

# HERITAGE

LINKING THE PAST WITH THE PRESENT — FOR THE FUTURE

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No. 57



## HEARKEN TO MY WORDS

“NEMESIS”, THE STORY OF OTTO STRASSER



**FRONT COVER**

*Photograph of Otto Strasser as a Volunteer  
in a Light Cavalry Regiment, 1914.*

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## The Egalitarian Spirit

Miriam Dixon, academic, author and member of the Commission for the Future recently questioned why "Australians turn on those who make it to the top". (Australian 26-27, May).

Using the personal experiences of two men, David Williamson, playwright and Barry Jones, politician, both well known to the general public, she wrote of how this destructive envy has been expressed, in particular from both men's own colleagues.

David Williamson from fellow playwrights and authors, and Barry Jones from fellow politicians.

Ms. Dixon believes that although Australians adhere to an "egalitarian ethos, a lively sense of fairness, justice, of fair play, is central" to that ethos, even though at times it "is tilted by historical forces" and shows up as "destructive envy".

What Ms. Dixon has unintentionally shown us is that it is the egalitarian spirit, or intent, upon which the sin of envy is nourished.

An egalitarian is one who holds to the principle of the equality of mankind. In fact, the *egalitarian* or *equalitarian* is *contemptuous, as well as envious, of the clever, the intelligent, the independently able.*

*In the case of David Williamson, his 'egalitarian' fellow playwrights and authors could not tolerate his achievements, his successes, because of their own mediocrity. Hence he had to be "cut down to size" — to their level.*

*Barry Jones made the mistake of thinking he could work through the rigid Labor Party structure to take Australia from being "the lucky country to the clever country". Those presently dominating the Labor Party are elitists; 'they', are the chosen ones, knowing what is good for others and 'they' are going to impose this 'good' whether it is wanted or not.*

Such men cannot tolerate the free thinkers, the intelligent, the independent, that is why they draw the 'yes' men, the drones around them.

Both groups, in fact, "despise all men, *as men*, and love rather their *idea* of men, not man himself in the singular", writes Dr. Rousas Rushdoony.

The Christian Faith insists on the uniqueness of each and every individual before God. All men are not equal, they were not created equal; each individual *person* is created distinct, unique, free, moral and responsible.

The worth and dignity of each individual *person*, rich or poor, high or low, and his inestimable value in the sight of God is fundamental to the Christian Faith.

The man who knows he has been created distinct and unique, and is of inestimable value in the sight of God, rejoices in that knowledge — he has no need to be envious of others.

But he also knows that he is accountable for that which God has given him. He knows that, "To whom much is given, much is required". There is no *idea of the egalitarian idea of equality* in that teaching, but there is responsibility, accountability; and some people will be more accountable than others.

Christianity seeks to reconcile the individual person's liberty — balanced by his responsibilities — with the power wielded by those in authority.

In all human associations, and a nation is a diverse and complex association of associations, the group's function is *suppletive* to that of the individual. "Do unto others — within the group — as you would have them do unto you."

The true Christian aim of all social activity is to help each individual person, within the group, to develop to their greatest potential; not to destroy or absorb them.

Ms. Dixon's own use of the title Ms. speaks to this writer of the same spirit. It is the spirit that seeks to absorb the individual person into the group, the mass. It is the egalitarian spirit.

## THE AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE SOCIETY

The Australian Heritage Society was launched in Melbourne on September 18th, 1971 at an Australian League of Right's Seminar. It was clear that Australia's heritage is under increasing attack from all sides; spiritual, cultural, political and constitutional. A permanent body was required to ensure that young Australians were not cut off from their true heritage and the Heritage Society assumed that role in a number of ways.

The Australian Heritage Society welcomes people of all ages to join in its programme for the regeneration of the spirit of Australia. To value the great spiritual realities that we have come to know and respect through our heritage, the virtues of patriotism, of integrity and love of truth, the pursuit of goodness and beauty, an unselfish concern for other people — to maintain a love and loyalty for those values.

Young Australians have a very real challenge before them. The Australian Heritage Society, with your support can give them the necessary lead in building a better Australia.

