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JOHN ANDERSON: MIGHT AND RIGHT

(John Anderson spoke on "Might and Right" to the Public Questions Society at Sydney University on 5th October, 1939. Notes, virtually verbatim, of what he said were taken by Frank Fowler, as follows.)

The questions I want to raise are fairly general, but I hope I shall be able to put before you one or two points you might find it worth discussing. The first point I would like to make concerning the opposition between might and right is that in one sense of the word "might", right could not conquer might unless it had might as well, so that it is a question of the comparative strength of opposing tendencies and there is no logical opposition between might and right, no matter what special sense may be found for the term "right". Thus, we have to look for a more special sense of the word "might" than 'power' or 'force' or the exercise of force generally, and there I think the distinction intended is one between a system in which there are certain recognised rules, rules recognised to be just, and one of an arbitrary character in which any rule might be given up at any time, e.g. despotism or tyranny, the despot 'knowing no rules but his own desires'. As far as that goes, then, you could talk of a struggle between might and right as one between a system in which there were settled rules and one in which that was not so, in which there were no understood or settled ways of procedure; and something of this is meant when people oppose might and right, especially when, in connection with the present war, Germany is taken as exhibiting might and the Western Powers, right.

Now one point there is that any system whatever must have certain rules of procedure and if, then, there is anything we can call Hitlerism, there must be recognisable ways in which Hitlerism operates; and even if in that case it is not a question of laying down legal requirements, there is a sense in which we can speak of a right or of a recognised system of procedure. When we are speaking of a right or of a system of justice, we are apt to think (by the way the terms 'right' and 'justice' are used) that a system of rights means a defensible system; but it seems to me that you can have two quite opposed systems of right, each having its own recognised ways of procedure, each having its own justice within that system, and therefore that it is only begging the question, in a conflict between the two, to call one right and the other not or to call one justice and the other injustice. The main question is whether there is any such thing as an absolute right, something that embodies right, while the others are merely to be regarded as pretences at just dealing and are not entitled to that term.

Now I would say that there is no absolute right; any system has its rules of operation, its rights and its might, that is, its power to continue as a system; and therefore if we are contrasting any two systems, then each side will be found to have a certain right and each side a certain might. The assumption when we speak of international right or of its invasion by one power rather than another is that there is a system of recognised right, an understood system of procedure in international relations and not only that there is a system at a particular time. But the essential thing in determining whether there can be a system of right within nations is whether there are irreconcilable interests or not. If there are, then any system of right will be in some way a makeshift. Where there are dominant and subordinate interests, then even if the latter accept the system, there can be no moral objection to them if they alter it in their own favour. Here there is one sense in which we could use the term 'might', the operation of the dominant force on the subordinate one; the subordinate institution or organisation would accept, under force, the prevailing system laid down by the dominant one, although it would not recognise it as fulfilling its demands. Whenever, for instance, you have the element of might and the limitation of the system of right you have the fact that certain modes of procedure are established and this gives an index of the relative strength of the prevailing forces; but there is nothing, in calling it right, to show that it will be indefinitely maintained. This might suggest that we

would be getting nearer something that could be called justice in an absolute sense if we had a country in which there were not irreconcilable interests. That would be what was understood by Democracy, allowing for the argument that complete democracy might not be possible; but a system in which all minor groups did recognise the prevailing system of justice, and in which they were represented and in an equality with other members of the system, would be a democratic system.

We can consider in regard to the question of justice in States how far within any given state we do have democracy or an equality between members of the state, how far we have the prevailing of a system recognised by members not as something to be put up with, but with which they were in favour. Now no such state at the present time exists. Britain is not a state in that sense; there are positions of superiority and inferiority within the system. You have, then, a certain type of criticism of any system in so far as it rests upon inequality.

One of the conditions of systems of right is publicity; the members should know what the law is and approve of it and be able to discuss what goes on under the law. This is connected with the question of censorship and the legal system in any state, especially with regard to the right of comment. As it is, in movements opposed to the system you will get comments but these are always made at the individual's own risk. If, however, you really have a system of right which people recognise, a way of working with which people could associate themselves, then there is nothing to fear from the fullest possible comment. In fact, the two would develop together, comment with further participation of the people in the system of justice. Anywhere where you have the failure to state the laws or to give the people in general the feeling that the laws are theirs or where you have laws to which people are opposed, you have social inequality, dominance and submission; you have the operation of might against right in the social sense.

In the Dictatorships, generally, you get the most marked departure from a system of recognised right, and it is most dangerous in Russia, because there you have people being condemned for acts in opposition to society as counter-revolutionaries; you do not find there that system in which it is a question of making the laws as clear as possible and of making the proof that any such breach has taken place as clear as possible. This is only an illustration of what I mean, but at the same time you might notice in regard to Germany that there you have a very peculiar position. Borkenau "The Present German Empire") says that Nazism arose from a deadlock of the right and the left; neither could establish a working system (including a system of law), and the Nazis came along to get over that, and the very circumstances in which they came to power would lead to the absence of publicity and would tend to arbitrary action in the interests of the ruling group.

Coming back now in respect to the question of an international right, there is the matter there whether, or to what extent, we can have equality, international justice and the satisfaction of various national interests; and it seems to me there that what we have had so far is a pretence of justice, that it has been only the operation of might, simply the satisfaction of particular interests quite regardless of whether it has been recognised by other interests as right. All we have had is the satisfaction of national interests, the operation of might, with lip-service to international justice. It appears that it is difficult to get equality in these matters, to get the conditions of the working of a system of justice in international affairs; and actually such a system is impossible under conditions of capitalism; only under socialism would there be the possibility of a federation of states.

The main thing I have attempted to show, then, is the varying extent to which you could have a working system of right and the varying extents to which it could be restricted, and extended, by increasing publicity.

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MAX NOMAD: WITHOUT ILLUSIONS PART 4
THE AVERAGE MAN

The Vain Struggle

"Democracy," according to Justice William H. Hastie, "is a process not a static condition. It is becoming rather than being. It can easily be lost, but never is fully won. Its essence is eternal struggle." Yes, an eternal struggle against the demagogic wiles of the politicians on the one hand, and against the gullibility and the prejudices of the ignorant majority, on the other. But speaking of eternity we recall what Schiller said in The Maid of Orleans: "Against stupidity the very gods struggle in vain."

Stupidity And Success

Oswald Spengler says somewhere that "the stupidity of a theory has never been an obstacle to its success". Provided the men who use it are not stupid, that is. For they have to choose the right moment when the masses are ripe for that particular brand of absurdity.

In protest against the return of the Bourbons in 1814 the Parisian masses shouted: "Long live the Emperor! Long live the Republic!" In protest against capitalist exploitation, the masses in many countries long shouted: "Long live the Soviet regime! Long live liberty!"

