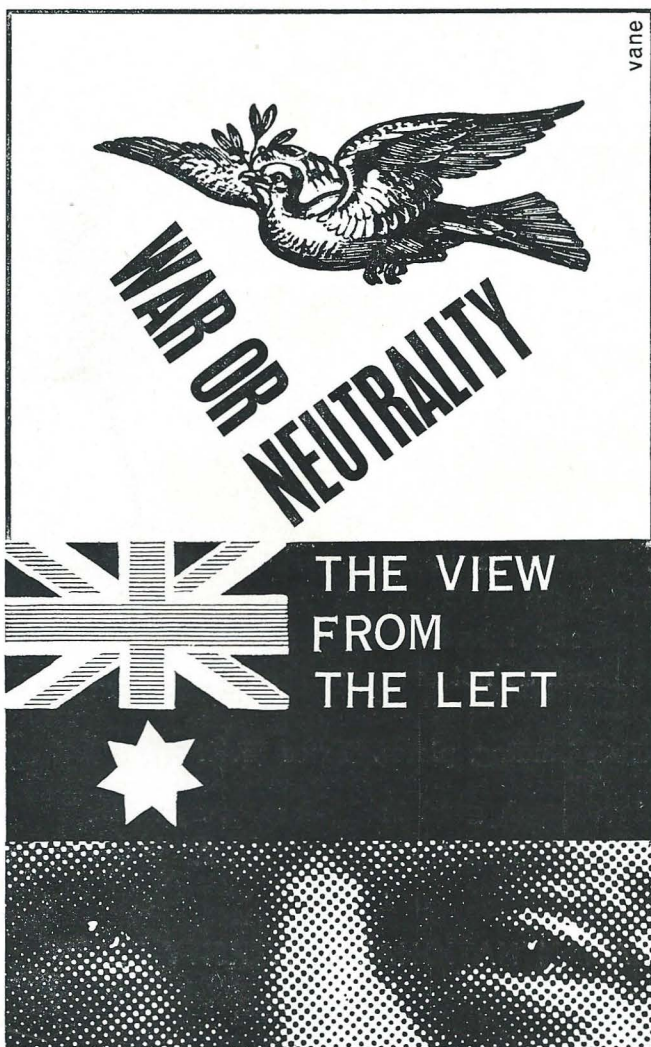


Dorothy Hewett:
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AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY PRESS

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Overland is a quarterly Australian literary magazine. The subscription rate is two dollars a year (four issues), and the price of each copy is fifty cents. Manuscripts are welcomed, but will be returned only if a stamped, addressed envelope is attached.

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NUMBER 36

WINTER 1967



OVERLAND

Temper democratic, bias Australian

HENRY LAWSON

Collected Poems Volume One: 1885-1900

Edited by COLIN RODERICK

This beautifully produced book is Volume One of a comprehensive collection of the verse of a writer who has often been called the folk voice of Australia. It includes, as far as the editor has been able to ascertain, all the extant verse composed by Lawson from 1885 to 1900, and it is significant that this, the first complete scholarly edition of his verse, is to be published on the centenary of Lawson's birth. \$6.50

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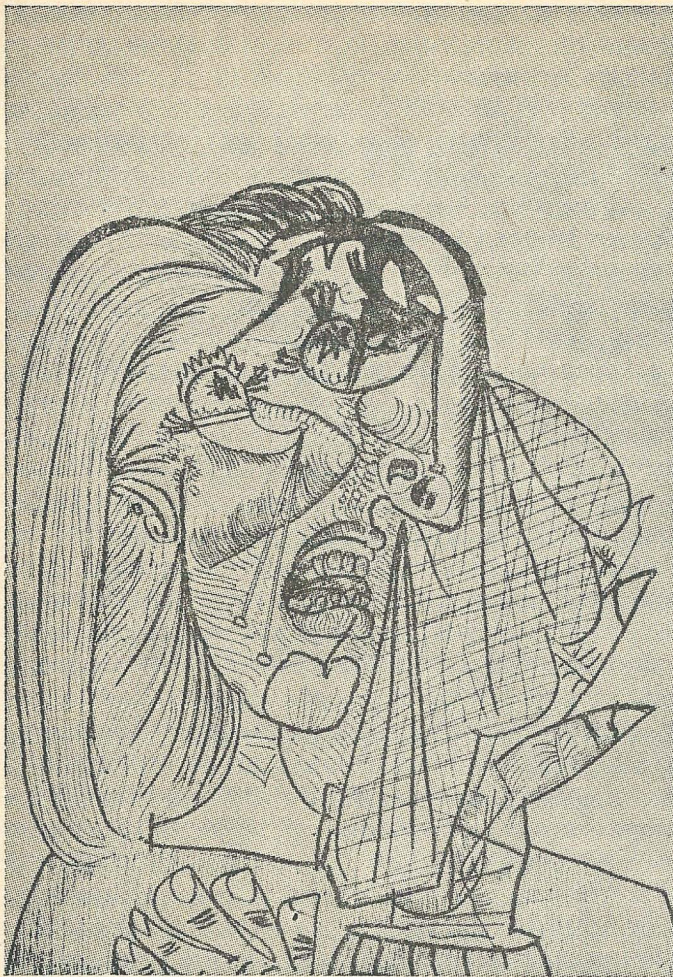
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Dorothy
Hewett

THE HIDDEN JOURNEY

I
IN 1952, in the year of Stalin, I came to Russia,
And saw flowers growing out of the blinkers on my eyes,
Saw the statues in the squares with their heads blown off,
The stumps of their thick stone necks stuffed up with roses.
Saw the wedding cake skyscrapers toppling like ice-cream cones,
And the firecrackers dripping off Stalin's moustache in the sky.
Saw a dumb cracked girl in Stalino who would not speak,
Welding under the great ribcage of the foundry,
While the Heroes of Labor smirked in the avenue outside.
Saw a blind man standing on a village corner,
With white eyes and a tin to take the kopeks,
Under the limes and the wind shaking the bird cherries.
Saw a ragged child who ran begging by the train in winter,
While the commissars pulled their pale fur coats to their ears.
Saw a man who sat on a step in a Siberian village,
Naked to the waist in the sleet, head buried in his hands,

Saw a woman with savage eyes who sat beside him
One arm flung over his body to shield him from cold.
Was he drunk or mad or in prison, his naked flesh
Blue-veined like breakable china left out in the rain?
A town of furtive eyes and whispering mouths,
Where men jostle against me in the State Railway Store,
Smelling of sunflower seeds and unwashed footrags,
Muttering out of closed lips in an unknown language
I do not understand: but sometimes in the river of sleep
A doubt surfaced, bumping like a stone, and would not be pushed under
And I would see the prison train pulled into Moscow Station.
Who are those paper faces pressed to the bars, behind the fixed bayonets
And the sleepy young snub-nosed soldiers, behind the flowers
And the speeches, the loudspeakers sweetly bawling "Soviet Land"?

I went back to mouth my commonplaces on street corners.

We are all guilty, ignorance was as inexcusable
As the blissful cataracts that closed on our white eyes.
Eyes, it was always eyes that gave me trouble,
Eyes cannot be denied; the sullen eyes of the Ukrainian women,
The mud snuffling at the doorsteps of their wooden houses.
The wind flattened the grass on the dark steppe, three men,
Huddled and reined on horses, stared into the safe, closed world
Of the train; hermetically sealed, warmed with pink lampshades,
Central heating and silver glasses of tea, we plunged
Into Moscow, to Lenin's tomb, the black queues moved like ants,
The red stars on the Kremlin blazed through the spring rain,
And Stalin kissed the little girls on the balcony,
His moustache ends teasing and tickling their rosy cheeks.
Mayakovsky, that murdered, trousered giant, legs astride,
Shut his stone mouth on the square, and Isaac Babel,
Round-faced, bespectacled, tender, still cried from the grave,
"The Revolution has given us the gift of silence".
Who spoke the truth; the old woman bowed in a black shawl
By the Moscow River, who crossed herself and cried "Peace",
Under the gilt onion domes of the orthodox churches?
Ivan, the Party secretary, warm and sardonic,
Who worshipped the Rembrandt oils in the Hermitage,
Tamara, with the brown blown hair and the angry eyes,
Whose dream was a dacha, lost, lost in the green virgin country?
Who knocked on your doors at night? Who hid the microphone,
Behind the gold frame of your favorite painting of roses?
Who disappeared from your street, who informed, who was guilty?
Where were you when they killed Isaac Babel's uncompromising tongue?
While I walked through the streets and listened to your marvellous lies,
Ehrenburg had a secret drawer for his autobiographies,
Khrushchev was playing with fire and a Twentieth Congress,
And Yevtushenko, that marvellous schoolboy, would, one day, stand
Beneath Mayakovsky's statue and shout out poems
Pressing open the lidless eyes and inserting truth.
Yevtushenko was only sixteen: the long winter fell
On the forests of Peredelkino, Pasternak's poems lay buried
Under the snow, a boy named Voznesensky sat at his feet in the fir forest.
Why did you deceive us? There was so much joy stirring
In the lilac roots under the black banks of that winter.
Beside the Leningrad River I might have met Daniil Granin,
Shot up from the war, an ache in his gut, his gold hair
Blowing truth in his candid mouth, I might have rubbed shoulders
With young Voznesensky, dreaming of ivory skyscrapers
Spinning like clouds, Bella Akhmadulina in a white pinafore
Playing hopscotch along the banks of the Moscow River.



Spring, 1965, a bleached crooner in a silver dress
Sings a Yevtushenko poem in the Hotel Moskva.
Rasputin bled on the snowy tablecloth.
The janitor gently draws the long cream curtains
Against the peroxide light and the upturned chairs,
The orchestra packs up like a Hemingway story.
The lilac, the marble staircase, the ringing voices
Of the amazons in the parks in their dark blue track suits.
The cafe in the Writers' Club where Natasha once
Came swan-bosomed down the stairs to old Lev Tolstoi,
His beard blue-fired in the teardrop chandelier.
Old Surkov stiff on the platform at the poetry reading,
Heroic, while the pitiless students chant "Where were you?"
The playwright sips his cognac, fat, gone to seed:
"Ah, the bureaucrats, the bureaucrats are always with us".
The Tolstoyans and the Dostoievskians argue outside in the street,
The blossom falls in snow-white tufts on their hair,
An old, fat, sunburnt woman in a dirty dress speaks French and German
The yellow-haired journalist steers her car through the rain.

"We Russians are all romantics. Do you believe in love at first sight?
That building on the corner has a special magic for me.
I met my husband in the lift. We looked at each other and knew."
The rosy light sparkles like a samovar in the upstairs windows,
The windscreen wipers swish, the girls in their red silk London suits,
Pressing my fingers, the pavements glisten, the spires tremble
Like Pushkin's tales, Marina cries: "We Russians are a tragic people",
And checks behind the painting of roses that hangs in my hotel bedroom.
The young men in the Youth Cafe are listening to detective stories,
The girls are pinning up pictures of President Kennedy,
Khrushchev is a little shocked man in a Moscow apartment,
The gargantuan editor rolls through the Moscow night-spots
Throwing roubles like emerald rain at the hat-check girls,
The taxi driver reads "War and Peace" in the parking lot.
"We Russians have soul. To understand us you must know the Russian soul,
Have you a soul in your country?" Irena swings her sooty eyelashes
In the back of the taxi. **Have** we a soul in my country?
The girls and boys place dark roses, gently, on Pasternak's grave.



1967, the Exhibition of Abstract Act is closed, the young men demonstrate
Under Pushkin's statue, Sinyavsky and Daniel, the poor demented son
Of Sergei Yesenin, are lost in a labor camp, alive or dead?
Yesenin's body dangles from a rope in the rosy twilight,
The gun goes off, the echoes roll across the city, Mayakovsky
Sprawls like a giant on the floor, the Bolshoi whirls with light?
"The Bedbug" plays to packed houses, screaming, "I am alone . . . alone".
The girls in their red silk London suits trip through the Red Square
Dreaming of Paris visas, the playwright in the blue straw dacha

Of cherries and limes, puzzles his brow over questions of Trotsky, Bukarin.
"They have not been rehabilitated, therefore we cannot discuss them."
The Japanese 'No' masks hang sardonic as words on his wall.
Yevtusheno washes his hands and the trial begins . . .
"I agree with what was done, but not with how it was done.
Should they be allowed to wash their dirty linen outside their country?"



The dirty, rosy, glittering linen of Moscow,
Spreads out in a snowy meadow under the sky.
The blossom whirls in the wind from Moscow Airport,
The taxi carries me with my broken eyeglasses, dazzled
With light and pain, past Lenin's Tomb, the dismantled
Statues of Stalin, the broken iron bell in the Kremlin.
The backs of Sinyavsky and Daniel bend over the golden cupolas,
The black backs of Satan ironically bending and bending,
Wringing their dirty linen out in the sky.
Seven years, five years hard labor. Ah! slanderers,
Cut out the silver tongues that toll black as the cracked bell.
Sinyavsky carries Pasternak's coffin shoulder high up the grassy meadow,
Mayakovsky floats like a cloud in trousers over this city,
Blessed, with a powder burn on his forehead, Yesenin's shadow swings
Back and forth on the stairs, Eisenstein's voice screams confessions
Endlessly into the amplifiers, where is Meyerholt's grave and Babel groping
Shortsightedly, shabby and plump, bespectacled, tender as blue lilacs
Shambling down Gorky Street? . . . I will speak with the tongue,
The iron tongue, the tongue of the bell, the gift of the dumb.
Why do I start from my sleep at Fadeyev's gun going off at midnight?
His vodka bottle stands, thick with cobwebs and dust, under the naked bulb
In the Writers' Union, the chandelier glitters, the blonde crooner sings
"Moscow Nights", holy city, Jerusalem, the janitor twitches the curtain,
Gagarin sits in the moonlight and autographs endless postcards,
The linen shroud of the snow touches the sleeping faces,
The voices cry out under the red stars like untended graves . . .
"We Russians have soul. Have you a soul in your country?"
Which country is mine? I dare not be dumb but must speak
With the voice of men who dream to be angels.
A fumbling at the door, short-sighted, blinking like owls—
"Is that you my friend? Come in and speak to me now,
Have you called to lend me an extra pair of your spectacles?
Look! there is nothing, nothing at all behind those monstrous roses
In the gilded frame, nothing . . . Isaac Babel, come in."



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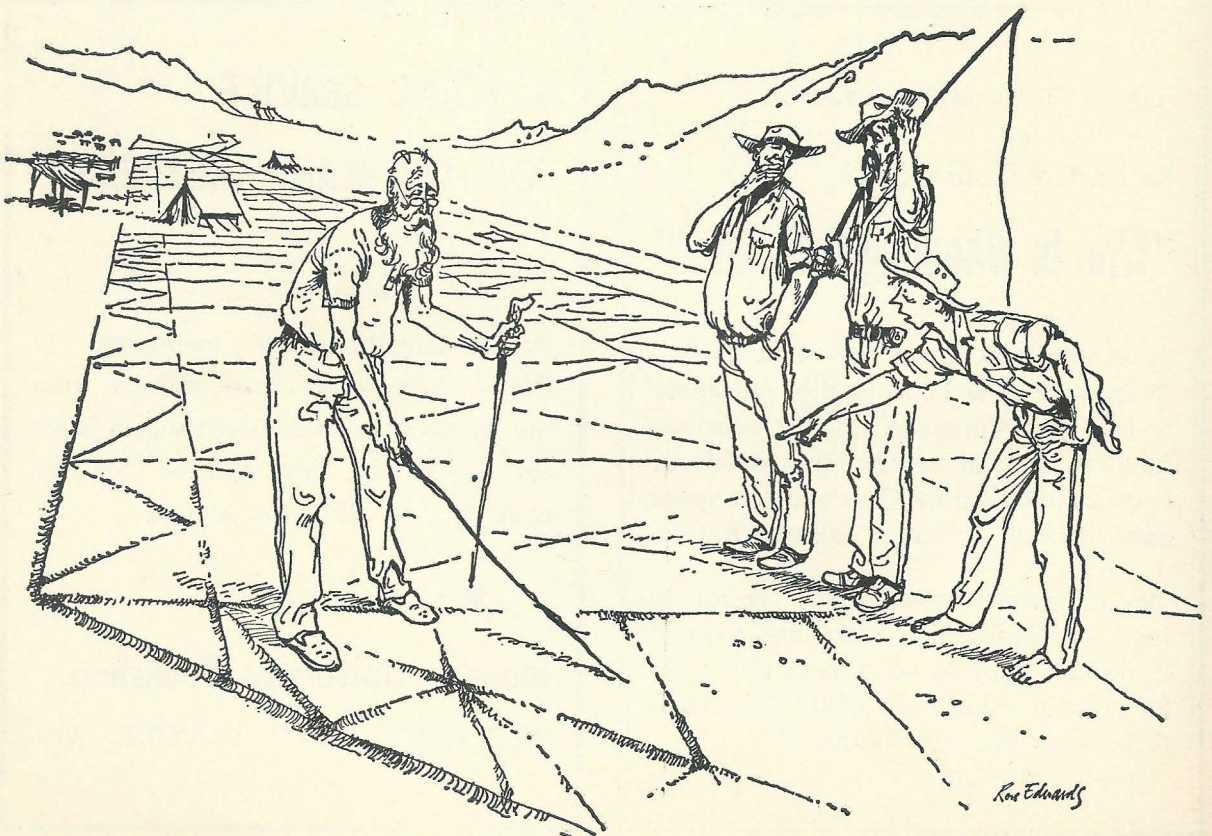
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THICKER THAN WATER



Peter Bennett Hills

SHEM, daydreaming, eyes half-slit against the sun, suddenly became aware of the approach of his father. A guilty glance at the flock assured him all was in order, and he stretched to his feet. The old man covered the ground at a remarkable pace, but reached him intact in dignity, and scarcely out of breath.

"Shem! I need fifteen hundred gopher trees."

Barely awake, Shem thought he had misheard.

"You want **what?**"

"Fifteen hundred gopher trees," said Noah, "perhaps more."

For a moment Shem's eyes and the valley were as one, desolate from rim to rim.

"Pop, you must be kidding!"

"Certainly not," said Noah. "Certainly not. I am going to build a boat."

The sun has reached him, thought Shem. The sun has finally melted his weak old brain. He's getting on a bit. Been very preoccupied lately. I'd better take him home. He said gently:

"Pop, what kind of a boat are you going to build with fifteen hundred gopher trees?"

Noah thought for a bit.

"A big one," he said.

"That," said Shem heavily, "is for sure. What do you need a boat for? A thousand miles of sand—who needs a boat? If we had any wood, which we haven't, I could make a boat out of one tree trunk. If we had an ox, which we haven't, I could haul it down to the Euphrates within two or three weeks. Also, if launched it would sink like a stone on account of I have never built a boat before." As an afterthought, he added, "Also, I would have fourteen hundred and ninety-nine trees left over."

"There will be no trees left over," said Noah. "This boat will be four hundred and fifty feet long."

"**What!**"

". . . And forty-five feet high."

"**What!!**"

". . . And seventy-five feet wide."

"Absolutely impossible!"

"Nothing is impossible. It is necessary that we build such a boat."

"We would have to cut down all the Cedars of Lebanon."

"No cedar," said Noah. "It has to be gopher wood. It's in the Specification."

"Specification! What Specification? When we build this liner four hundred and fifty feet long, does it say what we have to do with it?"

"Pitch it," said Noah simply.

"A very good idea," said Shem with feeling.

"Pitch it inside and out," said Noah. "I estimate we shall need ten or twelve tons of hot pitch."

"Ten or twelve **tons!**"

"Give or take a ton."

"Let's walk back to the tents and have a drink."

"Shem," said Noah urgently. "I want you to go back and explain to the boys. I hurry now to the tents of Eli to trade with him for oxen. Tomorrow you and Ham must take a team north, looking for

gopher wood. Japhet I shall need here to tend the herds, and later to trim the trees as you haul them back. Gather up your goods and make ready. You must be my left arm. Persuade you Ham, for he must be my right."

"He'll love it," said Shem. "He'll just love it."

*

Noah sped on. Shem, more slowly, moved down the slope of the hill, thoughtfully scanning the valley as he went. As he drew near the first tent, he could see them under the sagging goatskin. Ham, lanky, confident, was resting easily on one elbow. Japhet, still boyish, was tossing and catching pebbles. Grinning, he skimmed one at Shem's approaching feet.

"What's new, Man!"

"When I tell you," said Shem, squatting inside the tent shade, "Man, will you get a surprise."