**"Our heritage today is the fragments gleaned from past ages; the heritage of tomorrow — good or bad — will be determined by our actions today."**

SIR RAPHAEL CILENTO

First Patron of The Australian Heritage Society

### PRINCIPAL ADDRESS

**BOX 7409, CLOISTERS SQUARE,  
PERTH, 6000.**

### STATE ADDRESSES

BOX 1052J, MELBOURNE, VICTORIA, 3001  
47 McHARG RD, HAPPY VALLEY,  
SOUTH AUSTRALIA, 5159

BOX Q364, QUEEN VICTORIA BLDG, SYDNEY,  
N.S.W. 2000

461 ANNE ST, BRISBANE, QUEENSLAND, 4000  
C/- AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE ALLIANCE,  
P.O. BOX 187, SANDY BAY, TASMANIA, 7005

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EDITOR — Betty Luks

ASSISTANT EDITOR — Murray Jorgensen

### EDITORIAL ADDRESS

47 McHarg Road, Happy Valley, South Australia, 5159.  
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# HEARKEN TO MY WORDS

## or as the New English Bible has it: Give me a Hearing

by *The Prince of Wales*

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**W**hen presenting the 1989 Thomas Cranmer Schools prize at the Church of St. James, Garlickhythe, London, Prince Charles lamented the decline of the English language into a "dismal wasteland of banality, cliché and casual obscenity." As he observed, we live in "an age of miraculous writing machines but not of miraculous writing."

I ACCEPTED the invitation to be Patron of The Thomas Cranmer Schools Prize simply because I mind about what may loosely be referred to as our heritage. Some may say it is an exaggerated concern and, indeed, as I have discovered only too plainly, if you actually stand up and talk about the importance of our heritage and the lessons to be learnt from our forebears you are at once accused of having a quaint nostalgia for a picturesque, irrelevant past. It has forced me to reflect on why there is such a fierce obsession about being "modern". The fear of being considered old-fashioned seems to be so all powerful that the more eternal values and principles which run like a thread through the whole tapestry of human existence are abandoned under the false assumption that they restrict progress. Well, I'm *not* afraid of being considered old-fashioned, which is why I am standing here at this lectern wearing a double-breasted suit and turn-ups to my trousers, ready to declaim the fact that I believe the Prayer Book is a glorious part of every English-speaker's heritage and, as such, ought to be a grade I listed edifice!

Do you recall that wonderful passage of Alan Bennett in *The Old Country*? — "I imagine," he wrote "that when it comes to the next prayer book they won't write *He*, meaning *Him* with a capital *h*. *God will be written in the lower case to banish any lurking feeling of inferiority his worshippers might feel.*"

I would have liked to begin with a ringing phrase from the King James's Versions of the Bible: "*Hearken to my words.*"

But the New English Bible translates the phrase in less commanding terms; "*Give me a hearing.*"

It might seem more humble but it also sounds less poetic: and what we have to ask ourselves, it seems to me, is whether, by making the words less poetic, you

really do make them more democratic. Isn't there something rather patronising about the whole assumption?

Possibly there *are* more people today who read less well than people in the past, although I doubt it. Most people then couldn't read at all. But supposing it were true, whoever decided that for people who aren't very good at reading the best things to read are those written by people who aren't very good at writing? Poetry, is for everybody, even if it's only a few phrases. But banality is for nobody. It might be accessible for all but so is a desert.

The book of Common Prayer has been the spiritual resource of English and English-speaking people for four centuries. It is a book of prayer for the whole community, devised and composed so that it might satisfy everyone. Cranmer, like the translators of the King James's Bible, looked to the past as well as the present when he set about this task at a time of reformation and change; he compiled his Prayer Book in a spirit of reconciliation. To some of his contemporaries it seemed too conservative, to others too radical, but it has survived changes in Church and State that would have destroyed a liturgy less sensitive to the profound human need for continuity and permanence. The language Cranmer employed in the Prayer Book was quite deliberately "not of an age, but for all time".

