Public Service. This is the spending spree towards the end of the financial year when, on occasions, guernseys are distributed for spending and rockets collected for not spending. Any new system of financial control that enables an unspent budget allocation to be carried into the next financial year without subsequent penalty would save millions of taxpayers' money, for in April-May-June of each year funds are not just spent: they are often spent in a hurry, under pressure, and unwisely.

FAMILIES AND GODFATHERS: A MAN OF TRADITION'S LIFE

15 March 1984

A MAN OF HONOUR: The Autobiography of a Godfather. By Joseph Bonanno. Andre Deutsch. Illustr. 416 pp. \$21.95.

Now, there is more than one approach to writing about the life of a Mafioso chief who serves as a Godfather model for Marlon Brando. One is to lay bare the violence, injury and misery that flows from organized crime. Another is to illustrate that what is considered to be very anti-social behaviour by the citizenry is seen by a few as the outcome of successful enterprises by a coterie of compatriots banding together for mutual benefit.

Mafia paterfamilias Joseph Bonanno calls his autobiography 'A Man of Honour', so for him the latter approach is a natural. If people

around him speak of “bosses”, “organization”, and “business associates”, he will think in terms of “Fathers”, “Families”, and “Friends”. He regards himself as the last in the long line of “Men of Tradition”.

Bonanno hails from Castellammare, Sicily, Italy. As he tells it, he comes from a respected family, so when he is nabbed over 50 years ago for illegally crossing into the US from Cuba, he is grateful to his Castellammare Cousin Stefano who arrives from Brooklyn, spreads a grand to good effect, and rescues Joseph from the ignominy of jail.

Many Castellammare immigrants settle in Brooklyn and Bonanno is thrown into the company of playmates of his youth. Eventually the Castellammare chapter of the Family admits him into the fold, into “an all-embracing way of life governed by certain values and ideals... for the mutual advantage of its members”. It is understood by one and all that such membership entails “not only privileges but corresponding duties”... but naturally guys are ever willing to do anything for the Family for they know that guys who are not willing often have bad luck.

In this set-up of muscle and muscling-in the range and volume of business monopolies are often ill-defined and during Prohibition days the Castellammare tribe have demarcation disputes with another Mafioso Family which turn into regular “warfare”. During that time the Castellammarese drive around New York City in convoys of bullet-proofed Cadillacs, carrying pistols, shortguns and, in the back a machine gun mounted on a swivel. A negotiated agreement brings peace and a return to business as usual.

In the fullness of time Bonanno becomes the Father of his Family which, he points out, is “like a head of state”, for he too has to “conduct foreign affairs with other Families”. There are “national conventions” every five years but in 1957 he meets his Apalach-Waterloo. When an emergency national convention is called after the killing of Albert Anastasia the cops, who get wind of the gathering, stake out all highway approaches to the farm at Apalachin where the meeting takes place and take the names of all visitors. The law thus acquires a national register of every major Mafioso chief in the country and Bonanno is on it.

All through his life the authorities fail to get the goods on Bonanno. They try to deport him in '54 but fail. He evades clink after the mismanaged Apalachin meeting, finds himself on the inside alter entering Canada, but is soon released. Finally, in retirement in Tucson, Arizona, police agents collect incriminating evidence after years of sorting his garbage. When his book goes to press Bonanno is still on the outside, pending the hearing of appeal against his conviction.

Now in his late 70s, Bonanno mourns the Americanisation of his old "tradition" and "the birth of the Syndicate with its questionable values". He says that all his life he is against cutting in on prostitution and drugs, on moral grounds, and that even Al Capone gives up his prostitution interests "as a gesture of respectability" when he joins the Mafia. Nevertheless, Bonanno seems to do all right for himself just helping friends and neighbours. There is a photograph showing some of his 2,886 dinner-dance guests at son Salvatore's wedding reception at the Hotel Astoria, New York City, in 1956.

This is not to say that the Mafia way-of-life pays off. Godfathers in New York lead somewhat precarious lives and Lucky Luciano, Frank Costello, Vito Genovese, Albert Anastasia and Tommy Luccese never became senior citizens. Joseph Bonanno is one of the lucky few, which is one of the reasons he decides to tell it as it is.

Bonanno does not deny making mistakes but "the biggest regret of my life is that I have never totally mastered English". To this day he is very hard to understand, even for his lawyers, for he expresses himself "sometimes in English, sometimes in standard Italian, sometimes in the Sicilian dialect of my home town". To write this book he has enlisted "the help of a scribe". "I want to be understood for a change".

It is not a hare-brained thesis to promulgate that, if half a century ago American government authorities had offered free English tuition to immigrants, as our government agencies have done in post-war years, the history of organised crime in the United States would not have been as it is.

AUTHORITATIVE ON REGIONAL SECURITY

10 December 1983

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY IN THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN AND SOUTHWEST PACIFIC REGION. Ed. By T.B.Millar. University of Queensland Press. 317 pp. \$24.95

The distinguished contributors to this volume of defence studies originally met in Canberra last year under the auspices of the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre at the Australian National University. The published version of their papers is a well-researched and authoritative contribution to the topic of regional security.

South-East Asia, one of the fastest developing areas in the world, is expected to have a 450 million population by the end of the century. If there is dissension and stress among its people this is due more often than not to economic pressures and the aspirations of a very heterogeneous population.

Since security is defined as being "within the political, economic, social, psychological and military context", it is of course closely related to regional stability. Foreign-aid functions, economic development and government policies leading to national integration have therefore high priority on the regional security agenda.

Soviet interest in the region is considered to be marginal. Only in Indochina have communist insurrections been successful. The Soviets have a foothold in Vietnam but Hanoi has been unable to duplicate in national reconstruction its prowess on the battlefield. Militarily and economically, Vietnam is entirely dependent on the USSR. But Moscow's own security priorities in South-East Asia are overshadowed by problems of USA-USSR relations, her control of Eastern European countries, the perceived NATO threat and the running sore of her squabbles with China. Further afield and seen from Moscow in geographic terms, the South-West Pacific region is as far away as South Africa and Texas.

Naturally, as a global power, Soviet Russia would be well aware of many strategic, political and economic aspects of the region. But if the USSR is dug in in Vietnam, the US has bases in The Philippines, Diego Garcia, Guam and Australia. Unfortunately, the problems of international security are more complex than the accessibility of bases. The military “plus” of a base in South-East Asia could well be negated by the “minus” impact in the assessment of an Asian country’s ruling party because of the damage to that party’s nationalist credentials.

The security aspects of great powers like Japan and China form separate chapters. In terms of per-capita economic muscle, projected military power and raw materials, Japan is a mirror reverse of the Soviet Union. Her gross national product now probably exceeds that of the whole of the USSR, but her military might is negligible and, unlike the Soviet Union, she needs to import all her raw materials.

China may be very security conscious but the major thrust of her concern is directed northwards.

The greatest bolster to regional security is the supply of skill and capital for economic development of the region by donor countries like Australia and New Zealand and participation in furthering neighbourly co-operation through the Association of South-East Asian Nations, the South Pacific Forum, and other regional organizations.

It is well to conclude with the observation that “the future is not without promise of stability and security in South-East Asia, and by extension in the rest of the area.” At the same time, recent events in the region, on its periphery and beyond, highlight a remark of General Clausewitz quoted in the final chapter: “Between the particular case and the principle there is often a wide space which cannot be traversed on a visible chain of conclusions... where... a certain amount of skepticism is serviceable...”. This would be as true today as it was 150 year ago.

THE NAZIS, PROPAGANDA AND PERSUASION

15 February 1984

NAZI PROPAGANDA. Ed. By David Walsh. Croom Helm. 228 pp. \$31.25.

THE NINTH OF NOVEMBER. By Hannele Zurndorfer. Quartet Books. 182 pp. \$20.95

The use of press, film and radio is an important means for the modern totalitarian state "mobilising, manipulating, controlling, directing and re-educating the population". How effective was Nazi propaganda among the German people after Hitler's ascension to power?

Making such an assessment is not easy, because there is no suitable frame of reference to serve as a measure of comparison. Popular collective wisdom has it that Nazi propaganda was effective because the German armies fought to the bitter end. These studies argue, perhaps a little glibly, that the causes for this lie elsewhere.

"... these reasons have little to do with propaganda. Far more important than propaganda was its counterfoil, present since the beginning but now reaching its apogee: terrorist repression. The escalation of terror in the latter years of the regime was no incidental development..."

In the Nazi view, the main objective of propaganda was to unify the German people behind a single thought and purpose. Goebbels assumed absolute control over all aspects of the media. By his own admission propaganda did not have anything to do with truth. His task was to restructure community values through "madly heightened chauvinism" and "unthinking adulation and obedience towards a leader".

Of course, the Hitler regime wished that its policies would be enthusiastically accepted and it was well aware that loss of employment or knowledge of a concentration camp, even if used in exemplary fashion on dissidents, would hardly engender the

popular support it craved. Thus “propaganda” to it was not a pejorative term but a legitimate undertaking which allowed the “saturation of human minds with one-sided, heavily censored information... geared towards radically altering attitudes and behaviour”.

In his government’s early days, Hitler was looked upon by landowners and industrialists as the saviour of capitalism, while the professional and educated classes tended to stay aloof. Senior members of the civil service and the armed forces were inclined to regard the “Bohemian corporal” with some sarcasm, as a rabble-rouser and a useful tool. Specialist studies are said to have “vividly demonstrated the almost unmitigated failure of Nazi social propaganda among German industrial workers”.

However, all sociologists who have studied the Hitler phenomenon agree that Hitler was, primarily, a mouthpiece of the German lower middle classes, the *petit-bourgeoisie*, with whom he scored undoubted successes and whose child he was.

At the outbreak of war in September, 1939, the civilian population’s lack of enthusiasm came as a shock to Hitler. The euphoria following the quick and relatively easy victories in the first two years of the war quickly evaporated and Nazi propaganda was soon distrusted to such an extent that it led to “an increase in listening to broadcasts of the BBC”. Early in 1944 a district security office reported that “our propaganda encounters rejection everywhere”. Long before Goebbels had stopped the distribution of such unpalatable security-service reports among leaders of the regime.

Hannele Zurndorfer’s autobiographical work about her years as a German Jewish child in Hitler’s Germany and her emigration to Britain shows that, if Nazi propaganda was not swallowed by all, neither were there many people who in the long run refused to conform to government edicts.

The family lived in a small town and when Jewish children eventually were forbidden to attend government schools. Hannele’s one-time primary teacher accepted her younger sister as a new pupil into her class. The headmaster turned a blind eye. But a year later the risks for the teachers became too great and her sister, too,

had to leave school.

In November, 1938, when Goebbels organised an anti-Jewish orgy of destruction, arson and murder all over Germany, Hannele's father called at the local police station. "The police were sympathetic and admitted that they disapproved of what had taken place, but they had received orders not to interfere. They were sorry, but they were powerless...".

Hannele and her younger sister came to Britain with a transport of refugee children from Germany. Her parents could not get exit visas and did not survive the war.

Studies about the efficiency of Nazi propaganda which, by extension, have a bearing on the political performance of other authoritarian regimes, are a little esoteric these days. It may be that people wish to take comfort from the knowledge that soldiers, police and others representing government authority in the dictatorships of Europe, Asia, Africa, and South America, carry out their instructions reluctantly rather than enthusiastically. But it is very small comfort.

AVENGER'S JOURNEY TO THE PAST

15 April 1984

ELENI. By Nicholas Gage. Collins. 471 pp. \$19.95

One day in August 1948, three years after the end of World War II, a Greek peasant woman was led up a ravine together with 12 other prisoners from mountain villages near the Albanian border. They had been tortured and stumbled along barefoot on black and swollen legs. The 13 villagers were executed that day. The woman died because she had tried to save her children when the guerilla Provisional Government trained teenage girls as fighters and decreed that all children in their territory were to be sent to the "people's democracies" behind the Iron Curtain.

The peasant woman's name was Eleni Gatzoyiannis. Her nine-

year old son Nicholas, who had been smuggled out of the village together with most of his sisters eventually became a reporter on the New York Times. Thirty years later he returned to investigate the circumstances leading to his mother's imprisonment and death.

Nicholas Gage didn't believe the article of faith about the mills of God grinding exceedingly small. His search for the guilty began as a quest for vengeance but he soon found that he could not isolate his mother's murder from the events of the post-war years. What started as a pursuit of revenge became an extensive study of the forgotten world of Eleni Gatzoyiannis, recreated from the memories of scores of participants.

Thus he was able to resurrect the village of his childhood where "magic, superstition, ghosts and devils were invoked or appeased by holy oils and charms ... a mysterious world as faded now as a tapestry from the Middle Ages". His mother Eleni, who had hardly gone to school, lived by the rules of her primitive mountain culture. But when the civil war swept into her mountains and she saw her family threatened with destruction, "she discovered the clarity of vision to know what she must do and the strength to do it".

The Greek civil war raged for years and the village people of the mountainous north could not escape its intrusion into their lives. This is a riveting account, a true story, about the inhabitants of the village of Lia caught up in the events of their time. The author shows how a handful of men began their war-time resistance with humanitarian ideals, "the longing to bring about the equality of all men", and how, after the victorious conclusion of that war, a policy of forced labour, denunciations, sham trials, torture and executions turned the utopia of the revolutionaries into a Fata Morgana.

Today Lia is slowly dying as the young people move out in search for a better life. A photograph shows the ruins of Eleni's deserted house. But a more enduring memorial to its one-time occupant is this fascinating book about a simple peasant woman who managed to survive starvation and foreign occupation only to die at the hands of fellow Greeks.

After Gage had filled a wall of his Massachusetts house with files of "transcribed interviews, journals, letters, military reports,

photographs" he spent some months completing 'Eleni'. In 1982 he was back in Greece. He had tracked down the whereabouts of "Katis", Albanian for "judge". "Katis" had been the nom-de-guerre of the chief investigating guerilla magistrate in Lia. Gage collected an unmarked and unregistered Walther PPK pistol he had left with a friend and drove to the town where "Katis" lived.

But there is no space here for the telling of this adjunct to the main story which so captivated this reviewer that he missed out on his favourite TV programs three nights running. 'Eleni' is excellent value.

RICHARD NIXON, 'AN HABITUAL LIAR'

23 April 1984

RICHARD NIXON. The Shaping of His Character. By Fawn M. Brodie. Harvard University Press. Illustrated. 574 pp. \$16.95

The last major Nixon study was 'Breach of Faith', a journalist's story of Watergate. Among other things it illustrated the validity of the 'Chappaquiddick Theorem': the only good time for a politician to tell bad news is right away. Had Nixon come clean at once and not compounded his obstruction of justice by lying about it throughout 1973, he would almost certainly have been able to complete his presidential term.

Brodie's biography delves much deeper into Nixon's past and focuses not on his Presidency but on "The Shaping of His Character". Her research is based not only on the speeches and writings of Richard Nixon and on the many books, articles and monographs about him, but also on the records of more than 500 oral interviews with people who were in personal contact with Nixon at some time during the first 50 years of his life.

She demolishes the view that "what Nixon did was no worse" than what other Presidents, who were not caught, did. Those voters

who at one time shared Nixon's view of himself as a "courageous statesman ... who had met each crisis with dignity ..." may now agree with right-wing Republican and one-time president candidate Barry Goldwater that "he should never be forgiven".

Throughout his life Nixon is shown to have been a habitual liar who time and again lied quite needlessly. He often told the story about oil having been found on his father's land shortly after it was sold. Not true. He said that his wife was born Patricia on St Patrick's Day. Not true. On a presidential visit in France he announced that he had once majored in French. Not true. During World War II he had served conscientiously wherever the navy had put him but he could not resist embroidering the truth with false heroics. His lawyer found him to be "the most transparent liar I have ever met".

Richard Nixon's early political career is inextricably linked with Alger Hiss. Hiss is often presented as one of the victims of the House Un-American Activities Committee but Brodie depicts Nixon as an effective Committee advocate who acquitted himself with skill and distinction during the Hiss hearings. Indeed, convincing parallels are drawn between "Hiss under fire from Nixon and Nixon as a target at Watergate".

It is one of the paradoxes of character that the President who often talked about America having to continue being the "richest and strongest" nation on earth had a Quaker mother. Although he still professed to be influenced by the Quaker "inner light" when he left the Presidency, the Quakers had by that time almost all repudiated him.

It is probably true that high political office "neither elevates nor degrades a man" but simply provides a stage upon which all personality traits are magnified. By the last chapter one cannot help but marvel at Richard Nixon's successful ascent to the pinnacle of the Presidency of the United States.

Nixon's "litany in exile" has been chosen by the author of this absorbing and interesting character study as an appropriate exit: when an old acquaintance visited the ex-President in retirement, Nixon asked him "What did I do wrong?"

STALIN: PORTRAIT OF A SCHEMING TYRANT

12 May 1984

THE TIME OF STALIN: Portrait of a Tyranny. By Anton Antonov-Ovseyenko. Harper and Row. Illust. 374 pp. \$14.95

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin once wrote that the belated abolition of serfdom under the Czars had not been very thorough. He believed that in the Russia of his day the violence and the lack of human dignity were the outcome of a way of life where open and organised action of the oppressed had not been possible. A new biography of Stalin translated from the Russian, shows a tyrant more terrible than any Czar at the helm of the Soviet Union.

Antonov-Ovseyenko does not agree that Stalin's rise to power was inevitable. He follows in detail Stalin's ascent from relative obscurity and unravels his role in connection with the suppression of Lenin's testament, which was so damaging to him. Antonov assigns most of the blame for Stalin's victory in the power struggle to Trotsky's "hypertrophied self-esteem"; he looked upon that "uneducated and rude" fellow's political pranks with "haughty contempt".

Unlike Deutscher's Stalin biography, Djilas' exposures, and Svetlana's revelations after her flight to the West, Antonov's research of 20 years appears to be based on some original archival material. The author's father, an old revolutionary who died in Lubyanka prison, had known Stalin and had served as a Soviet Ambassador for nearly two decades. His son, "rehabilitated" after Stalin's death, was released after 12 years in the Gulag camps. A trained historian, he had access to much confidential information from those of his father's old comrades who had survived the purges.

It is generally recognised that Stalin documents have been doctored so many times that the resulting amalgam of truth and falsehood is rarely completely acceptable by historians as one or the other. Antonov's philippic, based as it is on eye-witness accounts,

memoirs which are unpublishable in the Soviet Union, minutes and other prime sources, may well be based on more solid foundations. His portrait is one of unmitigated scheming, stupidity, prejudice, backwardness, pathological hatred and mistrust.

Antonov occasionally overstates his case. Stalin's helplessness in the face of the German attack in 1941 is well known. But his comment that Stalin was "no more capable of organising the defence of the State than of dancing the pas de quatre in Swan Lake", though it may be good hyperbole, is not necessarily true. Many western statesmen and generals thought otherwise. If true, he certainly managed to fool Churchill, who relates in his 'The Second World War' how, advising Stalin of Operation Torch during his 1942 visit, he was "deeply impressed" with the "Russian dictator's swift and complete mastery of the problem hitherto novel to him".

Be that as it may, Stalin is certainly responsible for the death of millions of people from the time of the collectivisation of agriculture onwards. By Antonov's accounting it is "a hundred million people", all of them citizens of the Soviet Union. He says that not all of those who perished were on Stalin's "conscience" but "... nearly all. Nearly all."

In today's post-Khrushchev Soviet Union, Stalin's star seems to be again in ascendent. The media's euphemism for the Stalin terror is "the period of the personality cult" and the Stalin of history is once again the "Father of the People", "Great Leader" and "Builder of Socialism". The now elderly Antonov was walking down a snow-bound Moscow street not long ago when he slipped and fell. He recalls how an Old Bolshevik helped him up and said: "Now, if Comrade Stalin were alive.... he'd put our mayor in jail ... they'd clear the streets of snow in no time."

MODERN MURDER PUZZLE

16 September 1984

FATAL VISION. By Joe McGinniss. Andre Deutsch. 663 pp. \$34.50

This is a murder mystery.

One rainy night the military police at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, receive a faint telephone call for help from a Green Beret special-forces Army captain. Arriving at his quarters, they find him stabbed and battered on the floor. His wife and daughters are dead in pools of blood. Before the captain, a Princeton medical graduate, is taken to an intensive care hospital ward he is able to report an attack by gang of four drug-crazed hippies, three males and a blonde flop-hatted female. They leave their calling card at the headboard of the bed: "kill the pigs", written in blood.

Access to Fort Bragg, the largest military base in the United States, is unrestricted and, according to the newspapers, "young girls from all over the country follow the Green Beret glamour..." The unit of criminal investigators at the base is overworked and understaffed. There is an average of a murder a week, in addition to suicides, car crashes, training accidents, theft of weapons, rapes and robberies. There is also a narcotics problem of epidemic proportions.

The search for the hippies bears fruit and a suspect is located. A confirmed druggie, she went for a drive on the night in question but says she was "high" and can't remember where she has been or with whom. Among her possessions are a blonde wig and a floppy hat.

The army sleuths are not overexcited by this discovery. When their chief arrived at the murder scene he "slowly looked around the living room. He had spent nineteen years in the CID and had seen a lot of crime scenes and this one did not look to him the way it should." Within a week the Provost Marshal and his investigators are convinced that the Green Beret doctor himself is the triple murderer.

All they have is circumstantial evidence and subsequent developments are hardly conducive to the preparation of an indictment. It transpires that nobody had ordered the establishment of road blocks on the murder night. The captain's bloodied pyjama bottoms were inadvertently burned at the hospital and trash collectors emptied the garbage before it could be examined. Skin fragments and other matter found under fingernails of the victims disappeared. There are no fingerprints on any of the murder weapons which were found outside the house. Besides, if the captain is guilty, there is not a whiff of a motive.

After six weeks of furious nation-wide press comment about the Army's incompetence and its inability to find the perpetrators, the special-forces medico is asked to drop in at criminal investigation headquarters for a talk. "Before we begin", says the CID chief. "I would like to advise you of your rights."

So here we are on page 110 with another 500 pages to go. I do not normally get hooked on murder mysteries, but this one I could not put down. All the necessary ingredients are there. Forensic science laboratories come up with a wealth of information, such as that of the four different blood types of the four family members. This means that all traces of blood found throughout the apartment can be traced to their origin. Doting mothers, relentless step-fathers, odd-ball siblings, mates and girl friends, all tell their tales and contribute to the fabric of the puzzle.

Nine years later the doctor lives in style in a \$350,000 Southern California seaside condominium with a Jacuzzi "just off his master bedroom". He drives a Citroen-Maserati. Ian Fleming could have dreamt up the setting.

The suspect's trial finally begins almost a decade after the crime. The jury's verdict is unexpected and ends a very gripping story. And the reason why this one leaves all other murder-mystery yarns for dead is one that you, gentle reader of this page, have surely gathered: it is a true story.

CLASSIC STORY OF COURAGE, ENDURANCE

25 November 1984

*BOLDNESS BE MY FRIEND. By Richard Pape.
Granada. Illust. 422 pp. \$22.95*

Back in the bad old days when the Monaro Highway was a corrugated dirt road and Canberra, to this reviewer, no more than a Blue Moon Café stop en route to greener pastures, there appeared an incredible book, 'Boldness Be My Friend'.

Written by a Yorkshire journalist who was shot down over Holland in 1941 while serving as an RAF navigator, it was the sort of study that, once read, is never quite forgotten.

Now, 10 books later, the author has discovered Canberra, settled in our midst, and has issued a revised and updated version of his experiences as a prisoner-of-war-on-the-run which contains "hitherto unpublished facts which could not be told earlier."

The feelings of rage, venom and hatred that permeated the original account has been largely cauterized in this revised edition and much of the original text has been shortened. This tends to affect the reader's insight into the nuances of many encounters and situations.

Publishers are forever editing copy to reduce printing costs, but the description of such pivotal events as those of the two wounded airmen hiding in a Dutch wood as searching soldiers methodically thrust bayonets through the undergrowth, of the meticulously planned break-out from a Silesian slave-labour coal mine, and of the repeated and extended interrogations of Richard Pape by German officials, suffer from such slashing.

On the other hand, the added chapters contribute a wealth of new and fascinating information. We now know that, had Pape not been arrested before the Dutch resistance could get him to a waiting off-shore British submarine rendezvous, the year long "Englandspiel", one of the greatest German wartime intelligence

successes, might never have occurred.

In the new sections of this updated version the stark black-or-white characterisations of the original book are complemented by shading of a less determinate hue. His “capo” foreman at the Berchtesgaden forced-labour work site is neither hero nor villain. He was “accomplished and clever... spoke reasonable English and fluent German and French... had bitter memories of Mussolini... an outlook opposed to totalitarian suppression except... as practiced by himself...”

This particular trusty was subject to “underground manipulation” and helped the author escape from the special work site. Pape must have possessed very exceptional linguistic skills not to have been nailed on the spot when, as he tells it, he chatted with German Reich security and SS officers as they scrutinized his papers. He carried the documentation of a German civilian carpenter on two weeks’ leave from the “Führer Area” on the Oberalzberg.

In due course Pape is back in his rightful prisoner of war compound; and now, a generation later, he is free to relate in greater detail aspects of his activities while on the “inside”. It seems that it was once considered inappropriate to concede that the tendency of some German guards to accept occasional bribes and turn a blind eye when required was not necessarily always due to simple venality but was often motivated by the fact that some of the guards, particularly the World War I veterans, were not exactly Hitler-lovers.

For similar obscure reasons post-war British publishers were reluctant to acknowledge the existence of a German “resistance” with which the author came into contact during his escapades. On his treks through Europe during the course of his three escape attempts, the author posed in turn as Dutchman, New Zealander, Pole, Yugoslav and German. He says that he invariably enlisted the help of the underground and that the chances of success as a loner were remote.

This wartime account shows an extraordinary man with an uncommon nature of courage, tenacity, inventiveness, endurance and luck, a story which will surely endure as one of the great escape

classics of our time.

By coincidence, this review is written during Amnesty International Prisoner of Conscience Week which impels the comment that this book is not just about the adventures of a British prisoner of war. It also gives untarnished glimpses of a totalitarian dictatorship in action. Such regimes are in power to-day in many countries of the world.

HARD TIMES ON THE SOUTH COAST

10 December 1984

THE BITTER YEARS: Wollongong during the Great Depression. By Len Richardson. Hale and Iremonger. Illust. 256 pp. \$29.95

Half a century ago the Great Depression left its mark throughout the industrialised Western world. It was a time of great social and political upheaval and, like other countries, Australia was to suffer from the effects of this severest economic recession of the century.

'The Bitter Years' is a study of the Wollongong labour movement among a population which then consisted of fewer than 40,000 people scattered in settlements along the 25km coastal strip from Dapto to Coalcliff.

A decade earlier, in 1922, D. H. Lawrence, the son of a coalminer, had lived in one such township, Thirroul. Wollongong then had a population of 6,000 and Port Kembla was only "a cluster of houses amidst uncleared farmland".

The coal industry was in difficulties well before the depression struck and unemployment on the coalfields was endemic even then. The reasons why this was so have a familiar ring: development of alternative sources of power, irregular export deliveries and competition from other countries in overseas markets. Coalmining for internal consumption produced "more coal than the country

required”.

Coal had been mined in the area since the turn of the century and unionism in the coal towns was an ingrained part of the local fabric. Similar traditions were absent in newly established “steeltowns” like Port Kembla, where many of the workmen in camps and shanties returned to their families in Sydney for the weekend. It was one reason why migratory labour tended to be regarded by unionists as a threat to the living standards. In turn steelmen often objected to the ‘special treatment given to coalmen and thought this nothing but a ploy to divide the labour movement.’

In those days of pre-Keynesian thinking, few central governments of democratic countries accepted full responsibility for the plight of the unemployed. The expansion of Australian social service provisions for the needy belongs to the post-war era. In the depth of the Great Depression a quarter of all breadwinners in the Wollongong area reported that they had no income at all. Of the remainder, two thirds had an annual income below the then minimum wage of L155 per annum.

Friction arose between the unemployed who had come to the area in search for work and the Wollongong Council which believed that the aid it disbursed should flow only to established residents. There were, of course, many other areas of conflict. Among them a tug-of-war over an issue that is not novel to the Canberra school scene. The railways wanted to hire people with specific skills and abilities while the unions wanted people to be employed in the order they had registered at the Labour Exchange.

A Free Speech Committee was founded and it often clashed with the council’s prohibition of street meetings on late shopping nights in Wollongong’s main street. Soap-box orators regularly wandered into the local lock-up, the committee having placed an embargo on the paying of fines.

This study has many illustrations capturing the timbre of the times. While the limited canvas cannot serve as a microcosm of the Australia-wide situation, there is an attempt to relate Wollongong’s industrial problems to the politics of the Lang government and its successors.

However, it seemed to me that the author could have incorporated with benefit the reminiscences of old-timers. The daily struggle for survival, the deterioration of working conditions and the vicissitudes of crowd dynamics during protest meetings and riots are brought to life through such human touches. I still remember the recollections of one who would turn up at the factory gate early each morning with a half-brick wrapped in newspaper. It masqueraded as his lunch.

VIETNAMESE AMONG US

18 August 1984

THE LONG JOURNEY: Vietnamese Migration and Settlement in Australia. By Nancy Viviani. Melbourne UP. 316 pp. \$26.60

This study about Vietnamese immigration to Australia is not the first book about refugees from Vietnam to have been reviewed in these pages. In view of the recent debate this is a timely work.

Jean Martin, the leading researcher into the role of migrant settlement in Australia, believes that refugees from Vietnam are in a very special situation. While the educated urban Vietnamese share elements of a Western European outlook with many Australians, it is likely that the less-educated rural Vietnamese are more culturally distinct than any other post-war newcomers, including other Asian migrants.

Having once spent some time on the Saigon University teaching staff I was looking forward to reading 'The Long Journey', which sets out to investigate the cause and effect of Vietnamese migration to Australia. This was done, primarily, through a Brisbane survey of 120 Vietnamese heads of households who had arrived in Australia between 1975 and 1979, supplemented by data from other sources.

However, backward-looking conjectures are marred through a somewhat distorted portrayal of French colonial administration

and pre-1975 South Vietnam and the analysis of the information collected is not always without flaws. In addition, there are a good many questionable assertions, such as the first sentence of the first chapter: "It is difficult to explain why people leave their country".

Part three focuses on our own backyard and analyses features connected with the Vietnamese presence in Australia, such as government settlement policy, jobs, money, housing, health, welfare and Vietnamese-Australian social interaction. Peripheral to many of these investigations is the question of future integration:

"It is really too soon to say with any confidence what the integration experience of Vietnamese and Australians is likely to be. The dynamics of ethnic groups over time, shifts in residential patterns, change in social attitudes, occupational distribution and intermarriage are all complicated aspects of integration whose pattern will not become clear in the first generation."

POLEMICS AND UTOPIAN VISIONS COMBINE IN FRIEDMANS' TRACT

TYRANNY OF THE STATUS QUO. By Milton and Rose Friedman. Secker and Warburg. 182 pp. \$14.95.

Chicago School economist Milton Friedman, who once warned that There-Is-No-Such-Thing-as-a-Free-Lunch, joined forces with his wife some years ago to write the bestseller 'Free To Choose'. They have followed up this popular success with another salvo, 'Tyranny of the Status Quo'.

The title refers to the common phenomenon of government abandoning meaningful attempts at legislative reform not long after elevation to office. This is shown to have been so not only in the United States but also in other countries such as Britain, France, and West Germany. There are "windows" of six months in which major changes can be achieved. But once the post-victory bonhomie has evaporated, politicians prefer not to upset the electorate, and

opt for a comfortable status quo.