Ham raised an eyebrow. "Tell me more?"

Shem told them. Japhet said, "I don't dig you, Man!" Shem told them again. Japhet's mouth was hanging open. Ham had his head to one side, eyes hard. "So—tomorrow we take a team and start north!" Then they were both speaking together.

"The old man's flipped his lid!"

"He's blown his stack!"

"He's crackers!"

"How much wood?"

"How long?"

"How high?"

"He's gone stark, raving bonkers!"

"Better tell the old lady."

"How long?"

"How high?"

"Build what?" said Ham. "Build **what?** Listen, Jack! A hundred and seventy years I've lived in this desert, and I can't even build a sandcastle!"

Shem said, "O.K.—O.K.! You sort it out with him. Just remember that around here his word is law."

They suddenly realised he was standing in the opening of the tent. A sly breeze ruffled the magnificent beard, and he washed them with his soft, tender eyes. "My boys," he said. "My boys. The chosen ones. The fountainhead of a new humanity. I see the questions in your faces. Why must we build a boat? Because, gentlemen, at the appointed hour will come a Flood. A Flood so great, the whole world will be laid to waste. A volume of water that will stagger the imagination. We alone have been given the honor of surviving that catastrophe gentlemen. But we must build a boat."

Only Ham dared to speak. Ham, the loner, the rebel. He said, "Pop, don't you think that for five people a four hundred and fifty foot boat is kinda big?"

The full majesty of the noble head was turned fractionally in his direction. The eyes crystallised

to pure quartz, and Noah cowed him with a moment of icy silence.

"Shem, you will be ready to leave in the morning."

"Yes, father."

"Ham, you will leave with him."

"Yes, father."

"Japhet, you will attend me at first light."

"Yes, father."

He was gone. Japhet said, "I don't wanna build no crummy boat." Ham said, "It's the same with all these old guys. When they get around five hundred years old, they start to act funny." Shem said, "Rain, eh! Well, of course, that could make it a bit different." Their heads came together, and they conversed rapidly in low tones.

*

At dawn, two teams of oxen moved off the valley floor, and by mid-morning had breasted the last rise of the hills. Moving downhill, unseen below the rim of the high land, they changed direction from north to north-east, and began skirting the valley. At noon the party rested.

"How far do you think we have come," asked Shem.

"About five miles."

"The idea," said Shem, "is O.K. We circle around for a couple of days, keeping out of sight. Then we head home when the Old Man has cooled off. But supposing he hasn't cooled off?"

"He'll cool off," said Ham.

"The bit that worries me is this rain angle. Do you remember rain? I saw rain once, when I was a boy. Must be a hundred and fifty years ago. Japhet's never seen rain. He's too young. Do you remember rain?"

"Yeah," said Ham.

"First he told me about the boat. Then he told us about the Flood. He didn't mention a Flood that first time. D'ya think he just made it up about the Flood to make us build a boat?"

"Yeah," said Ham.

"But that wouldn't be like the old man. He's never told a lie in his life. He wouldn't be in the position he is today if he told lies. Suppose we go out to Mount Zefferon and have the story checked."

"You're joking," said Ham. "You know the kind of country it is out there. I should eat dust for three days out there just because the old man's got a touch of the sun."

"So we circle around for three days, or we sit here for three days. That's going to be just great. We may as well go somewhere definite for three days. What have we got to lose?"

"You must be nuts!" said Ham, but he got up and turned the team back down the slope.

*

On the second day they entered the foothills, and on the tenth hour were climbing Mount Zefferon proper. The cave was higher than they remembered, but the Prophet sat, as he had always sat, a goatskin bundle in the shade of a rock. As they drew close, the Prophet spoke.

"Greetings, my sons. How goes the world with you?"

"We were hoping," said Shem, "that you could tell us."

There was an uncomfortable silence. Presently the Prophet spoke again. He said, "What is it you seek?" Shem squatted on his haunches and said nothing. Ham fiddled with his crook, then took the plunge. "Do you have anything in the nature of a long-range weather forecast?"

The Prophet looked blank.

Shem said, "Could you sorta give us the weather pattern, local-wise and world-wise?"

The Prophet looked at Shem. He said, "I have looked into the future many times, my son. It is always the same. Oh, miserable sinners! The wage of sin is death. The wages of sin are death." He looked embarrassed. "I can never get that darn quotation right." He leaned forward confidentially. "Anyhow, I can tell you fellows that in a couple of thousand years, things are going to get mighty tricky."

"Possibly," said Shem. "Possibly. However, we should appreciate something a little more current." The Prophet looked into the middle distance. His eyes glazed. He fell asleep. He woke up. They leaned forward anxiously, waiting for him to speak. He said, "I'm sorry, fellas."

"What did you see?"

"I'm sorry fellas, I can't tell you."

"Why can't you tell us?"

"Something pretty big is going to happen. Something in the pretty near future. But I can't get a clear picture."

"Why not?" they asked.

"Too much damn rain!" said the Prophet.

Shem leapt to his feet. "Let's go," he shouted.

"Good enough for me, Man!" said Ham.

They struggled to U-turn the patient oxen on the rocky track. "North!" shouted Shem, "North, and don't mess around." The coal-black hooves made little patterns in the dust.

*

Nothing punched home the seeming impossibility of the whole project more than the drawing. Shem and Ham first saw it as they battled the exhausted teams over the valley lip. Sketched across the valley, deeply etched in the sand, was the Ark. It was a masterly composition. The straights were correctly economical and faintly superior as straights must be, and the curves, robustly swelling at bow and stern, would have delighted the heart of Rubens. It was also monstrous and alien, as though it had swallowed the little huddle of tents which lay in its belly. It seemed scarcely credible that this baked-earth draughtsmanship could have been executed in the bare two weeks that they had been away.

When Shem could tear his eyes away, he saw that Ham had been seized by the thought that was presently in his own mind. Ham was looking over the shoulder of his lead ox at the trunks. They looked like a bundle of twigs. Against that endless mural, the trunks they had fought and sweated and slaved to cut, shrunk to a handful of splinters. It was so ridiculous he almost laughed, but he and the oxen stood patiently on the hilltop until Ham stopped cursing and beating his fists on the rock. Presently, Ham let his arms fall slackly to his sides. "That does it! Rain or no rain, I quit!" He kicked the lead ox in a sudden relapse of frustration, and the surprised animal jerked and set off down the slope with its load. Shem was still studying the drawing.

"It's got a little window in it; about half-way up."

"Oh, shut up!" said Ham savagely. They started down after the team, coughing in the swirling dust.

Shem met Noah standing defensively at the prow, busily diverting the lead ox who was threatening to erase a portion of the boat. Noah clapped him cheerfully on the shoulder, "Well done, my boy." The ox wandered off aimlessly with its log. Noah waved his arm airily at the valley in general, "Not bad, eh?"

"Tremendous, Pop," said Shem. He meant it. For an old guy five hundred and fifty years old, it really was tremendous. Noah was counting, estimating. "We shall need a lot more logs," he said.

"Please don't mention that to Ham," said Shem. "You will have to make lots and lots more trips."

"Please don't mention that to Ham."

"You may have to go several hundred times."

"I wanna go and say 'hello' to Mum and Japhet," said Shem. He moved down the curve of the bow, taking care not to smudge the line. As he turned under the flap of the tent, he could hear Ham's upraised voice. Shem kissed his mother on the cheek. He said, "How come you haven't talked Pop out of this crazy idea?" He nibbled at a crust of bread. Mrs. Noah was mixing something in a bowl. "You know how your father is. When he gets these ideas, there is no stopping him. Besides, for some reason, this time I think he is right." Japhet came in through the tent flap and slapped Shem heartily on the back.

"Hi, Man! What do you think of the crazy drawing?"

"Great," said Shem dryly.

"What's with Ham—yelling up there?"

"It's the wood," said Shem. "We brought back enough to make two deck planks and a window frame."

Japhet said, "Do you have to go back for more?"

Shem said, "You've got to be joking!"

*

It was no joke. No joke, no rest, no peace. The hot winds blew, the sun climbed higher through the days, and the seasons died. The sheep grazed, and lambed, and passed away, and new generations of goats lived through their time. Here and there on the dusty basin a little grass would grow, and sometimes a bush, and occasionally the seed of an olive would root, and spread, and climb. And with them grew the Ark. It climbed through a hundred days on its hardwood keel. It spread through a framework of formers and spacers and uprights and bulkheads and risers. It grew until it towered above them, brooding and impossible. They still needed the wood long after Eli's oxen had grown old and crumbled into dust. Through the ten, the twenty and the thirty years, they still needed the wood. The hillsides were scoured with the coming of it, and the floor was thick with the chippings of it, until Japhet was grown to a man, and Ham's thick beard was streaked with white, and Mrs. Noah had grown pale in the shadow of it, and suddenly it was done.

It was the biggest thing in the world, and Noah was very pleased. He was slow, and old, and bent, and it took him half a day to walk around it. They lost him in the depths of it. He would descend into the bowels of it, and they would have to send Japhet to find him. In the fortieth year following the commencement of the Ark, he called them all together and made his pronouncement.

"It meets the Specification."

Ham said he was very gratified. He said a lot of other things as well. He discussed at length his possible reactions if the Ark had not been to specification. Shem was pleased, too. He was pleased with the silence. He was filled with a delicious sense of peace. They had finished the hammering. There would be whole mornings to evenings devoid of somebody banging something on something. They lay on the sand in the shadow of the Ark. They lay under a million stars in a silver sky. Shem lay with his hands clasped behind his neck, drinking in the peace.

Ham said, "Tomorrow, we don't have to harness no oxen." They were happy in the prospect of it, and allowed him to be ungrammatical. "No more wood. I never want to see another tree."

Japhet said, "I wonder when it will start to rain?"

Shem said nothing. Forty years ago they didn't want the rain. They certainly didn't want to build a boat. Now they had the boat, and they wanted the rain. They wanted to make the boat worthwhile, and the building of it to mean something. They did not think their father was so crazy, either. He knew that secretly even Ham conceded they had achieved something wonderful. He thought: we're all rather proud.

Ham said, "In the morning, we get to lie in."

*

In the morning, Noah said, "Now we assemble the animals." The cold winds of a thousand northern winters clamped around their hearts. The sun froze in the sky. The birds stopped, and the sheep stopped, and the sons of Noah stood very, very still.

"What animals?" asked Ham, soft as silk.

"All the animals," said the old man, waving his arms about vaguely, "all the animals in creation."

Japhet said, "Let's not exaggerate, Pop. Exactly how many animals?"

"Two," said Noah.

The softest of relaxing sighs.

". . . Of each," he added.

There was a catch in it, but they could not see where it lay. Japhet said tentatively, "Two oxen, two goats and two sheep?"

Noah said, "Those, certainly. Those—and all the others."

Shem said, "What others? There aren't any others! Are there?"

"Certainly there are others. Do you, for one moment, imagine the whole world is contained in this miserable valley? Of course there are others. Did you think, for one moment, the Flood would merely submerge the land of Ur? Why did we build the Ark? If man can cover great distance in a season, how far could we have walked in forty years? How great is a Flood that in forty years we could not reach the edge of it? Beyond the deserts and mountains and valleys are more deserts and mountains and valleys. Each contains its complement of creatures. Two of each sort must be gathered up. I charge each of you with this task. I shall remain here, and take care of the birds."

"What birds?" said Ham. "Waddya mean, the birds?"

"The birds," said Noah, "will come of their own volition. At the appointed time, they will come. This is quite outside our jurisdiction."

"Never mind the birds," said Shem. "Let's get back to the animals. What animals?"

For answer, Noah led them to a little cave in a hillside. The cave was stacked from top to bottom with slabs. "I have faithfully recorded all the animals," said Noah. "The library covers several thousand tablets. Enumerating briefly, to the south are antelopes, lions, monkeys, rhinoceros, hippopotamus and giraffe. To the north are wolves, bears, reindeer, horses and foxes. To the east are elephants, tigers, camels, . . ."

"Hold it!" said Shem. "Hold it! I've heard enough."

Japhet said, "A hippowhat?"

Ham said, "This is going to be another timber deal. I can feel it in my bones."

WINTER DISSONANCE : LONDON

Not completely uncomfortable.
My bed-sit was mostly perhaps autumnal—
brown mists of less-than-explicit fragrance
slept in the air; stealthily the vagrant
wallpapers scratched at each other;
the ceiling drifted down, smothering
the floor; dust and dusk dribbled
through the window ledges oral and terrible
with the glance and glare of gusty days;
the furniture was contentedly faded,
never minding my slopping and slumping
or dragging drawers and wardrobes to dump things in.
My room was always vaguely the wrong season:
it wouldn't quite declare itself; a room unreasonably
sitting on a fence, with exasperating diplomacy;
hot, cold, neither, both, till you lately
entered. Whereupon the weak-watt bulb was sun
in summer: the definitive season had come
with you. Ah! the landscape of my bed-sitting
scudded with breezes, warmth, light, everything
you insist upon in your country matters—yes, everything.
I know this is so, because winter slinks in
every time you open my door to depart:
my eyes are ice, and frost frays the edges of the cheap carpet.

LAURENCE COLLINSON

"How big?" asked Shem. "How big are these animals, sizewise?"

"Which one, for instance?" asked Noah.

"F'rinstance—elephants?"

It was an unlucky choice. Ham was quite put out. He shouted, "I knew it! I knew it!" It was some time before they could calm him. "Whatever happens, I don't go east. Somebody else can go east. Definitely no elephants. I'll take west. What's west?"

Noah told him about the west, taking care to mention chipmunks and ring-tailed possums first. Ham was somewhat mollified, but suspicious. Noah said, "Now there is only just enough room on board for the quota. I don't want you boys bringing back more than two of each."

They just managed to contain themselves until he was out of earshot. They filled the next few minutes with a spectacular display of massed invective. It was an impressive pile of masonry, and they considered it with studied disgust. After a while, Japhet selected a tablet and studied it. He said, "Tiger—Bengal (meat-eating). Length ten feet. Weight five hundred and fifty pounds."

Ham tried to look disinterested. "What was the weight again?"

Japhet said, "Five hundred and fifty pounds."

Shem said, "Four times bigger than me, and it eats meat!"

"I betcha it lives in the east," said Ham. "Yeah, in the east I betcha. Now you all heard what the old man said. I get the west. Let Japhet go east. All he's done for forty years is chop little twigs off logs. Let him do some work!"

"I hauled logs, too," said Shem mildly.

Japhet said, "Relax, Man! I'll take the east. You guys don't know what you're missing. Listen to these. 'Monkey—White-tailed Guereza, Monkey—Colobus Angolan, Monkey—White-collared Man-gabey'. Man! Imagine me seeing all those."

Ham said, "You won't if Tiger—Bengal (meat-eating) sees you first." He had two tablets in his arms, one marked "Wolf—Grey Timber" and the other "Wolf—Prairie". Both tablets were embossed at the top with a crudely chiselled capital "W", and he reluctantly piled them to one side of the cave mouth. After a while they were all busily sorting the tablets into points of the compass.

*

They were not to meet again for many years. The huge Ark sat in the silent valley and waited. High on the prow, Mrs. Noah affixed a little goat-skin awning, and in the tenth year Noah took to sitting in the shade of it, while watching the horizon. In the summer of the twenty-second year, the old man grew restless, and refused to leave his station day or night. He sensed their coming, and the tremendous import of it wrapped his shoulders like a mantle. He did not feel helpless and alone, as he had when Mrs. Noah made her little trip to Kish, or overawed as he had when the birds had come blackening the skies. He felt uplifted. His destiny was upon him, and his soul sang. The morning sun unveiled a puff of dust in the east, no bigger than a man's hand. The old man, bent as a bow, struggled to his feet, and threw his arms in the air.

"Japhet comes!"

Daily the dust cloud grew, until it was a column a mile high in the sky. On the fourth day, a second cloud of dust appeared out of the north. The old man was trembling with joy, and Mrs. Noah came and sat with him, in the shade of the little awning. "Shem is coming," she said. They held hands.

Two weeks later, the animals started pouring over the rim of the valley, an endless chain stretching back as far as the eye could see. Two by two they came, but meeting with the Ark they broke formation and began milling about, until they formed a sea of black, brown and stripe, fur, hair and bristle. By the time Shem had worked his string into the valley, it was near full from end to end. He met up with Japhet, and they embraced.

"Have a nice trip?"

"Fair, Man! Dragged a bit on the last five years, when I turned them for home. You know, last mile home is the longest, and all that jazz."

"You've said it," said Shem. "How come you weren't walking?"

"It's a great new idea I had, Man," said Japhet. "Like I was riding on this animal's back. Riding is gonna be all the rage. Walking is out, Man, like finished. Pick a tough, chunky animal like I had, 'Pig—Malay Babirusa'—absolutely ideal, Man."

"It's got a round back," said Shem, doubtfully. "Why not pick an animal with a flat back, like 'Horse—Arab'?"

Japhet said, "You're having me on. What, sit right up there! That'll never catch on. The secret is to have your feet touching the ground."

Noah said, "Who went south? No creature must be missed?"

Japhet said, "I went south, Pop, then worked my way around to the east." He caught Shem looking at him sheepishly, and added quickly, "Well, I'm younger than you guys. It wasn't far out of my way. I like keeping busy."

Mrs. Noah said, "I've been busy, too. I went over to Kish to invite some of those nice young girls to pay us a visit. I've talked it over with your father, and we might let three of them take the trip with us. Do you remember Rebeckah, Japhet?"

Japhet said, "Do I remember! You mean the swinging chick I met at the well in Kish, one Tishri about a hundred years ago? You mean she's on board!"

Mrs. Noah said, "I think you had better have a wash first, dear."

Shem said, "I wonder what's keeping Ham?"

Noah was jumping about, happily patting the shorter animals on the head. "Well done, boys, well done. I think we had better start the loading as soon as possible, Shem. As they go up the plank, Japhet can check them off against the tablets."

"I was planning to wash up, Pop, and take a stroll around the deck."

"Time is against us, boy. Time is running out. Events of great moment are upon us."

So spoke he, and as always he must be obeyed. The loading went well, with only one distraction. On the thirteenth day, Ham trudged into the valley at the head of his herd. He walked purposefully, as would a man who has simmered for sixteen years. He seized Noah by the shoulders, and shook him like a leaf. He said, "O.K. Wise guy. How come you didn't tell me about the Bison! These

Bison got minds of their own. You just try turning around eight hundred pounds of Bison when it's facing in the wrong direction." They restrained him with great difficulty. Noah went up and sulked under the goatskin awning. For the rest of the week Mrs. Noah trotted soothingly among them, pointing out the sooner they finished the loading, the sooner they could rest. Noah was six hundred years old. They did not know, but it was Zero.

Shem was pushing a small goanna up the gangplank with a piece of stick, when a large drop of water struck him on the hand. For a moment it did not register.

Ham said, "Well that does it, apart from two wart-hogs and a bison. I tell you now, I'm gonna put a wart-hog under each arm, and once I'm up that gangplank, I'm all through, Boy!"

Japhet said, "Like you brought in the Bison, Man. I say you should get him up the plank." A large drop of water splashed over his ear. "Hey, what's this stuff?"

High above them, a snowy head appeared over the side of the Ark. The voice was high and quavery, but the message was clear. "I think the time has come, gentlemen. Kindly come aboard and pull in the gangplank." Several large drops splattered on the sand.

Shem shouted, "You heard what the old man said! This is IT! Get this crummy Bison up the plank."

Japhet stood up horrified, and dropped the last tablet. He said, "Holy Cow! I think I forgot to bring a Dodo." Mrs. Noah appeared from nowhere and grasped the Bison by one ear. It followed her obediently up the plank. Relieved of responsibility, Ham put a wart-hog under each arm and followed her. Shem and Japhet pulled the gangplank inboard amid a flurry of heavy rain.

*

It was the forty-seventh day. The Ark rode on the face of the waters, and Noah was six hundred years old. Shem, Ham and Japhet were stretched out on the deck, dozing in the sun. Noah came upon them and smiled. He had a dove in his right hand, and a leaf in his left. He said, "If the signs are right, gentlemen, I shall soon have work for you to do."

Japhet said, "You name it, Pop. We can handle it."

Noah moved on, chuckling.

Ham said, "He ain't such a bad old guy. How many people could think up an idea like this, and get away with it?"

Shem said, "I asked him once how he knew this thing would float. He just said, 'I have it on the Highest Authority'. What can you say about a faith like that?"

Japhet said, "Well he sure got me in shape, Man. Starting a new civilisation is going to be a breeze. I can handle any animal known to zoology, and you should see my muscles, Man!"