And so it has survived by passing into common speech. Words and phrases from this liturgy have become part of the heritage of the English language by continuous reiteration through centuries, in public worship and private devotion. In Church of England day schools pupils used to learn by heart the great Collects from the Prayer Book, a practice much despised by educationalists today. But that learning by heart, together with regular Church services where the Prayer Book was the only rite, had a genuine influence

on the minds and imaginations of ordinary men and women. Though their own speech could not command the cadences and rhythms of Cranmer's prayers, because they were familiar with them they remembered them! At home, abroad, in hospitals, on battlefields, in solitude, in society, in trouble and in prosperity, these words were remembered and gave comfort and hope in the great crises of innumerable human lives.

The Book of Common Prayer reminds us of human frailty "among the sundry and manifold changes of the world", and at the same time of the consolation of "the means of grace and the hope of glory".

At this point it is perhaps worth recalling what George Orwell pointed out in 1984, "*that the best way of history and thought is to get rid of the language of history and ideas*". So he invented "Newspeak" for his nightmare communist world. Consider the following — "*We do not presume to come to this thy table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies*". Compare the courtesy of Cranmer's language with the crassness of the Alternative Service Book, which spends much time telling the Deity what he must already know, "*Lord Jesus Christ, only son of the Father Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world; have mercy on us. You are seated at the right hand of the Father, receive our prayer ...*" and so on.

It saddens me, as no doubt it saddens all of you, that we gather to praise Cranmer's great work at a time when it has been battered and deformed in the unlikely cause of making it easier to understand. We seem to have forgotten that for solemn occasions we need exceptional and solemn language: something which transcends our everyday speech. We commend the "beauty of holiness", yet we forget the holiness of beauty. If we encourage the use of mean, trite, ordinary language we encourage a mean, trite and ordinary view of the world we inhabit.

If English is spoken in Heaven (as the spread of English as a world language makes more likely each year) God undoubtedly employs Cranmer as his





*Whoever decided that for people who aren't very good at reading the best things to read are those written by people who aren't very good at writing?*

speech-writer. The angels of the lesser ministries probably use the language of the New English Bible and the Alternative Service Book for internal memos.

The editors of the Revised Standard version and the New English Bible had good reason for many of the changes they

made to the King James's Version. But a good many *more* changes were made just to lower the tone, in the belief that the rest of us wouldn't get the point if the word of God was a bit over our heads. But the word of God is *supposed* to be a bit over our heads. Elevated is what God is. And

for meddling with the Prayer Book there isn't even the scholarly excuse. The idea is to put great thoughts within our reach by changing the words. But the words *are* the thoughts. Admittedly the King James's Version of the Bible asks us:

"Why take ye thought for raiment?"

But the words aren't just decoration. They are the structure itself, as the Revised Standard Version inadvertently proves, by asking us:

"*And why are you anxious about clothing?*"

We can have a prayer book that talks like that if we want to — a prayer book that talks like us on a bad day. But what will it say to us on a *really* bad day? Where is the comfort in a phrase too banal to be remembered? How can we be lifted up by a sentence which itself needs lifting, on a stretcher?

"*And if the salt have lost its savour,*" says The King James's Version, "*Wherewith shall it be salted?*" Or as The Revised Standard Version so much less memorably puts it: "*If salt has lost its taste how shall its saltiness be restored?*"

Is it entirely an accident that the defacing of Cranmer's Prayer Book has coincided with a calamitous decline in literacy and the quality of English? We have rejected quality in expression, just as we have rejected quality in the buildings in which we work and educate. Fortunately, many more people have begun to appreciate the extent of the problem we face and have seen the fundamental need for quality, for a respect for tradition, for humility before the ideas and practices of our forebears which served them so well, and for which we have yet to find anything like an effective replacement.

It is a remarkable fact that in these islands we have produced the world's most successful language. That language has also served as the medium for some of the greatest literature in the world, including that of probably the greatest playwright who ever lived. Yet a great many people today look in dismay at what is happening to that language in the very place where it evolved. Looking at the way English is used in our popular newspapers, our radio and television programmes, even in our schools and our theatres, they wonder what it is about our country and our society that our language has become so impoverished, so sloppy and so limited — that we have arrived at such a dismal wasteland of banality, cliché and casual obscenity.