Bread And Circuses

Caesarism, Taxile Delord said in his *Histoire du Second Empire* (1869), is democracy without freedom. In other words tyranny with the consent of the masses in return for bread and circuses.

Same - 2000 Years Later

There were radical mavericks - Syndicalists and quasi-Syndicalists - who thought that the workers' struggles for regular meals would lead mankind straight into a libertarian and egalitarian millenium. As it turned out, any dictatorship with all its bestialities against independent thinkers (or, in these more soft sell days, which merely imposes Political Correctness - Eds) is now acceptable to the masses provided they get, or are promised, regular meals plus a car and a television set.

Upstarts, Rebels And Voters

A certain percentage of workers - invariably small - are able to raise their status and become store-keepers, small employers and the like. Another element of the working class, although quite small, can also manage to raise its status by acquiring a certain minimum of political education, as a result of which they can become union functionaries, organizers and politicians. Both groups are interested in the maintenance of the status quo, either old laissez-faire or new Welfare State style. There is also a third group - likewise self-educated - which believes in a new departure. These are the rebels, that is, courageous gamblers staking their lives in political adventures that may land them either in prison or in positions of power. Those outside these three groups constitute the majority which docilely keeps its "place" and occasionally uses its voting "power" to bring about a change in personnel of the office-holding gentry.

Men And Sheep

The conservatism of the masses is not always the result of their mental obtuseness. Sometimes their way of reasoning proves that they are almost as intelligent as those wool-bearing animals which, as Anatole France put it, "let the old shepherd shear them, lest the younger shepherd crop them more closely."

The Two Alternatives

The sheep has no say about its fate. The human sheep is different. He may either shed his blood on behalf of a rising oligarchy of ex-revolutionists, or choose between competing oligarchical machines. The latter alternative is called democracy.

Opium - East And West

In China, many coolies would refuse to work without their daily ration of opium. In the civilized West, their brothers need tabloids, lodge uniforms, political parades, slapstick films, or, at least, a beloved leader.

His Sense Of Humour

The average man's sense of humour is easily satisfied. Why torment him with Aristophanes, Petronius, Rabelais, Swift, Sterne, Voltaire, Chamfort, Heine, Anatole France, G.B.S., Mark Twain, Karl Kraus or Mencken, if he can get his daily ration of good clean fun from the sight of an old man falling down the stairs, or of a drunkard lying in the gutter, from slapstick movies, or from the imitation of a foreigner's pronunciation?

Racketeers And Profiteers

In November, 1940, the Gallup poll established that the number of people favouring more regulation of labour unions was twice as large as the number of those who wanted to have the same measure applied to business. In other words, racketeering of labour leaders was more repellent to the common man than the profiteering of the rich. It would seem that the upstart worker who has "made good" is hated more by the poor man than the man of wealth who usually inherits his possessions.

The Yes-Mass

The majority of every nation always approves of the injustices of the ruling upper crust. The German masses - save for honourable and heroic exceptions - did not object to the extermination of non-Aryans; the American man in the street approved of the lynching of the "Wobblies" and of the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti; the English populace took in its stride the massacre of the Kenya Negroes ("Mau Mau") whose best lands had been taken away by a handful of privileged Britons. The majority of the Poles who resented Russian domination believed in their own right to lord it over the Ukrainians. And the Soviet masses believed that "their" country was worthy of defence against domestic malcontents.

The Avenger

For all his lack of erudition Stalin no doubt remembered that chapter of Machiavel-
li's Prince in which Cesare Borgia is commended for the way in which he won over to his
side the population of a certain city which, upon his orders, had been scourged by one
of his lieutenants. He simply sent his faithful henchman to the block as the last
victim of the executioner's axe. Following that example, Lenin's successor exterminated
practically the entire old leadership of the Party and thus achieved a certain popular-
ity with the masses which saw in him the avenger for all the wrongs they had suffered
at the hands of the Communist office-holders. Such is the logic and the intelligence
of the common man.

Barabbas

Jean Cocteau is quoted as having said that if it has to choose who is to be crucif-
ied the public will always save Barabbas. And if it has the choice between a Harding
and a Debs, a Hoover and a Norman Thomas, a de Gaulle and a Mendes-France, it will al-
ways vote the way it did.

Equality

The poor man who no longer falls for the consolations of religion will envisage a
better future as a store-keeper, a small employer, a trade union functionary, or an
office-holder. There is one solution which he will hardly ever dream of as possible
or desirable: that of enjoying the good things of life equally with all other human
beings.

Otherwise, He Is -----

The underdog is more anxious to see a hanging than a work of art. He is more inter-
ested in the local crime news than in what is going on in the world. He would rather
read Mickey Spillane than Anatole France. He prefers the leadership of a "realist"
like Beck or Hoffa to that of a seamer like Eugene Debs or a rebel like Bill Haywood.
And he always sticks to the vilest prejudices from which the more advanced sections of
the bourgeoisie have emancipated themselves long ago. Otherwise, he is the hope of
all those who dream of a better world.

Behind The Plough

In French (and subsequently in English), the original word for peasant, vilain, i.e.,
inhabitant of a village, has gradually assumed the meaning of an ugly, repellent, de-
praved person. In Hebrew, om ho'oretz, the equivalent of the "man of the land", i.e.,
peasant, is the customary term for ignoramus; and in old Russian, the word smerd,
meaning stinker, was the regular designation for serf or the common man. It would
seem that the peasant is very eager to perpetuate this reputation. For at election
time he generally upholds the rule of those whose ancestors have enriched the language
at his expense.

The Grateful Rustics

In Central Europe the revolutions of 1848, fought for by the workers and the middle
class of the cities, so frightened the old rulers that they put an end to all the feudal
burdens still carried by the peasants. Whereupon the grateful rustics rallied to their
good old rulers, helping to crush the Revolution. Yet there are those who still com-
plain about the ingratitude of the masses.

A Hick Is A Hick, Is A Hick -----

In 1857 Carlo Pisacano, next to Garibaldi one of the most glorious and courageous
champions of Italy's liberation and unification, made a landing at Sapri, Southern
Italy, in the hope of starting an uprising in that section of his country. He and
his followers were immediately massacred by the ... peasants loyal to the Neapolitan
Bourbon regime, outside of Russia the most tyrannical in Europe.

The "Class-Conscious"

At a mass meeting held in New York by the Communist Party shortly after the conclu-
sion of the Soviet-Nazi Pact in 1939, the name of Hitler was greeted with silence. The
revolutionary proletariat boomed only when an orator mentioned the name of Leon Trotsky
- then a broken and inoffensive exile in Mexico.