Shem said, "You think you built this tub single-handed or something? If there is anything I don't know about gopher wood . . ."

They lay contented in the sun.

Ham said, "Did I ever tell you guys about the time I personally manhandled an eight-hunnerd pound Bison?"

The Ark sailed on.

WAR WITHOUT HONOUR

by Gerald Stone

In the year since the publication of this book, the 'dirty little war' in Vietnam has developed into a full-scale and bloody battle with both sides employing all the weapons and ruses of twentieth century warfare. It has developed into a vicious struggle for power between the western and communist worlds and the western nations have been split on the issue of involvement in Vietnam.

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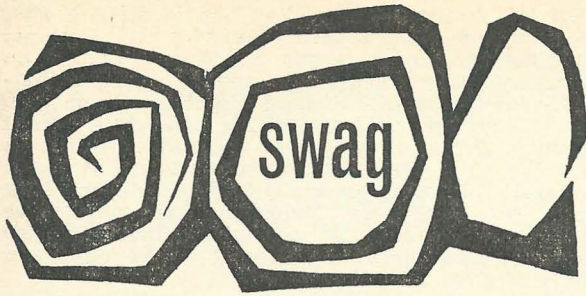
NORTHERN FOLK

is something more than just a small magazine devoted to folk songs and ballads.

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Write to the Editor,
Ron Edwards,
Holloways Beach, North Queensland.



SO the Congress of Cultural Freedom, supporter of Britain's Encounter, Australia's Quadrant and many other similar magazines, was in receipt of U.S. Intelligence money (through the C.I.A.) from 1950 until last year. The executive director of the Congress has resigned in Paris, Stephen Spender has resigned from Encounter; and James McAuley has an apologia in the current Quadrant. Of course one feels a certain sense of smug satisfaction; especially if you have spent, like me, a long time on the Left being accused one way and another of being supported by insidious foreign influences. It also makes me feel righteous: we live in a capitalist country but, ironically, it's the most right-wing of our literary magazines that gets the mostest handout, and it's Overland that, on the whole (excluding a small Commonwealth Literary Fund grant in recent years) has survived on the principles of the free market economy.

*

It's nice, then, to see others caught out, but it's easy to be too righteous about this. I find it hard to gloat. After all, didn't everyone know about the Congress of Cultural Freedom and its hidden funds? (Except that we thought they came from the State Department, if there's any difference.) Secondly, I have no real objection to ideologies, capitalist or communist or midway between, subsidising the battle of ideas in any way they like. (The Australian Department of External Affairs buys quantities of Meanjin and Quadrant, I believe, for distribution to diplomatic posts throughout the world; I'm not complaining about this; I

THE FLOATING FUND

"And if you want a small advance," jeered the Wobblies in one of their more famous songs satirising the reformists in the labor movement, "we'll speak to Justice Higgins". Well, as I mention in Swag, Overland has just received a small advance—from the Commonwealth Literary Fund. But not enough to cover the perennial gap between income and outlay—and that's why we're grateful to the following for their donations of \$155.86 since our last issue:

FM \$20; DP DG \$10; GB \$8; BJ \$5; DD AJ JT DA \$4; FD TT HH JD MW MC HP \$3; KMCC RGT \$2.50; NS GS LW EE HW RB FA WT MF KH TS LC MT OG LB \$2; KGT \$1.50; MR JW BR RH JC KT JT EMCL HM AB PC WY JD JG JW LR OG HB RW KF AE RMCL LK AL GD RM \$1; KS 76c; MO'B 60c; WS BB JC JP RH 50c.

just wish they'd buy Overland as well.) After all, it's the ideas that count, provided they have means to grapple with each other. And the Russians, while spending vast sums on subsidising cultural activities as part of the battle for men's minds, object strenuously to being answered. It was Krushchev who said most violently that cultural exchange didn't mean the swopping of dangerous thoughts. Well, I'm a dangerous thought man myself. My complaint at the Yanks is not that they support the export of offensive ideas, but that they do it so hamfistedly and so badly. And that brings me to my final point. Encounter has been an exception. It has not been hamfisted. It is one of the best literary and cultural magazines published in the English language. Everyone should read it (though it's desirable they know its provenance). Encounter and Quadrant should continue to be judged, not by the scandal to which their names are indissolubly linked, but essentially by the kind of magazine they are, the things they say.

*

Talking of handouts, it may be of some interest to readers to know that the Commonwealth Literary Fund grant to Overland has just been raised from \$500 a year to \$625, a quarter of which is paid on the publication of each issue. This amount just about covers our block-making expenses! The C.L.F. has just completed a general survey of the literary magazines (it does this every three years) and, I expect, has slightly upped all its grants—though I did hear that Meanjin has a substantially increased subsidy. (It needs and deserves it more than most.)

*

This time, though, the bureaucracy put us through the hoops. We had to perform to get our bone. We were asked to fill in a lengthy questionnaire which wanted to know, among other things, "Proportion of Australian creative writing published as percentage of total material published", "Proportion of reviews of Australian books published—shown as proportion of total material published", and so on. Such questions are pretty naive, it seems to me. Why should it be better to publish Australian poems than the poems of the Czech poet Miroslav Holub, which we printed in our last issue? Even more importantly, what is "creative" writing? We have published some documentary writing in Overland which is far more genuinely "creative" than a lot of our short stories—and we'd like to publish much more such writing, but we can't get people to write it. However, for the record, our answers to the above two questions were (a) 37% (1964), 34% (1965), 40% (1966); (b) 32% (1964), 26% (1965), 18% (1966). I should imagine that these figures were the highest of any of the magazines, except the purely poetry ones. Incidentally, in our next issue we shall publish a complete list of all C.L.F. fellowships since 1940, together with the resulting books (if any).

*

A number of well known figures in the Australian intellectual world, including I'm pleased to see a number of card-carrying communists, have signed an appeal to President Podgorny of the Soviet Union requesting the release of Andrei Sinyavsky and Yuli Daniel. The Russians set the clock back with a vengeance last year when, after a kangaroo court trial, they sent Sinyavsky down for seven years' hard labor and Daniel for five. Their "crime", of course, was to have written books and stories and to have arranged for them to be published abroad (since they couldn't get

JACK MULLETT

JACK Mullett died of lung cancer on 20th March, 1967, six weeks after returning from what was, for him, a gruelling three weeks' expedition to a remote Bass Strait island group, during which he pioneered the scientific investigation of Dover Island, which previously had hardly been disturbed by the hand or the mind of man. He was forty-eight years old.

Jack had known from the middle of 1966 that he was going to die. He resigned immediately from the Victorian Education Department, where he was a high school science teacher, so that his pupils would be as little affected as possible in concluding their year's work. He set to work to put his affairs in order, to order books for his library for his daughter's benefit, to eat and drink with his friends, and to plan the trip back to the Kent Group, where we had first been some years before. He was the best of company in this period, less cantankerous than usual despite his growing pain; it was Jack who worked out with pleasure, while on the island, that we had taken sixty gallons of beer with us but only forty of water.

Time was running against him—faster than we realised—but he remained very patient with us on the island, amid the manifold inconveniences of camp life. He couldn't get on with his exploring without us, but while he waited for us to give him a hand he got his books and instruments and collecting gear into order. When we finally established him in his advance camp on Dover he spent several days on the island, much of the time by himself, and carried out two long scrub-bashes which would have been considerable achievements for a healthy man, let alone a dying one.

Jack deteriorated quickly after the return from the Group. He would talk to you philosophically, as he plunged long needles into his thighs, of death and of life—somewhat glumly of life, for as a deeply-read Marxist he had come to the conclusion that mankind seemed incapable of ordering its affairs in time, and would strangle in its own proliferation and wastes—and he took scrupulous notes on the progression of his own illness. Jack hated sentimentality of any kind, so his friends

just had to like him and love him in spite of that, to take him with a dash of bitters. His external hardness masked a deeply affectionate nature, an extraordinarily unswerving honesty, a firm commitment to the rational and scientific approach in all things and a love of his country's natural beauty. Some of the most tranquil moments in my life have been spent sitting on boxes at Jack's campsite above the beach at Erith Island, drinking beer (preferably his Cooper's, if we could tease it out of him), and just looking at Murray Passage and the magnificent background of the cliffs and hills of Deal Island.

He was a modest man. A few weeks before he died I suggested that we might try and get him access to some exotic new treatment: "I'm not worth it" was his answer. But his work in many fields deserves to be remembered. A finer scientist than many Ph. D.s, Mullett never finished a university course; but he was an exemplary student leader, secretary of the Melbourne University Students' Representative Council in the forties, later a mature force among science undergraduates. He was an early and a persuasive lover of good jazz. He stood behind the post-war upsurge of left-wing Australian writing, and spent much time and effort in assisting the unorthodox publication of the first editions of Eric Lambert's "The Twenty Thousand Thieves" and Frank Hardy's "Power without Glory". He was a communist until the late fifties, owned a fine socialist library and thought and understood more about the political theories of socialism and communism than, I think, anyone else I have known. In his last few years Jack was a dedicated and excellent teacher of science.

As his friends would agree, it seems a funny thing to say about Jack, but I shall miss him for his charm. And I shall miss him for his refusal to be bluffed. The way he would exclaim "bloody Murray-Smith" will ring in my ears for ever. I shall miss him for his reminiscences, particularly of the more hair-raising episodes and eras of Communist Party history, and I am sorry he never wrote them down. I shall always be flattered that he liked me, for, unlike others of us, in his honest and dour way he wouldn't be bothered with too many friends. He was a part of Overland, and I shall miss him there, though he wrote little for us—he was always better at talking about what he was going to write than at writing it. I hope some of his honesty and some of his attitudes have penetrated me; and I hope at the end I have something of his courage. S. MURRAY-SMITH

them published in the Soviet Union in any case). Dorothy Hewett refers to the case in her poem in this issue.

The appeal to Podgorny asks for the release of Sinyavsky and Daniel in order to "correct an injustice and remove unnecessary barriers to international understanding and good relations between writers of the Soviet Union and other countries". Signatories include: Mona Brand, Mena Calthorpe, C. B. Christesen, John Clements, L. G. Churchward, Geoffrey Dutton, Lloyd Davies, Len Fox, Gerald Glaskin, Lyndall Hadow, Frank Hardy, Dorothy Hewett, A. C. Jackson, Barry O. Jones, Merv. Lilley, Nance MacMillan, John Morrison, A. A. Phillips, Rohan Rivett, Ron Tullipan, Ian Turner, F. B. Vickers, Joan Williams.

*

Announcements: Mr. Race Mathews, 5 Clegg Ave., Croydon (Vic.), has a file of Overland for sale (offers), including Nos. 1, 3 and 12, which have long been out of print. Tadeusz Sobolewski (Sienna 66 m. 7, Warsaw 1, Poland), who had a story in Overland not long ago, is anxious to get Australian poetry to translate—preferably short and non-rhymed. Payment in Polish currency. He would also like second-hand books and magazines on literary and other Australian matters, "for popularising some brighter Australian glimpses here (unfortunately Australia now makes the name for herself by cruelties committed in Vietnam)". There will be a Mary Gilmore novel prize of \$2000 in 1970—details from Box 32, Trades Hall, Sydney.

S. MURRAY-SMITH

CONSCRIPTS AT THE AIRPORT

For Richard Aldington, in memory

GEOFFREY DUTTON

Why are they all staring, why silent,
Sitting on the roofs of cars, backs
To the confident splendor of the T-jet on the tarmac,
Caring so completely for an old DC-6
Lumbering out to the take-off point?
I pass a weeping woman, ask a boy.
"Conscripts going to camp."

And I,
Disguised as an executive in charcoal grey,
Cuffs showing above the pigskin bag,
Car locked, look too the other way
Though the smiling airhostess waits for me,
Only me, and the plastic breakfast tray.
The DC-6 trembles on its brakes,
In an ancient ritual of testing switches,
And the resting cars seem to sigh
As like an elderly bull it charges the runway
And lifts its blunt head into the air.
Full of youth. Full of sons,
Already joking, pulling out a pack
For poker, longing now for Vietnam,
Guns, and seeing a bit of the world.
If you're in it you might as well be in it.

And what if I nearly miss my plane
And the hostess so happy to have me aboard,
For watching the rain in sunlight of these faces
Turning towards home, the breakfast places
Set for one too many now?
Are tears, or the tight eyes damming tears,
Simply for loss of one who was at home,
Or further fears, of the bony guest
Sharing every mealtime now?

Those airborne poker-playing boys
Will soon be brave as a marching song,
Our own brave boys we cannot let down,
Whose morale up there we cannot corrupt
With doubts down here. Their war, our war.

Even if they could, those joking boys
Would hardly question what their fate must be,
"Too bloody complicated for me.
No fear, if you don't stop the bastards there
You'll only have to stop them here."

And when they first come home on leave,
Before they've seen one Vietnamese,
They will not only be taught to kill
But taught all men are enemies,
And women, Viet-Cong beneath the skin,
The smiler with the plastic bomb.
Like long hair, those untidy minds
Will all be trimmed, and necks will bristle
At the sabotage of right by wrong.
The lecturer will have told them which is which.

The irony of my final call
Is that it's voluntary. The puffing man
In the seat-belt beside me, Christ,
His alarm-clock didn't go off, the taxi-driver
Woke him, but look! he's had his shave.

Seven years before those boys were born
I was a volunteer, kissed my mother
Goodbye through train smoke, watched her disappear
Down diminishing parallels,
Was asked to play poker by the blokes,
Didn't know how to, but played, and won.

Would that volunteer, eighteen years old,
Have told these conscripts, aged the same,
That, no fear, his was a just war?
I can hear him mumbling the secret of his war:
"Well, if she's on, you might as well be in it."

All wars have the same end,
We make our conquered enemies friends,
And distrust our friends into our enemies.
Only an invading army can simplify
The need to shoot another man.
Even so, I am not ashamed
Of having joined up to shoot our friends,
The Germans and the Japanese.
But conscripts, those of you still alive,
What will you tell your sons of Vietnam?
"I was sent, I did not go.
I was taught to kill, to fear, and to believe
That one man's health is another man's disease,
That all men, and women too, are enemies."

David Martin: HINTERLAND

THE meanness of some Australian newspapers in their dealings with local writers is almost beyond belief. The following instance, relating to the Sydney Mirror, is a prime example.

Shortly before last Christmas it decided to run a series of 25 short stories, selected from back numbers of "Coast to Coast", as a special holiday feature. The editorial manager approached the authors in question and offered them \$4.20 per 1000 words for the republication rights in New South Wales. The accompanying letter stressed that the stories would be well promoted, that the idea was a new one, and that the material should make excellent reading.

As one of the writers asked, I refused to sell my work for a token fee and proposed a more reasonable remuneration, pointing out that writers have to pay as much for their groceries as other people, and that they can no more afford to sell their wares at cut rates than can staff journalists or office cleaners.

I received a reply which expressed sympathy with this viewpoint, but was informed that, since the Mirror had had 19 acceptances, the fee for this particular series could not be raised. In future it would be higher. I was told that the success of the series could well open up new markets.

This is of course a ridiculous argument, for what is the use of opening up markets which are so unprofitable? The main point is this: in its editorials the Mirror is always making a great song and dance about patriotism, especially its own, yet it has so low an opinion of the worth of Australian writers that it is offering them a Kanaka wage.

Authors appreciate that "Coast to Coast" is not a lucrative publishing proposition; hence they reluctantly accept a few guineas in payment for their stories, although these often represent a heavy investment of time and creative effort. But Mirror Newspaper Limited is a wealthy concern and it would not run short stories if it did not believe they could help to build circulation. Twenty-five stories might aggregate 100,000 words—the length of a novel. For this it is prepared to lay out the princely sum of \$420 or 200 guineas!

No criticism can be levelled against the man commissioned by the paper to select the stories, George Johnston, who had nothing to do with the payment side. Nor against the Australian Society of Authors, which was quick to take up the matter. But the writers who valued themselves so little that they accepted this humiliating offer without protest deserve censure. However unawarely, they are blacklegging on their profession.

I hope their conscience will prick them and that they will forward the miserable bounty to the Australian Society of Authors, to sustain it in its bitter fight for an honest reward to Australian talent.

*

Among Italians in Australia there is a conviction that they are being discriminated against in many forms, some subtle, others less subtle. Of all the migrant communities here, the Italian feels least secure. Our Greeks seem to accept their temporary isolation as a matter of course, and the older ones continue to follow developments in their homeland with more attention than they give to local events. It takes time before they can read newspapers printed in Latin script, and the fact that they have their own, separate religious affiliation tends to reinforce their group consciousness in a protective way.

Italians consider themselves left out in the cold, and are dissatisfied. They regard our immigration procedures as illiberal and resent the manner in which problems affecting them have been dramatised unhelpfully. It began with allegations, some years ago, that they were supporting a network of prostitution. Since then there have been frequent and generally unsubstantiated accusations that the Mafia was active in their ranks. It would perhaps be wrong to stress all this too much, but I have gained the impression that there is a good deal of avoidable unhappiness and that the, once large, reservoir of Italian goodwill is being drained away. Better educated Italians often speak of the remarkable ignorance of Australians concerning Italy's contribution to the culture of the West.

Yet the Italian Government probably has done more than any other to build cultural bridges. The Italian Institute of Culture, until recently under the forceful leadership of Dr. Vittorio Politi, has done splendid work, promoting exhibitions of books and sculpture, bringing out savants, artists and musicians, and organising functions designed to bring the two nations closer. These activities, including also the award, last year, of the Dante-Alitalia prize to Fr. E. J. Storman, have not received the public acknowledgment they deserve.

Now our Italian friends have put us still more deeply into their debt by the publication of the first issue of *Quaderni*, a well produced magazine devoted to furthering Australian interest in Italy's creative spirit. Issued from the Institute's delightful home at 947 Punt Road, South Yarra, Victoria, *Quaderni* is available free to students and other genuinely interested persons. To judge by the inaugural number, it promises to make a distinguished contribution to our literary-artistic life.

THE SCAVENGERS

What you first notice when you get to Hell
Is the smell, not sulphurous, but of rotting food
—The wharves piled high, every warehouse full,
The rats swag-bellied, lazy, everywhere,
So that you have to walk with extreme care
Or break your neck on their sleek sides. It takes
A while to get accustomed to the air
The sourness and the ferment blown like breath
From bags of bursting vegetables,
The black potato liquor oozing out
From burlap mountains, the sweet filth that once
Was apples, oranges, onions, sides of meat
From which the maggots fall away like blossoms . . .
No people to be seen; a world of food,
All rotting, and a heaving wealth of rats.
And when your nostrils have become attuned
To this rare atmosphere and nausea seems
An absurd relic of your former state,
Once you will notice, in your evening walk,
(At first it seems a trick of failing light)
That, at some disadvantage to the rate,
Skinny racks of men wrestle in the mess
In search of some sound scrap to feed upon
—Hell then will seem more like your old address.

BRUCE DAWE

In the article, "Rome: Caput Mundi and Italian Capital", Professor W. K. Hancock's graceful commemoration address on the centenary of Italian unity is reproduced. It deals with some aspects of the intellectual pre-history and history of the Risorgimento. Fr. Storman is represented by a stimulating essay on "Romance and Religion in 'The Divine Comedy'." Professor Frederick May writes on "Some Dantesque and Other Symbolism in the 'Enrico IV' of Luigi Pirandello", which he justly ranks as among the greatest tragedies of our century. (Has it ever been produced in this country?) Colin McCormick, head of the Italian Department of Melbourne University, gives us a tentative but acute assessment of Quasimodo's line of advance in his more recent poetry, followed by two fine translations.

Quaderni is to be welcomed with warmth. Let us hope that on a still broader level, and coming from our side, something substantial can be done to remove misunderstandings between Italians and Australians. By this we stand to be the principal gainers.

*

As one who for eighteen years has had the interesting job of trying to explain Australia to Indian readers, working as a foreign correspondent, one difficulty above all others has impressed itself on me.

People in Asia cannot visualise what Australia is like, they cannot form a pictorial image and they do not understand how we live. Educated Australians can get at least some idea of, say, Indian realities through the books they have read, the films they have seen, the television documentaries they have watched. Our information may be scanty and lop-sided, but we are not altogether in the dark. For example, I should say most

Overland subscribers can picture to themselves, however imperfectly, what an Indian village looks like, or the bustle of a large Indian town.