As the cacophony of pressure groups displaces the hallelujahs, our legislators, unwilling to impose the additional taxes required to procure at least some of the cargo, are tempted to resort to the practice of “deficit financing”. This enables them to “vote for expenditures that their constituents want without having to vote taxes to pay for them.” Thus, the government obtains funds that would otherwise be available for building houses... or machines,” but it will need to meet additional interest charges and must eventually repay the loan. Naturally, the benefits to the recipients are emphasised. The cost to taxpayers is not.

The general case against government activity in the economic affairs of the country is bolstered by the indisputable fact that public servants spend money which is not theirs but other people’s. In addition, there are no financial mechanisms to gauge questionable or unsuccessful experimentation and practices. A government organisation can simply ask for more funds and carry on its business.

These are respectable and respected conservative sentiments. They are probably in the mainstream of the American tradition which reflects Jefferson’s view that that government is best that governs least. They strike a sympathetic chord in the heart of many who believe that not only should the government have no say in the bedrooms of the nation, but that its involvement in the affairs of our businesses, workshops and factories soaks up energy, time and wealth that ought to be devoted to more productive goals.

It is only when the Friedmans proceed to push their doctrines beyond the realm of the possible that they are in danger of looking like reformists fated to join a long line of fellow utopians.

More’s Utopia consisted of an imaginary realm where pure reason ruled. Fourier had visions of societies where all appetites were sated. Owen’s New Harmony was based on selfless co-operation. Marx spent his life working for a worker-controlled dreamland where goods flow to each according to his need. The Friedmans seem to be captivated by a vision that is a kind of idealised 19th century American laissez faire model freewheeling within a frame

of conditions that – so a fellow economist once remarked – would appear to work only in heaven.

Thus, the authors bemoan the ever-increasing spiral of government spending by showing that the proportion of national income expenditure on “health, education and welfare” has risen 233 times, as a proportion of national income, since the turn of the century; that is, from .06 per cent to 14 per cent. But even a political scientist “to the right of Genghis Khan” would balk at the very thought of turning this particular clock back. It is not an outstandingly successful illustration of government profligacy.

There are a number of similar question-begging exhortations. Milton Friedman once calculated that “the total time spent on preparing personal tax returns amounted to the horrendous total of 300 million man hours” and thought of cars, schools and industries that could be built by a hypothetical workforce of 150,000 people over a period of one year. The point is well made but the message is unclear. Could one seriously agree that the underdeveloped countries to the north of Australia which lack the means and know-how to collect income tax from the citizens have a good thing going?

This pithy volume of polemics is addressed to the lay reader. It provides much food for thought with occasional lashings of some excellent social science fiction.

A ‘RADICAL’ ON THE BENCH

18 February

H. B. HIGGINS: THE REBEL AS JUDGE. By John Richard. Allen & Unwin. 350 pp. \$29.95.

Henry Bournes Higgins, the “rebel” of this biography, became prominent at the 1897-98 Federal Convention when, as an inexperienced politician from Victoria, he forcefully put his views in the company of colonial luminaries like Deakin, Barton, Kingston,

Turner and Isaacs. His chief claim to fame in Australian history, however, rests on his work as president of the Commonwealth Arbitration Court.

It was Higgins who first introduced the concept of the basic wage in his 1907 "Harvester Judgement", in which he stipulated the minimum wage as being a wage that was "fair and reasonable", satisfying "the normal needs of the average employee regarded as a human being living in a civilized community", necessary for a "family of about five".

In Higgins's day most breadwinners were men and his award became a male minimum. At the time he was challenged by Mary Gilmore who believed, with Plato, that the family should be maintained by the state. Higgins's rejoinder was that he had no right to assume that the state would adopt Plato's theories". In later years the Harvester award turned out to be an obstacle in the fight for equal pay, but the reforms of one epoch cannot be measured with the yardstick of another.

"Henry Higgins" has a familiar ring. More people will associate the name with Eliza Doolittle's elocution teacher than with Henry Higgins of Melbourne, Victoria. Indeed, Australian High Court Judge Higgins and George Bernard Shaw were contemporaries at a Wesleyan school in Dublin. But when Higgins wrote to G.B.S after the publication of 'Pygmalion', reminding the latter of this, the great playwright replied that he could not remember him, adding "I certainly did not call the hero of 'Pygmalion' after you".

The young Higgins arrived in Melbourne about a decade after the gold rushes had come to a halt. The youth went job hunting but employers of the colony were making "the perennial complaints about the unsuitability of a classical education for commercial careers" and his success at the Wesleyan School was of no account in the antipodes. It seems he was, in today's parlance, overqualified.

He accepted advice "to go for the educational" for "nothing pays so well in the colony". In those days of on-the-job teacher-training he successfully applied for a position as a "junior teacher" and within a year gained his teacher's certificate and matriculation. He enrolled as a law student at Melbourne University and was a

foundation member of its debating society. Topics debated over 100 years ago have a familiar ring: democracy, immigration, capital punishment, the status of the university...

After graduation Higgins established a reputation as a successful barrister. It was the time of the introduction of the Irish Home Rule Bills in the British Parliament. Higgins's commitment to Irish home rule may have caused his being black-balled for membership of the Melbourne Club but his stance probably helped to attract the Catholic vote when he became interested in politics. He entered the Victorian Parliament as a Member for Geelong, the home town of his wife Mary Alice, sister of "Chinese" Morrison.

It was then that Higgins took a closer look at the social problems which were to engage his interest for the rest of his life. He grasped the implication for Australia of the arrival of the modern industrial society and perceived that interdependence and a measure of centralization were part and parcel of the new era.

In 1897 Higgins was elected as one of Victoria's 10 delegates to the Federal Convention and thus he became "a politician with a future". During the federation debates he was usually inclined to argue for greater Commonwealth involvement but was frustrated in his attempt to gain federal control of all railways, "the arteries of our continent".

In the Victorian Parliament he had the reputation of a maverick and a pusher of lost causes. His opposition to a bill authorizing the dispatch of troops to South Africa finally caused him to lose his Geelong seat and ended his career as a Victorian politician. However, his image as a radical led to his becoming Federal Member for North Melbourne, and when the first Labour Government came to office under Watson, Higgins became Attorney-General, the only non-Labor member of government. While he accepted Labor policy, he would not join the Labor Party. Eventually he was appointed to the High Court bench and to the presidency of the Arbitration Court.

Higgins found much pleasure in intellectual endeavors. He loved the classics and "amused himself" translating Aeschylus's 'Prometheus Bound'. He travelled widely and initiated personal contacts with his professional peers abroad, including some of the

Fabians in Britain.

Higgins appreciated poetry and in 1904 subscribed £1,000 for a scholarship for the study of poetry at Melbourne University. He had a link with the Melbourne literary scene through his niece, Nettie Palmer, and carries primary responsibility for the establishment of a federal fund which, as the Commonwealth Literary Fund, “became the first systematic... venture into government subsidy of the arts”.

This biography depicts a man who was never afraid to voice a view that turned out to be “a minority of one”. As a politician he was neither a wheeler-dealer nor a numbers man. No great believer himself in institutionalized Christianity - his father was a devout Wesleyan and his wife had been brought up a Presbyterian — other family members became Baptists, Quakers and Christian Scientists.

It was Australia’s fortune to have had a man like H.B. Higgins at the head of the newly established Arbitration Court. It was Higgins’s fortune to have lived and worked in a vibrant, developing society where a single legislator could still become a significant factor in the shaping of a pliable community. Higgins may have been a big fish in a very small pool, but to this day, as Rickard remarks, the arbitration system “remains... a curious part of the institutional framework of Australian society... few seem entirely happy with it but even fewer would risk dismantling it altogether”.

Someone once said that good biographies are written by artists who are under oath. A rigorously accurate account of a person’s life is impossible to achieve. But the writer’s creation, incomplete and shadowy though it might be, should be quite close to the original subject. One has the strong feeling that this notion is very appropriate here.

This absorbing biography avoids the pitfalls of hero-worship under cover of “*de mortuis nil nisi bonum*” but does not use the popularizing approach of biographers such as Andre Maurois, Emil Ludwig and Hesketh Pearson. Rickard does not invent motives or create passions. He introduces his elements of conflict and suspense from the material available to him and lets the record speak for itself.

MYTHS AND REALITIES OF THE EUREKA REBELLION

EUREKA. By John Molony. Viking. 272 pp. \$24.95

MEN WHO BUILT THE SNOWY. By van Kopal. 190 pp. \$8.00

THIS is not the first account of the Eureka Stockade and it won't be the last but it may well be the most thorough investigations to date of the events surrounding the Ballarat miners' revolt. The wealth, range and diversity of surviving source material is phenomenal. It seems that the analysis and correlation of all this information is a never-ending process as more and more documentation comes to light.

One must admit to a twinge of sympathy for the villain of the piece, Governor Hotham. Arriving in Melbourne as he did, three years after the Victorian gold rush began, he had been bequeathed a "veritable sonata of disorder". Having been a naval officer all his life, Australia was the last place he had wanted to be posted. The Colonial Office in London had selected him to balance the budget of the new colony. He discovered Victoria to be close to bankruptcy.

Hotham was not blessed with the advantage of hindsight as we are. For 60 years the one-time penal colonies had been administered on reasonably orthodox lines but now the ideas generated in the French revolution had made fresh inroads into the thinking of the old world. In Britain the Chartists pressed for reforms. In France, Germany and Italy the 1848 revolutions were crushed and the defeated had to flee their native soil. Uprisings continued to erupt in Ireland.

The 1851 gold discoveries in Australia were the cause not only of a population explosion – it is said that the population trebled in ten years – but they also brought a new kind of immigrant. Self-confident and spirited, the new arrivals poured in not only from Britain and the Continent but also from California and China. They were not usually penniless: the ordinary working man did not have at his disposal a sum of money as substantial as the cost of a

passage to Australia.

Thus, the miners' leaders at the Ballarat diggings were no ignorant hot heads. Lalor's father was a member of the House of Commons. Raffaello Carboni had literary ambitions. Vern claimed training in military strategy. Humffrey had been articled to a solicitor in Wales and Kennedy was a Scottish Chartist and preacher.

Hotham had been advised of the discontent on the gold fields. There were reports about American diggers preparing to bring "Liberty and Republicanism" to the citizen of Australia. Also, though not mentioned in this account, one would expect that the memory of Governor Bligh's overthrow during the Rum Rebellion would have been in the minds of many an old-timer in the colony.

When Hotham visited Ballarat on a familiarization tour he was well received and there is on record a speech which expresses his belief that "all power proceeds from the people". This is quite a remarkable sentiment from a mid-19th century governor reared since childhood in the rigid naval traditions of his day.

The miners' stand at Eureka was the outcome of a chain of events for which the author assigns primary blame to Governor Hotham as "chief architect".

It is fascinating and compelling story, a milestone in Australia's evolution from colony to independence. Public sympathy was with the miners. No jury would convict any of the diggers for treason and speedy reforms followed the Eureka debacle.

In the course of the last chapter, having spent time, effort and skill separating the facts from the mush and slush of fancy and myth, Molony reconsigns it whence it has lain for so long.

"So it was that Eureka and its meaning went out from Ballarat to be carried onto other goldfields and thence to movements and men and women and children at other towns and places. The earliest diggers on the fields, that old nomad tribe who wandered from rush to rush, carried with them a heritage from a convict past. It was a legend of mateship.

ADVERSITIES AND JOYS

1 June 1985

FROM PEKING TO PERTH. By Alice Briggs. Artlook Books. Illustr. 159 pp. \$24.95.

THE dustcover of this autobiography by a former internee of the Japanese promises to “dispel the image of the Japanese as cruel captors” and so foster a “better understanding between nations”.

Primarily, however, this is the story of four score years of an Englishwoman’s life from birth in Peking to retirement in Western Australia. Her account of three-and-a-half years’ captivity in Hong Kong is but an episode compressed into a couple of dozen pages.

Once one accepts the general shortage of food and the primitive living conditions as a sine qua non of such wartime imprisonment, it is evident from Alice Briggs’ account that the Japanese treated her correctly.

But there is much more to tell. The author, having lived a long life on three continents, has actually done what many oldies threaten to do “one day” — she has “written a book” about her life. It makes good reading, contributes to a better understanding of the people around us, adds to the store of knowledge of our times, and shows how one woman, caught up in the vicissitudes of peace and war, dealt with disaster.

FARCE IN ALBANIA

18 May 1985

THE GREAT BETRAYAL. *The Untold Story of Kim Philby’s Biggest Coup.* By Nicholas Bethell. Hodder and Stoughton. Illustr. 214 pp. \$29.95

‘THIS GREAT BETRAYAL’ deals with a little-known sequence of

post-war events. It is the story of a small-scale military operation against the late Enver Hoxha's Albania, a minor saga of courage and incompetence, daring and foolhardiness.

In 1949, what happened in a small, backward, rural country in the Balkans was of no great concern to the news media. It was the year when the Chinese Communist Republic, the Republic of Eire, West Germany, East Germany, Israel, Jordan and Vietnam came into being. George Orwell published his 'Nineteen Eighty-Four' and Arthur Miller's 'Death of a Salesman' made its debut. South Pacific' supplied the record companies with a clutch of hits and stage nurses in cities all over the Western world washed that man right out of their hair.

It was also Cold War time. Among the warriors the prevailing wisdom had it that the "smallest and weakest link in the Soviet block" would be the most vulnerable and that through a successful intrusion of an anti-Communist Albanian force Stalin would be "punished" for his destruction of Czechoslovakian democracy and his attempt to starve West Berlin.

The Albanian landings failed miserably. The title blurb, "the untold story of Kim Philby's biggest coup", sound sales promotion though it may be, is factual balderdash. While Philby undoubtedly did immeasurable damage to the Western democracies, his Albanian betrayal would have yielded comparatively insignificant returns to his Soviet masters. Bethell's researches show that, Philby or not, the Albanian operation was bound to founder because of half-hearted planning, slapdash security, and an abysmal ignorance of the real conditions in that country.

Was it Churchill who said that success has many fathers and failure is an orphan? Bethell located the one-time minders of this particular orphan and through them and Albanian survivors, pieced together a thrilling account of the lead-up to this up-beat, 'Guns of Navarrone' – type exploits with its sad, 'River Kwai' finis.

FACES OF THE NEW AUSTRALIA

18 May 1985

AUSTRALIANS TODAY. By Sozanne Faulkner and Lorie Graham. Allen and Unwin. Illust. 160 pp. \$29.95.

This outsize volume is a visual presentation of a segment of the Australian migrant population with which the ACT resident normally has little contact. But this coffee-table production of colour prints, a series of selective spotlights on the multi-faceted mosaic that is the Australian population today, is also much more than that.

The outstanding commentary can stand on its own. In straightforward, unconvoluted language, the authors introduce the problems of the Aborigines, the one-time difficulties of the Irish Catholic and Scots, the conflict with Chinese and Southern Europeans, and the isolated riots and upheavals in Kalgoorlie, North Queensland, and the Murrumbidgee area.

While in 1947 only 2 per cent of the people in Australia had been born outside Australia and English - speaking countries, the 1981 Census has shown that this percentage has now grown to 15 per cent. The major non-British countries of origin were Italy, Yugoslavia, Greece, Germany, Holland, in that order.

Of late refugees from more diverse cultural backgrounds have arrived. They are not only those from Indo-China, but also Rumanians and Egyptian Jews, Afghans and Greek Cypriots, Anglo Burmese and China-born Russians, Ugandan Asians and Timorese. These days about 2 1/2 per cent of our population was born in Asia.

Since the 1970s a new word, "multiculturalism", has entered our language. It is described here as a type of society in which "culturally diverse groups interact and share a commitment to social and national ideals". This volume depicts newcomers, particularly those from Mediterranean and non-Western countries, at work and play. It is a fitting contribution to the ideal of multiculturalism.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF GYPSY ROSE LEE

17 August 1985

GYPSY AND ME. By Eric Lee Preminger. Andre Deutsch. Illust. 277pp \$26.50.

'Gypsy and Me' is an account by stripper Gypsy Rose Lee's son Erik of life with Mother, the great sex object of American show-biz. His story opens as he and Gypsy return from a European and Australian tour and she decides to give burlesque theatre away after 27 years on the road. In his late teens, six years later, Erik discovers the identity of his "biological" father — film director Otto Preminger, who adopted him after Gypsy's death many years later. During her lifetime Gypsy had not been prepared to acknowledge publicly the illegitimacy of her son.

Erik is obviously a receptive and level-headed interpreter of moods and situations. Neither misty-eyed nor accusatory, he brings into sharp focus not only the many faces of Gypsy but also the stresses and strains of a one-parent family. There are the perpetual squabbles about money. There are the common obsessions of an American boy, "getting wheels and getting laid", and the conflict with Mother's own precepts of conduct for one still under-age for either activity.

Gypsy was a tough businesswoman who, like many children of the Depression, was always afraid of going broke. While earning \$10,000 a week at Las Vegas she would cook for the family in her hotel room because of the "outrageous" cost of room service. The vases in her house contained leaves, flowers being "too expensive". On the other hand, she could splurge \$17,000 on a Rolls Royce in the 1950s. .

Hitting New York as an unknown stripper, she had made a name for herself by getting Walter Winchell on side. His column, in those Damon Runyon days, "could make or break, star or newcomer". But she also had literary gifts. A "recluse at heart" throughout her life, she much enjoyed in later years the occasional social contact with the artists and literati of her day, occasioned by the publication

of her autobiography and other books. It is likely that Max Ernst, Christopher Isherwood and Erich Maria Remarque would have concurred with Erik's assessment of his mother as a woman of "taste, intelligence and style".

Gypsy had been married and divorced three times. Throughout the first 18 years of Erik's life he believed her second husband, Bill, to be his father. She had married him on the rebound from Mike Todd during the war years. Erik's description of their wedding night is hilarious. Julio, her last and favourite ex-husband was Spanish-born painter who loved wine, women and song. As his step-son Erik was still of preschool age, he sent him water-colour sketches in lieu of letters.

During the period Erik chronicles, Billy Rose entered Gypsy's life and proposed marriage. He was a multi-millionaire producer, investor and songwriter — for this reviewer, Rose's 'It's Only a Paper Moon' is inextricably linked with Tennessee William's 'Streetcar'. Gypsy declined, Erik, with whom she had discussed the matter, put it thus:

"She probably would have been bored as his wife ... sex was not one of her driving passions... she had very few affairs in her life and none whatever after her divorce from Julio ..."

She was not prepared to sacrifice her independence for financial security, after all.

At a more practical level, this biography teems with "how to..." hints: how to engineer the procurement of an illegal driving licence... how to liberate heavy pewter ashtrays from small restaurants... how to respond to a repartee that can't be topped... how to fashion an amusing Christmas present for a homosexual of the opposite sex... how to break a contract and still get paid.

In sum, this honest story is an interesting biography which prompts one to rephrase an entirely suitable maxim by observing that one can't always judge people by their profession.

MORE TALES OF EXILE THAN OF HOPE

28 September 1985

JOSEPH'S COAT. An Anthology of Multicultural Writing. Ed. By Peter Skrzynecki. Hale & Iremonger. 224pp \$9.95.

'Joseph's Coat' is an anthology of multicultural writing. However, with the only acceptable contributors having a "basic language other than English", a major segment of multiculturalism is missing. The contributors' own origins range over a wide spectrum of geography and culture and the degree of diversity has obviously been a factor in the criteria for selection of material submitted. Indeed, the four-page authors' biographical notes are among the most interesting pages of the anthology.

Unfortunately, selection on the basis of some pattern of non-literary discrimination, positive or negative, will always lower standards. Here it results in a very uneven literary product. There is the use of faulty vernacular. There are inane observations: "It takes more than a good one-night stand to form relationships of half the stability of your now defunct marriage". There is marital dialogue that, translated into English, sounds like an extract from a Norse fairytale: "a dirty black snake can eat the two of you". There are unreal encounters: "Roger Smith, head of the Department of Immigration looked at the reports on his desk... The opening door disturbed his unpleasant reverie. The Prime Minister entered. He carried a batch of newspaper under his arm, and threw them on the table.

Did you read the papers, Roger?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Well?'

'I have everything available on the move. The Police Chief asked for the full co-operation of the civilian population...''

There are of course poems and stories that make good reading and I enjoyed those of Walter Adamson, Silvana Gardner, Angelo

Loukakis, Serge Liberman, David Martin, Liliana Rydzynski. Ania Walwicz and some others. On two occasions, I caught what I thought was a whiff of Gogol and Stefan George.

But the dustcover which proclaims that the Joseph legend is not only a tale of loss and exile but also an account of “hope, courage and reconciliation” turns out to be a promise without substance.

Having read my way through from first page to last, I remember chronicles of a miserable passage on the migrant ship Fairsea, a 30 year-old recollection of a tortured lizard writhing in the dust, an unhappy student in a Bonegilla English class, the ruminations of a lonely bisexual art critic, a Woolloomooloo childhood of “hate, isolation, duplicity and defensiveness”, repeat servings of nostalgia, fear, bewilderment, bitterness, mistrust, terror, unhappiness. If there was any hope, courage and reconciliation, I must have blinked in the wrong places.

I once stopped ashore myself as a penniless, parentless teenage migrant, but the landscape described between the soft covers of this anthology is not particularly recognizable to me. There must be people who like to look at everything through a glass darkly but, personally, I would say “include me out”.

CONVICTS AND FREE SETTLERS

9 November 1985

A PLACE OF EXILE. The European Settlement of New South Wales. By David Mackay. Oxford University Press. 127pp \$25.

MEN & WOMEN OF PORT PHILLIP. By Martin Sullivan. Hale & Iremonger. Illust. 320pp. \$14.95.

With the Bicentennial approaching, these two publications are of particular interest.

Mackay has investigated the events leading up to British

colonization of New South Wales. He calls his study a volte face, for he says he has seen the error of his earlier belief that the First Fleet sailed in order to create a bulwark against potential encroachment upon the British empire by other colonial powers. He is now convinced that the sole reason for European settlement at the time was to relieve the pressure on overcrowded British prisons and hulks. This is a more prosaic setting than one which has the convicts as “tools of broader historical forces” serving England’s “temper of the age”.

Following Cook’s Endeavour voyage and the loss of the American colonies, the 1775-90 convict crisis is traced in some detail. A succession of proposals were made to ease pressure on the accommodation of transportees who could not be transported anywhere. Most seem to have had as their primary objective the gainful employment of their promoters. There was one plan to settle American loyalists on the newly discovered southern continent. There was another to mount an expedition for barter in the South Seas. Some of the schemes had no difficulty with the assumption that convicted felons from London would become productive yeomen when they set foot on antipodean shores.

The account effectively ends with the dispatch of the First Fleet. It is quite evident that this event, hastily mounted and culminating, as it did, from a series of squabbles, indecisions and prevarications was not a model of diligent long- range planning.

Sullivan turns a spotlight on the very early days of the Port Phillip settlement. After 50 difficult years of colonisation, some enterprising free settlers found their way to the Yarra and began to inhabit what was then the Southern District of NSW.

His focus is on the lives of ordinary men and women rather than on British government aims and plans. He is concerned with the “class struggle”. In the Port Phillip District the relations between men and women arose out of an economic mode of production and their exchange and distribution of produce”.

There were a few convicts in that part of the colony who worked out the remainder of their sentences for private employers or on assignment to government projects but most of the people who

drifted to the Port Phillip area were free settlers. As a consequence, the small population felt that it was not really a penal colony. This, as well as the great distance from the administrative centre in Sydney, and the desire to control its own revenues, provided the initial impetus for separatist agitation.

An increasing population forced the pace of government, whose representatives voiced the view that it was not possible to confine the wool-growers of NSW to any particular area any more than it was possible "to confine the Arabs of the Desert within a circle traced upon their sands". Very soon the first land sales were held and there was soon a shortage of labour. A proposal to introduce Indian labour was rejected as being a sacrifice to "temporary expediency". To attract migrants from Britain, monies received from the sale of land in the colony were used to assist migration. Very soon migration from Britain was entirely free.

The author's stance and perspective are mirrored in his text: "Elsewhere in the continent colonial administrators had supported the development of private property... the structure of capitalist economy had been formed by the time La Trobe arrived... other policies bolstered the institution of private property...". He explains that when the capitalists discovered that the state was not at "their beck and call", they "sought control by other means and they fostered churches, schools, newspapers and mechanics' institutes ..."

If I cannot always see eye-to-eye with Sullivan's thesis, it is still by and large an interesting interpretation by a Monash University historian.

THE POLITICAL CAREER OF A PRACTICAL PROGRESSIVE

17 November 1985

HELMUT SCHMIDT. HELMSMAN OF GERMANY.

By Jonathan Carr. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. 208pp

\$34.95.

As West German Chancellor, Helmut Schmidt led the Social Democrat-Free Democrat coalition for more than eight years, and for an observer of contemporary Australian politics many aspects of his skirmishes in that office have a familiar ring.

He believed that his party could not yield ground to noisy pressure from the radical young and expect continued popular support at the polls. He defended party moderates against “dreamers and fanatics” and those who, in his view, “allowed themselves to be conned into believing that the Americans are our enemies”.

Schmidt’s membership of the Bundestag, the lower house of the Federal Parliament, dates back to 1952. Returning to his native Hamburg after the war from a British prisoner-of-war camp, he graduated in economics and became “good value” as a speaker at functions of the Social Democratic Party, the SPD, Germany’s oldest party, which Hitler had banned in 1933. Eventually Schmidt stood for parliament and went to Bonn.

There he soon became opposition spokesman in matters of defence, hitherto an area traditionally regarded with extreme distaste by SPD luminaries. In the fullness of time he became Defence Minister and today the conscripts of the Bundeswehr are permitted long hair and beards. To jibes about his “German Hair Force” he replied that what mattered was what went on inside a man’s skull and not what was on top of it.

When Schmidt came to the Bundestag, the SPD was not making any headway against the Adenauer-Erhard team. The SPD slogans had become obsolete. A special party conference amended the party platform, dropping all references to Marxist terminology.

The “workers’ party” became a “people’s party” with a program acceptable to the middle-of-the-road voter.

In 1969 the SPD became the leading government party under Chancellor Brandt, in coalition with Free Democrats. Five years later Schmidt, who had gained valuable experience in a number of portfolios, succeeded Brandt as Chancellor.

He was invited to address the British Labour Party conference. His pro-Common Market sentiments, delivered in idiomatic English, scored heavily with the substantial “anti-marketeer” faction of his audience. Aware of the prevailing Labour Party mood, he defused antagonism by confessing at the beginning of his speech that he felt like someone trying to convince the Salvation Army of the virtues of drink.

At home, Schmidt made it clear that he supported his expenditure-chopping Minister of Finance. West Germany’s success in controlling inflation and minimising unemployment became unique in the industrialised world. Schmidt often emphasised that the improvement in West German productivity had been due primarily to the restraint of trade unions, whose leaders had conducted wage discussions at a high level of economic argument.

It is obvious from Carr’s study that Schmidt’s political activities were complemented by his interest in a number of quite different areas of human endeavour. An accomplished pianist himself, he is also fond of painting and sculpture and arranged a number of major exhibitions at his chancellery. While in government, during discussions on the importance of maintaining world peace, he felt it apt and pertinent to elucidate on Kant’s strategies for effective peace management.

When the SPD lost to Kohl’s CDU after 13 years in power, Schmidt had been Chancellor for over eight years. At his 65th birthday celebrations, the former French President, Valery Giscard d’Estaing, called him “the most esteemed German in the world”.

Carr, Bonn correspondent for a London paper, has done his job well. This is the first full-length biography of Schmidt since he lost government in 1982. As well, not being translated from German, it does not require a knowledge of the ABC of German politics and

makes easy and interesting reading even for the uninitiated.

It struck me that there is nary a mention of large-scale unemployment and the question of what to do with the millions of guest workers in the Federal Republic. It had, apparently, not become a major political, economic and social issue when Carr wrote the book. However, long-term national politics are discussed objectively, among them those concerning the Bundeswehr and the North Atlantic Treaty, Ostpolitik, and the special relationship with East Germany, the Red Army Faction and its terrorist tributaries, , the European Economic Community, and the Common Agricultural Policy.

Although this study does not linger on family life and purely personal relationships, Schmidt emerges unmistakably as one who believes in a greater Europe, one with a common cultural identity to which 'Tolstoy and Chekhov, Chopin and Bartok' belong just as much as 'Dante and Shakespeare, Beethoven and Kant'. He once said that he wanted people to have a more rounded picture of Germany, not just one determined on the one hand by the Jewish persecution as television presents it and on the other hand by armed forces and an efficient economy. This book most certainly makes a very worthwhile contribution towards this aim.

PEOPLES WHO MADE THE NATION

21 March 1986

THE GERMANS IN AUSTRALIA. By Ian Harmstorf and Michael Cigler. 183pp \$13.95.

THE HUNGARIANS IN AUSTRALIA. By Igon F. Kunz. 148pp \$11.95.

THE LEBANESE IN AUSTRALIA. By Andrew and Trevor Batrouney. 136pp \$11.95.

THE POLES IN AUSTRALIA. By Marian Kaluski. 151pp \$11.95.

*Australian Ethnic Heritage Series.
Australasian Educa Press.*

These four books in the Australian Ethnic Heritage Series show how immigrants from four non-British countries have contributed to the social, political, cultural and economic development of Australia.

It is now conceded by sociologists that at the time of Federation the proportion of the population descended from Britons was closer to 94 per cent than the 98 per cent usually given in our history books. But during the first 60 years of settlement nearly everybody hailed from Britain or Ireland.

In the early decades there was of course little attraction for those non-British people who could afford the fare to seek a new life in the comparatively primitive conditions of an unexplored continent faraway. The very poor who might well have been interested in such an undertaking had probably never heard of Australia. In any case, the cost of moving there would have been beyond their wildest dreams.

It was not until the time when gold discoveries followed on the heels of the '48 revolutions in Europe that the first "displaced persons" arrived. Like many of those who were to come as the result of Calwell's new immigration philosophy 100 years later,

these mid-19th-century arrivals were quite often middle-class immigrants who had been uprooted by war and social upheavals and preferred not to return to their homelands.

These four studies, written in a breezy, non-academic style, contain much information that is new even for readers who fancy themselves to be reasonably well-informed. How many are aware that Captain Phillip's father was German, that a decade before the Victorian gold discoveries Strzelecki found gold before climbing and naming Mount Kosciuszko, that the first arrivals from the area that is now Lebanon thought they had "set foot on American soil", and that as long ago as 1850s there were "assisted passages" for Hungarian refugees?

Not noticeable within the pages of these volumes are some features that could bear mention within the context of any immigration history. There would be few countries in the world that could equal the volume of state-sponsored assistance provided by Australia to newcomers, both upon arrival and before naturalization. Surely the comparatively harmonious existence in this country of so many immigrants from all corners of the Earth is the direct result of bipartisan post-war government efforts, particularly in the provision of free English tuition.

For over 200 years the "pull factor" has drawn people to the Americas and the other new worlds of the one-time British colonies. Of these, Australia was the furthest away and the least settled. It is "push factors" such as revolutions, poor economic conditions, racial and religious intolerance and the aftermath of the war which have been the cause of the influx of migrants from Continental Europe during the first three-quarters of this century. These factors now operate in South-East Asia rather than in Europe, where emigration has slowed to a trickle.

The ethnicity of permanent arrivals is available from immigration records based on place of birth. This may be a reasonable guide for purposes of statistics but the scientific determination of ethnicity (whatever that may mean — different dictionaries give different definitions) has always been somewhat of a conundrum. Marian Kaluski puts it succinctly:

“The people born in Poland who settled in Australia from the 1830s have been people of several ethnic origins. The Commonwealth of Poland was a vast country covering not only Polish land but also the territory of the present-day: Lithuania, Latvia, Byelorussia, Ukraine and Slovakia. The country developed into a cosmopolitan empire containing not only Poles, Lithuanians, Byelorussians, Ukrainians and Slovaks, but also large numbers of Jews, Germans, Walachians, Tartars, Armenians, Karaites, Italians, Flemings, Scots (thousands of Scots fled to Poland to escape English rule) and Greeks...”