Drawing The Line

The organized worker of Great Britain is of course much more intelligent than a be-
nighted Communist fanatic. He votes the Labour Party ticket and acclaims either the
moderate ex-truck driver Bevin or the radical ex-miner Bevan. But (Nomad writes of
the pre-1960s immigration situation) don't expect him to work in a coal mine along with
an Italian immigrant - even though there is a shortage of English coal-diggers. For
while he is a staunch believer in international working class solidarity, he knows that
there are things which are simply not compatible with his dignity as a member of the
British master race.

To be continued.

FICTIONAL DOCUMENTARY: THE PUSH IN THE 1950S

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Regard The Girl Not The Company She Keeps

Marratt, being late, was pleased to find Roslyn on the same electric train. The day before as they sat in the Quadrangle and he imparted her information about Plato's theory of forms, it was as if they had aroused a lazy universal lurking in the sandstone. "Yes," they were both hit, "wouldn't it be a fine thing if we went to Melbourne together?" Then in the pub Dray was all help, volunteering to come and show them the way. But now, when they got off at the outer suburb of Yagoona and looked up and down the street, they could see no one at all who was cultivating a hangover except for themselves. "Frankie was so keen last night, so desperate for Melbourne beer; did we foolishly believe him?" But then from the direction of the local pub they saw a thick-set soldier coming up, slouch hat on his head, kitbag on his shoulder, and rough beard beginning on his face. Nameless fears for motorists? Just as well Roslyn had not indulged herself warm slacks or a longer dress against the cool wind.

But was her skirt short enough? Marratt wondered at the kerbside half an hour and a hundred cars later.

Dray passed the time issuing valuable advice on the general principles of hitchhiking. "Just a matter of getting away from here. If you think it's hard, just imagine Henry Lawson waiting with his swag. Sul kies won't stop for him so his only hope is bullock teams - and they were so bloody slow that's why he claimed their tyres rusted before his eyes."

Another six cars rushed by without so much as a contemptuous glance.

"Take it from me, it's easy out in the countryside. More poetical. Puts drivers in a better mood, as you'll see. Here in asphalt Yagoona patience is the name of the verse - unless you want to go wishing with romantic Byron or dreamy Yeats. You know, woman in Rolls Royce comes by. Yellow hair and eyes. Bank balance and suspender belt in black. Mistakes me for her lost wartime lover... I did know a girl with yellow hair and eyes during the war. Back on leave from New Guinea and her mother was away from their Glebe house; both getting very interested on the sofa when the phone rang. Pushed me off with a fine flourish, sprawled on the floor - it was her bloody American colonel! Spoilt the evening... But a rich sort coming by about as likely as Lovelock's longshots at the races."

He took another swig from his brandy bottle. Marratt and Roslyn declined.

"If you're going all poetical," she said, "how about a rich poet in a Rolls for me? Although were any of them rich? Lord Tennyson maybe, but he'd have been so tedious raving on his verse before and after."

"It looks to me, Frankie," Marratt said, "as if the true story's really Thomas Hardy's: standing there at the road suffering in slow verse the pangs of life's passing ironies."

"If you want to be pessimistic there's his more enterprising mate A.E. Housman. He, of course, would be down there at the blind bend thumbing a lift out in the street. His day made when he gets runs over." Dray gave a vigorous jerking sign to a Chrysler driver who glared at them as he accelerated by.

At long last a driver, changing his mind, braked sharply in front of them. Two young men in a new Holden, being lairs with Roslyn in the front seat. "Wrote verse for my country and respect for womankind," Dray captured their interest instead. But they were only going twenty miles.

Out in the country Dray was right and they did have successes, but if there was a poetry of the road for them it was reduced to couplets and half sonnets. A few miles here, branch roads there, and three-quarters of an hour to traverse the cold main street of Bowral. Though a friendly farmer did convey to them the particular news that there were tulips in the season and the more general truth that the town cricket ground they were passing was where young Don Bradman was not out for ever. "Loved it when Bradman was batting at Sydney Cricket Ground," Dray told the farmer; "always emptied the bar and made it easy to get a drink." Then they were stranded on the outskirts of Goulburn and had to walk towards the town centre overlooked all the way by the big War Memorial diffusing gloom down from the hill and its arid, green and grey boulders. Dray marched them out of literature into The Great War. "That's the great Ideal we fought for and what we won." He dipped his slouch hat at the War Memorial. "Like our blokes in the desert." He halted to trace letters with his fingers in the roadside dust. LIGHT HOR/SEMEN. "But they got no Beer and not a smell of Sheba when they made their famous charge. As for the Western Front, Field Master Butcher Haig is said to be the greatest Scottish soldier - killed off more poms than anyone else. Didn't neglect colonials either. Did in the South Africans at Delville Wood. Then sent our mob in as shock troops at Pozières - which is where I lost an uncle and the Germans a few hundred yards of barbed wire... Wrote verses about the Somme once, you know."

At nightfall they walked out of town and felt lucky to score a lift with a local couple "only going to Breadalbane" a few miles away." They wondered what on earth for, Doctor Marx's "idiocy of rural life" manifesting itself in yet another instance?, until they realized there were some things missed by the Doctor's writ and they found themselves, by courtesy of their thoughtful benefactors, in a Breadalbane pub in which everyone in the village - including the policeman - were drinking on after hours. But well before midnight, with incredible lack of consideration, the policeman closed the bar and the three of them had to go and sleep in the deserted railway station the waiting room of which still had a fire burning. Later they had to huddle together in the cold night, but each time they were almost asleep a train cunningly leapt out of the night and shook the station without even a whistle of a warning. That startled them into "Whistle and I'll come for you" and other ghost stories, and when they were almost asleep more trains hurtled suddenly by or else rattled through like chains, and they told more stories and huddled even more closely together. "No one's exempt," Dray said at three a.m., "it isn't only snob literature that has universal appeal. Have you heard about the murdered men at Moon Siding?"

In the morning they were frustrated as well as tired space-time travellers, and after Dray had an early morning vomit and got down a brandy, he led them to reconsider their carriage standards.

"Good thing's they're more interesting to talk to - except you can't hear them over the noise of the engine, and also they take forever to get anywhere. It's a comedown too, an insult to our status on the road when there's a girl with us. But we're only a hundred and fifty miles out. Nothing for it. Have to take trucks."