But very few Indians have any notion of the atmosphere of an Australian country town. How Australian workers spend their holidays camped in the tea-tree scrub, or the sort of thing that goes on in Australian pubs—these are things they have never heard or read about. Therefore the news from Australia, negative enough of late, remains abstract to them.

I can only see one way how this could be remedied. We need Asian writers to come here, not to give a quick address at a seminar or congress, or to be rushed from place to place on some official tour, but to settle down quietly in some quiet spot, to get to know our people, their problems and their attitudes. Let them write freely and frankly about what they have seen at their leisure. The results would be good not only for themselves, and for readers in their own countries, but for us, for it is time that we saw ourselves through the eyes of others—by which I do not mean through the eyes of journalists.

Australia is not merely the land of the White Australia policy, despairing Aborigines and of American vassalage, nor even only the country of the Snowy River scheme and of the Davis Cup. It is a country which is evolving a manner of life interesting in its own right, and it takes good writers to interpret it. Come to think of it, such a scheme could be organised on a two-sided basis. What is wrong with the governments of India or Pakistan inviting some of our writers to go over there for a year's unencumbered stay, while we do the same for them?

I have often wondered what would happen if Kushwant Singh or R. K. Narayan were let loose in Ballarat or Broken Hill.

richard flantz:

the number game

Here, it is the number game again. The numbers fall glibly from announcers' lips and the nimble fingers of weary compositors that have always known them all. Of course, they are behind. While presses roll and whine incessantly like insistent machine-guns, bodies rip open to be tallied again for the next morning's headline.

Here, it is the name game still: the new names always new for the new generation, foreign names blithely mispronounced by the ever-smiling readers of the day's hot news on flickering screens. While fragmented beams flash out like unseen tracer across this sweet complacent air, distant dreams explode in miles of silent screams.

Here, it is the number game.
There — perhaps the same.
Another language, another name.

Not names of people
Not street numbers where
Separate people live
In private plots of air
With single living faces
But singsong names of places
And songless numbered people
That mass statistics give

I have not seen the wounds and dying pangs of today's
three thousand odd. I never saw
six million or
five hundred or
thirty one

I saw a man die once. In an accident, a friend of mine.
I held his head in my frenzied arms as gourds of blood
gurgled incomprehensibly from his fractured twenty
year old skull. But he had a name, and the number one.
I saw a man die once. Numbers. Can I see these in the bud
of their youths, then flowering, wilting, hoping for seventy
odd years of life, with names of their own, each one?

The same game: numbers and names.
And words: against and for.
Tired words, these words of war—
None that have not been used before,
No unflagged feeling that isn't a bore:
What? Scream a slogan, or shout: "No more!"?
Dramatically describe the impersonal gore?

I have not seen the fields and jungle wastes of this
Vietnam. I never saw
Hiroshima or
Guernica or
Treblinka.

I know St. Kilda, where on a summer twilight I have seen
the wooden pier where foreign families come to fish,
and the empty evening streets inhabited only by lights
of cars and houses where tiny people die on a screen
twenty-one inches wide. Do these, like those, all wish
unknowingly for life? Like me, walking silent through these nights?

I want to say I am sad but sad
Is not a word to be said—
Only with anger could my pain be glad—
Spraying out fiery words of lead,
Flaming with feeling I should have had,
Drilling them into another's head.

Anger? I try. I try to imagine another twilight, where the girl
I saw on television goes out to . . . No. False and cheap to say she cries,
or sighs, or dies. My anger sinks in a bog of words, it has no name
to grasp at, though still it seeks to bleed, to blame, to hurl
its feelers further, into any of the nameless numbered ones. All lies.
They live, or die, and my pain must also play the number game
as I touch the core
of this game of war
and still implore
no more

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AT EVERY BOOKSHOP

HEINEMANN

The foundation professor of history at the University of Papua and New Guinea, K. S. INGLIS, discusses a momentous educational development:

UNIVERSITY IN A HURRY

NO university in Australia has had so short a period of gestation as the University of Papua and New Guinea. Its interim council met for the first time in October 1965. Four months later, and three months before Dr. John Gunther took office as Vice-Chancellor, students began a course of preparatory studies. In March 1967 the first matriculated students started to work for their degrees.

Professor Peter Karmel, chairman of the interim council and Vice-Chancellor of Flinders University, spoke candidly about the perils of speed to an audience at the University of Sydney last year:

Those of us who had had any connection with the founding of new institutions were sceptical at the idea of mounting courses four months after the first meeting of the Council in a University which at that time had no staff at all. It is not difficult to think of one hundred and one good academic reasons for a reasonably leisurely planning period. Quite apart from these, the practical difficulties of obtaining accommodation, of getting academic staff, of acquiring equipment and so on are magnified many times over in the circumstances of the Territory. However, after a careful review of the situation, the Interim Council was convinced that the need and indeed the demand for the University by the local community was such that every effort should be made to press ahead in spite of the difficulties. We knew that we might make some bad decisions as a result of haste, but we believed that it was worth risking these to get the University under way.

It could not have begun so quickly without the hospitality of the Administrative College, an institution under the Territory's Department of the Public Service Commissioner in which indigenous public servants learn to qualify for more responsible jobs. Last year the initial organisation of the university's preliminary year was done by the principal of the Administrative College, David Chenoweth, and college staff gave indispensable help as teachers. This year most of the university's activities are taking place in new buildings lent or shared by the College at June Valley, or Wai-gani, seven miles from Port Moresby.

The preliminary year was recommended by the Commission of three—Sir George Currie, Dr. John Gunther, and Professor Oskar Spate—which the federal government appointed in 1963 to advise on higher education in Papua and New Guinea. "At an early stage of the Commission's discussions", said the Currie report, "it appeared to us that

the addition of a preliminary year before the normal degree course might go far to offset the predictable deficiencies of the Territory school-leaver, deficiencies arising essentially from his restricted environmental background and the late development of secondary education."

The Commission saw this year not as simply an extension of school, "but as a cultural broadening and a mental training. The primary objectives would seem to be two: training in the skills needed for full degree work, especially the assured use of the English language and possibly also of statistical concepts; and broadening of cultural outlook."

Fifty-eight students were chosen for the preliminary year in 1966 on the basis of their school records and their performance in a test administered by a psychologist. All but one, a Samoan, were natives of Papua and New Guinea. Only six were girls.

There is a useful analysis of the group in the journal *New Guinea* (No. 8, December 1966-January 1967) by Hank Nelson, a lecturer from the Administrative College who taught history in the preliminary year:

As there were virtually no Administration secondary schools for indigenous students before 1957, it was the exceptional student who had completed four years of secondary education to qualify for entry to the Preliminary Year. The students were exceptional either because of their background, their ability, or the chance circumstances which permitted them to continue at secondary school for four years . . .

Just over thirty of the students came from the Sogeri Secondary School, a boys' boarding school to the east of Port Moresby. Ten students had attended schools in Australia, and nine have been at Kerevat Secondary School, New Britain. The multi-racial High Schools in Port Moresby and Rabaul provided only three students.

The students' average age was nineteen; six were seventeen or under, six were twenty-five or over. "Considering that most of the students had completed only four years of secondary schooling",

Nelson observes, "the age level was high—a fact generally accounted for by late school entry." The Administration paid their fees, met the cost of books and equipment, and gave each student \$3.00 a week. They all took the same four subjects: English (which occupied about half their time), mathematics, science and history.

*

Before a single appointment had been made to the university, and before anything was known publicly of its character, some potential students had expressed pessimism about its likely quality. Members of the Papua and New Guinea Tertiary Students' Federation believed, according to the Australian on 7 January 1966, "that the degrees to be offered by the University of Papua and New Guinea will almost certainly not be recognised outside the Territory". They had in mind, presumably, the precedent of the Papuan Medical College, which admitted students with rudimentary qualifications and awarded a diploma whose holders could not practice in Australia.

Events of the next few months could have done little to reassure such sceptics. The potential university students found themselves living in crowded, ill-lit, under-furnished and mosquito-ridden barracks, and taught two miles away in muddy showground pavilions. Few people except those on the spot knew anything about these conditions until the Australian published on 10 May a report by "a special correspondent" headed "A tin-hut seat of higher learning". The writer alleged a "loss of initial enthusiasm" among students which, he said, "may well be speeded up by inadequate material conditions". Students, he wrote, "must be forgiven if they feel they have been the victims of a vast confidence trick".

This report appears to have been written about a month before it was published, for some of the deficiencies mentioned in it had been overcome by the time it appeared. The article provoked one reader to feel "ashamed, as an Australian taxpayer, to be associated with such a second-rate or third-rate venture." A lecturer at the Papuan Medical College wrote to the Australian pointing out "a few factual errors" in the article, but adding:

Neither Papua-New Guinea nor Australia can afford to have the university housed in temporary buildings for too long. And the university, when it is completed, must be one of which both students and staff can feel proud.

The Australian administration has already placed a great strain on race relations in Papua-New Guinea by its unwise two-wage policy. It cannot afford to increase this strain by providing a university to which European students would not be happy to go.

Professor Karmel wrote to the paper. "The preliminary year," he said,

is being conducted under difficult physical conditions . . . There is no doubt that, had the commencement of the preliminary year been postponed until 1967, conditions would have been much better; but another year's students would have been denied a university education . . .

Finally there is the question of standards. The standards of a university are largely guaranteed by the quality of the staff. The University of Papua and New Guinea has recruited professors and other senior staff of high quality. . . The Interim Council . . . and the academic staff are both determined that the University of Papua and New

Guinea will be a university in the fullest sense.

It will be most unfortunate if an emphasis on the current lack of physical amenities obscures the very real and rapid progress which has already been made.

There was also a letter from David Chenoweth, principal of the Administrative College. "The accommodation is certainly not ideal," he wrote, "but, in Port Moresby's climate, adequate. . . . Second, and more important, the impression that staff and students are languishing in a demoralised stupor, conveyed by your report that 'they feel they have been the victims of a vast confidence trick,' is simply false."

*

The mosquitoes let up, the mud dried out, electric lights were installed in the dormitories. There were other mild improvements. But much scepticism remained. The librarian-designate, George Buick, then associate librarian at the Australian National University, paid a short visit to Port Moresby in May and talked with students. "They wanted to know," he said when he returned to Canberra, "whether I was a proper librarian." When I went up briefly later in May, one student said to me, "I have heard that the standards of this university will be kept low, so that its graduates will not be able to go to Australia. Why is that?" And when I asked a group of students which aspects of history they thought they would like to study at the university, one said: "Would students in Australia be asked what they want to study?" Another student brought a textbook to his lecturer and asked: "Is this the same edition as students in other countries use, or is it a special simple edition for people like us?" Another student said he thought it unlikely that good university teachers would come to New Guinea: why would they, if they could get jobs elsewhere? And if well-qualified people did come, were they coming really to teach, or for some other purpose? More than one student suspected that the academics would treat them less as pupils than as objects of study, New Guinea pigs.

Some Australians in the territory also held a low view of the university, though with more indulgence. "The most frequently asked question," according to Nelson, "is: 'What sort of standards does the University of Papua and New Guinea hope to maintain?' Or, as one European enquirer crudely phrased it, 'Is this university for us or for them?'"

*

Midyear examinations made it clear that most students in the 1966 preliminary year were struggling in mathematics and science. All but one, nevertheless, sat for the final examinations in November. "The high retention rate," wrote Nelson, ". . . could be an indication of satisfaction among the students; but it is more probably a result of the fear of disapproval directed at students who withdraw. In a community in which the Administration provides the scholarships, controls alternative training schemes and is by far the most important employer, students are reluctant to take steps which, they think, might alienate the boss." Thirty-five of the fifty-seven were declared to have matriculated. Some of them would have been certified, on their performance in the examinations, as ready for university work in Australia. (Several people familiar with school and university standards in Australia—including the editor of *Overland*, to whom I showed some of the papers written in history—were impressed with their quality.)

THE AFTERNOON OF A NYMPH

It was not until she turned and walked towards me
leading at last grateful her boy's arm
I saw under her raincoat she was months gone
the stares she got so painfully in arrears.
I'd thought her just another prostitute—
but in that coat? Certainly not dressed
to fit the part. A nice girl from the country,
from a good home interstate perhaps flat broke?
But lunch time? by the Exhibition Buildings?
Dressed for some, any place but there.
An ageing Greek turned to absorb her carriage
a young perve tickled his fancy near a tree
a twelve-year-old whistled, a cop noticed.
It was her slow walk, the way she fumbled
fondled her bag, didn't know where to see
and stood under a tree, stood under it, didn't sit.
Her boy though found her. She'd been let out
I guess at her own request, the day so perfect,
by the sisters. He had only an hour.
Not proud, proud though his arm was round her
she could enjoy the fog disperse and going
polish each willowtwig, each wisp of grass
as sunlight focussed, shadows woke to their job
of etching elm and sycamore and willow.
She could reflect her smile from drearier hours
than this today: today she could accept
the lonely Greek's advance stopped on her boy's shoulder,
and wish the pervert in his surplus greatcoat
respite such as hers this shining lunch-hour.

ANDREW TAYLOR

Not all of the thirty-five would have matriculated elsewhere. But by the end of 1966 the university had decided to make its B.A. and B.Sc. courses a year longer than in Australia. The average Australian graduate in Arts or Science now has six years of secondary education and three years at a university. The average student at Waigani will have had four years of secondary education, one preliminary year, and four years of undergraduate work. So in judging whether to admit a student who performed indifferently at the end of the preliminary year, teachers at the University of Papua and New Guinea know that, if they let him in, they have four more years in which to educate him.

They know, too, that a student embarking on work for a degree can afford to sample a wider range of subjects than his Australian counterpart before deciding where to specialise; for the university has adopted a semester system in which each course runs for half a year instead of, as normally in Australia, a whole year. The semester system and an accompanying system of credit points will permit the unusually well-equipped student to move faster than the rest, and thus to graduate in three and a half or in some cases three years. The papers which a student writes in each discipline at the end of his course will be read by an external examiner as well as by his own teachers.

*

Physical conditions are much better this year than last. The food is more nutritious and tastier, and it is served in a refectory at the Administra-

tive College which students anywhere in the world would enjoy. The dormitory accommodation is far less spacious than any I have seen in an Australian university (four people sleep and work in a room, and the ventilation lets the sounds of the human voice and the guitar travel freely); but it is neatly designed and well-finished, and when study-rooms are in use and the library is open, working conditions will be fairly satisfactory. Even now, one academic straight from the Australian National University finds his first-year students, by and large, more diligent in preparing for tutorials than students blessed with the luxury of single rooms at Bruce Hall.

The lecture and tutorial rooms in the Administrative College, which the university is using for all its classes this year, are as pleasant to look at and as comfortable to work in as similar rooms built recently in Australian universities. The solid desks, the large ceiling fans, the blackboards on rollers, the battery of tape recorders in the language laboratory: these things offer a guarantee more immediate than the four-year course or the external examiners that what is intended here is a thorough education for proper students.

In these desks, moreover, sit an unexpected proportion of students who are not natives of the Territory.

"Any university institution worth the name," said the Currie Commission, should be open to all who are able and fitted to use it, and the Commission would hope that any such institution in the Territory would have something worthwhile to

offer the expatriate population. Initially, no doubt, this would be through the provision of external studies . . .

The university has not yet decided about external studies, but it has opened some courses to part-time students, and they have enrolled in numbers nobody foresaw. Of eighty-three students taking first-year degree courses, fifty are full-time students and thirty-three part-time. All but one of the part-timers are people known variously as expatriates, non-indigenous, Europeans or whites. So are four of the full-timers, of whom two have come from Australia to attend the university and two are Australian residents of Port Moresby. Most of the expatriates are Australians, and a few are natives of Britain, New Zealand and North America. From its beginning, the university is for "us" as well as for "them".

Of the full-time students, thirty-four have entered from the 1966 preliminary year, ten have an Australian equivalent matriculation, and six have a provisional admission which may be revoked if they do not perform satisfactorily at examinations to be held in July. Among the part-timers, twenty-seven have an Australian or equivalent matriculation and six have a provisional admission. Nearly all the full-time students are on scholarships provided by the Administration.

The only degree courses at present are in Law and Arts, though a number enrolled now in Arts will eventually take out a B.Sc. degree. Seventeen students, all male, have begun Law. This is a high proportion—one in five of all students—and it includes some of those who gained highest marks in the preliminary year. "Had there been a course in politics," says one of them in a published interview (Nation, 25 March 1967), "I would have taken that rather than Law." If any of the Law students, native or expatriate, has been worried about the likely standing of his degree, he can take comfort from the response to an enquiry made lately by his professor. If and when a student who has done subjects at the University of Papua and New Guinea seeks credit for them at the Law school of an Australian University, how will his request be regarded? At the time of writing, all the schools which have replied say that they will give credit on the same basis as they give it for subjects passed at Australian universities.

Enrolments in Arts are 66, of whom 36 are full-time and 30 part-time. Of the full-time Arts students, 31 are male and 5 female; of the part-timers, 17 are male and 13 female. (Indigenous female students at the university are greatly outnumbered not only by indigenous males but also by expatriate females.)

All students are required to take a service course in English until they are exempted from it. The Arts (including Science) subjects from which students can choose for the first semester are economics, English (an optional course, in addition to the compulsory service course), history, the law and society (put on by the Law Faculty for Arts students), calculus, statistics, biology and chemistry. By the second semester it is likely that physics, education, geography and perhaps social anthropology will be added.

In the 1967 preliminary year, 88 students (77 male, 11 female, and all indigenous) are enrolled. Another 28 who are undertaking a preliminary year for the Papuan Medical College are being taught with the university group; and so are some other students who are preparing for entry to the Institute for Higher Technical Education. The course has been revised in the light of last year's exper-

ience. English, as before, is compulsory and takes more time than any other subject. History of science and technology is also compulsory. This is a survey course of social history with an emphasis on the development of scientific method and man's growing control of his environment. For the first seven weeks of the academic year all students took these two subjects and an intensive short course designed to test aptitudes for mathematics. Each student then chose two out of four optional subjects to pursue alongside his two compulsory subjects for the rest of the year: mathematics, earth science (an inter-disciplinary subject introducing as much material as possible from New Guinea), history and social studies (an introduction to the social sciences and to the peoples of the Pacific).

*

One part of the price which has had to be paid for starting so soon is a temporary shortage of accommodation for all purposes. In Port Moresby, housing and office space are terribly scarce, and nothing ever gets built on time. At the university, houses promised by contractors for the end of last year are still not occupied. Members of the academic staff and their families waiting for houses are living temporarily wherever room can be found, in conditions ranging from the best to the worst available for white people in Port Moresby.

The library building at the Administrative College, which the university is to share for a time, is months behind schedule; and many books needed urgently for students cannot be got to them. The university has no permanent building of its own except one dormitory which will be used this year and next year for staff studies. The Vice-Chancellor, Registrar, Bursar and other people work on the first floor of the Peugeot agent's premises at Boroko, a suburb four miles from the centre of Port Moresby and another three miles from Waigani. One floor beneath the administrators, Peugeots gleam; and down in the basement the university librarian and his staff order, catalog, stack and step over books. A mile away, in a vacant ward of the Port Moresby Hospital, the librarians are unpacking some of the thousands of books which have been waiting in crates. Telephones at Waigani are so scarce that it can be quicker to drive out from Boroko or even from the centre of town than to keep dialling.

By June or July the worst of this crisis should be over; and even now it appears to be having remarkably little effect on morale.

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Of course it is far too soon to know how well educated the first graduates will be. How skillfully will academics adapt their disciplines to this environment? How efficiently will the newcomers work in this climate? Will the federal government provide enough money for staff, scholarships, buildings, equipment and books? Will students be discouraged from honest articulation of their thoughts about society by a fear, justified or not, that candor may be imprudent? Will they, on the other hand, living as they do in a milieu saturated with politics, be distracted by political activity from concentrating on their studies? Can the university establish itself as a truly autonomous institution in a society where "the Administration" is so pervasive? At the University of Papua and New Guinea, as everywhere else in this unsettled country, it is easy to go on thinking of questions and hard to answer any one of them. But at this stage of the university's life, optimistic guesses are just as rational as gloomy ones.

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Continuing Overland's discussion of the future of the Australian Left, political scientist ANTHONY CLUNIES-ROSS, co-author of AUSTRALIA AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS, writes on

FOREIGN POLICY ON THE LEFT

Brian Fitzpatrick: "A Future or No Future—Foreign Policy and the A.L.P." (Victorian Fabian Society Pamphlet 14, Melbourne, 1966, 40c).