What Kaluski says about people from Poland applies equally well to migrants from Lebanon, Germany and Hungary. Superimposed on ethnicity are important attributes like language as well as cultural and educational background which may make categorisation a thankless task. Albert Einstein is likely to be remembered as Swiss in Switzerland, German in Germany, American in the United States and Jewish in Israel.

The studies of this four-in-hand are all equally worthy but if there is a *primus inter pares* I would award the honour to ‘The Hungarians in Australia’, quite obviously the product of life-long research and expertise. The author’s deliniation of each Hungarian immigration wave during the past 50 years is novel and concise and he discusses many other facets of our multicultural society with insight and understanding.

These books are good value and deserve to be on the shelves of secondary school libraries.

THE CASE FOR BOMBING JAPAN

5 April 1986

MIRACLE OF DELIVERANCE. The Case for the Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. By Stephen Harper. Sidgwick & Jackson. 224pp \$26.95.

After victory in Europe in May, 1945, the Allies were able to turn their full attention to Japan. Final victory was not in doubt but the prospects were gloomy. The Japanese military counted on inflicting a million casualties on the invader. They called for the sacrifice of ten million of their people. President Truman was “numbed” by the calculations of his advisors: The possibility of half-a-million American dead before the collapse of organised Japanese resistance expected to occur until late in 1946. He was also warned that “no ceiling” could be put on American losses during years of guerilla warfare likely to occur after military collapse.

The title ‘Miracle of Deliverance’ is drawn from a remark of Churchill’s in the last volume of his ‘The Second World War’, in which he expresses his relief at the “merciful abridgement of the slaughter in the East”. He was attending the Potsdam Conference, not far from the ruins of Berlin, when he was informed of the first atomic test explosion. Stephen Harper’s factual study supports Churchill’s view and agrees that the two bombs were to save many more lives than they destroyed.

Harper illustrates that the Japanese call for sacrifice was no idle threat. When the tide of war turned against them, suicidal operations became a formal military tactic. If ordered to do so, Japanese soldiers fought until they were killed. Japanese officers had the power to order suicidal charges. Medals for bravery were not awarded to the member of the armed services. It was assumed that all were equally courageous.

On Iwo Jima the Americans lost a third of their assault force. 21,900 Japanese bodies were counted after victory. A mere 876 were captured alive. On Okinawa the attacking force suffered similar losses. Truman expressed the hope that his military planners would

be able to avoid “an Okinawa from one end of Japan to the other”. In the last naval action of the war, the battle of the East China Sea, nearly all the damage to the American fleet was caused by kamikaze air attacks.

In the light of this, and the fact that the world was in its sixth year of war, with over 30 million dead and hundreds of cities destroyed, the decision to use the two atom bombs on Japanese cities was therefore hardly surprising. There were a number of scientists, Einstein among them, who opposed such action. But American Secretary of War Stimson’s argument was conclusive: “Nothing would be more damaging to our effort to obtain surrender than a warning or a demonstration followed by a dud — and that is a real possibility. Furthermore we have no bombs to waste, and it is vital that a sufficient effect be obtained quickly with the few we have.”

Stimson believed that there would be no genuine surrender unless the Emperor and his advisors were administered a tremendous shock which would carry convincing proof of America’s power to destroy Japan. “Such an effective shock”, he declared, “would save many times the number of lives, both American and Japanese, that it would cost.

It is an argument that is not refuted easily even with 40 year historical perspective. Indeed, during a Canberra address some years ago the redoubtable Petra Kelly, one of the leaders of the Green Party in the West German parliament, had no conclusive reply to the question asked by a member of the audience: did the possession and use of the two bombs against Japan shorten the war and save lives or not?

The book’s subtitle, “The Case for the Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki”, spells out its brief in a nutshell. I suspect there is another side to the coin but to this reviewer at least, Harper’s is a strong case worthy of inclusion in any peace studies kit.

TRUMAN: NEAR-GREAT PRESIDENT

24 May 1986

TRUMAN. By Roy Jenkins. Collins. Illust. 230pp \$35.00.

When Roosevelt died during his fourth term of office, Vice-President Truman succeeded him as president. Truman did not expect to go down in history as having been in the same league as his distinguished predecessor. He wrote to his daughter, "your dad will never be great". But "Truman has been rated by American historians as being among the "near greats" of American presidents, and Roy Jenkins's excellent biography illustrates very graphically why this is so.

Truman was no unlettered backwoodsman. He never went to college but he had been a bookworm all through his boyhood. According to Jenkins, "he was at least as well read in history and biography as was Roosevelt" and as president he was 'mostly better briefed'. When Roosevelt died and Ambassador Herriman rushed to Washington, he was greatly relieved to discover that Truman had read all his cables.

When Truman's haberdashery business began to fail after World War I he did not want to return to the family farm. There was an opening in local politics, a member of the Pendergast family had been a fellow officer in France with him, and he received the backing of the Pendergast Democratic Party machine in his area to nominate for election as county judge. Seeking support from the American Legion, the rural community and the Masons, he also enlisted friends among minority groups. He had contacts among the Irish Catholics who had served under him during the war; his partner in the clothing store was a Jew; and his family had a reputation for fairness when dealing with blacks. He got the job and 10 years later he won the nomination and election as Senator for Missouri.

In Washington he became chairman of a sub-committee to investigate railroad finances of such companies as the Missouri Pacific and he impressed his staff by his determination to resist home State pressures. He believed in the Burkean principle of

voting according to one's conscience and for the good of the country rather than voting to placate majority views of the home electorate. At the same time he saw nothing wrong with the jobs-for-the-boys principle when approached by the home State party organization.

In later life Truman considered his second Senate nomination in 1939 to have been a greater miracle than his surprise win against Dewey in the presidential stakes nearly a decade later. With Penderpast in jail, the Democratic machine had fallen apart. But a few lucky breaks came his way and he squeaked in again. All this occurred in May, June, July 1940, an insignificant event if set against the sweep of war in the western world. Still, within the wider scope of history, Truman's return to Washington certainly affected the post-World War II world.

During Truman's second term his work as chairman of the Special Committee to Investigate the National Defense Program served to bring him national prominence and paved the way for his vice-presidential nomination four years later. Jenkins's view is that Truman's presence during the presidential campaign neither helped nor hindered Roosevelt's re-election at the time. The likelihood of Roosevelt never finishing his fourth term was not grasped by the voting public.

When Truman became president he asked Roosevelt's Cabinet members to stay in office. However, the American Cabinet hardly ever meets for collective discussion. Lincoln's opinion that the president's vote is worth more than all other Cabinet votes put together seems to have survived as a well-remembered aphorism.

Among a host of ongoing business — like other vice-presidents before him he had not been part of the decision-making process — Truman inherited a number of financial initiatives such as the Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the International Monetary Fund. No economic theorist himself, a story has it that when faced with the usual economic advice "On the one hand and on the other" he appealed for a one-armed economist.

For a year after the war Truman's popularity slumped and the Republicans gained control of both chambers. It was to-err-is-Truman joke time. Some of his problems were perhaps inevitable

in the post-war climate of industrial unrest but many were self-inflicted. After the electoral midterm disaster he wrote to his mother "From now on I'm going to do as I please and let'em all go to hell... at least for two years they can do nothing to me and after that it doesn't matter". Before long his Gallup Poll improved.

With Britain giving notice that she was discontinuing aid to Greece and Turkey, Truman was able to convince Congress that it was in the American interest to pick up the tab. Jenkins believes that Truman's sentence at the time, "I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempts of subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressure", can be "regarded as one of the four or five most decisive in American history."

"Viewed favourably", he writes, "it proclaimed several decades of the Pax Americana. Viewed unfavourably, it set the country on the course to the decade of Vietnam. Viewed neutrally, it achieved its purpose."

It was the time when the groundwork for the Marshall Plan was laid. It was also the period of the Berlin airlift, the implementation of the Truman Doctrine and the recognition of Israel. All these issues are discussed with clarity and conviction by an author who, with a Labour background of ministerial duties as Home Secretary, Chancellor of the Exchequer and Minister of Aviation as well as first leader of the newly-created Social Democratic Party, brings a degree of experience and understanding to his subject which is well beyond the literary and academic expertise usually found among political biographers.

Truman's second presidential term was beset with many problems. The Soviet explosion of the atom bomb, the victory of communism in China, the outbreak of the Korean war, the High Court conviction of Alger Hiss, were all precursors of the McCarthy witch-hunts. But they also played midwife to Truman's foreign policy principles, all of which had to be approved by a recalcitrant Congress: support for the United Nations, aid to Western Europe, military assistance to "freedom loving nations", and assistance to the underdeveloped world.

During that time Truman unceremoniously sacked General MacArthur. It was “belated” and “overwhelmingly justified” but none the less, Truman showed that he had the courage of his convictions and took the heat without flinching. Jenkins does not believe that Roosevelt would have done it. When Eisenhower won the presidential elections after many years of Democratic government Truman went into a 20-year long retirement.

Not everybody shares the view that Truman was an outstanding president who would not allow legislators to retreat to the isolationist stance of the post-World War I generation, the successful architect of a policy which barred further Soviet expansion, the creator of NATO and apostle of overseas aid, the battler for a Fair Deal in the face of a hostile Congress. If some regard him as the dropper of the first atomic bombs, the man who started the arms race, ignored the United Nations, threatened the use of the bomb during the Korean crisis and opened the floodgates to inflation, they should read this balanced account by an outstanding biographer.

THE MYSTERY OF FLIGHT KAL 007

August 1986

*KAL FLIGHT 007: The Hidden Story. By Oliver Clubb.
The Permanent Press. 744pp \$29.95.*

This book argues that the Korean Airlines flight 007 shot down by the Soviets in September 1983 with the loss of all 269 persons aboard was on an intelligence mission over the Soviet Union.

The aircraft might have strayed off course, but the thesis is far from being simply fantastic, and Americans should indeed ask whether their leaders are “capable of taking such a gamble with the lives of innocent airline passengers”. They are “ready enough to believe that the Soviets would knowingly shoot down a civilian airliner in cold blood... But is it really conceivable that those who govern our own country are capable of doing what the... account

suggests they did?"

The author has no doubts: "leaders of many countries have shown themselves capable, throughout history, of grossly deceiving themselves about the likely consequences of their decisions; and American leaders have been no exceptions."

With the best of intentions they have miscalculated many times. There was the Korean War decision to cross the 38th parallel which brought the Chinese into active conflict; there was the catastrophic Bay of Pigs invasion, the bombing of North Vietnam, which was expected to induce the North Vietnamese to capitulate, and the badly-planned attempt to rescue the hostages in Tehran.

Oliver Clubb sets the scene by recalling that there had been an earlier intrusion by a KAL airliner into Soviet strategic airspace, in 1978. That aircraft penetrated at least 150 miles into Soviet territory before it was fired upon, finally making an emergency landing with two passengers killed. "Against this background", he says, "it would not have been difficult for American intelligence officers to imagine that a repeat performance could also be pulled off successfully."

But it did not work out that way. 'Evidently' aided and abetted by a nearby U.S. reconnaissance plane, Flight 007 was tracked but not intercepted by the Soviets as it overflew the major Russian submarine base on the Kamchatka peninsula. It was shot down in Soviet airspace over southern Sakhalin, about 400 miles north of where it should have been. The Russians say that it was blacked out, would not reply when challenged, and took evasive action. The American version has it that it was fired at without warning.

I have always been inclined to reject conspiracy theories thrown up by the loonie left or right whenever there is a major or minor mishap anywhere in the world. But in this case, commonsense suggests that it is highly unlikely that a modern airliner equipped with several independent navigation systems and piloted by an experienced crew, could fly so completely off-course for hours on end.

This book canvasses only one side of the question of possible American involvement, but it is a cogent and well-argued account.

POT-POURRI OF PETER'S PRINCIPLES

14 June 1986

WHY THINGS GO WRONG, Or, the Peter Principle Revisited. By Dr Laurence J. Peter. Illust. From Punch. Allen & Unwin. 207pp \$19.95.

This is the 13th book by Dr Laurence J. Peter, discoverer of the Peter Principle. Together with Parkinson's and Murphy's Laws, it has given private enterprise and public administration boffins the motivation and tools for a thorough retune of organisation and methods.

Now it is of course understood by one and all that a man is known by the company that keeps him and that more competent individuals resign than incompetents get fired. But not many are aware of Ade's Law that anyone can win, unless there happens to be a second entry, or of Barnum's Theory which has it that if you can fool all the people some of the time, that's enough.

The Peter Principle has now fathered a clutch of offspring such as the Peter's Competence Principle: the way to avoid mistakes is to gain experience and the way to gain experience is to make mistakes. It is a useful theorem for the Canberra promotion appeal situation.

Also, in the prevailing atmosphere of consensus politics, the following slice of philosophy is noteworthy:

Committees of twenty deliberate plenty,
Committees of ten act now and then,
But most jobs are done by committees of one.

If all this makes Why Things Go Wrong appear like a stitched-together collection of witty left-over quotations and aphorisms, well, it is.

THE SOVIET'S NEW MAN

16 August 1986

GORBACHEV. The path to Power. By Christian Schmidt-Hauer. I. B. Tauris. 218pp \$50.00.

Mikhail Gorbachev was approved General Secretary of the Communist Party last year and became the eighth leader of the Soviet Union. He is in his mid-50s and, under the Soviet system of government, is expected to take his country into the third millennium. Schmidt-Hauer, a journalist who lived in Moscow as a foreign correspondent for many years has written an interesting study of Gorbachev's rise.

Gorbachev comes from the Caucasus. Accounts about his early days are hazy. Too young to have fought in the war, reports have it that he worked as a 12-year-old combine harvester assistant; that the combine harvester driver was his father; that his father died in the war; that he finished school with a "silver medal". There is no doubt however, that he went to Moscow University on a scholarship to study law.

We have descriptions of the young Gorbachev from a Czech contemporary, now living in the West, who studied law with him. According to this one-time architect of the Prague Spring, Gorbachev is "no bigoted fanatic... highly intelligent... with natural authority."

At that time only a very small proportion of Soviet students were allocated to law and it was only in the law faculties that undergraduates were allowed to examine the origins of ideas about the state. Schmidt-Hauer believes that Gorbachev would have studied the thoughts of Machiavelli and Hobbes, Hegel and Rousseau, and that this is one reason why, unlike most of his party colleagues with engineering, science, or economics backgrounds, Gorbachev is able to "move with such an assurance" in the West.

After graduation, Gorbachev's party career began with the Communist Youth organisation in his home province. In his 30s he became responsible for agriculture in the area. To help him with his

administrative duties, he enrolled in a correspondence course and eventually qualified as an agricultural scientist.

Within the local party hierarchy, Gorbachev was able to combine a degree of Moscow sophistication with a real understanding of the needs of the Soviet backblocks. His predecessor, Kulakov, was in far-away Moscow, having risen to become supreme administrator of Soviet agriculture. When Kulakov committed suicide for reasons never adequately explained, the 48 year-old Gorbachev was called to fill the vacant post.

Schmidt-Hauer tells us that, when the question of who called the comparatively unknown provincial to the Kremlin is raised, “the names of two Politbureau members are always mentioned — Suslov and Andropov”. Both came from the Caucasus and knew Gorbachev.

Gorbachev arrived in Moscow four years before the death of Brezhnev, who was followed by old man Andropov, who was followed by old man Chernenko. The book discusses the wheeling and dealing between the factions in the upper echelons of the party before Gorbachev’s election by the Party Central Committee.

We are used to having Gorbachev regarded by the media as the product of a PR exercise. Certainly it would be foolish to fall into the temptation of hailing the new Soviet leader as a “colleague” and “democrat manqué”, as some British Members of Parliament did during Gorbachev’s London visit.

Schmidt-Hauer emphasises that, seen through the Kremlin prism, Gorbachev’s main task does not lie in the sphere of foreign relations. The Soviet Union’s problems are economic rather than political. While decades of Soviet government have eliminated all effective political opposition, the economic malaise has become worse and is no longer swept under the carpet. The Soviet Union has gained superpower status as the result of her high military profile, but the per-capita economic performance of that vast and populous country is one of the lowest in the industrialised world.

Sovietologists cite not only countless examples of organisational shortcomings but also the actual deterioration of social conditions verifiable direct from Soviet data. There has been a decline of

industrial development in quantity and quality to such an extent that, the author tells us, life expectancy dropped from 67 in 1964 to 62 in 1980.

It is evident from this study that if anyone can introduce a measure of market-economy reform in a country where the population is inert after nearly 70 years of centralized planning, and where everyday corruption has become an acceptable way of life, it is Gorbachev.

His career and attitudes are shaped by “three important clues”: “trained as a lawyer and agricultural economist, (he) was influenced by his wife’s sociological inquiries”; (he) “found the courage and the experience to place regional realism above bureaucratic centralism”; and he has allowed “more scope and influence to economists, sociologists and researchers into communal economies”.

A measure of importance attached by the Soviet government to the corruption problem lies in the fact that the present Soviet Foreign Minister, Eduard Ambrosievich Shevardnadze, owes his rise to his successful battle against corruption in his native Georgia.

This is a well-written and highly perceptive interpretation of the rise to power of a Communist with a human face. If one wanted to find fault with Schmidt-Hauer’s study, one would have to observe that the face has no warts whatever. It belongs to a man who emerges as the personification of virtue.

But perhaps such criticism is a little unkind to the author. One cannot research such a book outside the USSR and a Westerner who is “a leading specialist on Soviet and East European affairs” is dependent on the good will of personal contacts. In a closed society like the Soviet Union, such continuing contacts are not possible without the sanction of officialdom. Furthermore, the primary aim of the book was to describe the new leader’s “path to power” rather than the man. In this Schmidt-Hauer succeeds admirably. Besides, he might not have been able to get close enough to Gorbachev to detect any wrinkles.

IT WASN'T MEANT TO BE EASY

IT WASN'T MEANT TO BE EASY: Tamie Fraser in Canberra. By Christina Hindhaugh. Lothian. Illust. 192pp. \$19.95.

Together with Bob Menzies and Billy Hughes, Malcolm Fraser was one of the three longest-serving of the 23 Prime Ministers of Australia. This enjoyable account of Tamie Fraser's Canberra years, written by her sister, contains large chunks of Tamie Fraser's own reminiscences in direct speech, which makes her a co-author in all but name.

I can only think of one wife of a former Australian Prime Minister who has gone into print, but having reread Zara Holt's 'My Life and Harry' for discernable parallels, I could only discover a common observation that neither particularly took to the idea of living in Canberra. This is the natural reaction of many spouses. One recalls that Mrs Chifley never shifted from her home town, Bathurst.

Like the old Parliament House, the Prime Minister's Lodge was originally built as a "temporary residence" in the inter-war period. When the Frasers moved in no new dinner service had been bought since 1927. Many couples will sympathise with a situation that limits the number of dinner guests to the availability of unbroken dinner plates. In any case, if the Prime Minister wanted to host a formal dinner for, say, overseas visitors, he could not invite more than five couples, the maximum number of guests the dining room would seat.

A selection of Tamie Fraser's VIP dinner fiascos makes hilarious reading even though, at the time, they could hardly have been a source of great merriment to the hostess. There are other boo-boos galore. Some have been well-publicised but there are many others that did not reach the press corps.

Political scientists will look in vain for some of the events that made headlines during the Fraser years. Quite apart from November, 1975, the resignations of Ministers Garland, Ellicott, Lynch, Robinson, McKellar, Moore, of Leader in the Senate Withers,

of backbencher Chipp, form no part of the story.

Instead there are Tamie's thoughts on being the target of eggs and tomatoes at election rallies, reflections on the absurdity (albeit necessity) of protocol, a run-down on the menu of a White House Presidential banquet, and notes on What to Wear to a Buckingham Palace dinner.

Now that the Queensland elections are past, it is interesting to note Tamie Fraser's belief that, six years ago, the "dreadful polls" helped the Government to return to power at election time. Her view is that people probably thought "we needed a bit of a kick in the pants" but when "the polls revealed that we might actually lose government ... a lot of people came back to us".

It Wasn't Meant to be Easy shows an organised, down-to-earth, no-nonsense countrywoman who would rather have been down on the farm than up in the seat of power. It cannot have been easy for the author, her sister, to put these experiences together without seeming to be too adoring on the one hand or too deprecating on the other. She has avoided either and produced a book which I would call a good read.

HOW THEY SERVED

THE WHITE MOUSE. By Nancy Wake. Macmillan.

206pp \$9.95. (paper)

WAR IN THE SHADOWS: Bougainville 1944-45. By Peter Medcalf. Australian War Memorial. 115pp \$19.95.

TEN DAYS TO DESTINY. The Battle for Crete. By G. C. Kiriakopolous. Franklin Watts. 408pp \$22.95.

ASSIGNED TO LISTEN. By Olive Renier and Vladimir Rubinstein. BBC External Services. 155pp \$12.95.

It is some measure of the depth of the social and sociological upheaval generated by the Second World War that, two generations

on, publishers are still publishing new books about this six-year struggle.

Nancy Wake, the much-decorated Australian agent with the Maquis, was the “White Mouse” to the Gestapo. Now her war-time memoirs are available in paperback. An intelligent, vivacious, and courageous woman whose luck never ran out, hers is a breathtaking story of war-time resistance that does not always tally with the post-war media image.

She says the Germans were efficient occupiers and clever propagandists who “did not miss a trick”. She is scathing about the French milice, “every bit as brutal... as the Nazis” and praises those French who “faced heavy penalties... even death ... helping Allied airmen”. The gutsy, rough-and-ready prose reflects the no-nonsense personality of the autobiographer.

Peter Medcalf served in Bougainville as a Conundra-trained teenage infantryman. His experiences there underpin the story of an infantry unit fighting the Japanese.

He gives vivid descriptions of small patrols setting ambushes, being ambushed, inflicting and suffering casualties in the jungles of the Pacific island. Troops had to lug up to 40kgs of equipment on their backs through knee-high ooze, thigh-high swamps, over tree roots, tussock and vines. One was always “grasping, gripping, hauling, slipping, grabbing” and wishing away the leaches in one’s boots.

Medcalf’s initial motivation to write this, his first book, came from the interest shown by his daughter’s high school students in Australia’s contribution to the Pacific war. Very little had been written about Bougainville. This story goes a long way towards filling this gap and, in addition, recaptures the social environment of the long and the short and the tall in the racy Australian slang of the day, still relatively uncluttered by American movie idiom.

Kiriakopoulos’s study deals with a 1941 campaign, a mini-Dunkirk for the Allies but a pyrrhic victory for Hitler. The battle for Crete was lost but British, New Zealand, Australian and Greek forces inflicted such heavy losses on the Germans’ elite parachute division that henceforth they fought as infantry and were never

again employed in the role originally assigned to them.

More importantly, this 10-day resistance proved to be yet another spanner in Hitler's Plan Barbarossa, the invasion of the Soviet Union, which had to be postponed from May to June because of the Yugoslav anti-Axis coup, the fighting in Greece, and the delay in the capture of Crete. Hitler impatiently cabled his commanding officer: "France fell in 8 days! Why is Crete still resisting?" Seven months later German troops stalled before Moscow. The question of how much the postponement of the invasion of Russia was responsible for its failure to capture her capital has long been a topic of debate among military historians. For Kiriakopoulos, Crete marks "the end of the beginning".

The author, an American, travelled an estimated 160,000 kilometres researching this book. He interviewed Greek, German and British veterans. It is a pity he did not add a few extra kilometres to his itinerary to visit Australia and New Zealand.

A Canberran is among the contributors to the collection of reminiscences by BBC war-time monitors of foreign radio transmissions, *Assigned to Listen*. The book, available through Heinemann, recalls an unusual aspect of World War II and makes fascinating reading.

Listening to German broadcasts had some concrete benefits. Once a German announcer was heard to say that bombers were just taking off for Britain. A message was flashed to the RAF and a number of German planes were intercepted and shot down.

As the tide of war expanded, so did the demand for monitors with a good knowledge of language and traditions of the many countries embroiled. Part and parcel of the job were the perpetual internal debates about priorities, editing of foreign broadcasts, interpretation of nuances and highlighting particular items, giving rise to in-house ditties such as this"

Engineer, engineer, what recordest thou?
Tis the musical interlude from Radio Moscow.

These four interesting volumes, disparate as they may be, reflect the validity of Anthony Trollope's dictum that a writer who wants to be read should not just tell a story, but have a story to tell.

FUNNY PECULIAR

HOW TO SURVIVE AUSTRALIA. By Robert Treborlang. Illust. By Mark Knight, Major Mitchell Press, 95pp. \$4.95.

George Orwell once cited Kipling's 'What do they know of England who only England know?' as an example of good bad poetry'. But while the format of the presentation may be open to debate, the truth of the observation is surely not in doubt and applies to any country including ours. Would this be one of the reasons why Dorothy McKellar's poem about survival in the 'wide brown land' has become so popular?

Robert Treborlang's slim volume, 'the first true guide for newcomers', is about integration and 'survival' in the urban Australia of the 1980s. If the paeans from this particular reviewer are muted, it is because the attitudes and modes of Australian behaviour, as described by Treborlang, bear closer resemblance to fiction than to fact.

Is it really a newcomer's impression that that "Asking questions is the one thing a true Australian never does" ... "That the Australian dinner party for six features ...six potatoes and three halved grilled tomatoes",... that, at an Australian party, "under no circumstances are you to introduce guests to each other",... that you should "ash your cigarette on the carpet" and "make sure that you leave the party so drunk that you can't remember where you left your car"?

All this is meant to be funny-ha-ha, and so it may be to potential migrants 'Over There', but to the reader 'Down Under' it is very funny-peculiar stuff indeed. One would wish to assign the author the accolade of 'Poor Man's George Mikes' were it not for the fact that Mikes is usually hilarious and nearly always dead-on. In sum: this booklet makes a good present to send to prospective newcomers across the waters who, in your judgment, are better off where they are.

VICTIMS OF THE SECRET WAR

*THE SECRET HUNTERS. By Anthony Kemp.
Illustrated by David Mallott. Michael O'Mara Books,
128pp. \$29.95.*

With Klaus Barbie's conviction for war crimes in Lyons we are reminded again of that six-year conflagration fought over a generation ago. It is silly to deny that good men fought on both sides, suffered and died irrespective of their political and national allegiances. But the network of concentration camps which covered occupied Europe, where much of the business of torture and killing was carried out, leaves no doubt about the rights and wrongs of that particular war.

We know that millions of people were slaughtered in these camps. What is not generally known is that among them were also members of the Allied armed forces: airmen, secret agents, airborne troops, sailors and commandos. When the war was over it was not an easy task to establish what their fate had been. The Secret Hunters records the perseverance of the wartime comrades of those British servicemen and women who had been on special operations in France but remained missing after Germany's defeat.

The hunters were hampered not only by the chaotic conditions in post-war Europe but also by the indifference from official British quarters which, amid the general euphoria of victory, would have preferred the records to remain forever as "missing in action".

Many British servicemen were killed after capture. Hitler issued a secret order in 1942 to the effect that all enemy troops captured in German-occupied territory were to be killed. Over 250 British and American servicemen and women died as a result of this directive. Some were shot, others perished in concentration camps.

It ought to be said – and this account does not say it – that it is established practice by all warring countries to sentence to death enemy agents caught behind the lines. Indeed, German agents parachuted into Britain or landed ashore by U-boats were executed unless they agreed to co-operate with the British, which most of

them did. But of course this practice did not apply to members of the enemy forces captured in uniform.

In the end the facts were established and the perpetrators caught, but to this day there is some bitterness among some of the survivors that so little has been done in memory of those who died in the camps. One of them, the woman responsible for the recruitment of women for service as couriers and radio operators in Occupied France, believes that “we (the British) do less than any other nation to commemorate our people”. After the war it was she who did not rest until she had discovered what had happened to four missing servicewomen. After many months of painstaking investigations among concentration camp survivors and one-time camp staff, she established that they had been killed and incinerated on the same day in a concentration camp in France.

When one reads about the barbarities described here, it is very sobering to reflect that these things happened not in Uganda or Cambodia or Siberia or South America, but in Europe, the heartland of Western civilisation.

QUALITY, FLEXIBILITY, RESPONSIVENESS, THE KEYS TO

3 December 1987

WINNING WAYS: How “Winning” Companies Create the Products we all Want to Buy. By James Pilditch. Harper & Row. Illustrated. 273pp. \$24.95.

This book investigates some of the causes of the British and American industrial malaise. It focuses on the strategies and practices of successful companies wherever they may be and the lessons learnt are obviously pertinent for the Australian manufacturing sector.

In the United States, once the heartland of industrial production,

imports rose by 70 per cent between 1980 and 1985 while exports declined substantially. In Australia too we have seen a shift of capital from production to service industries. New competitors, particularly Japanese companies, are winning the battle for the market.

Why is this so? The author, the former head of a London company who has spoken at international seminars and “across Australia”, tackles the problem by isolating those features which make the maximum contribution to successful companies’ performance. His findings are quite startling.

The first conclusion reached explodes the concept of price being a primary determinant of sale. Thus, market research in Britain and Germany has shown that in 60 to 70 per cent of cases, users of machine tools and agricultural machinery thought quality was more important than price. When people import goods for sale they often do so not because they are cheaper, but because they are of superior quality.

This is borne out by other studies which show that nearly all successful companies believe that they deliver a product to the customers which offers superior quality, rather than one which costs less. Price may be an element in effective competition but it is usually not the most important factor. A successful producer starts from quality and then works on price.

Consumers all round the world are impressed by the quality of Japanese products. An analysis of 400,000 replies to questionnaires from readers of a US consumers’ magazine showed that only 6 per cent of American cars, but 39 per cent of Japanese cars, scored above-average repairs records.

An interesting phenomenon in this connection is that the Japanese workforce engaged in inspection is only one fifth of that similarly employed in Europe. In Japan everybody who has a hand in production is concerned with quality, the reverse of the proverbial “she’ll be right” approach. The key to success is the involvement of everyone, including suppliers as well as those concerned with after-sales service. Pilditch believes that the establishment of a quality control department is an invitation to disaster because of

the introduction of a “them and us” attitude.

A second interesting feature of successful companies is that “small is beautiful”. UK employment figures show that in the 10 years following 1971, companies with a workforce of fewer than 100 employees were responsible for more than half the new jobs created, although they accounted for only 29 per cent of the jobs at the beginning of the period. There are a number of reasons for this.

Small companies often have a “fanatic” with expertise who keeps on trying something until it works. It might not work 95 per cent of the time and large companies, when there are five layers of management between design and decision to manufacture, require five “yesses” to go into production and only one “no” to stop it.

Also, small companies are often private companies which, unlike public companies, are not under constant pressure to maintain share value and achieve acceptable profits year in year out. A public company known to make a \$10 million profit per annum which suddenly decided to invest half of this in future development would be seen as halving its profits. A small company is much more flexible. Few major innovations have resulted from a highly-structured planning process. A common element of successful companies has been an avoidance of the “tyranny of paper plans”.

A third characteristic is that successful companies work from the customer inwards and not from the factory outwards. Rather than sell what they make, they produce what the customers wants. Some of the bigger successful companies have switched from conventional market research to social forecasting. By studying social and cultural changes they have isolated and identified new areas of business opportunities. Thus, a good number of “social value groups” have been recognised in 19 “advanced countries” which can be lumped together into three main groups, the “sustainer”, the “outer directed”, and the “inner directed”. Each shows different patterns of behaviour and consumer demand. Such social and cultural changes affect successful product development and one researcher believes that changing lifestyles are likely to result in growth markets in such diverse areas such as telephone communications, defence, holidays, credit, health, tourism, energy,

space, furniture and biochemistry.