He wasn't a rich poet driving a Rolls, but Roslyn soon found her own way to ginger up slow motion. This was by being friendly bloodshot-eyed, smilingly receptive to crude compliments, in other words a Leda leading on a swan, with the second truck driver they acquired, the big inarticulate fellow who, by good fortune at last, was going all the way to Melbourne. By the time they had competed with the other trucks on the straight Tarcutta stretch, had a few beers in Albury and then stopped for the night on the outskirts of the town, the truck driver - a victim perhaps of the too speedy operation of the modern laws of psychology - appeared to have developed a passionate crush on Roslyn; at any rate he was quite intractable in his desire to share his truck's cabin alone with her. As a result, Marratt and Dray, whose one thought was to please their kindly he-will-get-us-to-Melbourne chauffeur, had to sleep together for warmth in a ditch by the side of the road. It became even colder after midnight, but the truck driver - in what was perhaps a moment of guilt as he had formed the impression that Marratt was Roslyn's fiancé - leant out of the cabin and threw down the dog rug. Much struck by this exercise in the ethic of generosity, the two of them accepted the rug gratefully, fleas and all, and dozed in the ditch until dawn.

Southern Hospitality

It was as well Roslyn had rehearsed subserving her particular virtue to the general good. This was owing to a problem that arose when, the next night, they finally got to Melbourne. The Warden of the Students' Hostel, an older student, although he did cast an appreciative eye on Roslyn, was not at all happy to see them.

"Students only!" he said, looking hard at the three of them.

"I'm a student," Roslyn told him. "So am I," Marratt claimed. "I drank for my country," Dray said, "but I don't hold with the Returned Soldiers' League."

"We can't have women here, it's against the rules! The Hostel's strictly for Melbourne students and it's only as an act of courtesy that we occasionally accommodate visitors - that is men - from Sydney."

But Marratt quickly pleaded lateness of night, Roslyn gave a sweetly yawning overtired young lady impersonation, and Dray stood aside discreetly practising self-camouflage. So the Warden, a tall, serious student of biology, eventually relented to the extent of "For one night only!" That done, without further comment he led them to a large empty room, gave one of the beds to Dray, said to Roslyn and Marratt as he pointed at the other bed, "That's for you," and marched away.

Pleased but intrigued by this, before they went to bed they shared out Dray's nightcap brandy in the kitchen where they met a genial Indian student of politics. He turned out to be the Deputy Warden and explained that they'd come at a bad time as only the previous week the Hostel had made the dreaded headline "Immorality at Student Centre" in the newspapers. "The offence organs of the Melbourne citizenry," he told them, "are frightfully sensitive. While the heat's on we're thinking of not even having parties."

They all slept well until four a.m. when a horn suddenly sounded up and down the building. But that was just someone reporting, in accordance with a fine Communal Rule, that he had made a pot of tea.

In the morning Marratt was an earnest, tedious, repetitious father figure issuing urgent advice. "Frankie, don't get full! or at least not in the daytime. And Roslyn, please control your conversation even though you know we love it so well. Be nice to

everyone, especially the Warden; we really are in danger of getting the boot."

Whether Roslyn took this advice too literally or instead was a good Australian soldier exercising her initiative on patrol, was a point Marratt and Dray subsequently mooted in the nearby Carlton pub, but she did not come back to their room at all that night, and admitted next day she had been with the Warden. Next night it turned out to be the Deputy Warden who entertained her until the early hours. Nor did she, in the days that followed, restrict her cover notes - or was it merely the pursuit of happiness? - to them.

Well, he'd come to Melbourne in all innocence, Marratt reflected to himself late at night - Dray would already be dead to the world - and now he was left innocently alone in bed. Just as well he was Push-trained and didn't need to count history's unrequited lovers to get to sleep. And Dray offered his reflections in the daytime. "Good to see you're more amused than fretting; though of course it's not for long - easy for you, her or someone else back in Sydney. Silly to but in my case I always seem to come on too strong. Always say it to myself and then don't do it - and tried to write a poem about it - it's all been done before, you think it's unique but really it's just recurrence; you're getting a part, a well bounced part (if you're lucky) in an old, old Passion Play. Wise to make the most of it, put it in perspective - see there's no need later on to jump into the billabong."

Both of them, however, did profit from the fact that initial coolness towards them quickly grew into welcome as it was feared their departure would take Roslyn away. They were even listened to with polite disbelief when, in reaction to all the Left politics that was talked in the Hostel, they expounded a rival Futilitarian view of "permanent dissent" and "drinking without ends". "And Roslyn," insinuated the genial Indian student, "she is your delightful spokesman for permanent consent?" Most important of all, the Warden went so far as to excuse Marratt and Dray from their share of the communal sweeping and washing up, which they thought was another example of the finer principles of hospitality, although it turned out Roslyn, ever considerate, had now confided in the Warden the news that Marratt was her fiancee.

"You're lapsing into nominalism, Roslyn," he told her, "giving me the name but too little of what the name stands for."

"Oh, dear, if I get my philosophy wrong what will become of me?... But humour me a little, Syddie. It can't be too often in a girl's life it gets to be she's like the only nun in a liberated abbey... You too you know."

She didn't even miss The War of the Roses. In fact she was rather put out when, after ten days, Dray decided he simply had to get back or they'd scrub his name off the dole list. It was then she was suddenly full of solicitude for Marratt. "There's the Public Library, you still haven't been back there, Syd," coming in to lie with him before breakfast. "Don't you want to see the Art Gallery? Blackwell says the reproductions of the French Impressionists are very good. And you haven't even gone near the Yarra Bank... No, I suppose your 'Ugh' is right. But you do love the beer here; Frankie's not wrong about that. And think how we'll be able to lie in bed together without having to listen to him snore."

Little urgings like that and she induced him to let Dray travel back alone and wait with her until near the end of the vacation. But by that time even she was perhaps not altogether unhappy to leave the assorted set of Gippslanders, boys from the Mallee country, Indians and one reactionary Chinese young man who supported Chiang Kai-Chek. A girl wasn't ready for that sort of thing so early in the day as some of the men in the breakfast room, lacking Futilitarian finesse, waited tensely to see who it was she came in with that morning.

Problems About Progress

There's history out on this road, Sydney Marratt and Roslyn Gardens, except The Dream-Time is very sparing on details. The road is long as Hume and Hovell found but the history is short. We need some classy New Australians who should have been here long ago. Mikhail Bakunin, travelling anarchist, might do passing by in comfort in his coach. "Can you direct me to some peasants? There seems to be a shortage of them in these parts. When I go through Germany and see peasants storming a lord's castle I always stop and give them advice about the best way to do it." "Well, Ned Kelly tried something of that kind near here seventy-odd years ago, but there's been nothing like it since." Or Mikhail's faster but less stylish compatriot, Vladimir Lenin, hurtling across the level crossing down there in his Sealed Train. That will save him from taking risks at Railway Refreshment Rooms, but he'll find all he'll raise are some laughs when he gets to Sydney and tries to start a revolution there.