J. F. Cairns: "Economics and Foreign Policy" (Victorian Fabian Society Pamphlet 12, Melbourne, 1966, 35c).

Max Teichmann: "Australia—Armed and Neutral" (Victorian Fabian Society Pamphlet 13, Melbourne, 1966, 35c).

"LEFT-WING" views on foreign policy in Australia are generally so described because they set a low valuation on the use of force in international affairs and have a corresponding mistrust of great and powerful friends. This is an emotional propensity and it is capable of varying intellectual manifestations. These three recent Fabian tracts on foreign policy issues represent the approaches of what might be termed three separate generations of left-wingers. One suspects that the hearts of the three writers are in much the same place, though their styles and points of concentration are different.

Brian Fitzpatrick is as always the emotional nationalist, resenting the new "imperial" power as much as the old, suspicious a priori of those who lick the feet of the mighty, and above all of "this everlasting Australian nabob, this mogul of magnates, Robert Gordon Menzies". The world outside features, needless to say. He is concerned specifically with the Commonwealth Crimes Act of 1960 and the United States Naval Communications Station Agreement Act of 1963, and with the attitude of the Labor Party to them. But his prescriptions for foreign policy amount to little more than "neutrality" (the models being France and India) and "living with Asia". What we do with this neutrality—how we protect ourselves and how we live with Asia—is not explicit. Fundamentally Brian Fitzpatrick's interest is in the quality of Australian society rather than what Australians can effect outside their borders. The lecture reprinted in this booklet is full of the warmth and humanity of the founder and pillar of the Australian Council of Civil Liberties. It was given just a year before his death and published posthumously. The conclusion is pessimistic. "I do not think there will be a Labor Government, or if there should be one that it will differ in any important respect from a Menzies or Holt or McEwen Government . . . On the whole

maybe the best practical course for a satellite Australia is a McEwen or Holt Government." It is hinted that a satellite Australia cannot expect to enjoy much in the way of civil liberty. One may hope that Brian Fitzpatrick is over-pessimistic about the application of the Crimes Act. Experience so far suggests that he is.

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Dr. Cairns' booklet is of an entirely different character. Cairns is concerned with how the world at large is to get along, and he elaborates a framework—one could almost say, an ideology—to help us to determine the right thing to do in international affairs. Characteristically the left-winger of the nineteen-fifties and nineteen-sixties cares a lot about the world outside and thinks he knows how it ought to be ordered. Dr. Cairns is his representative, making articulate and more or less consistent a number of the views commonly held at random by people with reservations about Australia's place in the Cold War. Those who relish such a wide-ranging approach will find Fitzpatrick isolationist and Teichmann academic. Cairns is not unduly romantic and faces up fairly to the unpleasant implications of his recommendations. Of the three pamphleteers, he is the most

moderate in his radicalism. He makes clear that he prefers the American model of society to any of the communist models. He speaks from inside the western alliance of what that alliance should do, and it cannot be said that what he advocates for Australia is neutrality, whether armed or unarmed. Though he makes certain questionable allegations about American official motives, he makes them by way more of analysis than of invective, and he is for example generous enough to assume that the American government would not have got itself into the Vietnam war if it had known what that war would entail.

In brief, the Cairns ideology is that radical reforming governments will be needed in the low-income countries before those countries can develop economically and before they can enjoy liberal institutions and the benefits of the welfare state. The radical regimes may be more or less decent, liberal and democratic themselves. (He is prepared to pass Magsaysay, and would probably pass Frei and Betancourt.) The Western powers may be able to favor such desirable tendencies. But the radical regimes may also be ruthless and authoritarian, and at any particular point in time there may be no means of preventing their being so. For outsiders to interfere forcefully in favor of essentially conservative rulers against left-wing radicals, however unpleasant, will merely delay desirable and inevitable developments and aggravate the birth-pains of the new society. Left-wing authoritarianism may in some cases at some points in time be a necessary evil. Its emergence should not be welcomed or encouraged, but, once emerged, it should be tolerated and assisted to fulfil its purgative and ultimately beneficent role. Above all, it should not be resisted where the alternative is a conservative rule dedicated to the maintenance of the existing order.

Where a civil war breaks out, the Cairns recipe is international action "cordonning off" the area to prevent the conflict from spreading. What this appears to mean is international action to prevent intervention, the kind of thing that was tried by moral suasion and failed in Spain, but in this case presumably with U.N. forces in position to prevent intrusion. Of course, the Cairns thesis does not make sense if you believe in the communist (or is it Chinese?) world conspiracy, red pincers, white dominoes, and all that. But Dr. Cairns does not believe in them.

Cuba and Vietnam are the main instances on which the thesis is based. They are of course the cases in which American policy has most signally failed in its objectives. But Cairns is optimistic. He sees no inevitability in the course the United States has chosen in these two affairs.

This is a reasonable enough thesis. Just as the less one-eyed supporters of the Vietnam war are consciously prepared to accept hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese deaths as a price for preventing the extension of the North Vietnamese system, so a less one-eyed opponent like Cairns will consciously accept the possible brutalities of North Vietnamese or N.L.F. rule as a price for ending the large-scale killing and mutilation and for giving Vietnam, as he sees it, some chance of economic and social development. Either position can be characterised as morally objectionable. In fact the only people immune from this complaint are those who shut their eyes to some element in the situation or those who take no position at all.

Nevertheless it is important to recognise the possible defects of the Cairns prescription in terms of the claims that it makes. To start with, cordonning off may be easier said than done. One has only to imagine how hard it would be to cordon off Vietnam. But that is a defect of the world rather than of the Cairns medicine. It might not work, but there may still be no better candidate for the purpose on hand.

More seriously, however, there may be doubt about the implicitly assumed general rule that left-wing regimes produce economic development while right-wing or strongly anti-communist regimes do not. The list of those with whom the U.S. has mistakenly aligned itself includes "Chiang Kai-shek, Syngman Rhee, Ngo Dinh Diem, Marshal Pibul, Nuri El-Said, General Zahedi, Batista, Menderes and Franco", and apparently Pakistan. Straight after this list, we are told in Michael Barrett Brown's words that such governments fear land reform more than the devil and that "it is precisely the resistance of such governments to land reform that holds back the economic development of their countries" (p. 13). This will not do for that particular list, however, for Taiwan under Chiang underwent a very thorough Japanese-style land reform in the early 1950s and has had a very rapid rate of industrial growth (probably comparable over 1958-64 with that of mainland China during its best period in the mid-fifties) and a highly satisfactory rate of agricultural growth (considerably better than that of mainland China). Perversely for the Cairns thesis, the countries in the E.C.A.F.E. region that show the greatest proportional rises in agricultural output from the 1952/3-1956/7 average to the 1963/4-1964/5 average are in descending order Thailand, Taiwan, Malaya (West Malaysia) and South Korea—all well ahead of their nearest rivals among the developing countries in that area.*

Furthermore the usefulness of communist methods for hastening economic development in the East Asian low-income countries has still to be demonstrated. Almost everyone wants industrialisation, and communist governments seem to be quite effective at stepping up rates of investment and moving resources into industry. But industrial development in a number of Asian countries is crucially limited by the rate at which the food supply can be expanded. And here it would seem that mainland China's methods have been significantly less effective, or mainland China's calculations on priorities significantly worse, even than those of India, the West's problem child. Mainland Chinese foodgrain production may well have been less over 1963-5 than over 1955-7 (the years in which higher-stage collectivisation was effected). Over a comparable period to the one mentioned earlier the Chinese proportional increase in cereal production would appear to be markedly worse than that of any of the reporting E.C.A.F.E. countries, Indonesia included. This is so contrary to popular stereotypes of Chinese communism as diabolically efficient that many people refuse to believe it. Of course there is plenty of room for error in the figures, but this is the decided drift of such evidence as there is, with recent Soviet and western estimates of Chinese crops agreeing fairly well.

It may then be that the communist pattern of management is most conducive to economic development in areas comparable to the backward

* U.N. "Economic Survey of Asia and the Far East", 1965, p. 273. The list excludes the Indo-Chinese and communist states, but see the later reference to China.

states of south-eastern Europe (perhaps also to Cuba and other parts of Latin America—generally the countries of Galbraith's Model Two) and that it is irrelevant alike to the large countries of east and south Asia (where small-scale cultivation is so overwhelmingly dominant and there are no agricultural frontiers that can easily be pressed back with state enterprise) and to the industrially and educationally advanced areas such as Germany and Czechoslovakia. But even this qualified point of apology is blunted by the fact that Greece has recently experienced a rate of growth comparable to that of its communist neighbors. There is no a priori reason for supposing that the N.L.F. or the Hukbalahaps would push economic growth faster than their opponents. They might do so, but no simple scheme of classification will show who will promote and who will hinder it.

The Cairns thesis may still be right. It may still be better that the West should not interfere in civil wars. The choice for the U.S. is difficult, however, where non-military or para-military assistance is required to help re-establish civil order in a limited area of a country. The assistance may go with measures of social reform. Such perhaps is the case in Thailand. The line between social revolutionaries and organised gangsters of the Mafia type may be narrow. In Central Luzon some maintain it has already been crossed. The lawless are not necessarily the better or the more radical or the more popular, whatever ideology they profess. Nor incidentally are the more radical necessarily the ones who will win in a civil war when foreign intervention is excluded, contrary to assumptions commonly held at both ends of the political spectrum. But to repeat, Cairns' recommendation, which does not exclude collective defence or even the use of great and powerful friends against external attack, may be the best general rule.

The chance emergence of certain powerful personalities may be largely responsible for the fact that Cairns' position seems well to the left of the Australian political range. Without a Santamaria to rally the Catholics and a Menzies to set the line for the Protestant establishment, Cairns might have found himself much closer to an Australian consensus.

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Cairns' booklet does, however, contain some misleading half-truths. For example, we are told (p. 13) that one of the reasons that America seeks agreement with anti-communist forces is that "the 'advance of communism', of course, removes countries from America's field of trade and investment". This statement follows the assertion that the U.S. seeks to obtain "free access for investment and trade to all areas". Certainly the advance of communism removes countries from the sphere of American investment, but where is the evidence that U.S. governments have been keen for Americans to export capital? Over the last couple of years the administration has actually taken measures to restrict American investment abroad. Leninist doctrine in this matter ought to give way to contemporary fact. On the other hand, the advance of communism does not automatically remove countries from the sphere of American trade. Where it does so, the decision generally comes from the American side. Communist China trades extensively with western 'capitalist' countries, as every Australian wheat-grower knows. Certainly the conditions of whatever trade there is will be altered, but it is the Americans rather than the Chinese who have tried to ban trade with

China, and American congressmen, wharf-laborers and others who have from time to time impeded U.S. exports to Eastern Europe. The argument put here for imputing strictly economic motives to U.S. official anti-communism is thus extremely feeble.

"Having to choose between India and Pakistan", says Cairns (p. 13), "the United States chose Pakistan. Why? Because it seemed that the Moslem landlord-based ruling class of Pakistan would be more likely to be anti-communist than the socialist-neutralist India." Surely the truth is rather that the United States has never accepted the necessity of choosing between Pakistan and India, was eager during the early Dulles era to entice India into the western alliances, and subsequently accepted the country's neutrality, pouring tremendous resources into it, especially over the last seven years. On the contrary Pakistan, forced to choose between neutrality and alignment, and being the weaker of the two rivals, chose alignment. Because the United States refused to be partisan in 1965, Pakistan felt constrained to shift towards another ally, that great friend of landlord-based ruling classes, the Chinese People's Republic.

"What is more natural," concludes Michael Barrett Brown, "than that such governments should join the anti-communist alliance—the Baghdad Pact, now called C.E.N.T.O.—and qualify for American aid?" (p. 13, my emphasis). This again is quite misleading. India has in fact received considerably more American aid than Pakistan (or any Middle Eastern C.E.N.T.O. country) though admittedly less per head than Pakistan.

It is also misleading when we are told (p. 14) that "American policy makers have decided that anti-communism is the test of what is to be done, and the more reactionary and unprogressive a government is, the more sure they are that it will be anti-communist." A little recollection would have convinced the author that this is not true as a universal rule, even though certain instances (such as Guatemala and Cuba during the Eisenhower and Dulles Bros. era) seem to support it. It ignores the quite explicit thought behind the Alliance for Progress, for example. Cairns himself cites the enthusiasm of the Bell mission for land reform in the Philippines, and it might have been mentioned that Macarthur in Japan carried out, among other radical changes, a land redistribution with virtually no compensation for expropriated owners.

On the same page, the probably valid point that old-fashioned imperialism and the power of foreign export interests could hinder industrialisation is vitiated by being grossly over-stated and over-generalised to a point at which it could easily give the impression that all foreign investment in primary products would be harmful. Thus we are told that "this special arrangement" (the pre-dominance of the nationals of one particular foreign country in investment in some product) "leaves the country, in which the investment takes place, in a position in which it loses a substantial part of its foreign exchange earnings; it means that its commodity prices will be depressed because of the power of the investing companies." The former point must be qualified by the fact that without the foreign investment and technology there might have been no foreign exchange earnings from the product at all, and also by the fact that, as in Australia today, much of the income earned by the foreign investors may be ploughed back.

Of the second generalisation, that large foreign companies artificially depress commodity prices below those that a hypothetical competitive market would give, there may well be instances, but it is obviously unlikely to occur as a rule where the foreign company is itself producing and selling the commodity (as with the British-owned tea and rubber estates). Even where the foreign company is a trader or user, rather than a producer, it is not necessarily able to eliminate competition. Domination by one nation is not necessarily domination by one company or cartel. The trader best able to fleece the small producer is the local man in direct contact with him, and in Asia this man will frequently be neither a national of the imperial power nor an employe of a large European or American firm. Until the growth of restriction schemes (themselves generally designed to favor producers) the metropolitan, as distinct from rural, markets in tropical primary products were generally held to be highly competitive.

We are then told (pp. 14, 15) that the retention of political power by squatters and merchants, "the old imperialist relationship", has survived in New Zealand "for longer and to a greater extent than in Australia, and so New Zealand remains more economically backward." Maybe, but what exactly is meant by "economically backward"? Presumably not that the New Zealanders are more prosperous or egalitarian than we are. Does it just mean that 2-3% more of the working population are engaged in primary industry? If that is the test, then the Hamilton district say is far more economically backward than Fitzroy, and Yass than Paddington. And presumably the lesson for the people in the country is that they should be a bit more progressive and drop all this silly farming nonsense. Would it not be equally in accord with the evidence to say that in New Zealand the old imperialist relationship has survived for longer and to a greater extent than in Australia, and so New Zealand has a higher standard of living and more comprehensive social services?

Dr. Cairns also tells us (pp. 19-23) about the forces which make for continuance of the imperial relationships. These are the City of London (now apparently inhabited not by bankers and not, or not only, by merchant investors, but by "mass production consumer goods manufacturers") and in America not our old friend Wall Street, but the "military-industrial complex". The latter is reported as being the economic influence which is most significant in America (p. 22)—presumably the most significant in maintaining imperial-type ties. "Perhaps Secretary of Defence McNamara is the best example of those who exercise this influence" (p. 22). This is ill-informed guessing. Surely the point about the military-industrial complex is that it wants more, and more expensive arms. McNamara's influence has been exerted in precisely the opposite direction—in economising on military spending. I am also not sure in what sense the City of London **controls** colonial reserves (p. 19), or ex-colonial reserves for that matter—except that (through its supple tool, the British Labour Government) it rather quixotically manages to maintain their gold value at the expense of British output, employment and military and diplomatic power. (The economic interest of "mass production consumer goods manufacturers" in supporting such a policy is doubly mysterious.)

Finally it is incredible to see Dr. Cairns' economic recipe for low-income countries. They will not grow in a balanced way, he says (p. 18), "until the conditions necessary to produce a high indigenous effective demand are created". As most

second-year economics students know, it is extremely easy to produce a high indigenous effective demand. This can be done by a stroke of the pen. But alas, what is needed is an appropriately high indigenous effective supply or the available capacity for producing it. Without this, raising the indigenous effective demand will raise indigenous effective prices, or exogenous effective imports, or both. There is admittedly room for doubt as to whether certain low-income countries have been ready enough to raise effective demand by government spending or monetary permissiveness. There is no doubt that others (Indonesia and Ghana, for example) have raised demand far too much for comfort, convenience, external solvency or growth prospects. In many countries the political pressures for high spending are already very strong.

A clue to the reasoning that prompts this odd piece of analysis is given when the author talks of "relatively high" wages as being necessary to produce or sustain this condition of high indigenous effective demand. This suggests that some primitive Marxism or half-remembered scrap of depression economics has left him with the impression that what low-income countries need is to increase the part of their income devoted to consumption. Such a prescription is of course clean contrary to the views on growth normally held in modern communist countries and in the post-Keynesian west. Let us welcome Dr. Cairns then if he applies for the position of Minister of External Affairs or even that of U.S. Secretary of State, but let us also insist that he undertake a refresher course if he wants to become economic or finance minister in Indonesia or the Philippines.

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Max Teichmann's "Australia—Armed and Neutral" presents a distinctly more radical thesis than Cairns'. It belongs to a more recent tradition of left-wing writing in that it affects a cool, analytic, and comparatively unambitious approach to the problems of international relations. Teichmann largely manages to veil (though sometimes thinly) his peculiar brand of humor and to suppress his mischievous, provocative reconstructions of the world situation. The booklet is a development of his article "Nonalignment—a Policy for Australia", published in "Aspects of Australia's Defence" (M. Teichmann, ed., Monash University Political Studies Association, 1966), and I shall treat the arguments of the two Teichmann papers together.

It is usually assumed that neutrality would mean weakness. Teichmann challenges this assumption by reference mainly to the example of Sweden. Nor, he says, does non-alignment involve moral neutrality. Switzerland and Sweden are not morally neutral over systems of government and are not mere spectators in world politics.

What is the case for non-alignment? Briefly that close identification with a Great Power involves the risk of being involved in a major nuclear exchange and brings no corresponding advantages. To support the latter part of this assertion, Teichmann examines the possible threats to a **neutral** Australia from Russia, China and Indonesia, and writes them all off. His case would be strengthened by the 1965-6 changes in Indonesia, which obviously occurred after the preparation of his text. Before October 1965 it was reasonable to think that there was some risk of a clash with Indonesia over New Guinea. (Whether we or the locals should in that case have welcomed American intervention in Vietnam-style is another question.) The possibility is now so remote as to provide no argument for anything. China must

remain in awe of the United States until she has nuclear weapons clearly invulnerable to an American first strike, and, even if the kind of subversion that has occurred in Vietnam, Laos and Thailand is regarded as China-directed (a half-truth, at best), no one in his senses could imagine such an operation as succeeding or being attempted in Australia. And to suppose a threat from Russia to a neutral Australia is to imagine a world very different from the one that now faces us. Teichmann stresses the present incapacity of China or Indonesia to invade Australia, and in all this analysis of present dangers from potential enemies he points out his agreement with Dr. T. B. Millar, who is certainly not a neutralist. Both judge it unlikely that China has contemplated an invasion of Australia. One might perhaps summarise the argument against alliance as a shield from Chinese or Russian threats by saying that, while America remains the pre-eminent power and retains an interest in Asia and the Western Pacific, a neutral Australia has nothing to fear. Once America loses either the pre-eminence or the interest in the area, alliance with her is no use and may be positively dangerous.

The neutralists undoubtedly have a case. What counter-arguments could reasonably be used?

First it might be claimed that we can help to prolong the American interest in the region by being welcoming and co-operative, the assumption being that without the American presence some threat from China might eventually develop. No one can say for certain whether we can really influence U.S. policy in this way. A psychological-political assumption is involved about American official behavior.

Second, it could be argued that our defence as a neutral, though economically possible if it were a matter of buying the hardware at marginal cost, would require keeping up with the latest military technology. We can not afford to pace the great powers in research, and therefore we are unlikely to have the latest devices except as a heavily committed and co-operative ally of a great power. Thus **effectively armed** neutrality will be impossible. Teichmann's reply would be to point to Sweden, but there must be some doubt as to whether Australia could and would enter upon the research necessary for an anti-missile missile program, a prospect which has caused the U.S. administration to hesitate for reasons of expense. But then it is not clear that, with "weapons" like this, essentially non-aggressive as they are, the U.S. might not provide equipment, free of some of the overhead expenses, to neutrals that ran no risk of siding with the enemy. Beyond this possible next step in defence, it is rather hard to foresee just what kind of technology we should be dealing with. Once the U.S. withdrew from the area we should not, as an ally, expect to have much advantage over friendly neutrals. But then it is just possible that before the hypothetical American withdrawal we should have gained some know-how as an ally that would subsequently be useful. All highly speculative.