It leads me to wonder, for instance, how Hamlet would deliver his great "To be or not to be" soliloquy in the language of today — "*To be or not to be, that is the question, whether 'tis nobler in the mind ...*" no, we can't have all that incomprehensible, high-flown stuff. What about this?

"*Well, frankly, the problem as I see it at this moment in time is whether I should just lie down under all this hassle and let*

*them walk over me, or whether I should just say OK, I get the message, and do myself in. I mean, let's face it, I'm in a no-win situation, and quite honestly I'm so stuffed up to here with the whole stupid mess that I can tell you I've just got a good mind to take the quick way out. That's the bottom line. The only problem is, what happens if I find that then I've bumped myself off there's some kind of a, you know, all that mystical stuff about when you die, you might find you're still — know what I mean?"*

In the last two decades we have witnessed a situation where our education has no longer been centred on the idea that the English language is an enormously precious legacy to be handed on carefully. We have seen the abandonment of learning the rules of grammar and the parts of speech as boring and irrelevant. Learning poetry by heart has been abandoned, together with the idea of English as something really to be *learnt*, by effort and application, by long and careful familiarity with those who had shown how to clothe their thought in the most precise, vivid and memorable language.

Of course there have been honourable exceptions to this rule, where people have been courageous enough to withstand the accusations of being old-fashioned and reactionary. But the situation persists. At one of the country's leading public schools, for instance, I gather that George Eliot's *Middlemarch* was recently rejected from this year's list of A-level English set books because it was thought to be too long and difficult.

Before I am accused of being unfair to teachers, let me hasten to add that I do not envy the task that teachers have, particularly in inner-city schools. It must frequently appear a thankless task and I know that there are many who have been trying to uphold standards amid the general spread of mediocrity. They need our sympathy and support in an exhausting task. English teachers inevitably have to teach their pupils what is relevant, but surely they should not teach only what is relevant. There is also a need, through great literature, to give their pupils — in A. N. Whitehead's phrase — "*the habitual vision of greatness*".

We do, of course, have to recognise that we need ever higher standards if we are to survive in the modern competitive world. Our economic environment requires clarity in expression and precision in meaning. The world of work demands high standards of accuracy in communication skills to deploy and transmit facts, to process information, to persuade people, to sell goods. Many of you are familiar with computers and know that if you give these machines inaccurate instructions, your wishes will not be obeyed. So it is with people. If we do not communicate effectively with one another then we create confusion and lose our way.

Inevitably there has been controversy about the standards of English teaching in schools and about children's linguistic ability. This concern is not new. Complaints that young people cannot write grammatically, spell accurately, or express themselves clearly can be found stretching back into the last century. But there is now, I think, a growing consensus on what needs to be taught and it is heartening to witness the widespread recognition of this in the new national curriculum for English. It emphasises the importance of spelling, listening, reading and writing. It recognises the fact that competence in English is a key to success in all other subjects in the curriculum and a prerequisite for adult life.

In the words of Saki: "*You can't expect a boy to be depraved until he has been to a good school!*"

So today's prize is not merely an ode to antiquity. It is a demonstration of pride in our heritage. It recognises the contribution

which that heritage makes to our daily life and to assuring the achievement of standards of quality that will serve our own children well in the future. Those standards are important because they help us to enlarge our awareness; to heighten and deepen our experience of life like nothing else can.

Dr Johnson once remarked: "*I know of no good prayers but those in the Book of Common Prayer.*" Ours is the age of miraculous writing machines but not of miraculous writing. Our banalities are no improvement on the past; merely an insult to it and a source of confusion in the present. In the case of our cherished religious writings we should leave well alone, especially when it is better than well: when it is great. Otherwise we leave ourselves open to the terrible accusation once levelled by that true master of the banal, Samuel Goldwyn: "*You've improved it worse.*"

## HAMLET BEFORE AND AFTER

*Prince Charles parodied Hamlet to illustrate how literature could be destroyed by bad use of language.*

**Hamlet, Prince of Denmark: Act III, Scene I.**

HAMLET: To be, or not to be: that is the question:  
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,  
And by opposing end them? To die: to sleep;  
No more; and, by a sleep to say we end  
The heartache and the thousand natural shocks  
That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation  
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;  
To sleep: perchance to dream: aye, there's the rub;  
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come  
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,  
Must give us pause.