Pilditch's book casts a new slant on popular concept of efficient production, for there is very little about energy costs, wages, industrial management, and the economies of large-scale production. It does seem that industrial competitors who succeed in capturing larger slices of market share do so for reasons other than those based on low wage structures.

At the end of 1986, the Japanese average wage was higher than those in the United Kingdom, West Germany and the United States. One would imagine that the further appreciation of the yen since then means that the Japanese average is now well above our own. Wages cost are obviously not a decisive reason for achieving industrial success. *Winning Ways* tells us why.

JAPAN: EDUCATION FOR SUCCESS

3 December 1987

THE JAPANESE EDUCATION CHALLENGE. By Merry White Collier Macmillan. 210pp. \$34.95.

A country without mineral resources and with little arable land, Japan has been forced to rely on the only raw material available to her human resources. The development of human resources is the business of education and this book is about the Japanese approach.

The Japanese have now reached such a high level of economic development that they are overtaking the living standards of some Western European countries. If these achievements are essentially the fruits of human endeavour and we accept the veracity of Pope's dictum that "just as the twig is bent, the tree's inclined", then it is difficult to reject the argument that the Japanese must be doing something right in the field of education. Even if Japanese modes and cultural realities are not necessarily suitable models for us, the Japanese school scene ought to be of interest to Australian

educators.

In comparative education, as elsewhere, stereotyping abounds, and photos of Japanese schoolchildren with white headbands exhorting them to “struggle on” have a habit of reappearing in educational tests and journals. Generalisations are not always completely off the mark. But if the Japanese have shown that they can adjust policies, expertise and practices to meet the needs and demands of our times, it is unlikely that their educational philosophies are still stuck to the tenets of Zen Buddhism and Samurai ethics.

Many of the aims of Japanese education are our aims also, but not all. The Japanese believe that “it is desirable that, in the lower grades, one should learn to bear hardship, and in the middle grades, to persist to the end with patience, and in the upper grades, to be steadfast and accomplish goals undaunted by obstacles and failures ...”. In our American-oriented schools, success is writ so large that struggling against odds is not usually accepted as fruitful educational experience. The Japanese view has it that the child benefits from experiencing hardships. Pressure and tension cannot be avoided in life and one might as well learn to cope with it while young.

Cultural differences shape the characteristic of the “good child” as perceived by Japanese and American mothers. For Japanese, the three most important attributes are “regular habits, avoiding causing trouble to others, and perseverance”, while Americans put “independence, initiative and tolerance” on top of their list. White comments that Japanese children seem to be “reasonably socialised in the desired qualities” while American children are not noted for their tolerance to children who are different.

The Japanese educational approach would certainly be influenced by the homogeneity of its population. Japanese schoolchildren are taught that uniformity is necessary and desirable but Japanese educators complain that this has brought a lack of realisation by the schoolchild that Japan is no longer an isolated island but part of the wider industrialised world. This means that the children’s world view stands in need of “internationalization”. Critics cite the 40th anniversary of the bombing of Nagasaki and Hiroshima recently, when school textbooks made much of the bombing but had little to

say about Japan's "full-blooded participation in the Second World War".

The Japanese approach of urging crawling children to stand and standing children to walk is not in line with our own commonly-held principle that it is counterproductive to introduce new learning before the time is ripe. However, in a recently conducted survey which compared a Japanese and an American city, judged to be similarly placed within the socioeconomic structure of the two countries, found that the "poorest performer in some classes in the Japanese group were well ahead of the best in comparable classes in the American group".

Educators, particularly adherents of the Dewey-derived "progressive education" philosophy, may feel that such differences are gained only by drilling, coaching and long hours of schooling. Merry White meets such potential criticism by referring to a number of international polls, all of which show that Japanese children score highest in "liking school".

Secondary schooling is not compulsory in Japan and there is competition for entry to high schools, some of which are perceived to be "better" than others. About 10 per cent of students aiming to enter tertiary institutions compete for admittance to the top Japanese universities which offer a passport to the best jobs industry and the public service can offer. Because of the close connection between school performance and career prospects, all students work extremely hard and the practice has developed in urban areas of most students attending private afterschool coaching classes. This situation is deplored by parents and educators alike, but all efforts to stop it have been quite unsuccessful.

Some people are unconvinced by this apparent failure. White cites an American educator who says, "One suspects that Japan's more conservative leaders, though they are prepared to shake their heads over the system with those who deplore it, are secretly well satisfied. The examination hell sorts the sheep from the goats; a man who can't take the psychological strain would be no use anyway."

This book lacks statistical information and throws little light on the organisation of the Japanese school system, curriculum, the

training of teachers, their conditions of service, and the structure of tertiary institutions. But then it is not meant to be a comparative education test but a general account for the interested lay reader. As such it serves its purpose admirably.

Education has become a national priority in most countries, but there are many ways of tackling the task. Much is predetermined by educational history and in a democratic society there is not all that much room for manoeuvre. Quite obviously many aspects of Japanese pedagogy do not transplant.

Looking at the other side of the coin, the question arises whether it is appropriate for our teacher trainers and educationists to adopt, adapt, borrow and steal almost exclusively from just one country, the richest in the world, whose educational theories and practices are seen by some as the genesis of a crime rate and general social disharmony unrivalled in the Western world.

PIECES OF PLATE: A LOST TREASURE RECOVERED

26 March 1988

THE NANKING CARGO. By Michael Hatcher with Anthony Thorncroft. Hamish Hamilton. Illust. 176pp \$35.00. (paper)

TREASURES and treasure hunts have been a source of inspiration for many writers. After Ali Baba, Long John Silver, the puzzle of the Gold Bug, King Solomon's Mines and the last ride of Lasseter, *The Nanking Cargo* is a tale with a difference: it is a true story of a recent treasure hunt which was successful.

On January 3, 1752, the Dutch East Indiaman Geldermalsen sank in the South China Sea after striking the notorious Admiral Stellingwerf Reef. In England, James Cook had just qualified as an able seaman but Arthur Phillip was still at Greenwich School. Two

hundred and thirty-three years later Michael Hatch, a professional diver from Australia who had arrived here from Britain as a 13-year-old Dr Bernardo orphan, located the hulk and salvaged the cargo of 160,000 pieces of Chinese porcelain and 126 gold bars. His find was to fetch \$25 million.

Hatch did not stumble on the wreck by chance. He had been in the Singapore salvage business for years. At the time he was working in association with a Chinese businessman who looked after finance and had expertise in the latest sonar technology, and a Dutch naval historian who had researched old charts and documents in the museums of Holland.

While the discovery of the wreck and the salvage of the cargo were the result of much preparation and planning, there were special circumstances that caused record prices to be paid for the salvaged goods. There was, firstly, the visual record of the operation which raised the general level of interest, for Hatch had taken a filmmaker aboard. But, most of all, it was the detailed information about the shipwreck and the 18th-century Dutch East India Company trade with China that caught the public imagination. The porcelain had been transshipped to Canton from Nanking and the "Nanking Cargo", as it was called, was viewed by a queue of 20,000 people in Amsterdam alone.

The mass of contemporary data available to us owes its existence to the fact that even in 1752 the reef was known and well charted. The Geldermalsen had sunk in calm seas. Very few Dutch East Indiaman went down in the 18th century even though the company employed 120,000 seamen on over 200 ships. There had been 112 men aboard and there was not a single officer among the 36 survivors who reached land. Besides, it was a rare occurrence for a ship to carry 147 gold ingots. These had been destined for Batavia (now Jakarta). The Dutch authorities were very suspicious and set up a tribunal to investigate the events. The records of these proceedings are available.

It had taken two months to load the cargo of valuable timber, the crates with the porcelain, the tea, silk, and other special items. The enormous quantity of porcelain at the bottom of the sea was saved from destruction by the tea into which it had been packed.

At the time the value of the tea cups, dinner plates, saucers, butter tubs, teapots, bowls, mugs and jugs was only 5 per cent of the total shipment. It was the tea, not the porcelain and not the gold bars, which was the precious cargo. The porcelain was meant for the mass market, itself a result of the expansion of the middle classes which now could afford goods that had once been within reach of only the rich.

Only 126 ingots of the 147 aboard have been found. They were sold at the auction for much more than their bullion worth. It is probable that some gold bars are still at the bottom of the sea. The records show that the surviving boatswain, who had been on the watch before the disaster, was cleared. But the Dutch East India Company offered him re-employment at only his previous wage.

This is a fascinating tale of a successful conclusion to an adventure that required not only liberal portions of courage, determination, technical know-how and financial backing, but also public relations expertise, personnel management skills, and salesmanship. Items of the Nanking Cargo are now on sale in antique shops throughout the world. And if you, dear reader, happen to dine at the Ritz on your next visit to London, you can do so off Nanking Cargo porcelain for a mere £10 surcharge.

HOW THE ROYALS MADE PROGRESS

1 May 1988

THE DIARIES OF LORD LOUIS MOUNTBATTEN.

1920-1922: Tours with the Prince of Wales. Edited by Philip Ziegler, Collins. 315pp \$39.95.

PHILLIP, The man behind the Monarchy. By Unity Hall.

Michael O'Mara Books. 154pp \$24.95.

WHEN King George V decided in 1919 that “for the education of his son and the unity of the Empire” it would be a good thing for the Prince of Wales to visit far-away places, the Prince’s 19-year-

old cousin, Lieutenant Lord Louis Mountbatten, came to hear of it and began to “pull every string that might secure him a place in the party”. And so it came about that when the royal party visited Australia, New Zealand, India, Burma, and some smaller colonies, Mountbatten travelled with the Prince as “companion and confidant”. His diaries were intended to be off-the-record impressions of the “lighter side” of the program.

They make amusing reading. After the mayor of Newcastle entertained the Prince of Wales at lunch, Mountbatten thought that the luncheon had been “very much a ‘C 3’ affair”. The Mayor, told subsequently by one of the Royal Navy officers that “H.R.H. had never had such a luncheon before”, took this as a compliment and replied: “we do not do things by half in Newcastle”. Good stuff this. But Mountbatten’s comments during a later visit to Japan show that his observations were not all froth and bubble:

‘We drove in magnificent lacquer landaus to the Imperial Palace. The streets were crowded as in Australia, and everyone was smiling and shouting ‘Banzai’ which is the way they cheer out here ... I had the feeling that here we were in the heart of a great power, greater than we at home realise.’

The second book is a biography of the Duke of Edinburgh, Lord Louis’s nephew. Since Phillip was not the target of the media when he was quite young, the author’s summary of his first 25 checkered years introduces an element of novelty absent from the rest of the story.

Born on Corfu in a house without electricity, gas or running water, Phillip nearly lost his father, Prince Andrew, to a Greek firing squad. In the course of an anti-monarchical coup Andrew, brother of the King of Greece, had been arrested by the military. Fellow prisoners were executed within hours of being tried and condemned to death. Andrew’s life was saved by the young Mountbatten, his wife’s brother. Together with the Prince of Wales he lobbied King George V for help in rescuing Andrew and very soon a British warship appeared off Athens “with her guns raised”. A deal was struck and Andrew was allowed to go into exile.

After a brief stay at Kensington Palace the family went to live

in Paris, and after Phillip's four older sisters married "German princelings", his parents separated. His mother joined her daughters in Germany, his father set up house in the Riviera, and Phillip became a pupil at Cheam School in Surrey.

When it was time for him to go to a secondary school his German relations insisted he join a well-known German school, Salem, whose Jewish headmaster had been sacked when Hitler came to power. As Phillip was not a German citizen, difficulties arose when he could not be made to join a Nazi youth organization, and the new headmaster decided that it was "better for Phillip and better for him" if the boy was sent back to England. It was then that Phillip came to Gordonstoun, the school that the former headmaster of Salem had started in Scotland.

Phillip was 17 when his Uncle George, with whose family he lived, died. It was then that Lord Louis accepted responsibility for him and began to wonder "if perhaps ... it would be possible to marry this sprig of the Mountbatten tree to the future Queen of England". According to Unity Hall "the plot thickens" until, nine years later, Elizabeth undertakes to "obey him, serve him...and keep him...". The following 40 years appear to be a reasonable reflection of the life of a royal consort with very distinctive traits and characteristics. Those who were not born yesterday, however, will have read it all before somewhere.

FRUSTRATIONS IN SPAIN

17 August 1988

THE LAST MILE TO HUESCA. An Australian Nurse in the Spanish Civil War. By Judith Keene. New South Wales University Press. Illustrated. 178 pp. \$19.95.

WITH the death of Franco the Spanish Civil War has re-emerged as a topic of discussion and research. Only last month a new biography of this rebel general, who became the life-long Spanish

ruler, was reviewed here. Quite recently, the author of the first exhaustive study of the Australian involvement in that war was interviewed by the editor of these pages. Now, the diaries of an Australian nurse who travelled to Spain to help the Republican cause have been published.

To facilitate a better understanding of Agnes Hodgson's frustrations and difficulties in that strife-torn country, the editor of her journal introduces the reader to the political, economic and cultural forces which made up the social fabric of the country at the time.

Agnes Hodgson was one of four nurses sent to Spain by the Australian Spanish Relief Committee. Her three companions came from the same run-down hospital in New South Wales, "little more than a dumping ground for destitute old men", but Victorian-trained Alice had some interesting years of travelling and nursing in Europe behind her.

Comparatively little popular interest was shown in Australia in the Spanish Civil War. We had no overseas posts until the beginning of World War II and the authorities on the whole were in sympathy with Britain's policy of non-intervention. Those with anything to say took exaggerated partisan views of the conflict, ranging from that of Franco being a man "the like of whom has rarely been seen in the history of the world" to one who regarded the Spanish Republic as a shining example of a "united and democratic government".

Leaving Sydney on the Oronsay in October, 1936, all four nurses were looking forward to doing something with "real meaning". They were hosted enthusiastically by well-wishers in Marseilles. Agnes, who would not give the clenched fist salute — she explained that she had "no precise politics" — found herself in a bit of trouble upon arrival in Barcelona. The leader of the nurses, a communist party member, had reported her a fascist. The fact that Agnes had nursed in Mussolini's Italy and spoke good Italian did not help. During the three weeks of marking time in Barcelona while the powers that be decided what to do with her, she took in the ambience of the place.

There was an atmosphere of suspicion everywhere. Indeed

one of her fellow nurses later confessed that the thought of one or the other being “bumped off” did not seem all that ludicrous at the time. A profusion of political parties vied for influence and sometimes fought each other. There were the Spanish Anarchists, the International Anarchists, the United Socialista, the Trotskyists, the Catalan Separatists, the Socialist Trade Unionists, the Spanish Communist Youth, et el. The most important legislation of the Republican Government, the redistribution of the land, had come to grief. The new laws, well intentioned though they may have been, had resulted in unsown and unharvested crops and rural disorder. Some factions of the government had favoured individual ownership while others wanted collective farming.

When Alice, fed-up with doing nothing, threatened to leave the country, a position was found for her in a small hospital in an anarchist village behind the Aragon front. Staffed partly by a British medical aid unit, the village committee which ran the hospital viewed it with a measure of distrust since it was perceived to be part of the centralisation of administration which was against anarchist dogma. In addition, the reality of the foreign-staffed hospital did not lie easily with the locals who were concerned only with the war’s “Spanish dimension”.

For the next nine months Agnes nursed wounded from the front and from towns which had been bombed by German and Italian aircraft. She tells many stories about the suffering of the population, the dreadful conditions at the front, the lax discipline in the International Battalions, and the enormously high casualty rate among stretcher bearers. She also mentions the 70 per cent illiteracy rate in Spain which, if true, would have been the highest of any western country.

By the time she returned to Australia, both sides had been “unified into centralised commands: the Nationalists under a military dictatorship by General Franco; and the Republicans under a communist-dominated government in which the historically heterogenous Spanish Left had disappeared”.

Hers are the diaries of a mature woman not easily impressed by slogans and flag waving and if her jottings are not always rivetting, they are also far removed from the “self-serving recollections

in the familiar heroic... mode of participants in just causes". Unfortunately, a sketch map of her province does not show rebel occupied territory and government-held areas during her time of stay there. It is a pity that Alice Hodgson did not live to see how her diaries have contributed to a better understanding of a slice of Australian participation in that civil war, minute though it may have been, in that far-away three year long struggle half a century ago.

A PICTURE OF AUSTRALIA'S HUMAN CHARACTER

1988

*100 FAMOUS AUSTRALIANS. By Robert Macklin.
Viking O'Neil. Illustrated 248pp \$16.99.*

THESE 100 biographies are a welcome contribution to the range of bicentennial publications, providing a record of Australians who made their marks in literature, sport, politics, cinema, science, aviation, the arts, law, crime, exploration and business.

The two-page summaries are arranged alphabetically between the entries of Sir Reginald Ansett and James Cassius Williamson. Though mostly written in pithy factual style, some entries are marred by journalistic license such as referring to explorer Burke as "a racist oaf". There is really no excuse for Robert Macklin confusing image with substance and incorporating the legend of Breaker Morant into the curriculum vitae of the real-life Harry Harbord Morant. Kit Denton, who wrote the novel on which the film was based, explained in his *Closed File* why many episodes of the novel and film are not factual.

While I looked in vain for some of my favourite famous Australians, a selection of exactly 100 must always be a matter of personal choice. It would be miraculous if any two independent compilers were to produce identical lists. But the quintessence of

this book is best described by its author:

“The essential character of a society is most dramatically expressed by the lives of those men and women who rise to prominence within it ... So a book of this land is larger than the sum of its individual parts. It is a vivid picture of Australia’s human character as it has evolved over the last two centuries.”

A VIVID AND FRANK ACCOUNT OF AN AUSTRALIAN IN VIETNAM

26 October 1988

TIGER MEN. An Australian Soldier’s Secret War in Vietnam. By Narry Peterson, with John Cribbin. The Macmillan Company of Australia Pty Ltd. Illustrated 245pp \$24.95.

THIS is the fascinating story by a retired Australian army officer of his tours of duty in South Vietnam. It is a difficult book to review because the results of this long struggle are still with us and have bitten deep into the Australian psyche. I would therefore like to reverse the usual order of things and introduce the author’s final summing-up at the beginning: “I still believe that we should have been a presence in South Vietnam, but I don’t believe that the allied powers should have sent combat troops into that country.”

Captain Petersen’s first tour of duty commenced 25 years ago when he landed at Ban-Me-Thuot, the administrative centre in the highlands of South Vietnam. The town is ringed by mountainous country much vaster than our Brindabellas. The whole region is inhabited by Montagnards, the original inhabitants, who lived there before the Vietnamese arrived several hundred years ago. A good many Montagnard tribes are of Malayo-Polynesian origin, and Petersen, who spoke Malay from a previous tour of duty in Malaya, had no great difficulty learning Rhade, one of their languages.

The author worked for the American CIA at a time when the North Vietnamese army had not yet invaded the South, though they sent advisers, agents and equipment to the Viet Cong along the Ho Chi Minh trails. His first assignment was to locate a paramilitary force of 200 locals for which thousands of dollars of CIA funds were regularly passed to the province chief. Petersen never did manage to sight them.

There was, however, a hundred-man Montagnard force under police control and this was to become the nucleus of a unit which Captain Petersen trained and led. Because of the type of camouflage uniform they wore they came to be known as the Tiger Men. As Viet Cong activity increased, so did this force, until it numbered more than 1000. Its task was the harassment of traffic along the Ho Chi Minh trails, the collection of intelligence and “the dissemination of anti-communist propaganda... disruption of Viet Cong activities; ambushes; small-scale raids; and the kidnapping or assassination of Viet Cong agents or officials...”

It made sense to have an Australian army officer assigned to this task. There is no doubt that Australians are likely to be more tolerant of other people’s cultures than their American cousins who have a tendency towards brashness and insensitivity in their dealings with non-Americans. In addition, relations between Montagnard aids and Vietnamese were ambivalent at best as Viet Cong pressure in the highlands grew. Discontent exploded when three thousand armed Montagnards revolted against the government, killed some Vietnamese special forces soldiers, took American special forces prisoner, and occupied Ban-Me-Thuot radio station. The Tiger Men did not participate. Indeed, Petersen played a very significant and courageous role in diffusing the situation and pouring oil on troubled waters.

After Petersen had earned the Montagnards’ trust and cooperation after two years of working with them, he was replaced by an American CIA officer. All this was preceded by some unpleasantness and caused some unhappiness within Australian ranks. In the event, Captain Petersen’s force disintegrated after his departure. His successor insisted on installing an electric stove and a washing machine in his bungalow. However, he did not live there. He flew in each day. The bombing at the time of two Montagnard villages

by fighter planes because of a reported Viet Cong presence there did not help.

American intelligence operations were so uncoordinated that it was a practice for some local agents to sell “intelligence” to two or three competing agencies, each of which guarded its sources jealously. When, upon exchanging information, they found that certain items of advice tallied, it would result on occasion in some fiction emanating from the same source being elevated to the status of corroborated evidence.

The author offers glimpses of the occasional contretemps and infighting among Americans, Australians and Vietnamese. He pulls no punches in his description of clashes with fellow Australians and, with Petersen naming names, one wonders whether any of those people are still in harness. Petersen is not very complimentary about the French civilians who could still be found throughout the country 10 years after Dien Bien Phu. It does not occur to him that for Vietnamese country folk going about their business irrespective of their political allegiances, the Americans and their Anglophone allies who knew little of their language and customs were only latecomers on the scene. Those French who had chosen to remain in South Vietnam, some of them with Vietnamese wives, had a great understanding of the country and its people even though their defeated army had long since gone home. To Captain Petersen they seemed “arrogant”, and it was offensive to him that they could move “anywhere throughout South Vietnam without interference from the Viet Cong”.

Barry Petersen returned to South Vietnam five years later as a major and company commander with the Royal Australian Regiment. The war had changed. At the height of the American involvement more than half a million American troops had been stationed in South Vietnam. Apart from Australians there were soldiers from New Zealand, Thailand, the Philippines and Korea. His was now a more traditional military role in South Vietnam.

This vividly alive autobiographical account by a one-time professional soldier is told with great frankness and an understanding which, matured by time, is enriched by a recent visit to Hanoi where he spoke to wartime enemies.

ODYSSEY OF A CHILD OF IMMIGRANTS

DUKAKIS, An American Odyssey. By Charles Kenney and Robert L. Houghton Mifflin Company. 260pp \$29.95.

WHILE the sound of this heroic title has an impressive ring, the truth of the matter is that the subject of this biography was born in Massachusetts, raised in Massachusetts, educated in Massachusetts, and elected to political office there. However, a publisher's hyperbole dictated by the demands of the market, need not detract from the quality of the product. If it is agreed that an investigation of a candidate's credentials for presidential office requires not only an analysis of rhetoric but also an examination of past events, then this combined effort by two Boston Globe journalists has achieved its aim.

It is a balanced and well-researched description of Governor Dukakis's family background and that of his wife, his childhood, his adolescence, and his career in state politics. Once in the top Massachusetts job — he was defeated for second term but regained the governorship subsequently — his major political conundrums were the usual economic ones: how to lower unemployment and taxes. These issues are not exactly foreign to the Canberra political scene. Indeed, Governor Dukakis's consternation upon assuming office and discovering that he had to break election promises in the light of the state finances would remind many an Australian reader of events in our own back yard.

When Kennedy announced in December 1985 that he would not be a presidential candidate, Dukakis's stocks rose and his minders went to work. Opinion moulders like the Wall Street Journal, Business Week, Time, New Republic and National Review began to feature him as an outside possibility for the Democratic nomination. From the beginning he tried to shed the label of 'North-East liberal' and promoted the business image of being a "tough and innovative manager". At the same time there is no mistaking his "belief in government as an engine of good". In earlier days he was not particularly interested in Greek-American community affairs but since his elevation to national prominence discovered

political benefits arising from the “child of immigrants” theme.

One can argue about Dukakis’s policies but it is very difficult not to give him his due as an organised, hard-working, cool, calm and rational person. The authors see his “failings” as an extension of his personal qualities. Thus, “persistence can become stubbornness; sense of purpose, rigidity; self-assurance, cockiness” and, depending on one’s angle of view, he may seem “reserved or cold, serious or humourless, energetic or compulsive, frugal or miserly”. Such frailties do not seem to me to be of great moment for an aspiring leader. Ulysses would have lumped them without much ado. But Homer was not American.

STRADDLING THE TOPIC OF DISCIPLINE WITHIN OUR SCHOOLS

6 January 1990

*DISCIPLINE AND SCHOOLS. A Curriculum
Perspective. Edited by Roger Slee. The Macmillan
Company of Australia. 345pp \$22.95.*

DISCIPLINE needs to be writ large in the schools of the 1980s. The editor of this volume, a Victorian educator, has no hesitation in dismissing the “behaviourist” approach to discipline which sees disruption largely as a function of adolescence, in favour of the “sociological” modus operandi. This means that problems of discipline are viewed as being generated by the “disjunction between culture and interests of students and the curriculum content, the school organisational ethic, or school culture” so that, for example, truancy is “essentially a problem that lies within the school”.

The 19 contributors are allowed to straddle the topic for, by definition, school organisation and curriculum are part of the target area. The consequence of this is that sections of the book are substantially old wine in new bottles containing material familiar to teacher trainees of a generation ago. Fortunately there are also a

number of discussions within the areas of special concern during the last two decades, such as the chapter on “Girls, Schooling and Trouble”.

Another interesting chapter deals with the impressions of an academic returning to the classroom of an urban primary school “to do a small amount of teaching ... This has occasionally meant that I have found myself in disruptive situations at school ... a quickened heart beat, controlled anger, a lack of attention to other details around me, a tendency to reduce tension quickly by laughing ...”

There is much dissatisfaction among teachers and educational administrators about the fashion “to be blaming teachers for the phenomenon of classroom disruptions”. Because they are “not effective teachers, firm classroom managers, innovative curriculum planners, because they are... racist, sexist, classist, practitioners have only themselves to blame for their classroom tribulations”.

Segments of later chapters come to grips with practicabilities such as a “Code of Behaviour” developed by parents, teachers and students of a Victorian primary school. There is of course no doubt that schools do make a difference to pupils’ behaviour, but it is not easy to identify “precisely what elements in school (are) the ones most influential. Are they “the potted palms”? Putting the “impossible child” into a special classroom? Helping them to solve their personal problems? Getting them to overcome or live with their own problems? Less pressure? More work? Or..or..or..

Much of the text is clogged with the sort of “motherhood” promulgations familiar to many Canberra parents who take the trouble of reading the formulated “aims” of their children’s schools, such as:

“What is needed are forms of schooling which are integrative in their approach to education. It would ... counter alienation by being a school where fairness and sound discipline prevail ... the school also will provide a host of collaborative and active frameworks for creation of new peer constellations ...”

Two lines of Goethe's come to mind: 'An aphorism as expressed by Mephistopholes in Goethe's 'Faust' comes to mind: 'Grey my dear friend, are all thy theories. And green the foliage of life's tree.'

EXPLORING GREENE'S IMMENSE POPULARITY

11 February 1989

A READER'S GUIDE TO GRAHAM GREENE. By Paul O'Prey. Thames And Hudson. 160pp \$41.00.

GRAHAM Greene has been called England's popular export to America and, over the decades, his many novels, short stories, autobiographical and travel writings — not to mention more than 30 films — have made a dent into our own balance of payments. Recently The Canberra Times Saturday Magazine printed a new story of his, *The Last Word*. Now in his 80s, Greene is still read by young and old. Why is this so?

The short answer is that he has something for everybody: the sexual urge, God, politics, guilt, people inhabiting those faraway places ... But there is more to Greene than that. According to Paul O'Prey, "no other writer since Dickens has so successfully combined immense popularity with complexity of craftsmanship," though perhaps this is carrying idolatry a little far. It is more fruitful to examine Greene in conjunction with other English writers such as George Orwell, Evelyn Waugh, Christopher Isherwood, and Stephen Spender. Like him, they came from upper middle-class backgrounds and usually went to Oxbridge. Too young for World War I, they were all adults during the Great Depression.

A good many men of letters of this generation believed at the time that a better society could be achieved by the defeat of capitalism and it was not until a decade later that clear-sighted writers of the Western world — Spender, Koestler, Silone, Wright, and numberless others — came to perceive that their God had failed and communism

did not work. But for Graham Greene, as for Evelyn Waugh, it had been Catholicism rather than Communism that had been the more attractive philosophy. Though a "fellow-traveller" for much of his life, Greene has little love for political activism. He explains that Catholicism justifies the world as it is and not as a Catholic writer but simply as a writer who happens to be a Catholic.

When he was a boy a particular story caught his imagination because human nature was portrayed not black and white but "black and grey". He says he looked around and "saw that it was so". In later years he attempted to record events as if he were a camera, a technique that was also used to good effect by Isherwood.

O'Prey quotes Thomas Hardy's "All things merge in one another—good and evil...religion into politics". Graham Greene has always been interested in uncertainty, in 'Catholic agnostics', "holy atheists", and 'sinful saints'. He does not see himself as a propagandist but as a writer who needs to interpret his stories "from the point of view of the black square as well as the white". It may be that this preoccupation with showing life as it is and not as it might be is the key to his popularity: every silver lining needs a cloud, success is invariably linked with failure and happiness with unhappiness. This Readers Guide has clarified 'Greeneland' for me, and has put into a sharper focus what I have read over the years by this 'popular serious' writer.

Bern Brent's poems and articles have appeared in many professional and literary journals.

TWO VIEWS OF THE USSR

25 March 1989

PERESTROIKA. New Thinking for our Country and the World. By Michail Gorbachev. Collins. 310pp \$11.95.

GREY IS THE COLOUR OF HOPE. By Irina Ratushinskaya. Hodder & Stoughton. Illust 286pp \$29.95.

MICHAIL S. GORBACHEV. An Intimate Biography. By the editors of Time Magazine. Time Incorporated. Illust 265pp \$8.95.

EVERY Communist leader, starting from Andropov, Brezhnev, and Ceausescu, has published a testament of sorts. But Gorbachev's Perestroika stands on its own. Seventy years after the Russian Revolution, Mikhail Gorbachev is the first Soviet leader who has had the clarity of vision and the courage to state what has been obvious for a long time: the emperor's clothes are not what they were proclaimed to be by the courtiers.

Gorbachev's new interpretation of communism breaks with old traditions of wishful thinking. He admits that "the political economy of socialism is struck with outdated concepts and is no longer in tune with the dialectics of life". The "methods" adopted in the Soviet Union after the revolution were "canonized and turned into dogma". While the country was subjected to a "propaganda of success" depicting a "problem-free reality", the "needs of the working people ... were ignored". Indeed, the Soviet people's mode of "thinking", "moulded" for decades and "mesmerized by dogma", has now become an obstacle to progress.

Gorbachev rarely uses the word communism and chooses to discuss socialism instead. One wonders whether that particular nomenclature is in bad odour among his own people. He laments the custom of "waiting for instructions from above on every matter", the concept of seeing social justice as a tool for "equalizing everyone", the result of women's emancipation in the USSR which "failed to pay attention to women's specific needs arising from their role as mother ... and home maker". Above all, Perestroika sees "the

decentralization of government ... as a major piece of reform". The notion of class warfare is dismissed and so is the old communist myth that one more war "unleashed by capitalism" would "finish off" the capitalist system.

Throughout his discourse Gorbachev is careful to assign primary responsibility for Perestroika to Lenin: "Lenin's ideas were not always adhered to in the years after his death," and "today we have a much better understanding of Lenin's last works."