A third argument is that if we are protected by a Pax Americana, we ought to contribute to its maintenance and identify ourselves with the power that sustains it. This, however, is a strictly moral argument and not one of prudence, an argument incidentally that might have justified Finland's siding with the Nazis in 1941. It is important to recognise that other moral positions are possible. One might, for example, base decisions about alliance on the entirely proper question

whether a particular action was most calculated to preserve human life, and this might dictate a different international posture.

But there is a fourth reason, quite separate from the other three, for opposing neutralism, and it is the main reason why I personally am not satisfied with Teichmann's solution. This is that an end to the alliance might tempt us into getting nuclear arms of our own. An **Australian** nuclear policy—both for its own sake and for the emulation it might inspire in others—would be more dangerous, I believe, than having the American signal-station at the North-West Cape, and a fortiori more dangerous than to possess the allied status of, say, New Zealand. Clearly Sweden is seriously tempted by nuclear arms. So is India. Australians, with all those paranoiac delusions that Mr. Teichmann attributes to them, ought to be easier game once they have decided to be neutral.

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One is almost led to conclude that foreign policy is a matter of taste. Some prefer one risk and some another. Some subjectively assess one outcome as more probable than others assess it. Yet clearly it is important to examine the possibilities and appraise the issues carefully before jumping to one side or the other.

Those of us who are members or obsessive supporters of the A.L.P. will of course hope that the party comes up sometime with a coherent foreign policy that fits our own fears, expectations and moral preferences. A party that is a genuine political aspirant has also, however, to tailor its line somewhat to the fears, expectations and moral preferences of the electors. These are diverse and mutually inconsistent. Nevertheless account has to be taken of them. Furthermore the A.L.P. can not start from a clean slate. **Australia** is involved in sending troops to Vietnam and in the North-West Cape Station, not just a few chaps who happen to be in office in Canberra. It might have been quite easy to determine that these things should not happen. It is hard now to ask **Australia** suddenly to change its mind.

It would be difficult to deny that the overwhelming preponderance of Australian opinion is in favor of some kind of alliance with the U.S. It seems scarcely conceivable that any party, even if united in its desire to do so, could change such a deeply rooted preference within a generation unless some catastrophic event occurred to assist it. A political party may, however, carry the country with it over matters on which people are likely to have less firmly fixed views, such as the question of what precise form the co-operation with the U.S. shall take. Once a particular form of co-operation has been adopted, however, such as participation in Vietnam, that becomes readily identified with the policy of alliance itself. Many Labor supporters and many non-party people would like the Australian commitment to U.S. policy to be less absolute and more critical than it now seems. The difficulty is to find some compromise that will not appear to be a betrayal.

But there is no reason why the A.L.P. should lose sight of some of the other creative possibilities in our international situation that are not directly linked with the question of the American alliance. Genuinely regional arrangements to help stabilise that part of South-East Asia that is outside the immediate range of the fighting; the economic rehabilitation of Indonesia; careful and constructive initiatives for the future status of New Guinea: these issues might well be kept to the fore.

MISCELLANY

Melbourne Film Festival:

Erwin Rado, Director of the Melbourne Film Festival, comments on Bernard Rechter's remarks in our last issue:

Mr. Rechter makes a number of statements based on false assumptions and factual errors, which should be corrected. He also asks a number of questions, which create the impression that the affairs of the Festival are conducted behind a veil of secrecy.

Discussing the programs of the 1966 Festival, your critic states that neither the Soviet Union nor West Germany entered feature films. Mr. Rechter's Kremlinology failed to discover in the program book not one, but two Russian features ("Heat" and "The Overcoat"), and that the West German entry was "Delay in Marienborn". So much for the accuracy of his research.

Mr. Rechter asks: "Is the agreement with commercial distributors which limits the number of subscribers necessary and in the best interest of film goers?" The implication is that the Festival has a choice in this matter. The ceiling of 4,000 subscribers is not due to any agreement between the distributors and the organisers, but is imposed by the Customs authorities.

I fail to follow the logic of the argument that the Festival is now a "public event". Ninety per cent. of the subscriptions is taken up by members of the film society movement, which not only "formally" sponsors, but actually owns the Festival, and is financially responsible for its success or failure. On what grounds can there be a demand for public accounting? Accounts are given, for financial and artistic results, to the various bodies listed by Mr. Rechter, through their representatives on the Festival committee. Similarly, policy is being determined by the same representatives (and not by strong-man Rado) who in turn are instructed by and responsible to their organisations. The close rapport for which your critic clamors, does, in fact, exist.

The aims of the Festival can be fairly simply stated. We would like to screen a cluster of films which, by critical consensus, have emerged as the most significant achievements or outstanding contributions to the development of the art of cinema in recent years. The selection of these titles is based on international critical assessment of the film output of the year. The best of these are most likely to form the contents of the major international festivals.

Hence what Mr. Rechter chooses to call the "slightly second-hand air" of the Melbourne Film Festival. There are great advantages in playing prize winners of other festivals: advantages you only appreciate when you have to sit through the mediocrities (even in festivals of such standing as Venice), from which the prize winners are chosen.

Occasionally the director of the Melbourne or Sydney Festival makes a round-the-world trip and evaluates a lot of films personally. For ob-

vious reasons, these trips cannot be undertaken too often, and in an average year the festival's invited list reflects the tastes of reliable critics overseas. (It is interesting to observe how much more severe local critics and audiences are in their assessment of films than their counterparts in other countries.)

So much for policy. Now let us look briefly at the practical problems facing the organisers of the festival.

There is a wide discrepancy between the titles invited and the films actually reaching the screen. The non-existence of sub-titled prints; prior or impending commercial release in Australia; the reluctance of producers to part with their films for the long periods involved in sending them such a distance; these and numerous other factors stand in the way of obtaining a large proportion of the films sought.

The commercial release in Australia of festival-type films has dramatically reduced the field of choice over the past ten years, and this is a problem that the festival itself helped to create. While not claiming that the rapid expansion of the art film market was solely caused by the festivals, their influence in making Australian audiences conscious of foreign language films is undeniable.

The function of the festivals was always seen to be that of screening films which would otherwise not be seen in this country; it is still not the intention to make the festival into a series of premiere screenings of films which would be released in a short while in city theatre.

No one is more pleased about these developments in the film culture of the community than the organisers of the festival, but the consequences have to be faced: the more the works of the great directors of international cinema become available for commercial distribution (Antonioni's "The Red Desert", Godard's "Alphaville", the latest films of Bergman, Truffaut, Rosi, Donner, etc.) the further afield the festival has to search for new talents, new sources, new countries with new film industries, and the greater gambles it will have to take with the inclusion of more avant garde and experimental films. We think this will add new dimensions, a new excitement to our programs, and that the risk is well worth taking.

*

[Bernard Rechter replies:

I plead guilty to the oversight concerning the Russian films, although neither of the two mentioned by Mr. Rado was shown at a major screening. One was in fact not a Russian film but a product of a studio in Soviet Asia; the other a remake of Gogol's story. The point I should have made was the absence of the films now breaking new ground in the U.S.S.R. Certainly the screening of "Heat" and "The Overcoat" still leaves a gap in our knowledge of what is happening in Soviet cinema—a gap which the commercial distributors have not filled.

It is useful to have Mr. Rado's denial of a connection between the 4,000 subscribers ceiling and

the commercial distributors, although I'm quite certain that I was not alone in being deluded on that point.

Given the daily-press, radio, TV and periodical coverage of the festival it is surely a quibble to deny the festival's 'public' nature. Interest in the festival certainly goes beyond the subscribers in any one year. One would like a little more detail from Mr. Rado of the 'accounting' given to the various organisations which own the festival. The point I was making was that this accounting is purely formal.

Mr. Rado's statement of aims and practical difficulties in obtaining films is welcome. No one under-estimates the latter or Mr. Rado's ingenuity and perseverance in overcoming them.

Presumably the agreement with Customs to limit the number of viewers results in a lowering of duty barriers. Mr. Rado does not go into details. Is it unreasonable to suggest that film goers might benefit from a public discussion of the duty and censorship problems involved in bringing films into Australia either for festivals or general screenings, or would this rock the boat?]



Demonstrative Rights:

J. B. Kelly

THE right to demonstrate is an important aspect of freedom of speech and assembly. It is axiomatic in democratic theory that minority dissenting views should not be suppressed unless they present a threat to order. Expression of views on public issues by means of street meetings or processions—in short by demonstrations—should therefore be a jealously guarded right in a democracy.

Where a community is unusually complacent and apathetic about political matters as in Australia, preservation of minority rights is made more difficult. In spite of apathy, or perhaps partly because of it, the level of the Australian public's tolerance of dissent, non-conformity, or deviation from the common norm, is generally regarded as being comparatively low. It is hardly surprising to note that many Australian police share the common public stereotype concerning demonstrators. This could be summed up as: scruffy, bearded beatniks and no-hopers whose aim is to produce the maximum trouble and disturbance and gain as much notoriety as possible. The unfortunate result of the stereotype is that all demonstrators, including the responsible, mature majority, tend to suffer from a bad public image.

Whilst this aspect of demonstrations is unfortunate, there is another which is particularly regrettable from the point of view of civil libertarians who wish to see the right to demonstrate safeguarded. Recent demonstrations, particularly those concerned with the 1966 Federal Election and the visits to Australia of President Johnson and Air Vice-Marshal Ky, have produced amongst the demonstrators what appears to be a sizeable

minority of fanatical or semi-hysterical people apparently anxious to release their accumulated aggressions and frustrations on a conveniently accessible political leader. Civil libertarians cannot reasonably condone the activities of this type of demonstrator. Civil liberties organisations exist to safeguard the rights of individuals and groups against infringement, not to condone civil licence and irresponsibility. Demonstrations conducted in such a manner as to produce maximum emotionalism and hysteria are a threat to the safety of political leaders, public and police.

Presumably the basic purpose of demonstrations is to increase public awareness of, and gain support, for causes which the demonstrators consider are advanced in this manner in a particular political situation. If such is their purpose, demonstrators lacking in the self-control to be expected of responsible citizens of a democracy seem highly likely to defeat their own ends. Survey evidence which would indicate the attitudes of the public towards demonstrations would be most valuable. Fortunately a survey designed to obtain information along these lines is at present being organised by D. Chappel (Institute of Criminology, University of Sydney) and P. R. Wilson (Department of Government, University of Queensland). Until the results of this investigation are available, it is legitimate to draw conclusions based on impressions and logical inference, regarding the probable effect on public opinion of irresponsibly conducted demonstrations. It seems likely that such demonstrations will have the following effects: (a) At least a large section of the public will be prejudiced against the cause supported by the demonstrators; (b) Responsible demonstrators are likely to suffer through increased police hostility towards all demonstrators; (c) As a result of this situation, civil libertarians will be likely to find it much more difficult to gain strong public support for necessary reform of the laws and regulations regarding demonstrations, and for improved police attitudes towards demonstrators.

POLICE AND DEMONSTRATORS

Evidence from reports and publicity in the media of communication and other sources in recent months seems to indicate that police attitudes towards demonstrators have been, at times, below the standard of responsibility, enlightenment and political neutrality desirable in a liberal democratic society. Victoria and Queensland provide the greatest cause for disquiet in this regard. In Queensland discrimination has been exercised against groups wishing to demonstrate their opposition to the Vietnam commitment and/or conscription for service in Vietnam. Refusals to grant a permit to demonstrate have been fairly frequent; occasionally unjustified force has been used in breaking up a demonstration; on a number of occasions police authorities have demanded one dollar for a permit for each placard carried by demonstrators. This is made possible by distortion of the probable original intent behind the drafting of relevant traffic regulations.

Recent experience of demonstrations in various Australian states seem to justify two main conclusions: That there is an unanswerable case for a thorough examination of the laws and regulations relevant to demonstrations to ascertain where revision is necessary; that more enlightened views regarding the democratic right to dissent should be encouraged in Australian police forces. Members of our police forces should be encouraged, both by political leaders and by their own leader-

J. B. Kelly, a lecturer in government at the University of Queensland, is president of the Queensland Council for Civil Liberties.

GREASER'S SONG

At eight o'clock we come down the plank,
Me and young Louis and Jimmy the Tank.
All dressed up in our Singapore suits
To find ourselves some prostitutes.

In spite of a shave and a hot shower
The walking soon had us smelling sour.
Our hair smelt of oil, our hands of grease
We lusted after what Jimmy called geese.

We went down to a pub near the town hall
And drank Swan beer and played cue ball.
Talked of the ports and women we'd known
Of a Darwin girl named Rattlesnake Joan.

We sent young Louis out for fish and chips
And talked on about breasts and flossy hips.
For we'd all been a month without respite
From the terrible urge's gnawing bite.

With our bellies full, our bladders slack
And our faces shining like new shellac,
Just about ten we finally set sail
For girls or for fights or bloody gaol.

GRIFFITH WATKINS

ship, to discriminate between irresponsible rat-bags and responsible citizens exercising a basic democratic right.

There can be no doubt that ultimately the safety of civil liberties depends to a considerable degree on police attitudes and conduct. Consequently a society which is, or, at least aspires to be an advanced liberal democracy needs to ensure that its police forces operate at a parallel high standard. But such reform is a comparatively slow process.

That being so, it seems both inadvisable and unnecessary to wait for improved standards in this regard in our Australian police forces and meanwhile allow basic civil liberties to be infringed. There is no compelling reason why the laws and regulations affecting demonstrations should endow the police with power to act as political censors. Final decisions as to whether demonstrations will, or will not be held can be located in a source more suitably equipped to make such decisions.

Wherever possible statutory provisions in a democracy should safeguard and implement basic democratic values; therefore, reform should aim at safeguarding the right to express dissent by means of public meeting, or procession, as far as is feasible, free from police intervention. This involves curtailment of police powers to a point consistent with public safety and the rights of non-demonstrators.

Given an intention to curtail police power regarding demonstrations, the following general approach should prove effective:

(a) All laws and regulations pertaining to street meetings and processions should be examined in detail to ascertain whether they may invite misuse by police authorities.

(b) Organisers of demonstrations should be required to inform the police reasonably in advance of their intention to demonstrate and of necessary details such as purpose, time and intended location.

(c) In the event of police refusal to authorise a demonstration, there should be right of appeal, following the shortest feasible delay, to a suitable authority. This could be a committee of elected local government representatives such as a council committee including the mayor, or his equivalent. Possibly, because of his experience and training, the town clerk could be included. Obviously such a committee would be expected to give full consideration to the reasons why the police authorities had refused to grant a permit for the demonstration. This could be required by law.

However, in some localities, even those forming such a committee, or a majority of them, could be lacking in understanding of the fundamentals of the democratic process, and/or could be prejudiced against a particular group wishing to demonstrate. As an ultimate safeguard to impartial consideration of each case on its merits, final appeal might be allowed to the courts with either a police magistrate or a judge presiding. It is most unlikely that such an appeal procedure would be used frequently. It could be predicted that where the police had a weak case for suppression, a committee dominated by elected representatives would usually reverse the decision. Agreement between both authorities could well indicate that the demonstrators had a weak case. Only demonstrators who felt that they had a strong case in spite of such agreement would be likely to appeal against the decisions to the courts. They should have the right to do this.

Legislative changes along these or similar lines should effect removal from Australian police forces of the power to make decisions involving pre-censorship of legitimate political activities. The proposals are closely in line with existing practice in the United States where local authorities issue permits for outdoor meetings and processions. Freedom of assembly is protected by the First and the Fourteenth Amendments, therefore appeal is possible to the courts in the event of discrimination. Some appeals have gone to the supreme court, which has shown a marked inclination to strike down local decisions involving discrimination or pre-censorship.



Writer's Retreat:

Ann Pickburn

One night ended eight days. January 1967. Robb College. New England University, Armidale. Robb's the impressive slow stone arch one blessed with Norman-solid barrel-vaulted dining hall. Twenty historically significant days to go.

Seventeen writers — fifteen 'emergent', two emerged, curved round the bellies of four very small cars to save seven bob taxi rides into Armidale's changeless centre—Tatt's Seventeen sat together. Seventeen concentrated energy on Billy Borker. Came conversation. Came discussion. Came poetry shoutings, and poetry, came freedom songs, pop songs, madrigals, evergreens endless.

COLLOQUY WITH MYSELF

On a picture of a child killed in Vietnam

Who killed this child?

It was I.

What God will hear my bitter cry?

It was I.

Not that I fired the wandering shot.

I was not there that hour or day.

A fool with guns, I live at ease

Three thousand miles and more away.

I never advocated war.

And yet my taxes paid for lead

That killed this child, the youth who fired

The shot was warrior in my stead.

My leaders (whom I cannot change)

Claim that to make these people free

As I am, to preserve their way

Of life and mine, such things must be.

As free as I, who am not free

To pledge myself! They breathe and live

In this their only burst of being.

What greater gift have we to give?

Is death their freedom? Is freedom real?

Already my mind twists in that screw.

Caught in the stampede of my kind,

A useless beast, what can I do?

Win faith and wait relentlessly

That we will slough the outworn skin

And shame of war and find a new

Relationship to glory in,

Rising above the need of power,

Of being right, of saving face,

Be sure of freedom. War lays bare

Our failure, adds blood to that disgrace.

ROBERT CLARK

Electric uniting intensity tore through tightly wedging bodies to the townies who, despite themselves, were drawn to us, to it. They shouted for more song. They pulled up fresh chairs and threw in titles. A bit of a conquest. Armidale particularly.

But historically significant?

Seventeen writers—Australian writers being actively helped to write. No cost to them except getting to Armidale. (Thanks be to the Myer Foundation.) A new trend in Australian literature? In Australian thinking? Might there be some dividend from taking a gamble on relatively untried writers?

Seventeen writers—handpicked by a panel that included Judith Wright, Clem Semmler, Andrew Fabinyi and Russel Ward. Even the fifteen "emergents" had published or prize-won in one form or another, and all were being kept for one whole clear month of bush New England days.

Seventeen writers—not all but most of whom began to feel less isolated and to find more people

on the same wave-length than possibly ever before. Important, as Judith Wright said, because you need to have one or two friends whose judgment you can use as reliable reference points even if you don't always agree.

Seventeen writers, many initially picked as poets, began larger scale works at Armidale. One novel into its seventh chapter, one begun after two years' gestation, several synopses, television plays, short stories and so on. Most of the poets were excellent performers. Three poetry readings, one private, two public (surprisingly encouraging). Astonishing diversity.

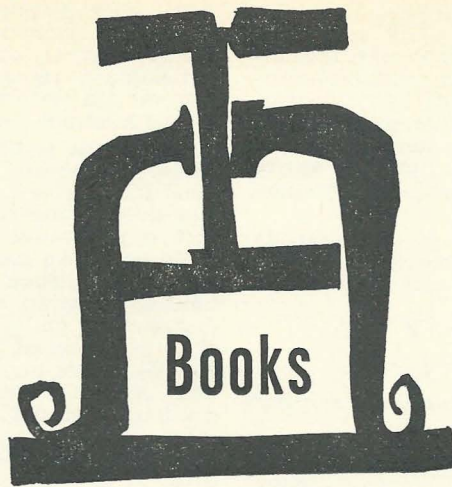
Seventeen writers—and you may come to learn their names: Richard Flantz of Melbourne, gentle, blue-eyed, and working on a beautifully complex novel; Denis Kevans of Sydney, round and inscrutable and an excellent declaimer of poetry; Ann Tregenza of the Northern Territory, known at Armidale for 'Zorba' dancing and Greek singing; Bob Bolton from South Australia, our youngest and best-looking, a lyrical poet of the sea and ships; Eva Sommer of New South Wales, perceptive and flattering about the work of others; Cliff Green, a snub-nosed school teacher from near the Murray in Victoria—innocent face but not laugh; David Ireland of New South Wales, prize-winning novelist, modest and a relentless worker; Geoff Lehmann, also of New South, a wordy (and published) poet and lawyer; Les Murray, translator at the National University, fine poet and notable trencherman; Irene Summy of New South Wales, once named Denmark's most promising young poet; John Campbell of New South Wales, bearded and sold on the potential of TV; Heleanor Ewing of New South Wales, prolific and disciplined poet; Mariano Coreno of Victoria, lyrical poet struggling with transition to the English language; Wilma Hedley of Melbourne, immaculate and domestic, and working towards a more personal approach in her verse; and me, of Melbourne, writing 'exposed' poetry that made Judith Wright squirm.