**Charles, Prince of Wales: Act I, Scene I.**

CHARLES: Well, frankly, the problem as I see it  
At this moment in time is whether I  
Should just lie down under all this hassle  
And let them walk all over me,  
Or, whether I should just say: 'OK,  
I get the message', and do myself in.  
I mean, let's face it, I'm in a no-win  
Situation, and quite honestly,  
I'm so stuffed up to here with the whole  
Stupid mess that, I can tell you, I just  
Got a good mind to take the quick way out.  
That's the bottom line. The only problem is:  
What happens if I find that when I've bumped  
Myself off, there's some kind of a, you know,  
All that mystical stuff about when you die,  
You might find you're still — know what I mean?



## “CANADA CALLS” The Caribou at Gallipoli

by John Wiebe

**T**hey couldn't see their faces in the dark water that night seventy-five years ago. It was probably just as well. Struggling to board lighters from a ship wasn't an easy task even on a calm day, and this night with its stiffening winds and rising sea was far from calm.

So some of the faces were twisted in sickness or strain as they bore their kit into the lighters, while other faces were blank with the combination of fear and amazement that confronts troops before battle. It was a long way to come to fight. No mademoiselles here, no wine, hardly even a tree on the edge of the dusty, cluttered bay. They'd left their island home to fight the Kaiser and his strutting Prussian soldiers, but the men they were to fight at this place were a breed they'd never dreamt of back in Fogo, Pouch Cove or St. John's, Newfoundland.

Once ashore their welcome was brief and loud. It was, "*Chuck your kitbags on the sand, find a hole, and heads down*", because there were snipers everywhere. A private fingered his cap badge which bore their emblem, the Caribou head. It was September 20, 1915 and the Newfoundland Regiment was at Suvla Bay, over a thousand strong.

Back in Cairo the Anzacs would warn each other about the Newfoundlanders. "*Keep away from the guys with the goat in their cap; they're a bunch of savages!*", they said. Soon though, the men of the southern cross could tell a caribou from a goat and good relations were established. They would all need each other in this maze of crumbling sand trenches, with its extremes of hot and cold accompanied by the risk of death at any second from a shell or a bullet.

The Newfoundlanders were to hold their sector of the line at Suvla against the Turks. Not being a large enough force to engage in full-scale, independent operations, they were still a part of the 29th division with all the honour and privation that implied during the Gallipoli campaign. And so they dug, dug, dug with their entrenching tools, endured the thirst caused by the heat and tireless sun, and soon buried the first of their dead.

Then came the flies. Warming weather encouraged a plague of the insatiable

insects that made even the simplest activities of life a trial of nerve and muscle for all at Suvla Bay. Insect and parasite-borne diseases felled a third of the Newfoundland Regiment infecting them with dysentery, jaundice and enteric fever. Only the use of double shifts ensured that there were enough men in the line to hold the regiment's ground. Ill and tired as they were, the Newfoundlanders held.

Any soldier who served in the Great War, and particularly at Gallipoli, either quickly learned to keep his head below the parapet of his trench or almost invariably wound up dead. Trench warfare, with its static nature between mad rushes "over the top", quickly devolved into a paradise for snipers that all sides were ready to exploit to the fullest.

The Newfoundlanders noted a knoll between their trenches and the Turkish lines that was being occupied by Turkish snipers on a nightly basis, and decided to rid themselves of this menace on November 4th. Thus took place the struggle at Caribou Hill, as the knoll came to be called. A small party of Newfoundlanders outflanked the knoll and dealt with the snipers it sheltered. They then awaited the inevitable Turkish counter-attack.