Perestroika is marred by occasional snatches of nonsense, such as "socialism and democracy are indivisible", or "an advantage of socialism is its ability to learn", or "openness is an attribute of socialism". On the other hand, there are also cogent expositions about the present Soviet perspective on disarmament, the North-South dialogue, the USSR and Europe, USSR and American relations, the Middle East, and the Third World. No matter whether the implementation of Perestroika will prove to be a success or failure, its birth marks the end of an epoch.

The Russians have had a long tradition of labour camps. Dostoevsky's *Notes from the House of the Dead* is the forerunner of their chronicles. Solzhenitsyn's reminiscences were not the first of the Soviet prison camp memoirs. *Grey is the Colour of Hope* is the latest but almost certainly not the last. As I read it there came to me Henley's lines: Out of the night that covers me, Black as the pit from pole to pole, I thank whatever Gods may be For my unconquerable soul.

Kiev KGB officers arrested poet Irina Ratushinskaya and found among her poems verses by Pushkin that had been copied by her. They thought they were hers and burnt them as being "ideologically dangerous". Ratushinskaya was sentenced to seven years of "strict regime" camps and five years of internal exile. When she was released shortly before the Reykjavik Reagan-Gorbachev summit, she had spent more than four years in the camps.

Among her group of about 10 women political prisoners there were Russians, Estonians, Lithuanians, Latvians and Ukrainians. She depicts the small camp area reserved for politicals — they were not allowed to mix with the *hoi polloi* in the camp — and describes

the internal camp jail and the dreadful punishment isolation cells in which she spent more than a year. She cites deliberate cruelties by the administration such as ignoring a dying woman on the floor of a cell, stitching up a self-inflicted slashed wrist without anaesthetic, and repeated refusals to release such women prisoners from work.

Graduates of the Soviet camps emerge with a particularly fierce love for individual liberty. Not always admirers of Western ethos, they have nevertheless contributed to the literature of the West even though this particular English translation is unlikely to do justice to the prose of a wordsmith like Irma Ratushinskaya. One would hope that future generations of Russians will be able to come to terms with their recent history through books like this one.

But for Gorbachev, Irina Ratushinskaya would now be either dead or barely alive in a Soviet camp. Where did Gorbachev come from and what did he do before he emerged from obscurity?

When Gorbachev was chosen Man of the Year by Time Magazine, there was an extraordinary demand by readers for more information about him. This resulted in a first for Time: a book. An octet of researchers perused all the published material and interviewed a clutch of former schoolmates, fellow students and colleagues, including a handful of foreigners who had known him before he reached the top.

Gorbachev was born in the Caucasus. After the war he obviously impressed the senior echelons of the Young Communist League, for at the age of 18 he was awarded the Order of the Red Banner of Labour. At 19 he was admitted to Moscow State University. It was very unusual for a boy from the bush to be admitted to one of the most prestigious institution's in the land.

The law faculty which he joined had no kudos in a country where the rule of law had low priority, but it led him to a study of the humanities. Access to unvetted foreign journals was not allowed, but law students were permitted to read Machiavelli, Thomas Aquinas, Hobbes, Hegel, Rousseau and other greats because their works had been available to law student Karl Marx. One of Gorbachev's foreign contemporaries recalls a two-year course on

the history of Political Ideas which was “one of the intellectual highlights of the university law program”. After his marriage to fellow student Raisa and graduation, Gorbachev returned to the sticks a thousand miles away. They lived there for 23 years.

Another biography of Gorbachev was reviewed in these pages three years ago and Time Magazine research adds some warts to the older portrait. For the price of a ticket to the flicks, this book is a steal.

AUTHOR TAKES AN HONEST LOOK AT STALIN ERA

17 January 1990

LET HISTORY JUDGE. The Origins and Consequences of Stalinism. By Roy Medvedev. Oxford University Press. Illustrated 903pp \$55.00.

THE DOWNFALL of Stalin’s heirs in Eastern European countries coincides with the publication of a study of Stalinism by a Soviet historian who has now become a member of the Supreme Soviets, the new national legislature. The future of many of the Warsaw Pact countries, which are now in disarray, may well depend on the Soviet Union’s own success in reforming itself. Such reform is not possible without a close and honest look at the Stalin years.

After Khrushchev’s speech to the Twentieth Congress in 1956, such scrutiny became possible for the first time and Roy Medvedev began to gather information from government records and from some of the followers of Trotsky, Zinoviev, or Bukharin, who had survived the camps. In addition, valuable information was gathered by him from a mass of ex-prisoners who had been ‘rehabilitated’ and released, such as ‘military people, scientists, writers, journalists, party functionaries ... ordinary workers ... peasants ... emigres who had returned to the USSR (and) Russians, Jews, Ukrainians, and Armenians who dreamed of leaving the Soviet Union..’

When that book appeared in 1972, it created much interest, was translated into five languages, and triggered a flow of additional information from without and within the Soviet Union where much debate had arisen about the 'personality cult' years. The author was also made aware of books and articles published in the twenties and thirties that he had not known existed. This second edition is a reworked and greatly expanded version of the original work and is considered by Medvedev to be the main work of this life.

Medvedev's political orientation is made clear in a London-published work some years ago which contains his views: "in order to triumph over capitalism, it will be necessary to fight hard". Thus, he could hardly be expected to agree with Solzhenitsyn's approach that Stalin was "never a major political figure" since he simply carried out Lenin's teaching. To Medvedev, the history of Stalinism is "the history of a disease." He might sympathise with Djilas that Stalin was "the greatest criminal in history" or with fellow-Soviet historian Antonov-Ovseyeriko, who showed a tyrant more terrible than any Czar, personally responsible for the death of a hundred million of his own citizens. But in the post-Khrushchev climate of the Soviet Union he bristles at the assertion of Deutscher, one of Stalin's best-known biographers, that Stalin was one of the great reformers. It was the October revolution, not Stalin, "that opened the road to education" and the country would have travelled down that road much quicker if Stalin had not destroyed "hundreds of thousands of the intelligentsia."

The aim to illustrate that Stalin was not Lenin's natural successor is also Gorbachev's recurring theme even though it is no longer possible to be certain about the role played by individuals in the years before and after 1917. Documents from that period have been forged, doctored and re-doctored and oral reminiscing by some old men and women who were involved and still alive in the sixties, is not absolutely reliable.

There are certainly contradictory impressions of the later Stalin by people who knew him while he was in the Kremlin: he was lazy; he was not lazy. He never read anything; he knew Lenin's writings inside-out. He never looked at a document; he never signed one without studying it carefully. He had no sense of humour; Churchill

thought otherwise and so on.

This book of 900 pages is now probably the most authoritative and up-to-date study of its kind on the market. Edited for the general reader, the publisher has dispensed with end-of-chapter commentary. Clearly written and presented, it cannot be expected to break very much new ground in terrain that has been ploughed over so often.

It shows that Stalin assumed control by deceit, that he ruled by terror, that he was one of the midwives of Hitler's rise to power, that the treason trials were a farce, that torture was standard practice, that he ignored warnings from Berlin, Warsaw, Prague, London, Paris, Washington and Tokyo, about the imminent German invasion, that he was an incompetent generalissimo during the first months of the war, and that suspicion and mistrust gave way to persecution mania at the end of his life. We know that he fooled many clever people in western democratic countries about the Soviet Union. Those who continued to be fooled in the post-war years do not fall into this category.

The author's analysis of a major event of the Stalin years does not tally with the accepted version of the west. The execution of Marshall Tukhachevsky and thousands of senior military officers after prolonged treason trials seriously weakened the pre-war Red Army. This is usually credited as having been the outcome of a German intelligence coup, for there is ample evidence that a letter from Tukhachevsky was forged in Berlin and played into Stalin's hands. Medvedev believes it was Stalin, and nobody else, who originated the scheme to eliminate Tukhachevsky and his sympathisers.

Some of the most provocative passages are those depicting honest Soviet citizens, in high places and low, in prison and out, forever retaining their faith in Stalin. We are told that a successful revolution may become "overgrown with its own dogma" and that there will always be people for whom dogma is substitute for thought.

There are those in the Warsaw Pact countries, recently affected by political upheaval, who assert that no variant of Communist government has worked satisfactorily, which requires the abolition

of private-ownership of the means of production, assumes control of the media, prohibits opposition and rejects a market economy. There would be many others who, like the author, believe that Stalin's brand of Communism was responsible for many disasters such as those culminating in last year's revolutions. It will be interesting to see what role future historians will accord Stalin.

WHAT ONE SEES OF EARTHA KITT

10 March 1990

EARTHA KITT. I'm Still Here. Sidgwick & Jackson.
280pp \$29.95.

EARTHA Kitt has found that chasing her American dream has not all been a bowl of cherries. A good many women have risen from obscurity to the fame of show biz glitter but few would have had a childhood as poverty-stricken, sordid, pitiful and wretched as described in this autobiography.

Stage identities do not usually take kindly to the notion of a nexus between perceived public persona and reality. Eartha reports on reading Plato at the foot of the Acropolis, lunching with Nehru, and begging Einstein for an explanation of his theory of relativity. It is obvious, however, that the moneybags that seem to perpetually cluster around her are a vital ingredient of her pursuit of happiness. In a world where diamonds are a girl's best friend, she is showered with a miscellany of pearl necklaces, gold bracelets, gems and suchlike, by a coterie of friends and strangers. Eartha had her shining hour when, at a White House luncheon, taking no nonsense from the First Lady and her entourage, she spoke her mind about juvenile delinquency and the Vietnam war. As a consequence, so she tells us, President Johnson put the CIA on to her so that for years she had difficulties about obtaining suitable engagements in the United States.

This autobiography is a good read even though Eartha's idiomatic expressions often sound a little odd. Some unexpected phrase "hits her ears like a boomerang" or, as her daughter announces on the telephone that her beau had asked her to marry her, Eartha's "whole being sank". Contemplating the wedding to come, she bought herself a bottle of Dom Perignon and "moaned, groaned, and died a thousand times over the champagne from my silver goblets until no tears would come any more".

An "ultimate actress-singer-comedienne" like Eartha Kitt must have been endowed with more than just a good figure, a pretty face, and an interesting voice, but by and large, her story reveals that what one sees is what one gets.

HANDLING BORES AND LINGERERS

31 March 1990

GETTING IT RIGHT. A Survival Guide to Modern Manners. By Laurie Graham. Illustrated by Gray Jolliffe. Chatto & Windus. 146pp \$29.95.

THIS is a delightful book to review. Written with humour and panache, it sets the mood for the day if picked up in conjunction with one's morning cuppa.

Its pages are spattered with pronouncements about a multitude of trivia that beset our lives, and we are warned about "five things never done by good guests", "ten things best left unsaid", and whether, if, when and how to peck or not to peck. One draws comfort from the fact that the author's breezy, chatty style cannot mask the obvious, which is that, in nearly all instances, her views tally with one's own. A sample: Bores, moving on from; Bottles, to take or not; Eavesdropping, useful; Lingerer, not be a; and so on. In the rare cases when one begs to differ one can, if all else fails, justify one's stance by showing that what does for the Old Dart does not necessarily apply Down Under.

Of course, trivia, like beauty, lies in the eye of the beholder, and Mrs Graham explains that this is all about manners, not etiquette. Her lead-in cartoon on page three depicts a couple at a table, one addressing t'other: "having an affair is forgivable, but not having the good manners to keep quiet about it certainly isn't." Be that as it may, there is comfort in the confirmation that it is still perfectly proper for a host to check a restaurant bill even in front of "female guests".

I could not find the author's view on the habit of occasionally replacing one's telephone receiver if an answering machine comes on the line. I am often guilty of this and have recently had a blast about this practice from a Sydney friend during a visit there. But perhaps this is a question of etiquette rather than manners.

A REPUTATION NOT BASED ON LEGEND

21 April 1990

*JOHN MONASH: A Biography. By Geoffrey Serle.
Melbourne University Press. Illustrated 600pp \$19.95pb.*

THE British can cite Boadicea and Hereward as heroic figures, both of whom battled against invaders two thousand and one thousand years ago. Jean d'Arc and Napoleon were French. The Germans have erected memorials to generals ever since Hermann and his Cherusci tribes annihilated the Roman legions in the Teutoburg Forest.

Today's Greeks and Italians, just as Iranians, Israelis and Egyptians, can lay claim to warring fighters of the ancient world. Portuguese and Poles, Spaniards and Swedes, Dutch and Danes, as many others, once possessed empires acquired by force of arms. During World War I an ex-colonial newly independent country like Australia, which then had less than a quarter of its present population, would surely welcome its very own great military commander, if only for home consumption.

These were my thoughts as I opened this biography.

I was wrong. Sir John Monash's reputation is not based on legend. Lloyd George referred to him as "the most resourceful general in the whole British Army". Liddel Hart said, upon Monash's death, that Monash had probably "the greatest capacity for command in modern war", and Montgomery of Alamein fame, writing twenty-odd years ago about World War I, believed that "the war might have been over sooner, and certainly with fewer casualties, had Haig been relieved... and Monash appointed to command the British armies".

All of this is quite astonishing, in view of the fact that John Monash in his rise to command an Allied Army Corps had four handicaps to overcome: he was a "colonial", he was Jewish, he was not a professional soldier, and he was of German origin, his parents having migrated from Prussia to the colony of Victoria after the gold rushes.

This book, of course, is a biography and not a military history. The Great War lasted for four years and Sir John Monash lived for 66 years. But for his achievements as a soldier — he was an engineer in civil life — this story would probably not have been written.

Although the editor's instructions were to deal with this reprint fairly briefly, I could not put it away until I had read all of its 600 pages. And while I avoid perusing the dust cover of a review book beforehand, I now find that Geoffrey Serle's study was the winner of the National Book Council Awards of 1982 and the Age Book of the Year. I am not surprised.

TRUTH FRAGILE IN STORIES FROM FAULT LINES

8 July 1990

DISTURBER OF THE PEACE. By Harrison E. Salisbury. Inwin Hyman 424pp \$45.00.

FOR OVER a generation, Harrison Salisbury's many books about the Soviet Union and China have been good value. But as a journalist and foreign correspondent of the New York Times he also reported events during the Great Depression, World War II, the Civil Rights struggle, and the Vietnam war. Now in his 80s, he looks back on a "lifetime on the fault lines of the world".

It is an absorbing story. While his primary aim as a newspaper man was one of interpretation and analysis, he often went further than that. His thorough researches in preparation for the chronicle of the siege of Leningrad are one example. Another is his monumental achievement in retracing, together with his wife, all of the 6000 miles of the Long March of Mao and the Red Army. As he did so, he recorded as much as he could gather from the people on the route and "all that was preserved in the memories of the survivors". This had never been done before.

Time and again Salisbury discovers not only that things are not always what they seem, but that "truth is multifaceted". What is a valid truth for one may not be a valid truth for another.

As a foreign correspondent, Salisbury often fought uphill battles to bring his tidings through censorship to head office and, hopefully, to the eyes and ears of the White House. From Moscow, he was at pains to stress the error of the gospel as preached by Senator McCarthy that the Chinese Communists were but an appendage of the Soviets.

Well before the author managed to visit war-time Hanoi, journalists there from non-Communist countries had lodged reports pointing to the comparative ineffectiveness of the American bomber offensive in a country like North Vietnam. Indeed, as we now know, McNamara himself was beginning to have his doubts. But when

Salisbury during his 1966 Christmas visit to North Vietnam had much the same tale to tell, the White House reacted with venom. He now writes that the “thin grapeshot” of his dispatches “didn’t pock the seamless surface of post-war American know-nothingism”.

Still, these are not the memoirs of a politician but of a journalist. Among the many gems related, there is the one about Khrushchev in retirement, soon to die, apologising to the poet Yevtushenko. He had once violently attacked him and other writers. “Then why did you shout at me, Nikita Sergeevich?” Yevtushenko asked. “Because I knew you were right,” Khrushchev replied, “and I had to shout. You are very lucky. You are a poet. You can tell the truth. But I was a politician... I had to shout to hold my job.”

If, over the years, Harrison Salisbury’s despatches were not always read with a great deal of enthusiasm by the “pols” in Washington, he was invariably true to the creed of his paper “to give the news without fear and favour”. The title of his book indicates that this is not always as easy as it seems.

DEMOLISHING THE DOGMAS

18 August 1990

REBEL WITH A CAUSE. The Autobiography of Hans Eysenck. W. H. Allen & Co. Illustrated. 310pp \$34.95.

BEFORE psychologist Hans Eysenck launches into the body of his autobiography, he highlights the imperfections of such biographies: they can only mirror what memory recalls and show only what the writer wants to reveal. However, by the end of the last chapter, one would describe Rebel with a Cause as the summing up of a life’s work rather than an autobiography in the traditional sense of the word.

Eysenck’s reputation is based on his contributions to scientific thought in the areas of intelligence and personality. Because he seems to have demolished a good many dogmas once regarded

as sacrosanct, he is one of the most controversial of contemporary psychologists. His studies in the effectiveness of interviewing, his findings that heredity is a strong determinant of social attitudes, his claim that portrayals of TV violence do indeed have an effect on the audience, his belief that behaviour therapy is the obvious successor to "medieval Freudianism", these and other research conclusions have affected long-established opinions about the factors that influence people.

It is a pity that Eysenck's editors have missed correcting a number of clangers when he touches on non-professional themes. Thus, he relates how, as a Berlin schoolboy, he handed in "in terms of Freudian symbols and complexes" a Niebelungen-topic essay about "the vulnerable bit of skin on Siegfried's heel on which a leaf had settled when bathing in the dragon's blood". A jolly story, this, but for the fact that there are a hundred million people who, were they to read this passage, would not fail to notice that Eysenck got the location of Siegfried's vulnerable spot mixed up with that of another mythical warrior, Achilles the Greek, who battled outside Troy about 2000 years before Siegfried collected Hagen's spear in the back.

Still, such boo-boos only serve to drive home the old maxim that cobblers should stick to their last. Now retired from the London Institute of Psychiatry, Eysenck has been under attack from the right for having employed Communists in his research institute, and from the left, for upsetting a good many shibboleths of Socialism. He counters with Adam Smith that "Science is the great antidote to the passion of enthusiasm and superstition".

Eysenck makes a point of emphasising that it was not he who discovered the genetic factors in intelligence. He merely wrote about them. Fifty years ago massive research had already been done on adopted children, identical and fraternal twins, and identical twins brought up in isolation. The overall conclusion to that research had been that "about 70 per cent of the total variance in intelligence was contributed by genetic factors" and not by environment. Once described as the psychologist "they most love to hate", Eysenck, now in his mid-seventies, is not concerned and refers to Dylan Thomas:

Do not go gently into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;...

For those readers who, like this reviewer, have no academic background in psychology, I would recommend this book as highly readable. After all, it is written by an author with some previous writing experience: Hans Eysenck seems to have published 72 books in 43 years.

PORTRAIT OF A ONE-TIME KING

KING EDWARD VIII: The Official Biography. By Philip Ziegler. Collins. 654pp \$39.99.

THERE have been other biographies of the Duke of Windsor. There is also his autobiographical account of events leading to his abdication. This, however, is the official biography. It cannot have been an easy task to write.

Everybody agrees that the prince was a slow developer, physically as well as mentally. As a young army officer during World War I he hankered after meaningful work. A contemporary view on record has it that he could not be given a worthwhile staff job because he "could not be induced to read".

There are pointers to the future relationship with the woman he was to marry. Throughout his bachelor days he liked "being mothered by women", as a member of his entourage put it at the time. This biographer comments that this assessment did not go far enough and adds that he "craved for it, could hardly live without it..." Surviving correspondence bears this out. Not all his women friends destroyed his letters.

The Prince of Wales did not always put duty before pleasure, and if abroad on official visits he was a headache to his minders. Exasperated by his lifestyle — this was well before Mrs Simpson appeared on the scene — his private secretary finally put in his resignation. Explaining to his erstwhile employer the reasons for

this decision, he received a good-humoured response: "I suppose... I'm quite the wrong person to be Prince of Wales."

It is perhaps well to conclude this brief review with a kind summing-up from the last chapter: "There was much he could have done; he did so little. And yet he himself would never have seen it in such a light. To his own mind he had done the all-important thing; he had rejected the stultifying trammels of a career which he detested to secure the greatest of human joys, the total commitment of himself to another being. 'This above all: to thine own self be true.' Others might say that he had betrayed his people and his patrimony, he knew that he had been faithful to himself.

The Duke of Windsor died in Paris 18 years ago. It is a good time for a definite biography. A scholarly and balanced work, it holds the reader's attention throughout and is probably as sharp and true a focus of the one-time king as we are ever likely to get.

CHURCHILL IN WORLD WAR I

19 January 1991

THE CHALLENGE OF WAR. Winston S. Churchill 1914-1916. By Martin Gilbert. Minerva 988pp \$26.95.
WORLD IN TORMENT. Winston S. Churchill 1917-1922. By Martin Gilbert. Minerva 967pp \$26.95.

THESE two paperbacks cover eight turbulent years of Churchill's life. They are observed through the prism of massive research which must have evolved a full platoon of research assistants.

There are not only excerpts from speeches and parliamentary debates, memorandums and minutes previously published. There are also letters to and from his wife, mother, brother, son and aunt, forming a part of several thousand pieces of correspondence. Dozens of diary entries from scores of private papers were consulted, together with letters to friends and colleagues which, upon reflection, were never sent. Similarly, there are notes for

speeches never given and drafts of articles never published. After Churchill's death in 1965, Martin Gilbert gathered recollections from politicians, from family members, from brother officers, from Churchill's guests and Churchill's hosts and from people Churchill had been in contact with and who had worked for him.

The author, who succeeded Randolph Churchill as Churchill's official biographer, worked from the original documents since he had discovered that much of the printed material does not tally with the original version.

The 2000 pages of these volumes give a fascinating insight into the official life of one of the great men of this century, two decades before he became Britain's wartime prime minister. Throughout much of that time, during and after World War I, he was at the vortex of government.

Having been First Lord of the Admiralty, he was saddled with prime responsibility for Gallipoli and went into political oblivion for a while. Later, as Cabinet Minister under Lloyd George, he dealt with British intervention in the postwar Soviet Union, the civil war in Ireland, and the many problems connected with Britain's new role in the Middle East.

During these years, Churchill dealt with a cavalcade of people: politicians, officials, army and navy officers, old acquaintances and new colleagues. The record of these interactions, nearly always temporary accounts, makes absorbing reading since much of the information presented here was not available to Churchill at the time.

If, within the upper echelons of government, one can discern displays of ardour, selflessness, fortitude and dispassionate counsel, there was also impetuosity, obsessiveness, acrimony and innuendo. Indeed, seven decades later, one is struck by the sort of comments committed hastily to paper and, presumably, dispatched to the addressee by messenger. Nowadays, disparaging remarks or worse about third parties are reserved for telephone conversations to be lost, alas, to posterity forever.

It is perhaps well for this review to conclude with a brief illustration of Churchill's determination and skill in the face of the

temper of the times. Churchill, the swashbuckler, the warhorse, the one-time Indian Army officer, saved the Government's bacon when he spoke in the House against those with whom "on the general drift of world affairs" he found himself in full agreement.

About 300 Indians had been killed and 2000 wounded during anti-British violence at Amritsar in India, when a British General had ordered his troops to fire on an unarmed mob. "A Government Commission... had condemned General Dyer's action, and the Army Council, on Churchill's insistence, had refused him any further military employment. The majority in the House of Commons were outraged that a British General had been publicly condemned while acting, as he saw it, to protect British life and to uphold British imperial authority."

The debate went against the Government and when the situation became very serious Churchill was called in. He made a long speech, "amazingly skilful" and "brilliant", according to The Times, and he showed that it was not in the interest of the British Empire "to take a load of that sort for all time upon our backs". He pointed out that such behaviour was the very "exhibition of ... frightfulness" which he had previously condemned when he had urged intervention against the Bolshevik terror in the Soviet Union. As a direct result of Churchill's persuasive logic the Government won the vote by a very good margin.

In a weight-for-age reading competition, these two paperbacks must start favourites.

ALL QUITE DIFFERENT ON THE HOME FRONT

16 January 1991

ON THE HOME FRONT. Melbourne in Wartime 1939-1945. By Kate Darian-Smith. Oxford University Press. Illust. 288pp \$39.95.

THIS is a book about wartime Melbourne half a century ago. Then, as now, Flinders Street Station disgorged its morning commuters, trams rattled through the suburbs, and wharfies went on strike. But much has changed.

When Australia entered the war, the Great Depression had not yet run its course. The ensuing six years saw the beginnings of many of those social changes which characterised the following decades. The early women's movement received momentum through the recruitment of women into branches of the armed services and through their increasing participation in the civilian workforce.

In the wake of Curtin's declaration in December 1941 — "We shall exert all our energies ... with the United States as our keystone... until the tide of battle turns ..." — Britain's status as mother country never quite regained the currency it had before the war.

By April 1942, 30,000 American servicemen had arrived in Melbourne and the appearance of these troops and of soldiers from what was then the Dutch East Indies must have influenced the accepted wisdoms of pre-war immigration precepts. This was one of the factors which made it possible for Calwell to introduce his radically new immigration policies after the war.

I have always thought that the government assistance available to ex-servicemen and ex-servicewomen, which filled Melbourne tertiary training institutions to overflowing after the war, triggered the increasing social mobility of the post-war generation.

But this is not the author's view. She writes that "this social mobility was neither the direct result of the war nor the result of demobilisation preference and training package. Instead, it was the

outcome of the post-war immigration scheme which created a sub-group of migrant workers within the labour market”.

There are vivid illustrations of the mores and practices of the times, long since overtaken by the realities of our higher urban living standards.

Monday, for Melbournians, was Washing Day. The washing was boiled in coppers fuelled, generally, with wood. Tuesday was Ironing Day, a major chore for the housewife in the absence of synthetics. Whether Melbourne “front rooms” are still kept as a sort of family museum, I do not know. Kitchen and bathroom floors were covered with linoleum which needed constant care.

“Almost one quarter of all homes in the Melbourne metropolitan area obtained water from the outside at the gully trap... fewer than a fifth had a hot-water service... less than half, a kitchen sink... less than 8 per cent... owned a refrigerator”. This of course meant “daily purchases of meat, butter and milk ...”

Melbournians, like Canberrans, can still tune in on “sentimental journey” nights to the hits of the Forties as sung by Gracie Fields, Vera Lynn, Frank Sinatra, Bing Crosby, the Andrews Sisters, et al.

But gone forever are the big bands of the war years that played these tunes at Leggets in Prahran — the “biggest ballroom of the Southern Hemisphere”, the St Kilda Palm Grove which offered three dance floors with three bands playing simultaneously, the Trocadero near Princes Bridge with its jitterbugging American servicemen, the Swanston Street Dugout and the Flinders Lane Blue Triangle Club; which catered for members of the forces. Packed by thousands every night, the dance halls were the only places where members of the opposite sexes, in and out of uniform, could meet without formal introductions.

At this time, Melbourne was probably the focus for the performing arts and J.C. Williamson’s produced scores of plays and musicals every year in a number of theatres in the city.

The Bourke Street Tivoli featured show-girl revues which toured army camps throughout the state. Borovansky struggled for years until his Melbourne ballet company gained Australia-wide acclaim. Small independent theatre companies began to cater for audiences

interested in more serious drama. The South Yarra Little Theatre, the Melbourne University Tin Alley Players, the New Theatre and others, experimented and established themselves during the 1940s.

A brief review cannot do justice to a book based on many years of research. It seems a pity that it contains little data from other Australian war-time capitals to enable comparisons to be made.

Was Melbourne the first Australian city to introduce tram conductresses? Did other urban centres have their Danila Vassilieff, Albert Tucker, Arthur Boyd, John Perceval, Noel Counihan, and Josl Bergner, or is this concentration of painters — who were to become household names in later years — unique to the Melbourne experience?

Would it have been possible to use the Prest Melbourne Social Survey, from which so much interesting information was gathered, as a frame of reference for living conditions elsewhere?

Missing from these pages is the story of the sick American soldier who was the talk of the town. Admitted, unconscious, to the Royal Melbourne Hospital just down the road from Camp Pell where he was stationed, he finally woke up to find a Melbourne nurse watching over him.

“Did I come here to die?” he asked her.

“No,” she replied, “you came here yesterday.”

THE KIDNAPPING OF A HUSBAND

28 April 1991

HOLDING ON. A Husband's Kidnap, A Wife's Courage.
By Sunnie Mann. Bloomsburry 162pp \$39.95.

VANISHED! Mysterious Disappearances. By David
Clark. Michael O'Mara Books 159pp \$29.95.

IN THE AFTERMATH of the Gulf war, a current affairs television program showed photographs of three Western hostages still in the clutches of unidentified Arab groups. One of them was Jack Mann who, with his wife Sunnie, had lived in Beirut for over 40 years.

When he was snatched from a Beirut street in May, 1989, he and Sunnie were the last British couple left in West Beirut. Sunnie is now also the last hostage wife left in town. There she waits, alone, poor in health, in strained circumstances, amid the privations and dangers of life in the Lebanese capital that was once called the Paris of the East.

Holding On is Sunnie's story. It is a frank account of the vicissitudes of expatriate life in Beirut, a narration that does not yet have a happy ending. She takes us through childhood and first marriage to the war in London, her second marriage to a Royal Marines officer killed in action, and her third marriage to Battle of Britain pilot Jackie recuperating from plastic surgery.

But the most absorbing parts of this autobiography are her descriptions of post-war life in Beirut where Jackie had obtained a job as a commercial pilot. The couple stayed on, through good times and bad, until, close to old age, they felt they had no other place in the world to come home to but their ramshackle bomb-damaged flat in Beirut.

Sunnie, in the course of her story, throws some light on the complexities of the political and religious factions of the country: the Maronites, the Shia and Sunni Moslems, the Palestinians, the Druzes, the Hezbollah and the Amal. But nowhere is there a glimmer of light on the question why anyone would wish to kidnap an old man down on his luck, who spoke not a word of Arabic, and had

no interests beyond reminiscing over his lager.

The former Australian Prime Minister, Harold Holt, features among thirty-odd “mysterious disappearances” of the famous and infamous in *Vanished*. Other well-known identities include Everest climbers Mallory and Irvine, aviator Amelia Earhart, actor Leslie Howard, band leader Glen Miller, frogman Buster Crabb, and Lord Lucan who, nearly 20 years ago, left a wife and child at the murder scene in his home and has not been seen since.

Both books deal with disappearances. The first is one book which is said to be in all of us, triggered by the kidnapping of the author’s husband. The second is a rewrite of press and magazine stories published over the years and familiar to most newspaper readers.

TWO COMPELLING TALES OF VIETNAM
WHEN HEAVEN AND EARTH CHANGED PLACES.
A Woman’s Journey From War To Peace. By Lely Hayslip
with Jay Wurts. Pan. 477pp \$35.00.
BA ROSE. My Years In Vietnam 1968-1971. By Iris
Mary Roser. Pan 288pp \$12.99.

Lely Hayslip, in her forties today, would have completed her secondary education at the very least, had she grown up in a developed country. But, as child in the Vietnamese countryside, she did what other little peasant girls had done for centuries. She helped her parents work the fields until war eventually compelled her to leave the village and make a living somehow, somewhere, as best she could.

Her story encompasses many family members and friends meeting their death at the hands of Vietcong, South Vietnamese soldiers and US military. But her descriptions go beyond the trauma, torment and tears of simple people at war. Lely Hayslip’s honesty and her sensitivity, attuned to the moods and mores of her compatriots, enables her to give penetrating portrayals of fellow

villagers at once courageous and callous, patriotic and hypocritical, hard-working, intransigent, stoical and self-serving. Above all, Le Ly Hayslip has found the strength not to spare herself in telling. She is a remarkable woman who has chosen her co-author well.