It is a long trudge between lifts, but Frankie taught us to find the right terrain. Ah, here comes another man in a hurry to get to Sydney - to the Martello Tower? James Joyce sitting elegantly in a taxi, glass in hand and a crate of imported Swiss Fendant beside him in the back seat. "Finnegans Wake," he murmurs appreciately, "will never end when you're on a permanent government literary grant."

It's all sorts day on this road. How many celebrated figures have won the Melbourne Cup? "I did," come shouts from Don Juan, Malvolio, the god Poseidon, and Peter Pan. "Just bloody fictional characters!" Lord Cardigan galloped up. "I won The Charge of The Light Brigade in 1854 and the Cup in 1903. "Make way for a brilliant general," Julius Caesar overtook him. "I won it too. Not I, myself; I'm not that plebeian. On my faithful horse Gaulus. Veni, equitavi, vici. I'm off to Sydney to advise on roads while, as usual, my lieutenant Labienus tidies up. He's bringing my trophies and impedimenta by bullock dray... I don't know why it's said he'll fight against me in the Civil War."

Speaking of fast and slow progress," Marratt said, "how are we going to keep up your continuing education, Roslyn? I mean after all this new social life. Head for the far north coast and a Surfies' Championship?"

"No way! Some of those boys do look fine, but you know they wouldn't recognize a concept even if one surfaced beside them... But if you want to know, I'll definitely be resting from Life Upon The Wicked Stage. Much study except, of course, for a tiny time for play on Friday nights... But now you've done your moral tutor's duty, what about your own progress, Syd?"

"That's hard: Tutor, tutor thyself. Do you know, sometimes in Blackwattle Bay when I'm up in time to verify the sun is rising, I sit at my table, pen at the ready, and think maybe there is something to be said for Immanuel Kant's moral Maxims after all. You know, we ought to do our Duty because what a terrible thing it would be if everyone did things like carry on Push activities all day every day... But then much later in the day when I've worked and taught I think there's no need to overdo it; as The Duke has shown, Kant's arguments are bad ones - and besides it's time to go to the pub."

"Marratt, the tutor with a touch of innocence, who came and was corrupted by The Push."

"Or was corrupted into innocence. At least that seems to be the opinion of Goodman's friend Wells Morlock."

"Morlock? Do you see him now?"

"Only accidentally in the Quadrangle. What he was telling me was that I should write often but on 'safe' subjects, say the right things to The Dean - all the usual things. Also that I should be seen as little as possible with Push people, especially not seen openly with Push women."

"That's Wells Morlock."

"But he so put me off I answered back I was beginning to see a lot of sense in Futilitarian views, not least because the food served up by people like him was putting me off my careerist diet. A few exchanges like that, then he turned on me and said, 'You must really be a hick; you seem to believe what you say!'"

Artists At Play

They had left Melbourne on the Friday morning in the vague hope of being back in time for the Friday afternoon pub, but what was the matter with fast car motorists? You could understand the ones with their wives but you would think more of the others, even if they knew nothing about Plato's form Beauty, would notice some of its rough approximations in the flesh such as Roslyn. Even without Dray (and the need to hide him behind trees) they made rather slow time. So when it took an hour to cross the long wooden bridge at Gundagai, there was nothing for it but to stay at the first hotel. But they did finally reach The War of the Roses on the Saturday afternoon.

In the lounge-room there was naturally no sign of Lovelock and the other racegoers, but they could infer from the marks of design that some people had signed on in the morning. Miriam called out in a hopeful voice. "Come and help us change the tune. It's 'Van Gogh in the Brothel' for the third time."

"Disgustingly often," they agreed.

Blackwell, assisted by the poet Rushcutter, was in musical flight. Each of them intrepidly held a dripping middy glass as he sang. Frankie Dray was a poet soldier plainly from the road returned. He was resting his head on a table, oblivious of a spilt ashtray, and a half-full schooner glass clutched protectively in his sleeping hand.

A dry voice tried to cut off the singers. "I hear Blackwell, that you're concentrating on representational painting now." It came from a gaunt older man who was drinking lemonade.

Blackwell finished a verse. Then he said, "That's a Miriam misrepresentation. What I did say was that if the publican would commission it I'd like to redo Degas' 'The Absinthe Drinker' as a mural with Miriam and Dray as the models."

Rushcutter had a new beard which made him look like a Trotsky gone sensibly "petty bourgeois bohemian" and convivial. "There's art all over the place," he announced. Even the men's shithouse's improved since you two went away."

"I think he just means the graffiti," Marratt said to Roslyn. He went with her into the toilet where, true enough, there were a couple of improvements on the usual words.

MY MOTHER MADE ME A HOMOSEXUAL.

IF I GIVE HER THE WOOL WILL SHE MAKE ME ONE TOO?

HOW'S THIS FOR A DEFINITION? "WOMAN IS AN ORIFICE WITH
MORE OR LESS PLEASANT SURROUNDINGS." (J.B. CABELL)
NO GOOD. IT'S BOTH TOO WIDE AND TOO NARROW.

"That was The Listener," Roslyn told Marratt. "He must be back after his stint in Newcastle. He's a Push doctor but we call him 'The Listener'. He started off studying under Wellington and he also knows a lot about history including the history of medicine. He does write out free prescriptions for people he likes, but mostly he observes everything. Will you believe?, he never drinks or sings or plays cards himself - and as for sex, as he'll tell you himself he touches neither man, woman nor fowl. But he loves Push life. He can repeat everything next day - including what Blackwell and everyone else says at four a.m. - which's why he's so admired for his iron nerve!"

I'll Write Your "Nights Of Wine And Roses" - Or
Would You Prefer "We Of The Never Never"?

No one was serving in the lounge and they had to go to the floor below. When they returned with their drinks, The Listener had silenced the singers and was instructing Miriam. "No, it's not what they call a great truth, but it's the sort of historical truth I like - at an in between level of generality. The fact is he was the finest of all English kings. Imagine a king who looked something like Ernie Lovelock - he had the same height and the same colour hair - but he wasn't quite as cautious as Lovelock when it came to being brave - "

"Those who bet and run away," Blackwell recited, "live to lose another day."

" - Edward The Fourth was a dashing general who was never beaten in the thirteen battles he fought. He was a good administrator and - don't get bored - he was loved, so it's recorded, by the citizens and even more by their wives. He was the best all-rounder who was ever king of England - only Oliver Cromwell was better and he, of course, refused to be king. But Edward The Fourth, for obvious reasons, has never been given proper credit. You'll be pleased to know, girls, that he loved drinking and he fucked willing women up and down the land. He was the real hero of The War of the Roses, and he died at the age of forty because he lived the same sort of life" - he gave an appraising medical look at Dray groping for his schooner glass on the table - "as the one that's favoured here in your War of the Roses."

"This calls for 'The Bastard King of England'," Blackwell said gleefully.