The attacking Turkish force never reached them, however. Another small patrol of Newfoundlanders literally ran into the Turks and after a short, nasty engagement that cost the regiment one dead and three wounded, the Turks withdrew leaving the Newfoundlanders in control of Caribou Hill. Fortified with machine guns, the hill became a very useful defensive position that raised the regiment's morale. A part of their sector was now a bit safer from the Turks if not from the rains that soon became their worst enemy.

The gales started in early November, but it was the horrible storm of November 26th that made life nearly unbearable for the troops at Suvla Bay. Trench walls of

sand collapsed into rivers of rainwater that took rations, weapons and men along with them through the Newfoundland and Anzac positions.

The bitter cold came next. Rivers of water became ice-coated as men in light tropical kit shivered under wet blankets. 150 members of the Newfoundland Regiment were treated for varying degrees of frostbite, an ailment that was succeeded in agony by trench foot as the ice thawed and the troops stood day and night in pools of frigid water. Veterans of the Great War have sometimes tended to play down the misery of this condition, but few things could be more pitiful than an 18 year old facing the amputation of both feet swollen to four or five times their normal size and gangrenous. Facing such trials together, the Newfoundlanders and Anzacs held their positions and waited.

The Newfoundland Regiment knew that a change was coming by December 9th when surplus equipment and supplies were ordered to their Brigade Headquarters. The campaign at Suvla Bay was winding down for all allied troops and finally ended on December 19, 1915, when Newfoundlanders and Anzacs departed the place under cover of one of the most brilliant tactical ruses of the entire war. Convinced that the allies had no intention of leaving, the Turks let the soldiers at Suvla Bay and Anzac Cove evacuate with as much material of war as they could take with them.

However the Newfoundlanders were not leaving to rest. Sent to help cover the evacuation at Cape Helles, the Newfoundland Regiment had to endure three more weeks of bombardment and casualties with their allies. Finally, at 4 a.m. on the 9th of January, 1916, Lieutenant Steele and the remnants of the regiment's rear-guard left the beach at Cape Helles. The days of the Caribou at Gallipoli were done. They deserve to be remembered by Canadians and Australians alike.

**"The writer thanks Mr Brice Bowen, Veterans Affairs Canada and the Canadian War Museum for their kind assistance".**



Randall J. Dicks is an Attorney who lives in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, U.S.A. Since 1970, he has been Governor and Editor of the *Constantian Society*, a monarchist organisation with educational goals and activities.

## TENSIONS OF EMPIRE

by Randall J. Dicks, J.D.

**A**t the beginning of the twentieth century, the world knew many empires: the British (including that empire within an empire, India), German, Russian, Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman, Chinese, Japanese, Persian, and Ethiopian. Some were thriving, some were faltering, some were on the verge of collapse; the first World War would substitute a myriad of lesser republics and fragments for some of the imperial giants, and would also give rise to a new empire, though it had no monarch: the American.

In the closing decade of the twentieth century, of all those empires, only Japan still has a reigning emperor, and that nation's official name is simply Japan. Memories of the second World War are yet vivid, and Japan's imperial status is downplayed, even though Japan's commercial and financial empire may nowadays be the greatest of all.

Other empires do exist, however, in fact if not in name. Some of them are commercial or financial, rather than political: Coca-Cola, McDonald's, Sony, and MasterCard. In geopolitical reckoning, surely the USA and USSR must be accorded imperial rank, by reason of sheer expanse, wealth and nuclear arsenals. The United States is maintaining its territorial integrity (despite a coming referendum in Puerto Rico), but the breakup of the Soviet Empire has become an accepted concept, even if not quite yet a problem for mapmakers.

The Soviet Empire has already lost its Eastern European satellites; now the empire itself is threatened with collapse. There are active separatist movements in at least seven of the Soviet Union's 15 republics: Lithuania (the first to declare, or *resume*, its independence, last March), Latvia, Estonia, Moldavia, Georgia; Armenia, and Azerbaijan. Whether the immediate response to these separatist or secessionist yearnings is intimidation, economic coercion, civil disorder or even civil war, or harsh military measures, it is likely that the borders of the Soviet Union will have receded by the end of the decade and century.