In view of Hayslip's extraordinary story and no dearth of previous publications by Australian aid workers in South Vietnam, Ba Rose was to receive much briefer comment. But reading it from cover to cover, it seemed to me that this gem of a tale by a stout-hearted and energetic Australian civil aid volunteer required more than some approving phrases.

Iris Mary Roser had never left Australia before she volunteered to be the secretary of a small hospital in the boondocks of South Vietnam. There she became "housemother, accountant, caterer, counselor" and general "doer". Her work, right in the middle of Vietcong territory, proved so effective that the US Aid authorities offered her employment in a senior executive position upon returning to Australia on completion of her assignment as a volunteer. Thus, during the last two years of her four-year stay in the country, she exchanged a mole-hill's view with a bird's-eye perspective.

Her trials and tribulations were many and cannot be listed here. The author is nonchalant with hindsight, but it cannot have been the most comforting of situations to find oneself the target of scare tactics and assassination attempts by a succession of nasty people – not always Vietcong – who, for a variety of reasons, had an interest in getting rid of the prying foreigner in their midst. Indeed, towards the end of her second tour, Iris Roser was requested to give periodic talks on the theme "What You See Ain't Necessarily So" to incoming US chaplains and other dispensers of American welfare cargo.

Book reviewers will normally try to temper praise with at least a modicum of constructive criticism. But there is always an exception.

Letters to Editors

Letters to the Canberra Times Editor

CHANGE IN ASAT SCORING

23 October 1983

Mr. Neville Wilson misses the point when he objects to the 'Change in ASAT scoring' (Letters, September 27) for the Minister has stated that increasing the score of girls is "not intended to create an advantage for girls but to remove a disadvantage..." (The Canberra Times, September 22). All school-leavers are equal but some are more equal than others.

D.H. Martin's 10-centimetre-platform-shoes method of solving the problem of girls being shorter than boys has a much simpler solution, suggested by the new ASAT scoring: the introduction of a special height-measuring stick for girls. The measuring scales of such a stick would start with 10 centimeters instead of zero.

The method of increasing the test scores for certain categories of candidates could have many useful applications. If an analysis of ASAT scores showed that candidates whose four grand-parents completed secondary education had scores significantly higher than those whose grand-parents were semi-illiterate, an upgrading and down grading of respective candidates could be made in order to adjust unfair bias.

Also, since average income in Canberra is known to be well above mean Australian income and there is a correlation between education and income, the scores of ACT school-leavers applying for entry to interstate tertiary institutions will need to be scaled down to allow for this income bias. This would not be discriminatory but simply an attempt to remove a disadvantage for school leavers living outside the ACT.

There are many areas of human endeavor that would benefit from this new system of marking. Thus, the old practice of determining public-service promotion on the basis of experience, qualifications and efficiency ensures only that to those who have shall be given.

However, with this scoring system in operation, promotion interviewing committees would be able to allot extra points to those applicants for promotion who, through no fault of their own, are at present being discriminated against because of youth, below-

average ability and lack of work-ethic. This will give them an equal chance in the promotion stakes.

SELF-GOVERNMENT OF THE ACT

7 July 1984

In connection with Mr. Bruce Birrell's letter (The Canberra Times, June 20) on self- government for the ACT, I should like to put on record a paragraph from my letter written to Mr. Uren in April last year in response to his radio talk about this topic.

"...the Assembly's own views on the scope of its own functions are not very relevant within the framework of the problem...I would rather be administered by a coterie of dispassionate public servants at the head of which would be a Commonwealth Minister of whatever political hue, than by a group of axe-grinding solicitors, real-estate developers, insurance salesmen and business people plus the political yes-no voters, busybodies and golden-tongued morons that are inevitably attracted to local government."

One can see that ACT self-government is in the interest of active ACT party members on both sides. I lived in cities and in country towns before coming to the ACT. No place I have lived in was as well administered as Canberra.

Some saint is supposed to have pleaded, "Oh Lord, give me chastity, but not yet!" Self-government for the ACT will eventually come, but the later the better.

'CALIBRATION' OF ASAT SCORES

11 December 1985

There are still people about who seek to "calibrate" ASAT scores by raising those of girls and lowering those of boys. See letters,

The Canberra Times, November 9. As the parent of a daughter in secondary school, I commend the School's Authority for not reverting to such "calibration".

There is a small but statistically significant difference in average IQs between the taller half and the smaller half of a large population of examinees. So what! These are averages.

If we were to "calibrate" to correct height "bias", ACT teenagers of the stature of Schweizer and Einstein, Howard and Hawke, would have their scores upgraded.

The argument for "calibration" of sex arises mainly from the discrepancy between raw Tertiary Entrance (TE) scores and the Australian Scholastic Aptitude Test (ASAT) scores which serve as TE score moderator. TE score averages do not show as much, if any, difference between boys and girls (depending on the year) while ASAT averages show such differences in science-based and mathematics based areas of learning.

The conclusion reached by advocates of sex "calibration" is not that ASAT shows what it shows, but that ASAT is sex "biased" and that it discriminates against girls.

However, TE raw scores are based on teacher-evaluation. They are the product of subjective testing. ASAT is an objective testing. The test paper recognizes neither sex nor appearance of candidates. There is no teacher input in the marking. There is therefore at least an even-money chance that the boot is on the other foot: that the TE scores are "biased" and that the ASAT scores are fair dinkum.

There is also a third possibility: that non-moderated TE scores and ASAT scores are both correct in terms of their own relevance and validity. The two scores are not really indicators of the same thing. One would not expect their averages to be identical at the best of times.

Whether or not the present Year 12 ACT examination system is good, bad, or the best that can be devised in the absence of external examinations, is not under discussion here. Obviously, if there were an examination system that is superior to any other, it would already be in use everywhere else.

But no matter what, it is quite wrong to monkey with (the correct word is “monkey” or “falsify”, not “calibrate”) the results of an objective Australian Council for Educational Research test by raising or lowering the scores of people according to weight, height, sex, colour of hair, virginity, religion, or whatever, in order to squeeze the scores into a mould that does not conform to facts and reality.

The Canberra Times reports that a committee is now looking at the sex of students at ANU and CCAE. I will be very upset if our Year 9 daughter were one day to be admitted to a tertiary institution not on the basis of her own efforts and achievements but because she is a girl.

VOTING FOR SMALL PARTY

I AGREE with the gist of the “Careful voting urged” letter (CT, March 1) with one reservation: as I see it, my vote for one of the “very capable people” in one of the major parties (Labor or Liberal) will almost certainly help other candidates in that same party I would not give my vote to in a month of Saturdays.

This is so because, in the first instance, my vote – first preference, second preference, or whatever – will be allotted to the party of the person I voted for to establish how many people of that party have been elected, if any. It is only then that attention is given to the number of votes each party nominee has collected.

However, as always, there will be a good number of electors who will give their votes to their favourite party, the party they have always voted for, irrespective of the candidates put up by their party. These people will tick the party box above the line. This means that, in practice, irrespective of my vote (though my vote will assist party nominees for which I did not vote), Labor and Liberal candidates will in all likelihood be elected in the rating order they appear on the ballot paper.

This is the reason why my votes one-two-three (I won’t bother with more preferences) will go to candidates from one of the very small parties or to Independents.

WOMEN MUST BEAR A CROSS

11 August 1987

The article about Senator Ryan's "problem... because she is a woman" (CT, August 8) does not go to the root of the matter. We can either have "equality" or "affirmative action", not both. Rightly or wrongly, the Government practices affirmative action. By definition, therefore, some women hold responsible positions because of their sex.

It was not always so. When I was an undergraduate after the war, we had women professors and women lecturers. I taught in a government secondary school run by a women principal and later, employed by the Public Service in the 60s, I was attached to a small overseas post where the First Secretary was a woman. A few years later, in Canberra, the branch head was a woman. Most of these people were able and some were not. So what! It is par for the course. The Peter principle existed before it was discovered. Gender didn't come into it.

Now, as then, there are women holding senior jobs because of their experience, knowledge and ability. But with affirmative action in the Public Service, in our teaching service, and in politics, they are tarred with the same brush as their less able sisters. It is a cross they will just have to bear.

VIETNAMESE AND FRENCH

25 January 1988

What Nola Cooke (CT, January 18) "actually wrote" in her original letter "Vietnam in retrospect" was that the French colonial regime in Vietnam was primarily responsible for the emergence of communism in Vietnam.

During four years I spent in South Vietnam not so long after Dien Bien Phu I could not discern any anti-French sentiment in the population. I had colleagues on the staff of the university there

who had fought with the Vietminh and my students came from towns and villages from the north, the centre, and the south of the country.

In the privacy of our flat (my wife and I had married in Sydney before we went there and two of our children were born in Vietnam) we sometimes heard anti-Diem murmurings and there is no doubt that “Uncle Ho” was far from being unpopular with the man in the street. But while everybody welcomed independence from French rule, the French as a people, their institutions and their education system, were held in very high esteem indeed.

Furthermore, in her original letter, Nola Cooke drew parallels between French administration in Vietnam and British administration in India. Taking account of the size of the populations, the differences in terms of size, racial composition, religious and social structures in India and Vietnam as well as pre-colonial political background, such comparisons are not particularly valid.

WALDHEIM NO WAR CRIMINAL

23 February 1988

I do not understand why your correspondent gets so het-up about the Austrian Presidency (CT, February 17). I could not care less whether Mr. Waldheim resigns or not. Of course he is not a war criminal. Those who accuse him as such really don't know what they are talking about. People of his generation were just cogs in the wheel of the Axis war machine.

However, Kurt Waldheim lied when he related his wartime doings in the book about his life. Indeed, to say, as he did some years ago, that he had “forgotten” about his wartime service in Yugoslavia at the time the book was written, is yet another lie, and a particularly silly one at that. For all I care, he can be Austria's President for life, but I am glad he is not the President of my country.

IMBALANCES 'NOT PREJUDICES'

12 April 1988

I refer to the equal-employment article by Nia Stavropoulos and Judith Dowson on page 2 (CT, April 5). Examples of imbalances between the sexes in terms of occupations and incomes cannot be indicators of 'societal prejudices' when all around us we can observe that economic activity is not distributed in proportion to the social, cultural and physical attributes of the population.

Immigration statistics show that migrants from some non-English speaking countries have an average wage very much higher than migrants from some other countries. Is this a proof of social injustice? We have many more aboriginals in public service employment than in private employment. The reverse is true for Vietnamese refugees. There are probably disproportionate numbers of Irish in the police, "gays" in entertainment, Jews in the rag trade, Greeks in the café business, and women in physiotherapy, librarianship, nursing or teaching. There are many more lawyers than engineers in our parliaments. All this has nothing to do with equal employment opportunity or discrimination. People tend to gravitate to those areas of activity best suited to their interests or talents, real or perceived.

We have more men in jail than women. More men are supporting women than there are women supporting men. Are these the signs of social injustice? Of course not!

It is not difficult to understand why the average wage of women is less than that of men or why only 11 percent of public service clerks 10/11 are women. Again, it has nothing whatever to do with equal opportunity. Indeed, I would imagine that everybody is in favour of equality of opportunity for everybody. What people are against is the spectacle of promotion in our public service and in our schools on the basis not of ability but of sex. This is very bad and lays the groundwork for much inefficiency, injustice and discord. It is the sort of nonsense up with which we should not put.

BAVARIANS AND BLACKS

16 September 1988

The new RSL leader may not possess the gift of the gab, but it makes no sense to call his views “bigoted rhetoric” (CT, leading article, September 10). We are all born equal, as the Prime Minister said, but politicians have decreed that some are less equal than others.

Aborigines are entitled to many special benefits over and above those available to other residents in Australia. This is discrimination, positive or negative, good or bad, on the basis of race. To call people “racist” because they perceive short-comings in the application of this policy strikes me as cockeyed.

About the time of the Burke and Wills expedition one of my grandfathers was born in the Kingdom of Bavaria. Would it not be odd if my children called themselves Bavarians? If there were special benefits available only to Bavarians, would it be proper for them to claim such benefits, financial or otherwise? Would it make sense for them to be legally entitled to them irrespective of need?

To be called “fascist” or “racist” by people who don’t like such issues raised is reminiscent of the McCarthy era a generation ago when those who voiced liberal or left-wing or anti-establishment views were tarred with the communist brush.

AID AND EXPORTS

Your correspondent Janet Hunt (CT, April 1) writes about exports to developing countries and aid to those countries. Since the dollar value of exports to these countries is much greater than the dollar value of our aid to them, we should, presumably, draw the appropriate conclusions.

When we buy coconuts or sardines or computers at whatever price, nobody does anyone a favour. Buyers as well as sellers are happy. Whether our aid to developing countries or any one country

in particular should be increased or decreased or remain unchanged is, no doubt, the topic of careful consideration by the relevant authorities. To link or compare the dollar value of our exports to the dollar value of our aid, does not make an awful lot of sense.

NO SIMPLE SOLUTIONS

20 April 1990

Janet Hunt, in a recent letter, is trying to make a 'simple point' by stating that 'huge financial flows' are going from developed countries to developing ones and that Australia's earning from exports to Papua New Guinea are worth more than the value of our aid. The 'simple point' is not so simple.

There are 'huge financial flows' going to The Canberra Times every year arising from people who pay 50 cents per copy for the newspaper. There are many people who do not buy the paper for whatever reason. Those who do, do so because they want to.

If people in Papua New Guinea buy our cars, air conditioners, lawn mowers, beer, soapies and clothes hoists, they do so because they want to. The monies paid to Australians is not a gift.

If we, in Australia, buy so many Japanese goods, it is because the Japanese are better educated, better trained, because they work harder and because there are more of them. If our adverse balance of trade with Japan had any bearing on aid, we ought to be getting such aid from Japan. Big sums of money from Japan in the form of untied aid would no doubt be welcome as a one-off gesture, but would it really be useful or harmful in the long run, seeing that Japan could not be expected to aid us forever?

For every complicated problem there is a simple solution. And it is always wrong! The problems connected with international trade and with overseas aid are very complicated indeed.

ABC'S JOB IS TO REFLECT ALL SIDES

8 February 1991

If the Minister had not “leaned heavily on the Australian Broadcasting Corporation” (Letters, January 28), the ABC would still be presenting one expert’s wisdom on radio and TV, morning, noon, and night. As a long-time supporter of Saddam Hussein’s Iraq, that particular expert’s comments were as impartial as Little Red Riding Hood’s “grandmother” was impartial about Little Red Riding Hood’s welfare.

It is right and proper for the ABC to be independent of the political party in power at any one time. While the thrust of the ABCs social commentary is always predictable, it is often quite interesting. One would have thought, however, that prolonged and repeated discussion about serious issues of the moment, such as the Gulf war, should reflect the values of all Australians and not just hammer, day in and day out, the views of a minority of well-meaning people.

Our elected representatives do not all agree on this issue but, rightly or wrongly, there is no doubt where majority views lie. It is perfectly honourable and laudable for politicians to follow the dictate of their consciences in opposition to majority views. But Mr. David Hill, as general manager of the ABC, cannot permit himself the same luxury. His convictions, or those of his staff, must not result in totally unbalanced current affairs programs.

GENDER EQUITY IS A NONSENSE

July 1992

The General Manager of the Australia Council refers to statistics which show that women are still very much disadvantaged in the arts, in performance, exhibition and publication (Letters, July, 4) and wants “to find out what we can do about it”.

There are many imbalances around us that require adjustment

and we need to rectify the gender disarray of prison inmates, supported spouses, chess and bridge champions, nurses, engineers, senior citizens over 75, et al.

We need not confine ourselves to gender. Why are there so many French dishes offered in the dining rooms of our hotels?

For every native speaker of French living in Australia, there must be hundreds of migrants from one-time Yugoslavia or Holland or Germany. Where are all the Yugoslav or Dutch or German restaurants? What is to be done?

There are no self-confessed gays in the senior ranks of our armed services. The Chief of Staff should have an adviser for Homosexual Affairs.

On the other hand, there is a disproportionate number of gays and lesbians in the fields of literature, the arts and entertainment. A little affirmative action should restore the balance.

Countless other inequalities need investigation. An item reported in The Canberra Times recently had it that the average family income in the ACT is nearly 50 percent higher than the income of the average Australian family. We need researchers to examine this statistically significant anomaly to enable us "to find out what we can do about it".

ACT POLICEMAN'S UNHAPPY LOT

26 March 1993

For years I have been following with growing fascination Justice Higgins's rulings on questions of law, ("Finding of guilt on police assault impossible: judge", CT, March 20, p.16).

Reading the court report, there seems no doubt that the assault on the policemen took place. But Justice Higgins said that the law required that the policemen were doing "something pursuant to their duty".

Yes, they were in the car park on duty. But no, "moving out of the

car park after the execution of duty”, said Justice Higgins.

Thus, Justice Higgins directed the jury to acquit the accused.

If this is the law, the law is an ass just as it was in Dickens’s time, though one is tempted to improve on Dickens’s observation by a slight amendment of this 19th century dictum: A policeman’s lot in Canberra cannot, indeed, be a happy one.

QUALITY COUNTS

In “Homophobia tarted up” (CT, Letters, 14 Sept) Dr. Peter Jackson complains of a book reviewer’s opinion that gay authors produce their best literature when the reader is not aware of their sexuality. Jackson insists that not only homosexuals but black or female writers are better writers if they tell their readers that they are black or female.

I believe the reverse is true and that a writer’s sexual practices, gender, or racial origin are attributes that have no bearing on the ultimate judgment of the quality of an article, a short story, a TV script, a play, a novel or a ministerial submission.

BUT BOSCH ONLY SPOKE THE TRUTH!

I refer to the article (CT, July 24, p2) reporting that “Henry Bosch is under severe pressure to resign from all government positions after a serious outburst about Aborigines”. He had referred to Aborigines as a “Stone-Age people”.

I consulted our encyclopedia. The Old Stone Age endured for many thousands of years until, about 10,000 years ago, it merged into the New Stone Age. People still used stone tools and weapons but began to abandon a nomadic existence with the invention of food crops and the domestication of animals.

The Bronze Age followed, with copper tools, the discovery of

sun-dried bricks, the baking of clay for pots and the spinning and weaving of cloth. This was followed by the Iron Age.

By these definitions, Australian Aborigines were a Stone Age people when European settlers arrived on this continent.

The Public Service column (CT, July 25, p9) advises that the Department of the Arts and Administrative Services is angry at Bosch's "highly offensive remarks". Two lines from an old evergreen come to mind:

If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken

Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools...

THE DISMISSAL OF A SENIOR PUBLIC SERVANT

November 1988

I refer to letters in connection with Charles Perkins (CT, November 9). During the 60s Charles Perkins went on his freedom ride. With him went the sympathies of the community. Nobody can take this achievement away from him. Now, Charles Perkins has been relieved of his job and the Aborigines have lost much of the sympathy they once had.

My view, shared I think by many others, is that the only thing wrong with Charles Perkins's sacking is the timing. It should have happened years ago. He has been on air and on TV many times. Every time I listened to him I wondered how it was possible for such a person to be given the job he had. No non-Aboriginal head of an Australian public-service department would have got away with so much for so long.

If the Government now has a political and administrative mess on its hands, it is only reaping the fruits of its public-service promotion policy. Discrimination, positive or negative, is anathema to equality and a bad thing, no matter whether it is based on race, sex, religion or whatever.

Allied to the government rethink on Aboriginal affairs must be the question whether it is conducive to “dignity”...happiness...enthusiasm (Pat Crane, November 9) to give more and more money to Aborigines and to those who now call themselves Aborigines. Indeed, those politicians who believe that by doing so they will generate self-help and self-esteem do not exhibit an abundance of common sense.

FUNDAMENTALISTS AND OTHER BELIEVERS

30 July 1997

Noting the catchy headline of Richard Begbie’s article about fundamentalism from the ABC (CT, July 27, p.8), I was somewhat perplexed to note that Begbie redefines a fundamentalist as one “who knows he is right’. By that definition, just about every letter writer to The Canberra Times – indeed, a goodly proportion of all of us – are fundamentalists.

The genesis of fundamentalism goes back to the early 19th century when some American Protestant ministers and thousands of their followers awaited the second coming of Christ.

By the end of that century, Fundamentalism was the name of a movement which upheld the beliefs of orthodox Christianity.

They opposed the modernists who, in the light of the many scientific discoveries of the modern era, wanted to make the Church more relevant to the dilemmas of our time.

These days the idiomatic meaning of fundamentalism has shifted to designate orthodox followers of many faiths such as pacifists, who will not take up arms under any circumstances because of religious scruples, or parents who insist on their daughters wearing black veils in Australian classrooms, or Aborigines who object to a bridge being built because of some secret “women’s business”.

Richard Begbie cites the recent contretemps between Professor

Plimer, geologist, and Dr. Roberts, who claims to have found Noah's Ark in Turkey. Begbie calls Plimer a fundamentalist. Begbie does not admire fundamentalists.

It seems to me that if any one of the two protagonists is to be labelled such, it should be Roberts rather than Plimer.

Dr. Roberts may not be a 24-carat fundamentalist, but he will do as a respectable stand-in until the real thing comes along.

PEOPLE ALWAYS READY TO KILL

17 October 2001

I refer to the article "America's Left turns on itself" (CT, October 12, p.11): There is little point in interminable soul-searching arising from the events of September 11. I wish Noam Chomsky and Christopher Hitchens remembered the writings of another one-time leftie, a contemporary of Jean Paul Sartre and Albert Camus: Arthur Koestler.

When Koestler wrote 50 years ago that people have been willing to kill and die for good, bad, and harebrained reasons ever since the world began, he discovered a truism that must surely be obvious to everybody.

Rhyme and reason have nothing to do with it. When nut cases who harbor perceived injustices combine pots of money with 21st-century technology, we get the sort of cocktail we have seen on our TV screens. Nobody runs amok with a sword anymore.

I imagine there are plenty of Indonesians who disagree with Australia's foreign policy during the Timor crisis. Like it or not, there is nothing much they can do about it. But they don't fly a plane into our Parliament House.

A REAL HOOT

25 May 2009

Thank you for Norman Abjorensen's opinion article, "Cold War a triumph of American-style capitalism (May 20, p11).

It is a real hoot amid today's hype about the decline and fall of the free enterprise system.

So the metamorphosis of possibly well-meaning heads of governments in former communist countries such as the Soviet Union, Hungary, Romania, the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Albania, Poland et al, into ruthless dictators with millions of lives on their conscience, never mind their cloud-cuckoo-land economic theories which China has now abandoned, is due to the fiendish anti-communist conspiracies of the capitalist world with America in the vanguard.

I had not believed that such views still existed in Australia, so, for the sake of freedom of thought and expression, I am agreeably surprised that they do.

I take it if Abjorensen were our prime minister, his government would caution our big brother – estranged as we might be – to ease off on the misunderstood rulers of North Korea and Burma to give them a better chance to achieve their utopia.

Letters to the Quadrant Editor

BORKENAU IN AUSTRALIA

December, 1985

Quadrant readers of W.W. Bostock's September article about Franz Borkenau may be interested to learn that Borkenau spent a year and a half in war-time Australia. He was behind barbed wire. Interned in Britain after the fall of France, as I was, we were disembarked at Port Melbourne from H.M.T Dunera on the first anniversary of the war, 3 September, 1940, and sent to Tatura camp 2, then Camp 3, and later Camp 4. Borkenau's academic achievements have been highlighted by W.W. Bostock and, indeed, I recall him as a fascinating giver of talks and lectures within the confines of the internment camp.

For me, however, he has the added distinction of being my first employer in Australia. He asked me if I could bring him his breakfast from the mess every morning. He liked to breakfast in bed. The inducement being a shilling a week, I accepted with alacrity. I was seventeen years old and thought then, as I think now, that I was grossly overpaid.

From memory, Borkenau returned to the U.K. late in '41 or in '42. He, like most of us, spent about a year in Australian internment with a British Home Office release in his pocket. It was not valid for Australia.

REFLECTIONS ON STONE THROWING

November 1991

I read Fred Blanks' "School Reunion" tale (September 1991) with great interest. We probably have similar backgrounds. I noticed with some surprise that our maternal German-Jewish grandfathers were both called Sigmund. Be that as it may, his story strikes a note of discord with me.

There is Blanks' penfriend Ortrud who is obviously a woman of goodwill. Why the disdain? With her "conscience hard at work",

why drag in her religion, her “Wagnerian name”, her marital status, or her “almost compulsive travelling”? By Fred Blanks’ light, I am a much more compulsive traveller than Ortrud. She works for the “reconciliation of anybody and everybody”. Why the sarcasm? Is it not a good thing to work for reconciliation?

Blanks goes on to explain why he did not go to the...50th anniversary school reunion of his class at which he was to have been the “special guest of honour”. Having once been chased around the schoolyard by other seven year-olds who threw stones at him because he was Jewish, he writes to the organizing committee asking them to let him know whether any of the seventeen students who would be attending had been among the stone-throwers of 1933. Knowing this in advance might save some embarrassment, for them and for him, “on the great reunion day”. Because his query drew no response he did not go.

At the time Protestant tots in Melbourne and Sydney threw stones at Irish-Catholic tots; in the then Mandate of Palestine little boys of Polish-Jewish background threw stones at little German-Jewish boys as Czech kids threw stones at class-mates with German names. Since then tens of thousands of brats throughout the world have thrown stones at others for all sorts of inane reasons. It should not happen in the enlightened and tolerant Australia of today but it does.

How many of us remember with embarrassment inglorious episodes from our childhood? I recall with little joy how we, the boys of Tertia – Year Eight – of the Goethe Schule in Berlin, a selective government secondary college, unmercifully tormented a newly-qualified and recently-appointed teacher until the school authorities finally transferred him elsewhere. He had a thick Russian accent – I assume he was the offspring of a Russian émigré family. From memory, the behavior of the half-dozen Jewish boys was no different from the non-Jewish boys. This was in 1936, before Jewish students were expelled from government schools all over Germany.

Fred Blanks states that the 1933 stone-throwers were “acting under indirect parental guidance or instruction”. Not necessarily so! Every parent is aware that children from perfectly well-adjusted

families are not immune from perpetrating quite unconscionable misdemeanours.

Let us not forget that for five long years after Hitler came to power most of the people dispatched to concentration camps were non-Jewish Germans. If the Jews had not been targeted in National Socialist dogma, the Nazi dictatorship and war machine would have been no less frightful. In that event, little Fred and little Bern would, in all likelihood, have become young uniformed adults joining in the chorus “denn wir fah-ren ge-gen En-ge-land, En-ge-land”. Fred Blanks must surely be aware of the power and influence of totalitarian regimes over people in the 1930s.

If ever there was a “just” war in which victory for the wrong side would have resulted in a catastrophic setback for human progress, it was the Second World War. It so happened we won. But, 50 years down the track, let us not be too self-righteous. I am sorry Fred Blanks did not go to his reunion. I would have.

EX-OBERSTURMBANNFÜHRER HÖTTL AND THE WAR

June 1994

Thank you for bringing such an unusual conversation to the pages of Quadrant (May 1994). As a one-time child refugee from Hitler’s Germany and a lifelong student of the history of the Second World War, please permit me some comments.

Former Senator John Wheeldon makes the point that Dr Wilhelm Höttl, at the end of the War, was “ten years younger than the average age of officers of the same rank”. My understanding is that it was known throughout the country that promotion was much faster in the SS and Waffen SS than in the other services. This was an inducement for young men to volunteer for the SS before they were called up and for serving military personnel to request transfer to the SS. Besides, Höttl received his token promotion from Sturmbann to Obersturmbannführer – major to lieutenant-colonel

– after Hitler’s suicide and four days before Germany’s surrender. A thirty-year old major during the sixth year of a war is about par for the course in any Western army.

I do not believe that there is even a trace of a possible nexus between the “combination of political, economic and social factors” inducing a “nineteen-year-old Höttl to become an active Nazi, and to remain one for over a decade” and the situation that might arise from any combination of such factors in the Australia of half a century later. In Hitler’s dictatorship all media were effectively controlled. Television, which can be picked up across borders, had not yet arrived. Foreign language broadcasts were in their infancy and in wartime lose their impacts. Travel to and communications with other countries were but a very small fraction of what they are today for all the obvious reasons. It is very difficult for Australians used to living in a free society to comprehend how pervasive state dogma can be in a controlled society. This is still so in many parts of the world. In an efficient dictatorship of the thirties it was very much easier to fool all the people some of the time or some of the people all the time.

The Austrian hostility towards Italy, as reported by Höttl, must have had its counterpart in Germany. I remember being taken with my class to welcome Mussolini at the time of his visit to Hitler in the thirties. As we waited for Mussolini’s car to come into view we sang, in conjunction with hundreds of other school children lining the road, a German hit of the time which, many years later, surfaced in Australia as “You Can’t be True, Dear”.

Höttl says that he did “not know about the extermination program until August 1944” and states later that he “first had concrete evidence of the extermination of Jews when...in Hungary in March 1944”. But I am inclined to accept at face value his assertion today that he did not really know about the Holocaust until 1944. Not only have many of us a tendency to forget what we do not want to remember, but fragments of uncomfortable tidings have a habit of going in one ear and out the other. My father, who was in the concentration camp Theresienstadt from August 1942 until his liberation in 1945, told me in Melbourne in 1947, where I was then an ex-service CRTS undergraduate, that he had not believed

until 1943-44 that deportation for resettlement in Poland was a euphemism for mass murder even though there were persistent rumours and some evidence that this was so.

Höttl cites Göring's remark to the British and French Ambassadors at the outbreak of war – "If we lose this war, then God save us!" – as a mark of Göring's intelligence and realism. But Göring was wrong. As I see it, Germany and the German people – never mind Europe and Western civilisation – are much better off today than they would be had Hitler won. The Höttls of Germany and Austria may not agree.

Perhaps Admiral Canaris, Chief of German Military Intelligence, hanged by Hitler in April 1945, ought to be quoted in this context. An early Hitler sympathizer, he was certainly more clear-sighted than Admiral Dönitz, and seems to have got his Führer's measure after six years of a peacetime Nazi regime. Canaris is reported to have prefaced his address to senior officers on his staff at the beginning of the War thus: "Gentlemen, if we lose this war it will be terrible", and added after a moment's thought in audible sotto voce, "and if we win this war it will be more terrible still".

STICKING POINTS

May 1996

It does not sit well with me that the monumental 1178-page study of the Second World War should be reviewed as if, after fifty years, we now have the one true version of this war (March 1996). After reading "World at Arms" with great interest, I wrote to the author, Gerard L. Weinberg, with some queries and comments which elicited a friendly reply. But some sticking points remain.

Professor Weinberg had it that when Hitler was planning his war, "it became obvious that France was reluctant to fight at all" and that, therefore, the bulk of Western resistance would come from Britain. I think this is very much an America-centred stance developed after the event. France had been Germany's main wartime

foe for generations. For a European of any hue to have voiced the view in 1937 that Hitler, after becoming the master of Austria and Czechoslovakia, would defeat Poland, Norway, Denmark, Holland, France and Belgium, in a succession of blitzkriegs, with only Britain left to defy him until the tide turned, such a politician would have been delivered to the loony bin ere long.

There are countless accounts based on German records that show the unexpected anti-German revolt in Yugoslavia as the cause for the postponement of the invasion of the Soviet Union, well after late spring, when the warmer weather had dried the dirt roads. Had Hitler invaded a few weeks earlier, as planned in "Operation Barbarossa", those extra weeks might have made the difference between capturing Moscow and not capturing Moscow. Not so, says Professor Weinberg, and states that the Balkan campaign had nothing to do with the date of the invasion on 22nd June 1941, quoting a single recent study as his reference.