"You're so right," said Rushcutter.

"It calls me for a schooner of lemonade," The Listener said, moving off.

There were noises on the stairs as the racing people came in for a drink and to recount the day's wins and disasters.

"Well, well," Roslyn said when a fiery chit-chat about money disclosed that Miriam was having an affair with Lovelock. "She didn't give us that news."

"But she had enough sense to save the rent and not go to Rosehill," Blackwell said in a loud voice.

Then they all went to the Greeks to eat - except for Dray who was carried out and sent home in a taxi. At the Greeks The Listener had a plate of haricot beans. "This is what I have when I eat out," he said to Marratt. "At home I eat chokoos. Boiled for lunch and fried for dinner. It helps me to starve myself lean. Of course I walk everywhere too. It's good exercise and it saves me from taking risks in cars or in public transport." He also explained he had finally decided to give up practising medicine. "I already have far more money than I need and I prefer reading. But don't think I'll be one of those feckless people without an aim in life. I intend to be alive at eighty-five and not merely alive and decrepit like those euthanasia candidates you see stumbling about, but like I am now. I'm going to be alive and alert when all of you are dead and I'll tell the new Push or whatever lumpen intellectual set there is at the turn of the century all about you people in the old Push."

Then Marratt and Roslyn decided after all to go to the small party at Strathfield. This was like death warmed up at first but, as if to please The Listener, was improving when he arrived two and a half hours later. "I had an interesting walk along Parramatta Road," he reported, "including when the police held me up for questioning. I think they entertained the mirthful hypothesis that I was the Petersham rapist." As one of their most implacable Push opponents he wasn't keen on the folk songs, but then relished the scene as the party climaxed. Disputes were now breaking out between the singers and the card players, the beer was running out but there was plenty of Chateau Tanunda, and Miriam, after a quarrel with Lovelock, agreed to make true a proposition put to her by Blackwell, but then he fell asleep in an armchair.

"The Troubadour's too tired tonight," Marratt said slyly to Roslyn.

It was no time to resist hospitality, so they drank brandy and The Listener got them to register their travel experiences with him.

S.M.

ORWELL IN TOP FORM

(Observations by a regular contributor who writes from a socialistic standpoint.)

Some years ago I wrote a caustic piece on Orwell for Heraclitus. My one feedback from an Orwell-admirer was: "I hate you, S. Cooper!" This dialogue finished up very satisfactorily, but raised the question: Did Orwell have a finest hour? I think that he did, not in Catalonia, but on the rooftops in England during the blitz, working on a programme for post-war Britain.

In 1992, when many ex libertarian socialists never mention the forbidden words, it is interesting to read Orwell's programme, formulated, it seems, around February 1941, well before the Nazis went into the Soviet Union (The Lion and the Unicorn: The English Revolution):-

1. Nationalization of land, mines, railways, banks and major industries.
2. Limitation of incomes (tax free income not to exceed lowest by more than ten to one).
3. Reform of the educational system along democratic lines (total state education).
- 4, 5, 6. Various anti-imperialist and war alliance proposals.

Orwell also suggested an upper limit to farms ("probably fifteen acres at the very most") and abolition of ownership of land in town areas.

While his knowledge of farm sizes in Britain shows a hazy grip on such things, and his "abolition" of small town holdings would doubtless cause deep social resentments (as Eastern Europe's ¹⁹⁸⁹ retrospective on 1949 indicates), George Orwell grasped the importance of leaving smaller industrial enterprises alone, and presumably a sphere for a competitive market, in his projected new world - as adapted to "English" conditions. It's a bit surprising that he doesn't seem interested in Scotland and Wales.

Although Orwell presents some other ideas in a confident and forceful way in the same article, much of it has been by-passed by real events, including the peculiar notion that an independent India would be divided up between Japan and Russia, or Japan alone. His solution, no less patronising than Bernstein's, would be for a Socialist Britain to "bestow" socialism on the Indians in a new federation. How naive of them!

None of these details should distract from focussing on items 1 and 2, in particular.

Although Orwell does not define "major industries" clearly, it is plain that he is advocating a not-especially English version of Lenin's N.E.P. ("New Economic Policy") which, given its problems, worked fairly well in the old Soviet Union until 1929, when Stalin's faction discarded it. Orwell's model omits the encouragement of voluntary cooperatives, as in Catalonia, among those farmers for whom he proposed such stringent acreage limitation. That could have been just a slip.

Although Orwell devotes a fair bit of time to attacking intellectuals as though they were "left" (if only that were so, instead of almost the opposite!) or soft-headed apologists for Stalin, the pamphlets of the time indicate that there was not much difference between the post war projects of Orwell on the one hand, and the "immediate programme" of the communists - for the British economy. N.E.P. style programmes had been worked out by the national sections of the comintern since the 1920s and particularly after the new course in 1935, when taking into account national differences (which is what Orwell was on about in his essays) was stressed, and had some effect in Britain, Australia and elsewhere.

The important difference in policy of the Orwell/Wintringham etc. sector and ^{the} C.P.'s was that the former were fully alerted to the sort of ideas being pressed on "outside" socialists, whether cynical or naive, by Stalin and his collective in the political field. The dithyrambs to Orwell by Packer, Fairfax, Murdoch and their counterparts overseas in the 1945/49 opening shots of the cold war were because of the serialised Animal Farm and 1984, and were certainly not addressed to the Orwell of 1941, when he briefly sought hope in a libertarian socialist post war Britain. Elephantine satires and lambasting methods did not have much effect on case-hardened old reds, who saw it all as part of "the armoury of the bossclass", in old IWW terms. Far more effect was achieved by countless quiet discussions among themselves, whether over beer or cocoa, in the Quaker style, following the layer-by-layer, revelations, now "official" made in a period extending from the time of Khrushchev to Gorbachev. The millions living in error that Orwell saw around him ("Stalin's dupes") have been reduced to a few old fogeys (in the West) twisting themselves into knots to prove that Gorbachev was/is "objectively" an "agent of the imperialist powers", quite in the 1937 trials tradition.

All that is an improvement, but in the momentous developments of recent years, when yesterday's young socialists in career-positions are falling over themselves to prove they can manage capitalism better than the "thoughtless and inefficient" capitalists, it is well for others to remind themselves that the pre-war mode of production here remains virtually intact, except for tinkering.

In this state of affairs, Orwell's "model" is worth looking at, both for its intrinsic argument, and for its close resemblance to the proposals made in recent years for Eastern Europe, no matter how botched since, and to proposals made by the left in the West, as well as for left-inclined mixed economies without stalinist tinctures.

On the subjective side, one can see Orwell, previously depressed, caught up in the wave of solidarity and hope that was found in Britain and elsewhere, the crucial years of World War II.