Seventeen writers—and six tutors. Their names you'll know. Frank Hardy—"The man who doesn't drink too much always feels good", the new-look Hardy. Got a gallop into more introspective areas. Ken Slessor—great encourager and useful critic. Judith Wright—unhappy time but terribly helpful as stimulator and adviser against dangers of poetry publishing. Ivan Southall—calmly sucked his pipe and was devastatingly honest. John Thompson—impressively large-boned man, acted as tutor, but scouted for program material too. And Tom Kenally—who seemed to find being regarded as one of the senior literary figures slightly over-awing.

For most of us I think it worked. There were weaknesses. The neighboring music school's practices and rehearsals were hard to work against; there were too many organised lectures; it probably would be better with fewer retreatants and fewer tutors (purely in terms of navigation through human relationships in close environment); there needed to be more individual working time ribboning ahead to defeat the righteousness of procrastination; and perhaps we whiteskins from the south needed air-conditioning.

But the weaknesses were peripheral. The aim of the retreat was to provide "an intensive workshop for fifteen emergent writers of proven talent, and a unique opportunity for them to devote themselves to their craft for a month in comparative seclusion." This it did. Plus perhaps some contemporary literary unity.

Will it pay off? We'll see.



Australian Ugliness

D. L. SERVENTY

A. J. Marshall (ed.): "The Great Extermination" (Heinemann, \$4.75)

This is a book campaigning for the more effective conservation of the Australian fauna and flora, but it is unlike the usual run of books in this field. Those knowing the literary style of the editor, Jock Marshall, the irrepressible Sydney undergraduate who stirred or infuriated his readers with his "Australia Limited" (1941), may expect something equally galvanic with his latest book. Though now far more elevated in the academic hierarchy, as Professor of Zoology and Comparative Physiology at Monash University, Marshall has lost nothing of the pungent wit and fearless exposure of ineptitude and cowardice which have always characterised him. Even those who may have little concern in the present subject will be interested in the unconventional way he has presented it and, maybe, become converts to the cause.

Marshall is the author of four of the nine chapters in the book and these concern themselves with general principles and the particular cases of mammals and birds. In reciting the tragedies of the past most writers of books of this sort cast a kindly veil of anonymity over the perpetrators, politicians and bureaucrats, who were responsible. Marshall scorns anything of this kind. He has delved into the records and mentions by name the 'villains of the piece' in an attempt to shame present-day Australians to renounce old attitudes.

An example of his treatment is the documentation of the tragic koala-slaughtering episode in Queensland in August 1927. By this time the precarious state of the koala in south-eastern Australia was generally known but despite protests from a wide section of the community, from the Anglican Archbishop of Brisbane downwards, the Labor Government in Queensland declared an open season on the koala. As a result it drew licence fees from about 10,000 registered trappers and nearly 600,000 koalas were massacred in a few months—and the koala population received such a blow that it has never recovered. David Fleay, the Queensland naturalist, wrote in 1956 that prior to 1927 Queensland was looked on as the remaining stronghold of the species. "But just

how many are there now?" he asks. "In four years of residence in the northern State I have seen scattered colonies and heard of others, but in no instance were there a great many individuals."

This sordid episode and its grim results impelled Marshall to "uncover the names of the local politicians who were responsible for this unsavoury business so that they, if not the Koala, would be preserved for posterity". He does so. The premier of the day was W. McCormack, but he appears to have been absent at various relevant times, and two other politicians were key figures in the business—Forgan Smith and A. J. Jones. Another was Thos. A. Foley, M.L.A., who took up the cudgels publicly on behalf of the trappers and jeered at the protesting archbishop.

Ancillary details of the story are revealed by Alec Chisholm in his review of Marshall's book in the Sydney Morning Herald of 18 June 1966. Chisholm, a colorful figure and possibly the most politically influential of Australian naturalists of the past few decades, wrote: "Queensland Premier Forgan Smith promised me in Sydney that he would cancel another open season then projected; yet when pressure was applied by country politicians, who themselves had been pressurised by trappers and shooters, he and his colleagues allowed the mass murder to be renewed. There you have a classic example of cupidity on the part of skin-minded hunters and gutlessness on the part of vote-minded politicians."

Some reviewers have commented that Marshall was somewhat too cruel in pillorying the Queensland politicians in view of the fact that New South Wales and Victoria had previously decimated their koalas and other fauna. But these earlier disasters had resulted from ignorance. Queensland had no such excuse. Marshall names other Australian politicians for misdeeds against conservation including "a Mr. Robert Cosgrove", Tasmanian Premier at the time portion of the renowned Mount Field National Park, with its fine stand of mountain ash, was made over to a paper company. He comments: "It is unlikely that posterity will remember this gentleman for any reason other than his government's reckless sale of the property of the Tasmanian people".

Naturalists are notorious record keepers. Perhaps contemporary politicians might bear this in mind and remember that "there's a chiel among you taking notes and faith he'll print them".

The collaborating authors in this book have also something solid to say. They are all competent observers and recorders, but perhaps special mention may be made of the botanical authors—Professor John Turner of the University of Melbourne, and Dr. Leonard Webb, of Queensland. This is a field which has not been adequately publicised in the past and these two chapters provide source material which will be invaluable to conservation crusaders.

The book should be in the hands of everybody who has Australia's interests at heart.

Erosion of Liberty

MAURICE CULLITY

Enid Campbell and Harry Whitmore: "Freedom in Australia" (Sydney University Press, \$7.00)

For centuries the legal profession has had an unenviable reputation with regard to law reform. Stigmatised by Bentham as "a passive and enervate race", lawyers still seem to many people to display an overfondness for the wisdom of the past and an unquestioning reverence for the dictates of parliament. These qualities appear in perhaps their least favorable light in the context of civil liberties.

In such matters academic lawyers cannot dissociate themselves from their practising brethren. The optimism of Dicey's writings on the rule of law seems strange today. One thing is certain: if it was ever true that the basic freedoms were safe in the hands of the judges, the proposition is now scarcely credible. With the growth of a vast complex of delegated governmental powers involving discretions of the widest nature, the courts are hamstrung and the individual is at the mercy of officialdom.

No doubt in Australia, as elsewhere, part of this development was inevitable. Much of it was not and here lawyers must take a good deal of the responsibility and the blame. With an unrivalled knowledge of the injustice which may result from arbitrary executive action, members of the profession have too often acquiesced in and, indeed, supported and even initiated measures conferring discretionary powers far in excess of those required.

It is heartening, then, to find that two academic lawyers have had the concern to commence and the perseverance to complete the valuable but wearisome task of accumulating the numerous, varied and often complex provisions of the law affecting civil liberties in Australia.

The authors of "Freedom in Australia" aim primarily to inform and their product is in no sense a civil libertarians' tract. It could hardly be expected, however, that they would confine their task to compilation and refrain from critical comment. On most, though not all of the multifarious topics considered the authors' views are indicated. There is, however, sufficient unevenness and, at times, inconsistency in these expressions of opinion to make one speculate whether, on some matters, they did not find themselves in quite basic disagreement.

A few of their conclusions are tentative to an excessive degree. One of the most curious examples is the brief dismissal of a suggestion that a special system of administrative appeals tribunals might well be substituted for the present haphazard system of judicial review: "But it is the Parliaments which must find the answer".

On other matters caution is thrown aside and some fairly lusty blows are delivered. "The most offensive feature of the [Film Censorship] Board's self-satisfied reports is the implication that its censors are incorruptible, and are engaged in saving Australian society from moral debasement."

On a great many of the less familiar topics the author's views are stated with clarity and moderation, and one would hope that most readers will find them immediately acceptable, at least as the first step towards reform. Among these diverse subjects will be found vagrancy, contempt of court, delegated legislation, radio and television, migration, administrative secrecy, sedition and freedom of assembly. On other matters, of which the extensive discussion of police powers is one, Campbell and Whitmore merely state and discuss the operation of the relevant rules and express either cautious approval or disapproval.

The work is presumably not aimed at lawyers exclusively. The layman will almost certainly find parts of it heavy going. That is hardly the fault of the authors. On topics such as police powers or the treatment of mental patients there is by no means uniformity amongst the states and, of necessity, Campbell and Whitmore find themselves in a position where most general statements require some qualification. In such circumstances and in the light of the multitude of matters they consider it could hardly be expected that every statement of the law would be sufficiently precise or accurate to form the basis of a lawyer's advice to his client. Nevertheless as an attempt to provide basic information concerning the effect of the law on civil liberties the book has considerable value.

Indeed, for persons or organisations concerned with civil liberties, "Freedom in Australia" might well prove to be indispensable. For other persons the concluding paragraph of the author's preface is worth repeating and endorsing.

"Australians have no grounds for complacency on questions of freedom. Some hard-won victories of past centuries have been eroded away by decisions of the courts. There has been little effective protest. It is our hope that this book may play a part in stimulating protest in the future."

Who Is Wheeling Grandma?

R. A. SIMPSON

Laurence Collinson: "Who is Wheeling Grandma?" (Overland, \$1.95)

W. H. Auden has suggested that "the only fair thing to do" when reviewing a new volume of poetry is "to give a series of quotations without comment". He also points out the main difficulty that will arise out of such a simple but sincere presentation. The editor of the publication commissioning the review will think that the reviewer is escaping from the job too easily. And we all know what scoundrels reviewers are!

Reviewing is a wonderful outlet for spleen and cleverness, and often only the slightest reading is needed before the critic gives us a really hypnotic display of words. But any reasonably competent writer should be a country to be explored, and he will have his signposts set in readiness for the proper approach. Laurie Collinson's country is not a difficult one to enter, and I believe there are rewards for those who take the steps.

I experienced a number of personal reservations concerning Laurie Collinson's "The Moods of Love", and at the time of its publication ten years ago I was also given the opportunity of expressing myself in print. I felt then, and still do, that the volume needed severe editing, and many poems "should not have been included". In "Who is Wheeling Grandma?" the poet has refined and concentrated his talent to produce the nucleus of good poems. This new volume indicates far more self-criticism on the author's part.

I believe the most successful poems in "Who is Wheeling Grandma?" are "Participation", "Us; them", "A Small Elegy for my Father", "Refuge", "Finis", and "Legend". The ambitious poem in the volume is "Aspects of Modern Education", and though I think the public should know how our educational system is "murdering our children", I do not feel that here the poet's anger, good intentions, commentaries, and judgments concerning individuals drawn into an adolescent sexual dilemma works as a complete poem about real human beings. I should think that there is more to each character involved than the poet gives. It is tempting to see the poem as a satire, and yet it is too much like a case study to be just that.

It seems that the aim in "Aspects of Modern Education" is to peel the skin from an unpleasant situation to show the truth, and the final poem has more truth than craftsmanship. And the result is the "insipidity of truth", as Johnson remarked, compared to the "wonders of fiction". Though Laurie Collinson's "Aspects of Modern Education" is a shorter poem, it is interesting to compare it with a fairly long poem by Evan Jones—"A Dream of Barricades"—which has been published in three sections over the years in *Quadrant*. The long dream poem by Jones never succeeds in making us believe in the predicament poetically; its content is thin, drawn out, and remote. On the other hand, Laurie Collinson's poem is bursting with actual things to say in terms of the evils around us, but its manner is raw.

However—and to return to some of the short poems: in the best of these I find human emotions carefully contained and observed, and language and directness of thought are one. But I do not think that the poet has achieved a rounded poem dealing with his private reactions to the act of love, though love is a constant subject. He looks from a distance at the "unbearable elegance of young lovers" and he is always aware of his "sad, segregate land" from where he stares "absurdly at love" in its usual forms. Loss and recollection give the poet his inspirations—a dead father, time he spent with a friend ("Refuge"), the reality of being in a land apart ("Us; them").

At this point it is surely a good idea to take Auden's advice. Here is "A Small Elegy for my Father":

My dad's dilemma: death or death.
A chasm to his right; and to his left
another chasm: even steps more deft
can't catch on middle air. Around, a wreath
surrounded his near-blinded flesh; around
the foggy shapes of servitude revolved.
Mere life, his groping problem; problem solved;
all our solutions fertilise the ground.

Courage his only bread as he grew thin,
but how his spirit fattened! I took hold,
wept at such weight. My yellow hero, cold
in victory that all and none must win.

This is your meagre line of love from one
whose verbal city was cacophony.
Too late I tender you a quiet tree;
now you are nothing; now I am your son.

The volume has been handsomely produced by Edwards and Shaw, who remain this country's most tasteful printers of poetry books. The format of the book, and its contents, should please many readers.

The Banjo

ALEXANDER PORTEOUS

Clement Semmler: "The Banjo of the Bush" (Lansdowne, \$5.25)

This is the first full-scale study of Paterson, and it is one to be welcomed. Mr. Semmler presents us with detailed and lively accounts of Paterson's successive careers, and he gives us evocative and sympathetic descriptions of their backgrounds, historical and social. The accuracy of Mr. Semmler's detail I am not competent to discuss, although I can point to the generosity of his documentation. I can, too, commend his lively pictures of scenes, long changed in many respects, that still visibly and recognisably relate to the Australia of today (even if, in many instances, the relationship is declining into the cliché of nostalgia).

Paterson's own life indeed exhibits a remarkably comprehensive representative function. He personally participated in an extraordinary list of activities of significance in a powerfully formative period for the Australian tradition. He saw all phases of Australian life in the decades that stamped on the minds of Australians, for the first time, the conscious image of a defined Australian identity; he studied them alertly, and celebrated them in lively verse that was immediately welcomed and absorbed by his fellow-countrymen, eager it would seem for just the definition and articulation of their attitudes that Paterson and the other balladists were providing.

Mr. Semmler would make Paterson Australia's supreme ballad-laureate. No doubt he produced the most consistently impressive body of bush-ballads: is it characteristically as authentic as the best of the rougher and less 'literary' ballads of more fugitive authorship?

Even the briefest summary of his career is impressive: a bush childhood near Yass, meeting bullockies and lending a saddle to a bush jockey; growing up in the Sydney of the eighties; regularly contributing to the *Bulletin* throughout its great decade (and selling out his first book of verse in its week of publication); accompanying Australia's first expeditionary force to South Africa and involving himself in the Morant case, that classic clash of British and African mores; editing a city and country papers for five years; covering personally the first Sydney-Melbourne motor-car reliability trials; collecting bush-songs all over the country; running a 40,000 acre station for three years; acting as a remount officer during the Great War (and putting 50,000 horses and 10,000 mules through his school in eighteen months); editing the *Sportsman* for nine years; and even surviving to broadcast reminiscences and comments in the 1930s—the pattern is wonderfully full, and Mr. Semmler brings out vividly the style and dash with which Paterson performed it all.

Paterson's career and writing will always be of the first importance to anyone seeking to understand what it is to be Australian, and Mr. Semmler's sympathy extends to all its phases. In perhaps the most lively chapter of the book he

describes Paterson's contribution to racing and racing lore, quoting from the provisional final chapter of an unpublished "Racehorses and Racing in Australia" what must be one of the finest evocations of the glamor and fascination of racing ever written (by a man who tersely denounced Tolstoy's famed description of Vronsky's race in "Anna Karenina" "as about the worst account of a horse race ever written"): all its meaning for those involved is rendered with both fine insight and robust report. This is the power that makes "The Man from Snowy River" so memorable.

All honor to Paterson for such achievement; and for his collecting of bush songs—the basis of all subsequent work in this field. It was Australia's fortune to inherit the last stages of the long and honorable English folk-tradition and give it perhaps its highest nineteenth century apotheosis; and to find in Paterson an active collector who understood its value with equal intelligence and foresight. But how does Paterson's own poetry fare in retrospect, from across the watershed represented by the achievements of the Australian poets and novelists of the 1950s?

Its representative importance can never be gained; as a lively documentation of Australian mores it ranks with the stories of Lawson and the best verse of Boake. No doubt Mr. Semmler is right in contending that Paterson's is the most consistent and impressive achievement of all the literary balladists. Where I must take issue with him is on the sensitive question of Paterson's status as a poet.

In any discussion that would relate him to the whole tradition of English poetry, it must simply be said that Paterson and his compeers are, as Douglas Stewart has pointed out, very minor figures: except indeed in this special function of their real and valuable representativeness for Australians, which is precisely the quality in their work to which we all respond. Pace Mr. Semmler, Paterson's frank and avowed balladry is of far more import than his more ambitiously "poetic" writing; the latter is consistently hamstrung by an all too insistently regular metre, typified by the unmanageable seven-stress iambic line which Paterson favored—true son in this of one of the worst periods of metrical decline in English poetry, that dominated by Swinburne.

It brought a breath of mountain air from off
the hills of pine,

A scent of eucalyptus trees in honey-laden
bloom;

And drifting, drifting far away along the
southern line

It caught from leaf and grass and fern a subtle
strange perfume.

Such verse (commended by Mr. Semmler) can be potent because we know and care so much about its reference; but it is poetically defective—the diction of the last phrase, for example, is not so much selected by the poet as seized upon to fulfil the requirements of the metre. In terms of the English tradition at large, Paterson is a lesser Kipling.

But let me gladly acknowledge that this is not the whole story. It is a sufficiently worthy achievement, after all, to give voice to the characteristic moods of a nation; perhaps this is of more real significance than a greater but more restrictedly 'literary' success. And we need not be too sad about refusing Paterson final poetic greatness; after all, he would have been most surprised—and amused—to find himself enjoying a historical stature so large as to call out a book so full, so good, and so enjoyable as this.

Fathers That Begat Us

S. MURRAY-SMITH

Douglas Pike (General Editor): "Australian Dictionary of Biography", Volumes 1 and 2, 1788-1850 (Melbourne University Press, \$12.00 each volume).

Biography has never been a mode that has suited Australian writers, whether they are historians or not. A good biography first needs, of course, a good subject. Then it calls, from the author, for the objectivity (but not necessarily the detachment) of a judge, the patience and pertinacity of a scholar, and the feeling for the human condition of a fine poet or novelist. It is hard to pull off, and I think that in Australia, and with all due respects to John La Nauze for his book on Deakin, the nearest we have come to it is with Malcolm Ellis' "Lachlan Macquarie".

So we have been poorly served in biography and, even worse, in autobiography. (Australians are timorous and egg-bound when it comes to being frank about themselves.) It is an extraordinary reflection on the immaturity of scholarship in this country that anyone doing serious work in, say, nineteenth century history, has until now had to rely for biographical data on Heaton, Menzell and Johns—journalistic compendiums put together up to ninety years ago. Yet it is equally as great a comment on the potentialities for scholarship, once it is channelled and organised, that these two volumes, the first fruits of a great continuing project, are the splendid books that they are. The libraries and the universities have been collecting the archives; the historians, professional and amateur, have been increasing in number and in competence; the presses have been developing high standards of expertise (though not even Melbourne University Press always uses it).

Douglas Pike is an historian come aft through the hawsehole (as they used to say about sailors) and is in charge of this magnificent project, the target for which is twelve volumes, concluding date 1939. Working committees have subdivided the work to be done by period and by area, and have commissioned a wide variety of authors. ("Commissioned" is a bit of a misnomer—nobody gets paid.) The outcome, if we are to judge by these first two volumes, is not only a splendid historical "Who's Who"—it is also a work which one could almost read seriatim, as a corrective to the fashionable concept that history is not about people but about processes. This is not the least of the services it will perform for Australian historiography.

These two volumes contain 1,116 biographies of Australians and people concerned with Australia up to 1850. Most are important, but some are ordinary folk grabbed from the stock-pot of history to dilute the mixture. Many were rascals; many more were litigious, quarrelsome, greedy and outspoken; a very few pretty well wholly admirable. On the whole the half-century after 1939, when it comes to be written, will be struggling to present as lively, as spirited and as independent a mob.

Of course criticisms can be made. There are misprints and misspellings where, given the apparatus behind this project, there should be none. There are omissions which are hard to explain: where, for instance, is the entry for J. H. Tuckey, the naval officer who brought Collins to Sorrento and made the first survey of Port Phillip Bay? But such lacunae are hard to find. Perhaps the only constructive criticisms worth making are pleas

that have been entered by other reviewers and users of this dictionary: for more generous bibliographical notes and for a signature (and thus acceptance of personal responsibility) at the foot of every entry—though of course the great majority are so identified.

The approaches of the contributors are sufficiently individual within a framework of overall consistency; they are frequently witty and elegant also. Even where standard biographies already exist, as with Macquarie, these entries bring in new and updating material. Dare one hope that the individual volumes of the series will themselves be revised and updated from edition to edition?

Certainly one hopes that this memorable work, far from expensive, will sell so widely to the general public as well as to the scholar and the institution that the question of continuing editions will become a real one.