Nor can I accept Weinberg's thesis that the July putsh provided Germany's last "election" as a united country until 1990. He says that "most generals chose to support the Hitler regime..." when they received orders on their teleprinters from the putchists in Berlin on the one hand and from Hitler's headquarters on the other hand. This is true as far as it goes.

But when Colonel Stauffenberg who had placed the bomb at Hitler's headquarters returned to Berlin, he was furious to discover that the order to arrest all SS had not been given. However, there had been telephone calls and a broadcast from Hitler's headquarters that an assassination attempt had been unsuccessful. Stauffenberg, who had seen the explosion from afar, did not believe this. The teleprint order from the putchist officers was indeed sent, but it was now much too late to be accepted at face value. A decision by a military commander in this situation is not an "election" or a measure of his personal views or sympathies.

There is a statement in the book that the British government "from at least 1943 and into 1945" preferred top Nazis to be summarily shot without a trial. This reminded me of an episode at the Teheran Conference of November 1943, described in volume V of Churchill's *The Second World War*. The Russians suggested that

50,000 officers and technicians of Hitler's armies should be shot and that this would "extirpate" German military strength forever. Churchill wrote that he was so upset by this statement that he got up and left the room only to have Stalin and Molotov scurry after him to assure him that it was all said in jest.

It is true that Hitler prepared for war and that, as a consequence, he had a military advantage in 1939 and 1940. But, whether we like it or not, the German war machine was a very efficient instrument. It fought for long against huge odds. It was certainly ruthless. Professor Weinberg mentioned in his letter to me that they shot 30,000 of their own soldiers. Enigma notwithstanding, we couldn't sit on them for years. Were the German generals, Nazi or not, really the incompetent nincompoops they appear to be in this study?

Which is not to deny that *A World at Arms* is a magnificent book of breathtaking range and detail.

JEWES UNDER THE NAZIS

September 2004

As a one-time kindertransport refugee who left Berlin in December 1938, I am astonished to read of a professor of history disputing the view that "the majority of Germans did not know of the program of mass extermination of Jews carried out by the Nazis during the Second World War" (September 1998). Professor Pipes agrees that "Hitler began to dehumanize German Jews" but then deduces that the "average German" must therefore have been aware of the Holocaust since this dehumanization occurred "in full public view".

It is difficult for people in the Western world today to comprehend the situation in Hitler's dictatorship. Within one year of the Nazis coming to power, 120 concentration camps were in operation – consolidated by 1939 into six big camps. Until November 1938, not many inmates were Jewish. The threat of a little spell in a camp for those on the outside who would not conform was always effective.

Besides, while one did not necessarily wander into one because of minor sins, going against city hall in a dictatorship is an undertaking fraught with unpleasant consequences.

In 1932, my parents had selected a secondary college with a liberal tradition and I got there at Easter 1933, the beginning of the German school year. By that time the principal had been pensioned off. Eventually, Goebbles' brother-in-law took his place. It was not a liberal institution for very long.

The judgements of the regular courts were too lenient for Hitler. In 1934 he established a new "People's Court". It dealt, specifically, with "treason" (anti-Nazi activities) and brought down innumerable judgements against German enemies of the regime. In Berlin alone, 3000 sentences resulted in death by guillotine or hanging.

The German army killed 35,000 of its own soldiers. Many German Jews did not feel threatened until it was too late. My father was one of them. Before he was sent to Theresienstadt in July 1942, he was greeted on the Kurfürstendamm by people unknown to him. They did this in the fashion of the time by raising their hats as they passed. Liberated by the Red Army, he told me in Melbourne in 1947 that, as far as he saw it, the Berliners had greeted not him but the Jewish star on his chest. My father did not believe the rumours current in wartime Berlin. Indeed, frightful though conditions were in Theresienstadt, he continued to disbelieve them until 1944. That year some of the Theresienstadt inmates who had been sent to Poland were returned to Theresienstadt.

Nazi propaganda chief Goebbels' wartime diaries state: "We are definitely pushing the Jews out of Berlin...Unfortunately our better circles, especially the intellectuals, once again have failed to understand our policy about the Jews and in some cases have taken their part." While the regime could not prevent knowledge of the genocide from reaching some Germans, it never stopped striving to keep it secret. Deportations were undertaken in the dead of night. Even Dobberke, the SS officer in charge of the deportations of Berlin Jews, was not allowed to enter the camps.

It is quite true that the social isolation of the German Jews brought about in the previous eight years made the post-1941 genocide

of German Jews possible. Everybody has 20:20 hindsight vision. Where the social isolation had not succeeded, the Nazis were not successful in Germany. In April 1943, 2000 Jews with “Aryan” husbands or wives were collected in the Rosenstrasse in Berlin prior to “resettlement”. Their spouses gathered in front of their prison and protested for one week despite the SS and police threatening to shoot. They did not shoot and Goebbels gave in. They were not deported.

The Goldhagen thesis is an exercise in myopia. Had Hitler fallen in the Great War we would not have had the history we had. The heart of prewar anti-Semitism was not in Germany but in Austria and Poland. My father wrote his reminiscences in Melbourne and I have two prewar family histories totaling over 200 pages. These chronicles incorporate old letters and diaries and it seems to me that my Jewish ancestors lived in German lands reasonably happily for centuries until Hitler came along.

THERESIENSTADT

November 2004

According to Professor Maley (Letters, October 2004) I offered judgment on a book I had not read. I did not. What I did do was to “contribute” a view to the contretemps in...letters... about Holocaust language and asylum seekers”.

Professor Maley’s imagery and smiles didn’t appeal to me. He used the phrase “banality of evil” when referring to the government’s boat people policy. Most literate people would be aware of the origin of this expression. No matter which side of the political divide one may be, it is inappropriate to draw such parallels.

He warmed to his theme: in the wake of this policy which “has caused boundless sorrow to countless innocent individuals” – an over-the-top choice of words – he introduced the Nazi dictatorship by pointing out that “we do not run concentration camps of the German variety”. Our government may have “sought to marginalize

the judiciary”, but this has not been replaced by people’s courts. Not all his readers would know that these were created by Hitler for whom the regular German courts were too legalistic. See my last sentence of the preceding paragraph.

One does not need to be a social scientist to be aware that people often react differently to identical stimuli. Nor does this invalidate my belief, arising from experience, observation and reading, that, other things being equal, children in immigration detention centres have it easier than adults.

Lastly, there is the Theresienstadt film. I will leave aside my puzzlement that anyone could attempt to explore a route from Australian immigration detention to a wartime concentration camp in Czechoslovakia. Professor Maley is “intrigued” to read that I have viewed that film. As far as he is aware it does not exist. There are only some “nitrate out-takes” in Yad Vashem. How did I manage to track it down?

The Theresienstadt film I saw was shown by the Australian War Memorial a good many years ago. Much of it consisted of interviews of Theresienstadt survivors in Australia and elsewhere but it also incorporated the remnants of the Nazi propaganda film. Professor Maley should be able to access it from Screensound. It is numbered 206033X, “Paradise Camp”.

My father, a Rhinelander vintage 1873, was a versifier all his life and left behind some Theresienstadt poems. If Professor Maley reads German, as he appears to, I will gladly send him a copy of one of them: *Gefilmte Luegen*” (Filmed Lies).

LIFE UNDER HITLER

September 2006

As a German born a year after Hans Faubel, I would like to comment on “Growing Up under Hitler” (July-August 2006). Like his parents, mine sent me to a gymnasium. Unlike him, I grew up not in a provincial town but in Berlin, have Jewish ancestors, and

left Germany on a Kindertransport before the war.

While my headmaster was also dispatched to premature retirement in 1933, he was not replaced for some years. In Prussia, when Hitler came to power, 46 of the 137 senior educational administrators and 60 per cent of staff at the teacher training institutions were dismissed. The government decreed that a teacher was to be greeted by his class with "Heil Hitler". However, although my Goethe Gymnasium had Jewish students until after the Olympic Games, I recall no anti-Semitism among teachers or students. I know now that this was not so in the provinces, but I can only talk about my own school. During the weekly religious period, Protestants, Catholics and Jews trooped off to their respective teachers. Nor do I remember any of our teachers wearing a party badge. The school had a liberal reputation, which was the reason my parents had chosen it.

When we did eventually get our new headmaster, he turned out to be Goebbels' brother-in-law. But he was unable to turn his staff into true believers in a hurry. He wanted to expel me in 1937 for impertinence, but my "Ordinarius" Gruber put his foot down, spoke up on my behalf, and I collected instead an official warning from the 'Herr Direktor' in the college auditorium in front of the assembled school. Form master Gruber, by the way, was an officer of the reserve with dueling scars.

Faubel discusses the Winter Aid activities, the "one-pot" Sundays, and the collection of foodstuffs within the context of the Great Depression. These things had no effect on the number of unemployed. In the self-published *My Berlin Suitcase* I had this to say:

Occasionally one encounters the view...that Hitler had a good knowledge of economic theory. This is not so. All economic indicators show that the trough of the Depression occurred when he came to power. It is not difficult for a dictator who can eliminate opposition to achieve a measure of full employment in a comparatively short time, even without the assistance of an upsurge of the world economy. Hitler banned all trade unions other than the one state-sponsored union whose officials were paid by the government and did the Nazi party's bidding. There were no unions pushing for higher wages and prices remained stable...The warning of a little

spell in a concentration camp was enough to silence malcontents. He then introduced the Arbeitsdienst, a year's compulsory work for all school leavers...Then two years' universal military service became the law of the land so that the age cohorts of three years disappeared from the unemployment queues. Strict exchange controls held capital captive...Rearmament invigorated industrial production via the multiplier effect and boosted employment. A policy of rearmament is of course inefficient and ineffective unless the products of such rearmament are put into use. They were, in 1939 and 1940 and 1941. But did this turn out to have been to the benefit or the detriment of Germany and the German people?

Faubel reports that the newspapers were "one colour only". The German word is gleichgeschaltet – "switched to equality". As a perfect illustration of this, late in August 1939, I was a sixteen-year-old factory worker in London. All the newspapers had it that a war was imminent and I sent a cable to my mother in Berlin to take the first boat train to London. I knew that she had got a job as a cook with an English family, had her British visa, was saying her goodbyes and organizing the dispatch of household goods which in the Third Reich required clearance from customs and taxation authorities.

My mother boarded the next train with her one suitcase and ten marks, all the luggage and money she was allowed. It turned out to be the last train to Britain before Germany closed its borders prior to the invasion of Poland. She was in the London blitz. In Australia decades later, she revealed to me that in 1939 her Berlin friends and relations had urged her to be realistic and not to abandon her belongings at the behest of a child. One needed clothes and linen and kitchen utensils and a thousand and one items when beginning a new life abroad. Another week or two or three, and everything would be cleared and ready for dispatch...There was not a whisper in the German press about the war on the horizon, and radio as a means of international communication had not yet developed.

Faubel says he did not hear about the Holocaust when he was stationed in France and I accept this. With my parents having been divorced in 1931, my father was sent from Berlin to a concentration camp in 1942. He survived the war and wrote in his reminiscences

that, although he had heard the occasional rumour about events in Poland, he simply would not accept that such things could happen.

Lastly, Robert Murray asked why young men joined the SS, to which Hans Faubel replied: "It was the uniform." This was only partly true. When the German army invaded the Soviet Union there were only four Waffen SS divisions in existence. They accepted young men at an age before they were conscripted for military service. Promotion was faster. For those who were about to be called up, this was an incentive. Experienced commanders from the army were in great demand. The SS had major-generals in their thirties. Losses were high but teenagers tend not to dwell on such matters. Besides, conscripts sometimes found themselves allotted to these units. By the end of 1944 Germany had 500,000 Waffen SS producing thirty field divisions and they took anyone they could get including Muslims from the Balkans, Balts from the Baltic states, Slavs and even Tartars.

In 1996 I spent a week, as a guest of the association Against Forgetting, in Volkmarsen, the Westphalian town in which my grandmother was born in 1847. It so happened that I also attended the birthday of an uncle of a committee member and, at his request, sat next to him at dinner. He told me he had been with the remnants of the German division that reached the terminus of a Moscow tram line in December 1941. And then he said to me: "Gott sei Dank haben wir den Krieg verloren" – thank God we lost the war. And I don't think he said this for my benefit or for the first time.

DANCING INTO AUSTRALIA

December 2010

Laurie Hergenhan's evocative memoir "Dancing on the South Coast" (October 2010) reminded me of my own dancing years which had their genesis fifteen years earlier in a Tatura internment camp. Having arrived in Britain from Berlin as a fifteen-year-old in December 1938, I thank my lucky stars that I was interned there in

June 1940 and shipped to Australia to spend seventeen months in Victoria behind barbed wire.

Those months did me a lot of good. I had the time to read, attend talks, learn bridge, prepare for the Victorian Leaving Certificate and observe the great variety of Homo sapiens around me. But all of my elders and betters who contributed to my social development, one man stands out: Herr Mayer, who taught taught me dancing.

It had always been my ardent wish to be able to steer the girl of my choice through gyrating multitudes to the tune of a snappy foxtrot. In my hostel in Sutton, Surrey, I had been one of about a dozen teenagers from Germany and Austria. We were occasionally invited to a Saturday night social by one of the local youth clubs. This invariable meant dancing. Alas, the best I could hope for was to be led gingerly to a corner of the floor by a young lady who would then try to teach me the steps while I looked down at her feet wondering which way they would move next.

One day in a Tatura internment camp, someone thought something should be done to prepare the young men in the compound for life outside the wire. Herr Mayer was approached. He had been running a School of Etiquette in Melbourne before he was interned. Could he organize a course of ballroom dancing? Our compound held males only.

In the spacious Tatura mess, a couple of dozen internees, arranged in pairs, formed a circle around Herr Mayer. Mayer, a monocle clamped into one eye and a buttonhole in his lapel, had us moving around him anti-clockwise, to the strains of a German hit which eventually became a Bing Crosby evergreen, "In Dreams I Kiss Your Hand Madame". Each pair had a designated "lady". After ten minutes Herr Mayer would clap his hands, the gramophone operator would take the needle off the revolving record, there was a shuffle of hands, "ladies" became "gentlemen" and vice versa. Those who had led were now going to be led by their partners. And so it came about that when I was actually let loose in the antipodes, I entered that new world schooled in the two major steps of the time: foxtrot and waltz.

Early in 1942 I was released to pick fruit in Ardmona and then

joined the army. As an “alien” – the law forbade naturalization in wartime – I was put into a labour company. The following four years were spent in tents, sometimes in the bush and sometimes in the city. But if I was on leave and went to a dance, I could now approach all the ladies with a minimum of trepidation and without apologizing in advance. On army leaves in Melbourne, there were dances somewhere every night. It was unusual for single girls to live anywhere but with their parents and, occasionally over the years, an obvious newcomer to Australia, I was invited home by girls to meet their parents. They remembered my birthdays, borrowed a second bike, asked me to help with the washing up, and have a weekend with them. Once I spent five days’ leave near Mildura with the parents of a student teacher I had met at a dance. They were “blookies” in Red Cliffs.

After the end of the war, the army gave me a priority discharge to enable me to board a ship at British government expense which was to take me back to Britain – to which I had always wanted to return. Four days before boarding I decided I couldn’t go. I had grown too fond of the place. And it wasn’t the climate or the wide open spaces or the beaches. It was the people. And the primary person responsible for this state of affairs had been Herr Mayer, my Tarura dancing teacher.

LAWS DEVOID OF COMMON SENSE

November 2011

I pursued with interest ruminations in the daily press about the Bolt verdict and now the discussion on Aboriginality by Vice-Chancellor Alan Robson and the editor (October 2011).

However, I come to the subject matter from a different direction: How was it possible for clear-sighted people to enact legislation which is so obviously flawed? I cannot see why Henry Lawson’s grandchildren should be prevented from calling themselves Norwegian and spending Norway’s National Day folk dancing if they so wanted. But any law that stipulates that they are legally

Norwegian because of their grandfather is clearly not just counter-intuitive. It is harebrained.

If we applied the principles embodied in our present legislation to the case of an Australian who looks like an indigenous person but calls himself a European because he had an Irish great grandfather among his Aboriginal ancestors, the Aborigines around him would fall about in mirth and that would be the end of it.

But Australians who are not Aborigines and who are for the most part inheritors of Western civilization, seem to accept without further ado what the lawyers tell them – that, subject to a couple of provisos that appear to be easily produced, a person is an Aborigine because somewhere among his or her many Caucasian forebears there was an Aborigine. With some of our laws based on race, our lawmakers produced the convoluted legislation we have. They came a cropper when they were forced to define people in terms of race. The law as it stands today was not handed down to us carved in stone. It was fashioned by politicians and lawyers not all that long ago.

So my question is this: How was it possible to enact laws which are so obviously idiotic? Why were they not laughed out of court by those charged with the task – public servants though they might have been? I would have thought that in those days it was still possible to give frank advice. It seems to me that as soon as we introduced legislation which did not apply equally to all the people in the land, we were lumped with laws that are devoid of common sense.

Letters to Editors of other publications

A MATHEMATICIAN'S LULLABY

'Drylight', 1957

During my post-graduate professional year at the Sydney Teachers College, the management regretted the dearth of contributions from mathematics and science graduates to their annual publication 'Drylight'. I heeded the call.'

Sleep, Resultant, Sleep!

They insisted that marriage was a fusion of two different entities, but as for the inevitable chasm between them, it would take some time to bridge it.

So, we said, "Pooh to you, Sirs, this is the atomic age," and went and donged them on the digit.

Sleep, Resultant, Sleep!

Sleep, Resultant, Sleep!

When he tried to slip in the love, honour and OBEY part of the business on the sly,

We quoted the 20th century proof of $a+bi=c+di$ which is an equation showing the equality of two complex numbers having equal amplitude and equal moduli.

Sleep, Resultant, Sleep!

Sleep, Resultant, Sleep!

The psychologist told us the other day that your ignorance of Pythagoras' Theorem stems from ill-adjusted frequency modulations of tonsile origin setting off a series of Oedipus complexes which are the root of the matter.

So home we tootled and calculated $(ax^2+bx+c=0)^{\frac{1}{2}}$ which is a complex root and therefore suited us to the letter.

Sleep, Resultant, Sleep!

Sleep, Resultant, Sleep!

The other day one of your functional attributes came along and asked us what sex is,

And we deduced that he was definitely Sub-Normal

which, as everybody who remembers his Cartesian Geometry knows, is the length of the projection on the axis of abscissas of the segment of the normal between the point of the curve and the point of intersection of the normal with the x-axis.

Sleep, Resultant, Sleep!

Sleep, Resultant, Sleep!

Should your temper exhibit positive signs of somewhat oscillating stability,

The kinetic energy of $\sqrt{25}$ fingers will merge into a mass with rectilinear velocity of "a posteriori" probability.

Sleep, Resultant, Sleep!

Sleep, Resultant, Sleep!

Did I wake you from your slumber?

Daddy's love for Mummy is as deep and mysterious and real and unending and bottomless and undefinable as any transcendental number.

Sleep, Resultant, Sleep!

Sleep, Resultant, Sleep!

$(a+b)^2 = a^2+2ab+b^2$ and water at 212 degrees comes to the boil.

And if you are good and learn your vulgar fractions before breakfast

I'll come again tomorrow night and instead of singing a lullaby

I'll read you *The Nature of the Universe*, unabridged, by Hoyle.

Sleep, Resultant, Sleep!

MORONIC THINKERS?

The Age, 4 July 1984

According to the paper (19/6) a mob of students stormed the building occupied by Professor Geoffrey Blainey at Melbourne University, calling him a racist and demanding his resignation.

I am a one-time migrant. My parents, wife, self, eldest daughter and son-in-law were born in six different countries, one of them Vietnam. I am a Melbourne University graduate and a member of ICCRA, the association assisting Vietnamese refugees.

Like other people I am against "racist hate" - the students are reported to have chanted "2, 4, 6, 8 we don't need your racist hate". Indeed, I am against hatred of any kind. But personally, I cannot agree that there is anything objectionable in Professor Blainey's views. I hold views very close to his own.

The demonstrators could not have been very straight thinkers to have believed what they chanted. I hope they were not typical of Melbourne's student population. Unless, of course, they were just a bunch of morons out for a rumble.

DISADVANTAGED GROUP

Refugees in UK, September 1992

As a 'Kind' who arrived in Harwich in December, 1938, with 10 marks in his pockets, may I make the following comment:

I do not think any legitimate job is degrading if no 'better' job is available. This applied particularly in our situation as newcomers with poor command of the English language in times of unemployment.

After Lowestoft, the Salvation Army in Harwich, and Dovercourt, someone found a factory job for me in Lambeth. I was 16 and my pay was 14/6 per week. I didn't particularly like it; indeed, I hated it. But I was clear-sighted enough, even then, to understand that it

was better than no job at all. To this day I am grateful to that firm, Watts & Sons, for employing me when jobs were as scarce as hen's teeth.

LEARNED BROTHERS AND MACEDONIAN PAIN

The Sydney Morning Herald, 19 June 1993

I refer to the "xenophobic rodomontade" on the front page of the Herald (June 18). As an "ethnic" who was born in Yugoslavia with parents born in Russia and Germany respectively, with two Vietnamese born children and a Finnish-born son-in-law, may I state the following: It is true that there are cultural differences between people from different countries. But truth and exaggeration, fact and fiction are known and recognized yardsticks and values no matter where we are and who we are. I disagree with Justice Kirby.

It seems to me that unless Australian law is interpreted and applied in equal measure to all people who live in this country, no matter whether they come from Egypt or England, Somaliland or Sweden, the implicit relationship between law and justice in Australia would be even less evident than it is today.

MORE SEX BIAS, PLEASE

The Bulletin, 26 October 1993

I refer to the article about the "extraordinary anomaly" of sex bias among academics at the University of Southern Queensland and the proposed policy of "woman-only appointments" to overcome this. (B, October 5).

Such action, recommended by a professor and vice-chancellor, ought to be adopted by other organisations. This will rectify the sex imbalances in many facets of our society. There is sex bias in our

prisons. There are certainly very many fewer women supporting men than there are men supporting women. The sex imbalance among our senior citizens is obvious. Even more so is that among our top bridge and chess players.

How many women have been awarded the Archibald Prize? Indeed, sex-biased recruiting could be introduced for engineers and nurses, senior defence personnel and physiotherapists, insurance agents and pre-school teachers, auctioneers and magazine cover young persons, et al. Naturally, the principle of this approach to proportional representation is that a wide range of economic activities could be extended to height, weight, origin, religion, race, age, etcetera. Migrants from some non-English speaking countries have a very much higher average wage than migrants from other such countries. This is unjust. There are more Aboriginals in public employment than in private employment.

The reverse is true for Vietnamese refugees. There are many more lawyers than scientists in our parliaments.

Let us go the path being pioneered by the academic staff of the University of Southern Queensland and become the clever country!

THREE NO TRUMP

Australian Bridge, September 2000

(This letter to the 'Australian Bridge' magazine was a genuine query to their fictitious bridge professional Iwana Trump. I was interested in the probability of a particular distribution of cards. They printed my letter with their humorous reply which showed that their mathematics were not up to the task.)

7 August 00

Iwana Trump
Budapest
c/o Australian Bridge

Dear Iwana Trump,

The other day my partner opened with INT (15-18). I had 14 HCPs with four spades and a single QD. At duplicate, I bid 3NT.

This seemed the best bid in the circumstances. We had a combined strength of between 29 and 32 HCPs even if we discovered an eight-card major via Extended Stayman. Our opponents led a small D, they took the AD and KD and we made +660, probably top board (all others made the same number of tricks in 4S or went one down in 6S).

Question: is there a statistician amongst among your readers who can calculate the probability of my partner having only two diamonds missing AD or KD? Had this been the case, we would have been massacred. Such a calculation would need to take cognizance of the fact (a) that I had 14 HCPs in my hand with the single QD and (b) that my partner had between 15 and 18 HCPs (say, 16.5 HCPs), so that the chances of his holding either the AD or KD, enough to stop a D lead even with only 2 diamonds, would be very much better than evens.

However, I would like to have a firm mathematical probability value to back my gut feelings. A 60 percent probability is not good enough. It would not be worth risking a good average for the 40 percent chance of a bottom.

There is also the more general situation: of the unseen 26 HCPs of which my partner held an average of 16.5 HCPs and a diamond suit from as short as two to as long as five. Why give our opponents more information by bidding 2C? With the single QD, was mine a foolish bid at duplicate or a sensible bid?

Yours sincerely,

“SON OF MISSISSIPPI?”

Canberra Bridge Bulletin, December 2000

The story of the Mississippi heart hand in the May bulletin reminded me of my own misspent youth. Newly married, we found ourselves at the Saigon Circle Sportif. This was a social club offering recreational facilities, a left-over from the French colonial days. With our Sydney wedding a couple of months behind us, we had not been in the country very long. Outside it was coming down in buckets and washed out our plan of jumping into the swimming pool or playing a couple of sets of tennis.

On the weekday afternoon there were few people about. Sitting at the bar together with a couple of people we did not know, we somehow discovered that we were all bridge players. As we walked to a table I agreed to their suggestion of one piaster stakes. This was worth about a penny in those days. I had often played for ‘threepence a hundred’. After an evening’s play, usually changing partners after a rubber, a big loser rarely paid much more than the cost of a meal in a local eatery.

As we settled down with bids of “deux coeur” and ‘trois sans atou’ – it was still a fancophone country – we were not doing too well. It did not matter. My wife Jean had only just taken up bridge. Bidding in a foreign language was fun. It was all very exotic and adventurous and, besides, when in Rome...

Finally it was time to make for home and I moved to settle our debts. It seemed to me that we were in the red for much more than we had bargained for. Not the farm, not enough to lose sleep over, but certainly a few days’ salary. When I looked closer at the calculations I was told by the French gentleman that we had played for a piaster per point, ‘un point’, they explained. Not, as I thought, for a piaster per hundred points. What else could I do but pay up without further ado. Was this the Saigon equivalent of the Mississippi ploy? To this day, I do not know. Your guess, dear reader, is as good as mine.

KAISERS GEBURTSTAG

Canberra (Australien), July 2003

(In order to refresh my German which had been in disuse for nearly half a century – and also because I am interested in modern history – I subscribed to the German monthly historical magazine 'DAMALS'. In the issue of July, 2003, there had been an article about the celebrations of the Kaiser's birthday in the decades of his reign. Thus this contribution from me from my father's reminiscences.)

Bonbonniere zur Erinnerung

Mein Vater ...wurde bei Ausbruch des Ersten Weltkrieges in Moskau interniert und nach Sibirien geschickt. Er entkam nach dreijähriger Gefangenschaft über Stockholm nach Berlin. In hohem Alter schrieb er in Melbourne seine Erinnerungen darüber: "Nach und nach lernte ich die ungeheuerlichen Gegensätze im Leben Berlins kennen, die sich im Verlauf der Kriegsjahre herausgebildet hatten. Auf der einen Seite grösste Not...auf der anderen unbeschreiblicher Luxus. So wurde ich in einen der ersten Clubs eingeführt...Im Clubrestaurant die feinsten Delikatessen...Zuerst war ich entsetzt. Wenn die draussen das wüssten – sie würden alles kurz und klein schlagen. Bald aber glaubte ich nach den Entbehrungen der letzten Jahre mich berechtigt, nun endlich wieder einmal aus dem Vollen zu leben..."

Unvergesslich ist mir der 27. Januar 1918 geblieben. Kaisers Geburtstag. Man tafelte unter den diskreten Klängen gedämpfter Musik. Mein Nachbar...war sichtlich nervös und blickte von Zeit zu Zeit aufgeregt auf ein Blatt Papier das er unter dem Tisch in der Hand zerknitterte. "Sie werden doch nicht? Das ist doch die Sache der Herren da drüben", sagte ich, auf eine Gruppe von Aristokraten und Offizieren blickend. "Ich dachte auch so", erwiderte er, "aber ich bin vor einigen Tagen ausdrücklich darum gebeten worden, den Kaisertoast zu übernehmen". Da war nun nichts zu machen. Er legte los. Anfangs ging alles gut; als er aber zwischen Lachsforelle und Pute die üblichen Phrasen von 'schweren Zeiten' und 'durchhalten' auftischte, wurde ihm wohl selbst das Lächerliche seiner Rede bewusst, er began zu stottern, und es war einer der Herren von der anderen Fakultät, der die Situation rettete, indem

er ganz unvermittelt aufstand und rief: "Seiner Majestät, der Kaiser, Hurra – Hurra – Hurra" worauf der übliche Tusch und die Hymne das weitere Reden unmöglich machten. Als Erinnerung an diese letzte Kaisergeburtstagsfeier erhielt jeder der Anwesenden eine Bonbonniere mit dem Kaiserbildnis und einer riesigen schwarz-weiss-roten Seidenschleife.'

The translation is as follows:

My father, interned in Moscow at the beginning of the Great War in 1914, was sent to Siberia. In 1917 he escaped and, via Stockholm, made his way to Berlin. In Melbourne in his seventies, he wrote his reminiscences about these times: ...'as time went by, I was confronted with the enormous differences which had developed in Berlin during the war years. On the one hand shortcomings and starvation, on the other hand unbelievable luxury. It so happened that I was introduced to the membership of a leading club.. in its restaurant the finest delicacies...At first I was horrified. If people on the outside knew about this...they would smash it all to smithereens. But soon I felt that, because of my years of hardship in Siberian internment, that I was justified to live to the full... Unforgettable to this day is 27th January, 1918. Kaiser's birthday. One dined within earshot of subdued music My neighbour...was obviously nervous and, every now and then, glanced at a sheet of paper grasped under the table in one hand. "Surely you won't, that is something for the gentlemen over there", I said, looking at a group of aristocrats and senior officers. "I thought that also", he replied, but I was asked specifically a few days ago to offer the royal toast. There was nothing to be done. He began. All went well at first. But when, between prawn cocktail and turkey he began to mouth the accepted jargon about 'difficult times' and 'sticking it out', the hypocrisy of his address sank in, he began to stutter, and it was one of the gentlemen of that other faculty that saved the situation by rising suddenly and calling out: "His Majesty, the Kaiser, hurrah, hurrah, hurrah" which was followed by the customary trumpet flourish and the national anthem. As a souvenir commemorating this very last Kaiser's birthday festivity, we were all presented with a box of chocolates, on its cover the Kaiser's image, wrapped in an enormous black-white-red silk bow.'

'The Australian' invited readers to tell their VP Day stories and used my contribution to publish the article below.

FREE GROG AFTER A LONG WAR

The Australian, 10 August 2005

Bern Brent was one of the "Dunera boys", the boatload of young, predominantly Jewish men who had been rounded up in England in the early days of World War II and, because many had fled from Germany, shipped to Australia.

The British authorities thought they were a possible threat – and, initially, so did Australia.

Brent, now aged 82 and living in the Canberra suburb of Farrer, was released from internment at a camp near Tatura in rural Victoria in January 1942 and his first job was fruit picking in Ardmona.

In April 1942, he volunteered for service in the Australian Army, joining up at Caulfield racecourse in Melbourne.

"Since I was then not naturalized – the law prohibited naturalization in wartime – I was put into a special unit, the 8th Australian Employment Company, together with others like me," Brent recalled this week.

"Employment companies – much like the British Army Pioneer Corps – were non-combat units.

"Although I was A-1 medically fit, requests for transfer to other units were consistently denied, although in one instant, the RAAF asked for my services as I had been an instrument maker trainee in London before the war.

Having spent the war years loading and unloading goods trains up and down the Australian east coast, Brent has vivid memories of the end of the war.

"On VP Day, the members of No 1 platoon of the 8th Australian Employment Company were on the Tocumwal (on the NSW-

Victorian border) station platform waiting for the Melbourne goods train to pull-in," he said yesterday.

"The empty wagons of a NSW train - built for a different gauge - were lined up on the opposite side.