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S. Cooper

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ORWELL'S HOSPITAL

We mentioned once before that the Paris hospital - Hopital Cochin - that George Orwell made the mistake of booking himself into in 1929, and on which he based his fine essay "How The Poor Die", appeared to have improved by the 1980s. We now have much better evidence of that: President Mitterand went there for his prostate operation earlier this year.

BAR THOUGHTS ON AUSTRALIAN POLITICS

It began with talk about recent Heraclitus material on rickshaws and sedan chairs as hopes for the country's future. Someone mentioned that Gunther Grass in his latest novel (translated as The Call of the Toad) has a minor plot reference to a Bengali in the new Poland who copes with the new "private enterprise" conditions by running a bicycle rickshaw business. Then we reflected ruefully that there's another parallel between the Oz situation and that in the former sections of the Communist Empire: it's as if here was another lost Antipodean section of that Empire also gone to the dogs under the ministrations of government policrats of a similar type.

That led us on to Dr Hewson who, we must confess, hadn't previously rated much pub time with us - except for worries about what the GST would do to the price of beer. Not that we think he would have much effect on the overall condition of the economy, as that of course depends on overseas developments and very little on Hewson or Keating.

We agreed however that what they do will have a very considerable effect on how the cake gets shared out, given the fact that Australia's economy is probably in an irreversible decline. But in this regard even Blind Freddy can surely see that what will keep happening is what visibly started under Hawke and Keating (Hawke got the blame more because of his open praise of his "rich mates", but Keating was the architect of the first of the economic rationalists' dreams: financial deregulation, which so far as any of us can see has so far had such wonderful results as firm after firm being sold to overseas interests and our enormous foreign debt). What will keep happening, i.e., under either Hewson or Keating, is that the rich will get richer, top executives will continue "to have to be paid more in order to encourage people with the right abilities" (including the right greedy outlook; whatever happened to people in interesting jobs who took some disinterested joy in their work?), the well-paid more ordinary people who do retain their jobs may stand their salary ground, but the rest of the population will become poorer and poorer. As for the ACTU, so far as we could see its function in this process - intentionally or unintentionally - is to exacerbate the divisions within the lower classes by demanding more pay for workers, which then leads to more unemployed.

Or, in terms of elite/ruling class theory, as times get harder it is large sections of the non-elite/ruled classes which suffer, but not the governing elite and its attendant auxiliary elite. We granted there are exceptions to this in history as when there are great changes (as in the former Communist countries of Europe where the old elites are now under threat) but there is Buckley's chance of this happening in Australia.

We agreed that there will be some difference between the parties as economic adversity goes on. Thus, (a) in the usual way the party machine which wins the election will have the power to bestow jobs, patronage etc. on its prominent supporters - though leading figures in the losing party machine will still have (just as the ACTU does) their own oligarchy to preserve and dispense power with, and won't suffer personal loss of privileges. (b) Particular vociferous interest group minorities may gain or suffer depending on which party wins. But these are matters that affect special, usually greedy, minorities, not the mass of the population - most of whom will simply suffer whoever wins.

We indulged in some moral philosophy at this point and agreed that of the numerous socio-moral nostrums in history that have been peddled for "the good of the country and the people", economic rationalism is one of the ones with the least soul or spirit and in the scale of ethical values has an intrinsic value that is exceedingly low. We also reflected that Sorel's conception of self-reliant, non-servile, worker-producers, and his criticisms of the consumer or greed ethic - and of capitalists and politicians and bureaucrats - now seem so faraway from present received beliefs it is as if they had currency, not eighty, but eight hundred years ago.

The only positive thought on all of this any of us had was this: If there are (and there must be) members of the A.L.P. who still have ideals and principles (i.e., other than about clinging to power at all costs) they'd turn their attention away from worrying about oppressed peoples in South Africa, Croatia, Bosnia, Somalia, Burma, China, etc., etc. (and the diversions Senator Evans serves up for them), and start some intelligent worrying nearer home, not only about our trees and wildlife, but about the present and impending misfortunes of lower class ordinary (very often white) Australians. This would lead them to concentrate on transforming the party by giving the boot to the present leadership and its devious, elite-serving outlook. They'd no doubt lose the next election, but having genuine anti-ruling-elite principles and policies would give Labor a chance of later being elected to office as things get worse and the mass of the people see through the bullshit and realize what is happening to them... But of course we know what Max Nomad would have said about hopes of that kind.

But why Hewson got to interest us was because of his very different, uncompromising attitude to how to be an Australian politician. Thus, he is often quoted as saying he won't alter his political agenda or leadership style for anyone. For instance: "If someone comes to me and says you have to change in order to win... they can get someone

else. I honestly didn't come in to be popular. I recognize that if I wasn't out there advocating major change I would be a lot more popular... That's my secret in becoming leader. I don't owe anybody... I don't care if you are big business person, a big green leader, or a big welfare leader..." (Aust. Fin. Review, 14-9-92.) Or, again: "NO DEALS... Opposition Leader John Hewson declared yesterday his goods and services tax is not negotiable - and issued a warning to industry that he will not bow to vested interests." (Report in the Daily Telegraph, 17-10-92.)

Of course, so far as the GST is concerned, our view was that whether you're in favour of it or not depends a lot on how you are financially. Probably Hewson is right about how that tax would be an improvement on the present sales etc. taxes - that is, except in one main case, that of FOOD. Even here the well and fairly well off may make out because of their gains elsewhere, and the very poor are going to be compensated - i.e., for a time. But the remaining large number of poor and fairly poor will certainly suffer as food prices skyrocket, not only from the GST, but from cunning food sellers who ^{will} also jack up prices themselves realizing that the government will get the blame for that too.

But there is the phenomenon of Hewson's refusal to change, or even to pretend to change, his policies in the usual Liberal/Labor way - i.e., according as the daily winds and opinion polls blow. That we felt was very commendable, not to speak of being almost unbelievable. Imagine frankness and honesty in politics! And furthermore, to the pleasure of believers in logical argument (such as readers of Heraclitus), Hewson, although he does seem to be learning rather quickly, is as yet far from being in Keating's league when it comes to making unrelenting use of the argumentum ad hominem instead of being objective when supposedly arguing. (Even so, we're divided about whether Keating is or isn't worse than Hawke who, it will be vividly remembered, stuck to the one "argument", the appeal to sentimentality, and whenever possible simply wept.)

Then, too, in Hewson's favour, we remembered the old happy party time refrain, "There'll always be a Menzies while there's a EHP ..." How Ming must be turning in his grave at a Liberal leader actually standing up to the EHP, not to speak of the car manufacturing firms and the tourist trade sharks. But he could take heart from the fact that Hewson won't, any more than Keating, pose a threat to the greedy banks, Ansett Airways (why does it live such a charmed life whoever is in power?), most big business ... and of course under no circumstances to the big near-monopoly media proprietors. But then they all favour economic rationalism and squeezing the non-elite into political servitude, don't they?