New Poetry

ANDREW TAYLOR

Judith Wright: "The Other Half" (Angus & Robertson, \$1.95).
Vincent Buckley: "Arcady & Other Places" (M.U.P., \$2).
Kath Walker: "The Dawn is at Hand" (Jacaranda, \$1.50).
Norman Talbot (ed.): "XI Hunter Valley Poets plus VII" (privately published, 40c).
David Campbell (ed.): "Australian Poetry 1966" (Angus & Robertson, \$1.75).

With the exception of "Birds" and the section entitled "The Forest" in "Five Senses", "The Other Half" is Judith Wright's first collection of poems to be published for over ten years. This in itself gives the book significance to anyone interested in her poetry, and in Australian poetry in general. Thus I wish that I could be more enthusiastic about the collection as a whole.

Unfortunately, while displaying the formidable technical skills we expect of her, many of these poems are pretty dull. Often the rhythms lack life and buoyancy, and the imagery appears willed and intrusive, lacking vibrancy and resonance. All this adds up to a kind of creeping greyness in many of the poems, particularly in the first half of the book.

Ostensibly the title derives from Miss Wright's "search for the reconciliation of seeming opposites" which

... may meet at last, and meeting bless,
And turn into one truth in singleness.

But beyond and beneath this is her more pressing concern with the paradoxical relationship of Love, which "takes no pains with words, but is most eloquent", and her role as poet to whom

I cannot know my beauty
—say all the creatures—
till you interpret me in god-made words.

It is no accident that "word" is capitalised at times.

Thus her writing centres more and more on the problems of writing poetry and on the articulation of experience—i.e. on giving reality life (and vice versa) by putting it into words. Unfortunately her articulation of it is too often too remote from the life or the experience itself, especially in such poems as "City Sunrise" and "To Another Housewife". Such poems become theatrical, not dramatic.

A similar thing happens at the end of the otherwise good "Child with a Dead Animal" and in the longer sequence "New Guinea Legend". The symbolism intrudes on the poem rather than grows

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within it, and the result is forced, and lacking the feel of experience.

But if many of the poems are disappointing, there is much compensation. "Remembering an Aunt" reminds one of the early "Brother and Sisters" as it measures a hard-headed sense of the world against a sense of human loss and a warm sympathy. "Prayer" faces squarely and movingly what is now clearly one of Miss Wright's major preoccupations—the oncoming of age and the threat it brings of the drying up of the poetic and the spiritual life. It has the honesty of that very impressive earlier poem "The Harp and the King", and in it the poet prepares to face the world uncomfirmed by any "new tremendous symbol for the soul" and armed only with a will to praise.

"Naked Girl and Mirror" has already won much acclaim, and deservedly so, even if that does serve to show up the poverty of many of its surrounding poems. It crystallises Miss Wright's apprehension of the relationship of transient beauty, sensual delight and love to change and to the life of the intellect and spirit so important to her. The poem is made radiant by a remarkable sensual grace that informs the rhythms even more than the diction.

So although many of the poems in this book are disappointing, the best of them show Miss Wright as continuing to earn her reputation as one of Australia's best poets.

*

With the publication of his third book of poems, Vincent Buckley's right to be considered one of our more important poets must surely be conceded.

"Arcady and Other Places" consolidates the achievement of his two earlier books, but also adds considerably to it. Most of that tortuous and at times rhetorical syntax of his early work has gone, and with it that too frequent reliance at crucial points on liturgical reference and symbol. If there is a sense of Arcady in this new book, it is not confused with Eden. Rather it is the precarious loveliness of this world, where "the smell of earth breathes heaven" and which makes

A man, forgetting the common rubric, pray
"O God, make me worthy of the world".

But set against this is the realisation, as he puts it in "Burning the Effects" of

How much seeks out its element in fire,
How much, too, mocks its own weakness there.

"Poetry", Buckley says, "is a long memory and a sense of hell", and that sense of hell is given moving and controlled utterance in these poems. It is this, more than anything else, which distinguishes them from the more domestic poetry of so many others. A sense of hell can take many forms—illness, insanity, hatred, cruelty, inhumanity and the political destruction of Man's dignity and reverence. The "Eleven Political Poems" are a fierce attack on the latter. Yet in the light of the evils it diagnoses the poetry is finally unable to oppose them with anything more meaningful and adequate than its own anger and "The building of the honeycomb" and "The bright shapes and the true names".

However, the opening sequence, "Stroke", looks boldly and with great humility into the face of suffering, physical decay and death. It is a fine and moving testament to human frailty, and to human strength and dignity. In "Stroke" as in a number of other poems (e.g. "Parents", "A Song for Thomas Nashe" and the excellent "Versions from Catullus" to name only a few) Buckley has found a measured and serious cadence, a way of talking which is direct, flexible and sensitively able to modulate its tone. Thus it can be used to gauge and evaluate the poet's own responses to what he is talking about. While speaking out, he is also looking in. This naturally goes with considerable technical skill, and is an impressive achievement.

*

If I had my way I would ban all publishers' blurbs. Apart from their inaccuracy, the dust-jacket comments on "The Dawn is at Hand" do Kath Walker a disservice. She is no poet, and her verse is not poetry in any true sense. It hasn't that serious commitment to formal rightness, that concern for making speech true under all circumstances, which distinguishes Buckley and Wright at their best. "The Dawn is at Hand" belongs more rightly to that field of social protest in which Miss Walker's statements are most relevant and most moving. I have a sincere respect for her indignation, her sense of pathos, and her forthright candor. For any white Australian with a conscience her book is often moving and shaming. But to invite us to approach it as poetry is to invite us in this case to take the easy way out, to avoid its message (for it is a book with a message) by measuring it against standards and pre-occupations with which it has really little to do.

A slender but interesting little volume is "XI Hunter Valley Poets + VII" edited by Norman Talbot in memory of the late Harri Jones. Most of the young poets printed here should take a lesson from the wines of their region and take care that

they mature properly before expecting to be valued highly. There are probably few poems here which will eventually take a place in their authors' future first volumes. But there is a deal of promise, and it is for this promise that the collection is clearly meant to be read.

Predicting the future quality of a young poet is even more difficult than predicting that of a young wine, and I claim no great expertise in either. For what they are worth, here are my tips. Judith Driscoll at 19 already has a sureness and sensitivity of expression, and ability to make the rhythms of thought become the rhythms of her poetry, and a hard-hitting directness. Such poems as "Labour Ward" and "I, Judith" are very impressive. Malcolm Dunipace's three poems show a mythologising imagination (it reminds me a little of Edwin Muir) that gives a widening significance to apparently simple poems. Julian Croft's "Weekend Asylum" is a long, uneven but ambitious poem that shows considerable talent. And Norman Talbot, at 30, one of the oldest of the poets printed here, has several good poems. But his "Polemic about Poems" is dreadful, and his introduction pretty windy.

David Campbell has got together a good anthology this year to mark the 25th anniversary of "Australian Poetry". Few poems in this collection are embarrassing, and there are several which are very good indeed, notably by A. D. Hope, Judith Wright, Vincent Buckley, and J. R. Rowland. Younger poets such as Geoffrey Lehmann and Craig Powell also give one hope for the future with their freshness strengthened by a growing professionalism (in the best sense of the word). "The Door", a previously unpublished poem by Kenneth Mackenzie, makes one realise how much we need an authoritatively edited and complete edition of his poems—such an edition is long overdue.

Eighteen of the poems in this anthology originally appeared in the Australian and three in the Sydney Morning Herald. I often used to wonder at the value of "Australian Poetry". But now that so much poetry is being printed in that most ephemeral medium, the newspapers, such an annual anthology is not only justified but almost essential in giving the best of it a permanent and more accessible form.

Bosh and Bildungsroman

EDGAR CASTLE

- H. J. Summers: "Ashes of the Angry Years" (Australasian Book Society, \$2.50)
Elwyn Wallace: "Sydney and the Bush" (Australasian Book Society, \$2.50)
Jan Smith: "Ornament of Grace" (Sun Books, 95 cents)
Patrick Davidson: "Make Much of Time" (Rigby, \$3.95)
Judah Waten: "Season of Youth" (F. W. Cheshire, \$3.50)
Max Brown: "The Jimberli Track" (Australasian Book Society, \$2.75)
Gordon Barry: "Bed and Bored" (Lothian, \$2.95)
Desmond O'Grady: "A Long Way from Home" (F. W. Cheshire, \$3.00)

Inside every fat man there is a thin man trying to get out. Inside every journalist, it seems, there is a Serious Novelist trying to get out. Whether his great novel is in his mind or in his desk drawer, with a publisher or in the bookshops, the typical Australian journalist clings to it as to his dearest child; it is his hope of escape and the source of his self-esteem; it is what he comes home to from a trade with too few prizes and too many compromises.

It is not by chance that, in this sampling, four of the eight books of fiction are journalists' novels.

"Ashes of the Angry Years" is a workmanlike job in the historical novel line. The 'angry years' are the 1890s, the decade in which Australian political and economic structure hardened. Mr. Summers invents a militant shearer, Lancey McCall, and through his experiences and his judgments allows his readers an insight into the growth of unionism, the formation of the A.L.P., the context of Federation, and so on. It is no "War and Peace"; but it is the sort of thing that "War and Peace" is: an attempt to present public events in terms of private men, and so wholly to encompass an age. It succeeds to a degree, as a fluent and apparently accurate account of 'how things happened', touched up with 'human interest'. It is the sort of book one would pass on to a bright high-school student of Australian history, or to an undergraduate who wanted an instant background to Lawson.

Less successful as an historical novel is "Sydney and the Bush". Elwyn Wallace's obvious aim is to represent the depression period, and the life of the 'track dolly', who weathered out those years as an itinerant. Her raw material seems to have been wonderful; the reminiscences of a lady whose family took to the bush in the grand manner, in an ancient landau behind an eccentric horse. It does not survive, however, the bad habits learned in knocking off (as her publisher boasts) "forty mysteries and romances under various pen names as well as many half-hour radio plays", and (no doubt) in her present trade of writing advertising copy. Her characters, to be blunt, are sentimentalised two-dimensional wonders. The anecdotes are good, but it would have been much better to have had them verbatim.

*

Also from a professional hack is "Ornament of Grace", which is in part about the difficulties of being a professional hack. Jan Smith writes about a young married-and-separated woman, whose life is lived within a triangle whose apices are a Sydney newspaper office, a shabby-genteel suburban house, and the expense-account ambiance of a Jewish dress manufacturer. Hers is a highly polished book, efficiently and tautly written, and sharply observed. But it is necessary also to say that the polish is the polish of Vogue, and that the observation is, in the end, trivial. It may well be true that Richard Hunt's men's-wear shop is the most "exclusive" in Sydney, and that Doyle's Pier Restaurant is currently fashionable. It does not seem in the least necessary that any writer or any reader should be trying to order his attitude to truths so thoroughly unimportant. The heroine-agonist of this (let it be said) brilliantly composed book treads her lonely and dissatisfied way about a landscape in which she has, quite simply, no need to be. The obvious thing was to resign and clear out—in the first chapter.

Patrick Davidson, too, is a journalist. His "Make Much of Time" seems to have been worked at very devotedly, and comes out with an odd attractiveness. His Jim McComb is a working-class high school boy with literary aptitude. He is befriended by a barber-book-collector who introduces him to a little scholarly and academic circle through the members of which he is educated, enlarged, and taken to whatever satisfactions go with being a university tutor. If probability and accurate reporting are essential to the success of the kind of novel this aspires to be, then it is not a complete success. Characters behave and speak throughout it with clumsy formality, as though they were

nearly all well-disposed Dalechs. It is unlikely that there are many dedicated yet isolated poly-maths like Dr. Carlson or Professor Poole about now; and it is even less likely that they would be found to speak so much of, and like, "bookmen".

But to say this is not to dispose of the novel. There is a strand of it which redeems the rest. Mr. Davidson has done a magnificent delineation of teen-age love in the developing relationship between Jim and his patron's daughter Penda. He has caught, most accurately, the innocence and the prurience and the wonder and the anxiety of the adolescent in love. If the boy seems to be just a little of a clothes fetishist, and the girl a tease, well, that's adolescence too. "Make Much of Time" is a curious novel, perhaps in both senses.

*

Patrick Davidson was writing, of course, what the Germans call a Bildungsroman; an account of youth's passage to manhood. The Bildungsroman is Judah Waten's speciality, and in "Season of Youth" he has written another. It is much less impressive than "Alien Son" or the earlier part of "Time of Conflict", possibly (it may not be impertinent to suggest) because it is set a little further than usual from its author's experience. It is concerned with a Melbourne youth who grows up with a neurotic Anzac father, educates himself, goes to Sydney with a mistress, returns to Melbourne and the arty set, and finally comes through to find himself as a writer. The basic plane of the book is the father-son tension, which Mr. Waten's fans are possibly used to, and the end of the book coincides with the establishment of a viable relationship, which (as old Dr. Freud used to say) is the beginning of wisdom. Judah Waten is best as a novelist of movements and causes; when, as here, he turns to the intimate personal theme he seems not to achieve the greatest coherence. Again, when his observation is firsthand, his writing is sharp and particular; when it is not, it is woolly. In the particular matter of neurotic Anzac fathers, that has been done so well in "My Brother Jack" that anyone who tries it is challenging a world champ.

"The Jimberi Track" comes from Max Brown, a sound writer who years ago impressed with his "Australian Son". His new book is an account of the collision of tribal Aboriginal and white settler in Western Australia, told through the fortunes of two young Aboriginal men. It is a compassionate book rather than a sentimental one; it allows that there might be bad Aboriginals and good white men, or, rather, it refuses that sort of judgment altogether.

Like the other 'workmanlike' book in this parade, it is apparently the result of a good deal of homework and of a good deal of careful writing. Like that other book, too, though it is designed in large part to educate, it reads easily and pleasantly. The fate of Tawala has its pathos, and the destiny of Ralph has its irony: but most readers will remember "The Jimberi Track" as primarily an extended pamphlet on "the Aboriginal problem".

*

The best and the worst books in this group I have saved till last. "Bed and Bored" is every bit as bad as its unfunny title would suggest. It is an undergraduate novel about medical undergraduates, occupying territory somewhere between "Doctor at Sea" and Honi Soit. But bad as it is, it deserves mention because its publishers and its author (who makes no secret of his wit) both

think that it is comic, and the boldness with which they both assert this may bully customers into agreeing. It is a very silly book.

The prize, if I had one to give, would go without a shadow of doubt to Desmond O'Grady's "A Long Way From Home". This is a collection of short stories, some of which we have seen before. Mr. O'Grady is concerned with the question of alienation, and each of his fifteen stories is a study of a person in some way out of sympathy with his social context. The stories differ very widely in setting and in tone, and one has the feeling that one is in the presence of a virtuoso performer like Hal Porter.

"Birth of a Nation" finds an interestingly alien figure in colonial history; its hero arrives in Ballarat with a collection of watches for sale just in time to see, but wholly to misunderstand, the troubles at Eureka; he begins to prosper, a symbol of all those paradoxical people who become rich because they are too insensitive not to. "All the King's Men" is a tragic-comic treatment of Sydney's Serbo-Croatian feuds reducing them to a war between two restaurateurs. "Barbecue" sketches an accountant too confused to resist his wife's sheep-dogging into a role he neither fits nor likes. (There is one beautifully-contrived irony in this story.) There are a dozen more aliens, each of them invented with love and irony to expose yet another way in which a man might be a long way from whatever ought to be home.

Books For Kids

CLIFF GREEN

The last ten years have witnessed a quiet revolution in the writing and publishing of children's books in Australia. Children as readers are now being taken seriously. Authors of the calibre of Nan Chauncy, Ivan Southall and Colin Thiele have lifted our work to world class, often heading publishers' and best-selling lists in England and the U.S.A.

Two recent books, both dealing with bushfires, illustrate this. Bushfires have been used in many children's novels before, but usually as one of many incidents in harmless holiday adventures. In "Ash Road" by Ivan Southall (Angus and Robertson, \$2.25) searing fire is the red thread of horror that runs right through the book, exposing the true characters of a group of children and two elderly adults who are cut off from help. Mr. Southall experienced the disastrous 1963 Dandenongs fires and he brings all his skill to bear on this tight and brilliantly-balanced story.

Death was once taboo in the modern children's story. An old man suffers a fatal heart attack in "Ash Road", and in "February Dragon" by Colin Thiele (Rigby, \$2.25) a storekeeper is burned to death. If a little too episodic in its early chapters, this book deals convincingly and lightly with the life of children in a rural community. There is no compromise offered the reader in the final section and once more fire is shown as starkly horrible. Both these books well deserved their success in the 1966 Children's Book Council Awards.

The people and the boats that wandered the Murray and Darling Rivers before the turn of the century come to life in Max Fatchen's "The River Kings" (Methuen, \$2.25). Descriptive writing that is a delight, an appropriately racy style and larger-than-life characters lift this book well above the level of most river stories.

The topics for children's novels are as varied as life itself. In "Cocky's Castle" (Angus and Robertson, \$2.25) a group of youngsters restore

an old homestead and enter it in a competition for historic houses. Excellent detail and good characterisation compensate for a story that moves rather too slowly at times.

The difficulties of combining fantasy with reality are well known to the children's authors who have attempted this feat. The magic bottle in Elizabeth Fitzgerald's "Finders Keepers" (Angus and Robertson, \$2.25) is not entirely convincing, but the children who find it on a council rubbish tip, and then proceed to use it in extricating themselves from a number of original situations, will satisfy most young readers.

"Peter Comes to Stay" by Lois Southern (Ure Smith, \$1.25) is an artless, sensitive little story about a small boy who spends an extended holiday with relatives. How Peter adjusts to his cousins and to country life will appeal to younger readers and listeners.

Mary Elwyn Patchett's "Tiger in the Dark" has been re-published as a Puffin (Penguin Books, 60c). A whole new circle of readers will be able to enjoy this tight, exciting story for boys.

Ben Cropp, the author of "Sammy the Seal" (Rigby, \$1.50) has observed his subjects well, a number of good photographs illustrate his book, but the style is blandly journalistic. He could study such writers as Frank Dalby Davison and Erle Wilson in an effort to discover the key to creating effective animal stories.

"Great Stories of Australia" is a worthwhile series for background reading for young history and social studies students. Two new titles enhance the list. "Strange Seeker" by Keith Willey (Macmillan, \$1.80) is a detailed, well-written account of the explorations of Ludwig Leichhardt, with no attempt made to gloss over the German's weaknesses or underestimate his strengths. Exciting and informative reading with excellent illustrations. "The Sliprails are Down" by Gordon Broughton (Macmillan, \$2.10) is a remarkable series of reminiscences by a retired civil engineer now in his eighties. Pictures of a bush boyhood, youthful adventuring on a West Australian sheep run, in Shanghai and the Philippines and as a surveyor along the Murray are clearly and skillfully etched. It recreates, as no history text could ever do, Australian life that has gone. The crude illustrations are an injustice to an otherwise excellent book.

"Lyrebird Books" (Nelson, \$1.15 each) by Roy Norry are brief biographies of notable living Australian scientists Dr. Phillip Law, Sir Macfarlane Burnett, Eric Worrall and Dr. Edward Bowen. Texts are lucid and interesting with first-class production and illustrations.

"China the Waking Giant" by Nuri Mass (Writers' Press, \$1.25) is a confidence trick. The blurb tells us that this book will give readers "a new understanding of China, and a respect mingled with compassion". Instead we find one hundred pages of twisted fact and unsupported dogma. It will generate prejudice, not understanding.

Frank and Betty Few's "The Stone-Axe Maker" (Rigby, \$1.50) is a documentary photo-story from the "Alcheringa" television series. Simple text and fine illustration combine in an attractive little book.

"Vanished Giants of Australia" by Hans Mincham (Rigby, \$2.10) is an unvarnished account of some of the animals of our prehistoric past. Strictly for young enthusiasts who are prepared to handle a difficult vocabulary and who will not be disenchanted by the lecturing style.

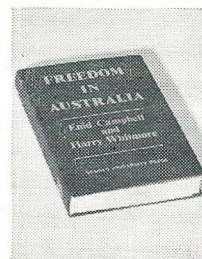
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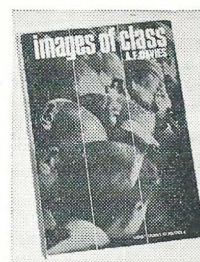
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Coonawarra Estate RIESLING 1965 Vintage

An Estate of S. Wynn & Co.

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