As soon as the munitions from Victoria were reloaded, that train would depart north.

"The canteen sergeant had mentioned that if there was confirmation of the rumour that the Japs had surrendered, he would open the wet canteen - beer to be on the house.

"Suddenly, a cloud of dust rising among the distant eucalypts approached us. It was the company staff car bouncing along the corrugated dirt track beside the single railway line.

"Helmut Newton, the company driver, stepped on the brakes and the car came to a stop next to the raised platform. A corporal with unfamiliar unit badges jumped out, talked briefly to the sergeant, and returned to the car, which disappeared as quickly as it had come.

"The sergeant turned to us: 'She's on,' he bellowed, 'Line up in threes. Without step, forward march!' He was referring to the free grog that was beckoning back in camp.

"It looked like the war was over. The transport company's three-ton flat top met us half way. The CO had sent it to pick us up."

SAIGON AS WAR LOOMED

Quadrant, Jan-Feb 2009

We married in Sydney in October '58 and left for Saigon the following month. On contract to the then Department of External Affairs under the Technical Assistance Scheme – often referred to as Colombo Plan – I was to assist the South Vietnamese Ministry of Education in the training of teachers of English at Saigon University.

A month after our arrival Jean wrote home: '...Saigon is picturesque and different enough to hold our interest for months. We like it best in the evenings when, wandering along the quay, we listen to the chattering of the people squatting there. There are lots of shrieking children, families eating their supper, and people curled up on mats trying to sleep. And the little sampans and houseboats rock to and fro ...' In another letter I had this to say: 'If my initial observations are anything to go by, the Vietnamese are a gentle and intelligent people.... Street hawkers will smile as you refuse to buy their wares. I saw a taxi back into a rickshaw tricycle. No curses, no shouts, no wild gesticulations. The driver of the rickshaw alighted in slow motion with perfect equanimity as a policeman strolled forward to take particulars. . . We have been here for only five weeks but already the novelty of first impressions fade. The enormous three-pronged fans twirling silently from ceilings have ceased to be objects of curiosity. The waiters in our hotel kow-towing each time they usher us to our table, no longer appear as stage-managed as they did on our first days and we have accepted the custom that on leave taking after a meal in the company of guests, one circumnavigates the table shaking hands with everybody...'

We eventually moved into a flat in Dakao, a few kilometres from the centre of the city, and slowly became acquainted with life in the tropics. At that time I was reminded of a definition of 'gentleman' as being 'a man who uses a butter knife when breakfasting alone on a Sunday morning.' We received an invitation for drinks at the house of new acquaintances. We had met them at a social gathering. James worked at the British Embassy and the invitation had arrived

by messenger. Telephones were often out of order and mail was unreliable. Drivers doubled as messengers.

At official functions ties were obligatory but this was an invitation from a Scottish couple. I had no business with the British Embassy, it looked like an invitation to a small private dinner, and I chose an open-necked, short-sleeved shirt. It was a humid tropical evening. As we parked close to the given address I noticed uniformed drivers lounging around their cars. The buzz of conversation from guests wafted across a veranda. As we approached the open wrought-iron gates of the villa we passed a policeman on duty. Men in suits were gathered on the lawn nursing their drinks. It was not going to be the intimate dinner party we had expected. As our host spotted us he came rushing towards us with his hand on his neck. By the time I shook his outstretched hand, he had torn off his tie and pocketed it. James would have used that butter knife on a desert island.

Soon after moving to Dakao, I watched from our balcony a cyclist pedalling down the street at full bore. As he braked, his front wheel locked and he was flung in a semi-circle across his handlebars and to the ground. Shaken, he picked himself up and proceeded to straighten his bike. Within seconds half a dozen pedestrians had collected around him laughing their heads off. There they stood choking in mirth, not showing the slightest signs of empathy. To this day I ponder: does this episode illustrate sheer callousness or just a curious facet of Vietnamese humour?

By mid-year I felt I had begun to establish my professional credentials. It was around this time that the Minister of Education asked me could we meet once a week at his office. He would like to improve his English. Earlier that year I had sent my first quarterly report to Canberra in which I summarized the task before me as I saw it:

‘From the professional point of view and as a newcomer to the East, I find that Vietnam provides a fascinating aspect of cross-currents evident in the organisation and aims of the educational picture. The ancient Chinese ideal of knowledge for knowledge’s sake is fighting a dragging but probably losing battle against western concepts of utility. But tradition and the old-way-of-doing-things appear to me to be a much more potent force than in western

society.'

In a later observation I had this to say: 'The primary motivator for educational reform is economic. The desire for improved standards of living demands an increased per capita work output and the learning of new technical tasks. When their schools are criticised for not serving the needs of society, developing nations have mainly economic needs in mind.... In an underdeveloped country the gap between the aspirations which are infinite and the means which are finite is very great indeed Here....conflicts arise... between religion and secularism, domestic modes and foreign modes, Saigon and the country, Christianity and Buddhism, Vietnamese and Montagnards, southerners and émigrés from the north'

We were invited to a South Vietnamese parade commemorating a Vietnamese anniversary and a detachments of South Vietnamese troops marched past. Assembling not far from our elevated timber stand, I could not help noticing the inept drill. They took an eternity just to line up for inspection. Keeping step presented difficulties. In view of the '54 defeat of the French army at Dien Bien Phu, I found this very puzzling.

Among our acquaintances were a French couple, Parisians both. Claude had served with the French army fighting the Vietminh and remained in South Vietnam as the manager of a French manufacturing business. I asked him how it had come about that the French army had been unable to keep the Vietnamese insurgents at bay. Claude explained what was known to every French colonial in Indo-China: Vietnamese southerners and Vietnamese northerners were a different breed. Ho Chi Minh's fighters were northerners. Tough and resourceful, they made do with a handful of rice all day. North Vietnam had winters with snow and ice. The Vietnamese industrial heartland lay in the north and the Communist hierarchy hailed from there. The Vietnamese university with all its research institutions had been in Hanoi. Saigon University was a very recent creation. When French soldiers had gone on leave for rest and recreation, they had gone to Saigon with its bars and casinos and dance halls. The southerners had a much more relaxed way of life,.

Our first French dinner at Claude and Françoise's is not

forgotten. We had been asked for 8 o'clock but nobody seemed to be concerned about the absence of food. We sipped our drinks and talked and were then served with another round of drinks. Hors d'oeuvre appeared on an array of trays well after ten o'clock. Once we did attack the delicious repast, all was forgiven, but from then on, if we were invited to dinner by locals—urban middle class Vietnamese had adopted French ways—we would have a snack at home beforehand.

There was another French couple that we occasionally saw. One day Yvonne mentioned that they were having dinner at her sister's who would be delighted if we could come also. We had not met her sister, said thank you very much, and duly turned up at the designated address on the appointed evening. It was a traditional Vietnamese dinner with our Vietnamese hostess in traditional Vietnamese garb. During the course of the evening and having a closer look at the two sisters, it became obvious that they were Eurasians. And while one sister looked like a European to the uninitiated, had married a Frenchman, and lived the life of a westerner, the other sister looked like any other Vietnamese at first sight, had married a Vietnamese, and lived her life as a Vietnamese.

One day I pulled up at one of the city's petrol bowsers and was approached by a uniformed US army lieutenant. Did I speak English? Did I live in Saigon? Could I suggest where he could take his colleague for an evening out? He was on leave from up country. I turned around and noticed a tall black smart-looking US army captain near their car. This was well before America sent fighting troops to Vietnam. These officers served with the South Vietnamese army as advisors.

I did not think the captain wanted to spend the evening at the Chinese opera just across from our Dakao flat. There was good dining to be had at French and Chinese restaurants, but this would presumably not fit the bill either. Then I recalled the 'Tour d'Ivoire', a ten minutes' drive from the centre of town. It was not a cordon bleu eatery but a perfectly respectable night club with a restaurant and a little band. I had been there with my wife and local residents. It was a remnant of the French presence in the country. If one was

without female company and wanted to dance, one asked any of the bao dei clad Vietnamese hostesses sitting on high stools at the bar. They were French-speaking but some had a smattering of English.

In the western world rock was beginning to supplant jazz, but in South Vietnam the bands in hotels, restaurants and nightspots still favoured the melodies of the war years. Songs like 'Jealousy' and 'Smoke gets in your Eyes' alternated with French evergreens like 'j'attendrai'. Dinner was not compulsory. One could sip a drink and listen to the music. It seemed the perfect spot for an American military advisor on short leave from the bush.

I suggested to the two young officers that we meet at that same petrol station that evening and I would then take them to the Ivory Tower provided they did not mind if I left them early. At about ten o'clock I guided them up a flight of stairs to the nightspot. We had a drink at the bar and chatted with some of the Vietnamese ladies. I was surprised to hear the black American speaking good French. Eventually, the two officers in uniform decided to try their luck on the dance floor. The lieutenant was soon foxtrotting with a diminutive partner, but not the captain. Not ten minutes later either when I said my good byes and left. From what I could overhear, the ladies begged to be excused when the captain asked them politely in French. They were tired. They had promised that dance to someone else. They were having a break. Not then – perhaps another time.

It was obvious that I had not done the captain any favours and I mulled over the situation as I drove home through the dark Saigon streets. I was not responsible for this state of affairs and yet I felt embarrassed. I was new to the East and had not expected any colour prejudice East of Suez.

Everybody in Saigon was aware of the existence of a revolutionary anti-government movement fuelled by the Communist regime in North Vietnam and our Embassy had declared many parts of the country to be out of bounds. One afternoon my wife Jean's American friend Nora rang her. Nora was Ted's wife, an American colleague at the university. Nora was in a panic. Could we come over? Ted had not returned home. He was over two hours overdue.

We hurried to their house a ten-minute drive away. The government still denied the existence of the Viet Cong but they had killed a Frenchman duck shooting on the Saigon River and had then apologised in a letter to the French Embassy. It had been a mistake. How were they to know, they explained, that he was a French resident with a Vietnamese wife? A couple of young recruits had been after his shotgun. This was soon after an American CIA man had been assassinated as he drove to the coast. A party of Viet Cong had lain in wait for him at a sharp bend on the road to Long Hai, a popular beach resort. They had also killed his Vietnamese driver. It was not a deed for which they apologised.

The Viet Cong were killers but not indiscriminate murderers. When the British assistant military attaché spent his honeymoon at a small beachside hotel, a party of Vietcong in black pyjamas had turned up in the middle of the night. They demanded 100 piasters from every visitor, perhaps fifty dollars in today's money. This was to be a contribution to the 'fight for freedom', the struggle against President Diem's dictatorship. They asked this young RAF officer who he was. He explained, showed his credentials, and gave them a 500 piaster note. He didn't have a hundred piaster note on him. The Viet Cong in charge disappeared, returned, and handed him 400 piasters change. He cautioned the British airman: he understood the situation, but suggested he not travel to the coast again.

Apart from teacher-training, the Australian government also provided assistance to the South Vietnamese government in the establishment of a dairy industry. To that end we had two experts at a farm at Ben Cat, about 45 minutes' drive out of town. One lived at the farm, the other commuted from Saigon two or three times weekly. One day his Vietnamese driver turned up at our embassy with a letter in Vietnamese. Wilfred and his interpreter had been kidnapped by the Viet Cong who had sent the driver with a ransom request for a typewriter, some medicines available only on prescription and a small sum of Vietnamese piasters.

This was a problem for the embassy. The Vietnamese government did not acknowledge the Viet Cong who, in their official communiqués, were simply 'brigands' and 'criminal elements'. The embassy sent the Colombo Plan attaché to the Viet Cong to discuss

the matter but they kidnapped him also. They were all missing for a day or two but everybody returned to Saigon safely eventually in exchange for what I understand to have been a second-hand typewriter.

Their release had followed the arrival of a senior Viet Cong cadre who had travelled to the Ben Cat area in order to interview the captives. The Viet Cong's accusation was that President Diem of South Vietnam was the lackey of the Americans, a dictator and a bad man. Wilfred and Australia aided Diem and this was a bad thing. Wilfred asked him whether he knew who Sukarno was. Yes, he knew that he was the President of Indonesia. Was Sukarno a Communist? Wilfred asked. The Viet Cong agreed Sukarno was a Communist. Was he a good man? Yes, the Viet Cong man agreed again that he was a good man. So Wilfred explained that the Australian government aided Indonesia just as they aided South Vietnam. It was Australia's policy to aid underdeveloped countries irrespective of the colour of their regimes. This made sense to his interrogator who relented. Wilfred had his interpreter with him and managed to extricate him also even though, initially, the Viet Cong chief wanted to keep him.

All this went through my mind as we drove to Ted and Nina's house. Nora was very upset. We asked her had she notified her Embassy? Where had Ted gone? What time had he left? As we sat in her living room the phone rang. It was Ted. He had been at a meeting which went longer than planned. We did not wait for him, said our good-nights, and drove home to Dakao.

During our Vietnamese sojourn I was inundated with stories about the rampant corruption everywhere, particularly in government. Nepotism appeared to be an accepted way of life. In a country of millions, most of the senior government officials and academics had not only known each other since their undergraduate days but were often related.

The Vietnamese authorities responsible for selecting high school graduates for university studies abroad and interested in the most meritorious getting there, were aware of the problems confronting Vietnamese selectors for these Colombo Plan scholarships. It was difficult for them to withstand pressure from family connections,

politicians, and academics. I was asked by the relevant Vietnamese authority to become responsible for compiling a short list of 60 applicants annually from among the hundreds which applied. A Vietnamese committee would then select 40 students from this list for study in Australia and New Zealand. How was such a list to be compiled? Vietnamese Baccalaureat results? Headmasters' recommendations? Interviews? Requested fields of study? Age? Since a good knowledge of the English language was a sine qua non for success, this short list consisted of those who had scored the highest marks in a battery of English language tests which I administered in Saigon and Hué.

During one such test I noticed a girl glancing sideways at the test paper of her neighbour. It was an objective aural comprehension test given to many students at a time. When, after a brief warning and keeping her under observation she transgressed again, I confiscated her pencil. After the completion of the test the girl approached me and said that she understood that she had missed out on the examination but wanted to explain that she had not attempted to cheat. She had looked away because she was embarrassed. She said that, coming from a traditional family, she was not supposed to look at a man. Besides, she hated herself in glasses.

Once home with my bundles of test papers, I ruminated about this unusual explanation. She had either told me the truth or she had lied. If she had told me the truth – and I thought she had - I had done her an injustice. The director of the Vietnamese Direction du Plan agreed with my proposal to retest her. I did so. I had another objective test of the same degree of difficulty. Her scores were well within the top five per cent of the hundreds of candidates that year. She was eventually selected for an Australian scholarship. In the event she graduated in Sydney, married an Australian, and lives in Queensland today. Did I do the right thing?

We had become friendly with a South Vietnamese public servant whose Sydney undergraduate daughter, a friend of friends, had asked us to look up her people in Saigon. We found them to be a pleasant family. Her parents had many children and one of them had just completed his Vietnamese secondary school Baccalaureat. Unlike the American high school diploma, this was accepted by all

Australian universities as a valid matriculation qualification subject only to proficiency in English. I recalled that the father had told me that one of their sons was going to apply for an overseas university scholarship and when we saw them again, I asked in the course of conversation how he had got on. I was told that he had missed out on selection for Australia and New Zealand. Surely I knew how it was in their country, his father added. Unless one had access to someone high up, there was no chance of being awarded such an overseas scholarship. His son had not made the short list and he was unaware that I had been responsible. Where corruption is prevalent, many will see corruption even when there is none.

While the Viet Cong were active in the countryside, Saigon was comparatively peaceful. I was never concerned for my safety no matter where I was at any hour of the day or night. But two years after our arrival the centre of Saigon was occupied by army putschists and there was shooting in our suburb because we lived close to the radio station which the rebels occupied. They were an elite regiment of parachutists wanting to topple President Diem who was accused of being too autocratic. I recorded the events as they unfolded.

'Friday, 1 November '60. At 7 am Ah-Moy reports that she heard shooting nearby between 3.30 and 5.30 . . . Marcel tells us that his driver has just returned . . . There had been fighting in Rue Norodom and the dead were still littering the streets . . . They say it is not the Viet Cong but a parachute battalion of the army.

At about 8 am there is sporadic shooting far away. Nothing is heard from the radio station occupied by the parachutists. Perhaps a hundred yards from our rear window its transmitting mast juts above the rooftops. . . Barbara is on the floor pushing coloured blocks around. Jean helps me mark the two hundred odd papers of Australian scholarship applicants that I tested a couple of days ago'

My full diary entries are too long to reproduce here. They end around 9 o'clock the next morning:

'.... We are having a cup of tea when there is a burst of firing nearby ... select a safe corner and finish the morning tea sitting

on the floor. Ah-Moy has joined us crawling in on all fours from her quarters. Her balcony faces the radio station We all keep below the window sills. . . . The soldiers have reached our four-storey building . . . they are well armed with camouflage netting on helmets with pouches around the rim. On their belts dangle hand grenades, torches and trench tools. Between them they carry a mortar and mortar ammunition. . . . Sudden bursts from I don't know where send us ducking for cover again . . . Ah-Moy appears yelling "toute partir maison!" but we remain where we are. . . Barbara is still fast asleep in the windowless bathroom. . .

The tramp of boots passes our door and continues upwards. A detachment of soldiers makes for our flat roof forty feet above the one-storey dwellings around us . . . a grand view of the radio station. At 10 o'clock the firing recommences and Ah-Moy rejoins us on the floor All of a sudden there is a terrific boom from the roof. Our building seems to vibrate. We duck and rush back to the lounge. There are a few more ear-splitting bangs. I think they are mortars though some of our residents later reckoned they were bazookas. . . Suddenly there are shouts of "Cong Hoa" from the radio station. It's all over in Dakao.'

I put it all in a nutshell in a letter of 20 November to my father in Melbourne:

'All is well and things are quiet . . . The coup d'état began at 3.30 on Friday morning and was over by 4 in the afternoon of the following day. . . You must not imagine that there were troops all over the city shooting up the place. They had captured five key points and apart from the occasional bursts of firing in the distance, things were pretty much functioning in the afternoon. Throughout that day the radio broadcast contradictory proclamations from government and rebels..

In our suburb, things got 'comme le cinema' - as Ah-Moy said on Saturday morning. An armoured division had come to the rescue of the government during the night. We live on the upper story of a block of flats and that morning we had a grand stand view of street fighting with the radio station as the prize. . . before they pressed the triggers of their automatics, the government troops waved away curious pedestrians and cyclists whose heads appeared

from doorways whenever there was a lull. The putschists were a crack regiment of parachutists and they were opposed by another government elite unit from out of town, an armoured division. Just after 10 am on the second day we heard the cheers of the victors coming from the radio station around the corner. . .'

As quickly as the insurgence took over the city, Saigon returned to normalcy. That same week the university flew me to Hué, the old Vietnamese capital, to give guest lectures at the university there.

I had puzzled for some time about the familiarity with which one of the British Embassy's counsellors was able to discuss the work of the Snowy Mountains Authority with me. I had spent some years with the Authority. The British diplomat was not an engineer, had never been in Australia, and I asked him one day how it had come about that he was so well informed about the S.M.A. He replied that he was seeing President Diem regularly and every time they met Diem would raise the topic of the Authority which he had visited the previous year and had been much impressed by. The counsellor, at a disadvantage in such conversation, felt that he simply had to find out as much as he could about this hydro-electric construction scheme.

The Snowy made its presence felt in other ways. On leave in Cambodia one week we had spent a day in Phnom Penh where, booked into a hotel, we went for a walk to look around this Asian city still then untouched by the tourist throng. There was not much traffic on the dusty street and as a land rover passed us, I pointed out to my wife with some surprise a kangaroo painted on its side. But before I could finish the sentence the land rover braked and out jumped two Snowy engineers I knew. They had seen us and recognized me. They were visiting Cambodia on Snowy business.

The highlights of our Indo-Chinese existence were of course the births of Barbara and Peter. We were fortunate in that Jean was under the care of a well-qualified American-trained Vietnamese paediatrician who also happened to be the Minister of Health. This meant that babies could not be born on Tuesdays. That was the day when President Diem's cabinet met. Peter's birth was induced one Monday night.

There were not all that many secondary schools in the country that offered schooling to Vietnamese Baccalaureat level but all those who had passed this examination were entitled to enrol at any faculty of the university. The Faculty of Arts had many students and the bulk of the English department consisted of teaching staff from Britain, Australia, New Zealand and the United States.

At the beginning of my second academic year at the university I was invited to join the teaching staff of the Faculty of Pedagogy. This faculty, situated in the suburbs a few kilometres from the Arts Faculty, had been a closed shop for years. Apart from two or three French members of the teaching staff who were permanent residents, their lecturers were Vietnamese. The undergraduates were all on Ministry of Education scholarships. Upon graduation after three years, they qualified as secondary teachers in government schools..

Like everybody else, the thirty students of the English section had been selected from many applicants. Those studying other teaching subjects were in parallel classes. Once I fronted the students in the classroom, I found them to be the *crème de la crème* of the Saigon student population. It was a pleasure to teach them. While a proportion of students in the various English certificate courses of the Arts Faculty regularly failed the annual examinations, there was no question of failing any of the pedagogy undergraduates. They did their assignments to a man and woman. The third-year classes were no smaller than first year classes.

When the Australian Minister for External Affairs, Sir Garfield Barwick, paid an official visit to South Vietnam, one of my third-year students at the education faculty told me that she had met him. Surprised, I asked how that had come about. She related laughingly that she and two friends from the same class – attractive girls all – had been flown to a little hamlet in the north of the country where the Minister was to distribute farming implements to the peasantry. The girls mixed with the crowd of local onlookers and, after the ceremony, were informally introduced to the Minister as members of the village population who happened to be about. And, lo, the pretty rice-planting daughters of the soil spoke English and could reply intelligently to the Minister's questions. I forgot to ask them

whether they had stained their teeth with beetle nut and dressed in the black pyjama-like clothes that the people in the hamlets wore.

I was now able to concentrate on teaching methods and some broader aspects of secondary education. My synopsis of a course of lectures at the Vietnamese Students' Seminar Association, 'Education for What?', later published in the Vietnamese English-language weekly newspaper, read:

'Slogans for guidance of educators: Education should be 'general'. It should be vocational to teach us to earn a living. It should be for democracy. For a world adrift. For usefulness. For leisure. For citizenship. For parenthood. For 'life'. It should pass on cultural heritage. It should teach appreciation for art, music and good literature. It should train thinkers. It should show how to discover truth. It should build character. It should instil faith. It should teach us to love our neighbour, etc. No educational system can fulfil all these requirements. Selection is necessary...' Nearly half a century later, this summary is as relevant in Australia today as it was in South Vietnam then.

Saigon was a hardship post mainly because of the climate. There was not all that much interaction between francophone expatriates and English-speaking westerners. Since the country had been under French rule, medical services still conformed to French norms and the brands of medicines dispensed by chemists and in use at hospitals looked and sounded different from medicines commonly used in the English-speaking world. Among Americans and Brits, French medicos were regarded as an exotic species.

We were young and our family coped reasonably well with the tropical conditions. However, during the '61 rainy season I began to feel very fatigued and weak. Visits to American and English doctors were non-productive. How long had I been in the country? Three years? When was my home leave due? I was run down. Nothing that a month or two in Australia would not fix. As a last resort I thought I would chance a suburban French doctor whose shingle I had noticed at the door of a ramshackle old bungalow half a kilometre from our flat. After five minutes with him he said it was very simple. It was either X or Y or a slight case of typhoid. He would send a blood sample to the Institute Pasteur in town. The

results would be available in four days. He thought typhoid was the most likely scenario. And so it proved to be. Not to worry, he assured me. Was I married? Yes? No need to go to hospital. My wife would be able to look after me. A week in bed and another two weeks' recuperation. He would send a nurse to give me daily injections.

And that was that. After three weeks I was cured. The doctor told me that he changed places with his medical partner every seven years. He would then return to the small French provincial town where his partner had his medical practice and his partner would then take his place in Saigon.

At that time the South Vietnamese education system was based on that in France. There were no offices for teaching staff at my two faculties and all reading, preparation and marking needed to be done elsewhere. I would sometimes drop in at the Circle Sportif, particularly during the last year of our stay when much of the preparation for the various Certificate courses I taught lay behind me. The Circle Sportif, a sporting facility not far from the centre of the city, was a remnant of the French colonial days, but in my time French members were but a tiny minority.

On one such day at the Circle the grey skies opened and dumped torrents of water on its lush green lawns. The rainy season was upon us. The downpour cascaded on the tiled roof of the clubhouse and ricocheted off the stone-paved footpaths. In the club's swimming pool miniature fountains erupted and collapsed. I had left the pool and sat on its edge with my legs dangling in the water.

The club was still deserted. A Vietnamese in his twenties, the only person at the pool with me, sat on the tiles as I did. I recognized him. It was Truong, Lien's husband. Lien worked at the Vietnamese Ministry of Education. It was not that long ago that we had been a foursome at dinner at one of the restaurants in Rue Catinat. Truong was a South Vietnamese fighter pilot who had trained in Algiers and the United States. I said 'Truong, how are you?' It was a rhetorical question. He had been taciturn and non-communicative on the few occasions we had run into each other at social functions. To my surprise, with the rain pelting down and nobody else within earshot, he opened up.

It was obvious that he was furious about something. His English was reasonably fluent but, typically for a Vietnamese of his generation at the time, difficult to follow. As I strained to listen I began to make sense of his torrent of words. He had just completed three days' duty with the South Vietnamese air force. His orders had been to bomb specific South Vietnamese villages whose coordinates he had been given. They were all villages that had been observed flying the Viet Cong flag. What, he asked me, was the point of dropping bombs on them? Everybody knew that the villagers had no choice. A party of young newly-recruited boys and girls would turn up after dark. They would be led by an older Viet Cong who instructed the village elder to fly the Viet Cong flag. What was the village chief to do? If he refused he risked not only a horrible death but also the life of his wife or children. Truong said that he was a soldier who had to carry out orders. But he hated himself for doing what he did. He said that if he had to fight French or Americans or indeed Australians in a war, he wouldn't like it either, but war was war. But to kill his own people for no particular rational reason, that upset him.

There was nothing I could say. I do not remember running into him again. Back in Australia for good six years later after five years in Malaysia, the American Marines had landed near Nha Trang and the war was in full swing. I read countless newspaper articles about that war and not a single one of the journalists ever touched on the turmoil within the Vietnamese soldiers who were participants in this long and bloody conflict.

What one sees Eartha Kitt

Eartha Kitt has found that living her American dream has not all been a bowl of cherries. Women have risen to the same of show business and she had a sor-

EARTHA KITT, I'm Still Here. Sidgwick & Jackson, 280pp. \$29.95.
Reviewer: BERN BRENT.



Funny

HOW TO...
By Robert...
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Press, 95pp...
Reviewer:
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Life in The Lodge

IT WASN'T MEANT TO BE EASY:
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Review:
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Richard Nixon, 'an habitual liar'

THE LAST major Nixon study was 'Breach of Faith', a journalist's story of Watergate. Among other things, it illustrated the validity of the 'Watergate' theorem:

TOGETHER Menzies and Billy Hughes were one of the three longest-serving of Australia's Prime Ministers of Australia. This enjoyable account of Tamie Fraser's Canberra years, written by her sister, contains large chunks of Tamie Fraser's own reminiscences in direct speech, which makes her a co-author in all but name.

I can only think of one wife of a former Australian Prime Minister who has gone into print but not who has gone into print but

RICHARD NIXON. The Shaping of His Character. By Fawn M. Brodie. Harvard University Press. Illustrated. 574pp. \$16.95.

an effective Committee advocate who acquitted himself with grace and distinction during the hearings. Indeed, convincing parallels are drawn under fire.

INTERESTING

THE DUNERA INTERMEDIATE By Benzion Patkin. Cassell Australia. Illustrated. 182pp. \$12.95.

Reviewer:
BERN BRENT

Life in West Berlin

By Bern Brent

In 'Love Again' in the film 'Der Blaue Engel' and an unemployed Swedish actress by the name of Greta Garbo was offered a part in another film.

In the last of the free Reichstag elections, with more than 600,000 unemployed in Berlin alone and named Hitler Chancellor, Berliners voted against the city began with the burning of the books there on March 10, 1933. It ended on May 2, 1945, when one-sixth of all the wartime rubble in Germany lay in Berlin.

The post-war development of West Berlin is the subject of a new book, 'The Siege of Berlin' by Mark

his detectives who kept villain Grun...
other 'Isberwood' mixed prairie...
the Kurfuertendamm.

Also Einstein defended his General Theory at the Prussian Academy of Sciences there; Gropius designed 'workers' houses for 'What Now'; Franz Kafka settled there in the final year of his life. Vladimir Nabokov had his first slim volume published there; Arthur Koestler, one-time science editor with one of the Berlin newspapers, had not yet written his first novel.

Marlene Dietrich sang the much earlier original version of 'Falling

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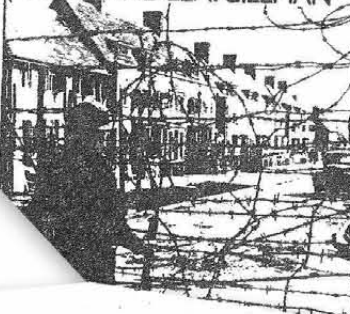
Reviewer:
BERN BRENT

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MUDDLE AND INCOMPETENT

BEFORE the first year of World War II was over, Britain had suddenly embarked on a policy of wholesale internment of German... and re...
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'COLLAR THE LOT!'
HOW BRITAIN INTERNED AND EXPELLED ITS WARTIME REFUGEES.
PETER AND LENI GILLMAN



'COLLAR THE LOT!'
Britain interned wartime refugees.
Leni Gillman...
Illustrated.

Reviewer:
BERN BRENT

Odyssey of a child of immigrants

DUKAKIS, An American O
Kenney and Robert L. T...
Mifflin Company. 260pp. \$29.
Reviewer:
BERN BRENT.

WHILE the sound of this...
has an impressive ring, the...
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biography was born in Massachusetts, Massachusetts, educated in Massachusetts and elected to political office there. However, publisher's hyperbole dictated by the dem... of the market, need not detract from the quality of the product. If it is agreed that an...
candidate's credentials...

A 'radical' on the French

H. B. HIGGINS: THE REBEL AS JUDGE. By John Rickard. Allen & Unwin. 350pp. \$29.95.
Reviewer:
BERN BRENT.

tion as a "junior teacher" and within a year gained his teacher's certificate and matriculation. He enrolled as a law student at Melbourne University and was a founder member of its debating...

pointed to the High Court bench and to the presidency of the Arbitration Court.

Higgins found much pleasure in intellectual endeavours. He loved the classics and "amused himself" translating Aeschylus's 'Prometheus Bound'. He travelled widely and initiated personal contacts with his professional peers abroad, including some of the Fabians in Britain.

Higgins appreciated poetry and in 1904 subscribed £1,000 for a fund for the study of poetry...

Christianity — his devout Wesleyan — had been brought up a Baptist, Quaker, Scientist.

It was Australia that have had a man like at the head of the lished Arbitration. Higgins's fortune to worked in a vibrant society where a st could still become



Nick Greiner: political figure of Hungarian descent.



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THE GERMANS IN AUSTRALIA. By Ian Harmstorf and Michael Cigler. 183pp. \$13.95.
THE HUNGARIANS IN AUSTRALIA. By Egon F. Kunz. 148pp. \$11.95.
THE LEBANESE IN AUSTRALIA. By Andrew and Trevor Batrouney. 136pp. \$11.95.
THE POLES IN AUSTRALIA. By Marian Kaluski. 151pp. \$11.95
Australasian Ethnic Heritage Series. Reviewer: BERN BRENT.

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