Just the same, in so far as Hewson is trying to break the Australian politicians' mould, he does have us watching with bated eyes. Partly in anticipation of savouring whether he could or would persist with it if he did get into power. But more because, before that ever happens, we should not be terribly surprised if - especially if the opinion polls show the Liberals may lose despite Keating's dismal economic record - Hewson's ever timid colleagues rebel, or other powerful forces intervene, and one day soon there is another great Canberra moment on television: when the men in white come to take him away as a dangerous innocent who wanted to stick to his guns. After that we all thought it would be easy to predict: The Liberals would reactivate the ever safe "Featherduster" as leader and compete with Labor in a fast drive into the Promise Land. (STOP PRESS. Our thoughts are, in part, already being overtaken by events.)

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED. BAD BROADSIDE No. 8, "Voting Anarchists: An Oxymoron or What?" Boston Anarchist Drinking Brigade, PO Box 1323, Cambridge MA 02238, USA. A well argued statement on why genuine anarchists don't vote.

FREETHOUGHT BOOKS. A wide collection. Rationalist Association, Sydney. Tel. 310-2218.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS, Population & Sustainability in Australia. Australians for an Ecologically Sustainable Population Inc., PO Box 1875, Canberra ACT 2601, July 1991. Argues for an immediate reduction in Australian population growth.

LANTERN WASTE, No. 1, P.O. Box 346, Petersham NSW 2049. A well produced new publication with an anarchist bent whose exact position is not yet clear, but it is interesting to note that it carries the same motto (with a slightly different translation) as that of the Sydney University Libertarians in the 1950s and 1960s, viz., the quotation from Karl Marx in 1843 in which he refers to ruthless criticism/ uncompromising critical evaluation/ of all that exists.

THE ONLOOKER INVESTIGATIVE NEWSLETTER, P.O. Box 1162, Elgin St, Carlton VIC. 3053, Nos 36-39, August to November 1992.

RED AND BLACK, Ed. Jack Grancharoff, P.O. Box 12, Quaama, NSW 2550, No. 22, Spring 1992.

THE RATIONALIST NEWS, 58 Regent St., Chippendale, NSW 2008, Vol. 26, 4, Spring, Sept. 1992.

JURA NEWS/NOVEMBER 1992. 110 Crystal St., Petersham, NSW 2049. Tel. 550-9931.

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We are sorry to say R.S. Walters died on 7th October - after a long illness. Ray, who studied under John Anderson, lectured in philosophy for many years in the University of New South Wales.

HEALTH MORALISM NEWS

When it comes to satirizing today's New Health Moralists, we have to admit that London's Peter Simple (Richard Wharton) wins going away. The following appeared in his column "Way Of The World", in the London Sunday Telegraph, 6 September 1992: "All for the Cause: Under a new arrangement between the Home Office and the British Medical Association, doctors will be able to put down smoking on death certificates as a contributory factor. The alleged purpose of this is to show how many people die as a result of smoking. In fact it will merely show how many doctors believe smoking is a contributory cause of death.

This move has been welcomed by the ordinary run of anti-smoking fanatics. But the Anti-Smoking Liberation Front, which maintains that smoking is a contributory cause of all deaths, even those from food poisoning or collapsing masonry, has condemned it as inadequate.

Extreme elements in the Anti-Smoking Liberation Army, the ASLF's militant wing, believe that all illnesses and deaths are solely due to smoking and that doctors should rationalise their work by ignoring other alleged causes. At the ASLF's annual ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Non-Smoker at Turgis Hill in South London on No-Smoking Day, they regularly stage a protest at the implication that it is possible to die from any other cause.

A mystical anti-smoking movement which is gaining more and more adherents in the ASLA holds that non-smokers who truly believe and dedicate their whole lives to the cause of non-smoking can actually attain immortality and so will have no need of death certificates at all."

(In the Telegraph Weekly now available in Australia, they don't reprint Peter Simple, though they do so from Auberon Waugh's more lightweight version of "Way Of The World".)

NZ CRITICAL DRINKING OF YESTERYEAR

By courtesy of Ken Maddock, we have come across a book by Michael King, Hidden Places, a memoir in journalism (Sceptre, NZ, 1992) in which, in referring to the University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand in its foundation years in the 1960s, he writes in a friendly way about some people we know. Thus, on pages 30-32, he says:

"I took up my jobs with St John's and the Waikato Times and I enrolled at the University of Waikato. Then began a year of such demented activity that, in my forties, I am wearied merely to recollect it... There was a great deal going on... acrimonious staff meetings... acrimonious student association meetings... a student paper first called Kato and then Nexus, which undulated with controversy; and a proliferation of parties on Friday and Saturday nights, which seemed as well attended by staff as they were by students... All these things may have been more indicative of the times than of the spirit of the university. The year 1968 was, after all, a year of international ferment: students raised barricades in Paris. Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King were assassinated... It was also the year that the counter-culture found its way to New Zealand, though its proponents in Waikato tended to be of the libertarian, anti-authoritarian persuasion, who analysed events mockingly from the pub (a process that philosophy professor Jim Baker referred to as 'critical drinking') in preference to manning barricades..."

I felt comfortable with the staff members who taught me and enjoyed especially the company of John Salmon and his wife" - Coral Lansbury - "(who served mulled wine at home in winter) and Arthur Sewell. The latter's tutorials were scintillating affairs. Allusions exploded from his memory as we studied The Four Quartets; quotes from Shakespeare, Dante and St John of the Cross fell from his mouth with erudite and effortless relevance. At the end of a session with him, one felt that one understood matters that had previously seemed impenetrably arcane. His brilliance in the lecture theatre was more than matched by his conversation in the pub, which threw up stories about England, South Africa, Spain, Greece and Lebanon, and about New Zealand, for he had held the chair of English at Auckland University before and during the Second World War and knocked around with Rex Fairburn and his cronies. The most dedicated pub-goers were members of the philosophy department - Jim Baker, Alan Olding, Garry Bates, Geoff Reid, and students such as Ted Ninnes - all of whom seemed to regard sessions at the bar, primed with beer, as extensions of the learning process. Baker, a comet that flared briefly across Hamilton's dullish firmament, was clearly the leader of the group. He was a powerhouse of ideas, conversation and off-beat humour, inspired (as somebody wrote about him subsequently) by doctrines derived from John Anderson of Sydney University, Marx, Sorel, Freud and Reich, in a tradition of philosophic free-thinking..."

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