What is more, there may no longer be a Soviet Union as we have known it for some seven decades; there may be a new Soviet Federation, or a Russian Republic (socialist or not) surrounded by a variety of former components of the Soviet

Union, or perhaps something completely different. The three Baltic republics might form a union of their own. It has been reported that there is active monarchist sentiment in Georgia, which was an independent kingdom until it became a part of the Russian Empire in the early nineteenth century. The distinction between "Russia" and "Soviet Union" may achieve new importance, for some have suggested that the Soviet capital should be moved away from Moscow, with Moscow remaining capital of the Russian republic. Perhaps the old capital of the Russian empire, St.

Petersburg, may find itself the capital of a new, post-Communist empire. In that connection, the collapse, or at least disintegration of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union is being confidently predicted for this summer's Party Congress.<sup>1</sup>

So much change, however welcome, may be more than the system can accommodate — and as yet, there is no new system to take the place of the old. The nations of Eastern Europe have found that dissolution of their Communist parties, dropping the words "socialist" or "people's" from their names, or even the execution of a hated dictator does not bring automatic or magical relief.<sup>2</sup> Centuries-old rivalries and complex ethnic tensions are making themselves felt with new post-Communism passion. As commentators from every one of these countries have said, there are still grave problems, there are still shortages, there are still disputes, "but at least now we can



Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of Great Britain.





King George VI.

talk about it." In some cases, the proposed solutions are not so very novel; President Havel of Czechoslovakia proposed, in a speech to the Polish parliament, a central European federation or common market which sounds very much like what used to be called the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

The USSR is faced with the sudden and perhaps cataclysmic breakup of its empire, with resulting catastrophic effects on its political structures and economy. The many Soviet spokesmen who say that the Soviet government does not want to force Lithuania and other separatist republics to remain a part of the whole, but rather to make their separation in compliance with legal procedures, reflect a desire, a desperate desire, to slow down the process, to avoid total, immediate collapse — and to avoid triggering a military coup or civil war.

International strategists and sages have drawn comparisons between the Soviet situation and the dissolution of the British Empire. The similarities are limited. Both the British and Russian-Soviet empires grew over a period of some three or four centuries, and both encompassed enormous land areas and populations, but the breakup of the British Empire took place gradually and, for the most part, with great success. There are still a few outposts of that Empire, mostly remote islands which will in all likelihood remain parts of the British Empire. The best aspects and highest ideals of the heritage of the British Empire have been kept alive in the remarkable, durable institution of the Commonwealth of Nations. The changes in thinking, national needs, and political reality have been mirrored in the smooth semantic changes, over the last century, from colonial to imperial, to commonwealth.

Today's "Commonwealth" bears no resemblance to the Empires of the past. It is an entirely new conception... built on the highest qualities of the spirit of man: friendship, loyalty, and the desire for freedom and peace.<sup>3</sup> The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of equals, of states which have experienced some form of British rule and who wish to continue to work together to further their individual and collective interests.<sup>4</sup> The relationship between Britain and its self-governing dominions was stated by Lord Balfour at the Imperial Conference of 1926: "dominions... are autonomous communities within the British Empire... equal in status... united by common allegiance to the Crown." This new concept of "commonwealth" was to take the form of law five years later as the Statute of Westminster (1931), and the Commonwealth remains a free association of equals (now nearly 50 of them).

The next major development in the Commonwealth (after 1946, it was not referred to officially as the "British Commonwealth") came after India's inde-



Prime Minister  
Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe.

pendence. India, to firmly establish its independence from Britain, had decided to declare itself a republic. It was in Britain's interests for India to remain in the Commonwealth, and India wanted to retain those contacts, as well. The problem was, from the Indian viewpoint, in a republic owing allegiance to a monarch, King George VI, last Emperor of India. A solution, either serendipity or genius, was found. The King would be *Head of the Commonwealth* although exercising no powers. At the meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers in London in 1949, India accepted "the King as the symbol of the free association of its independent members, and as such the Head of the Commonwealth." So has it ever been: members of the Commonwealth include those 17 countries of which Queen Elizabeth II is Queen, republics, and five countries (Tonga, Lesotho, Swaziland, Malaysia, and Brunei) which have other monarchs.

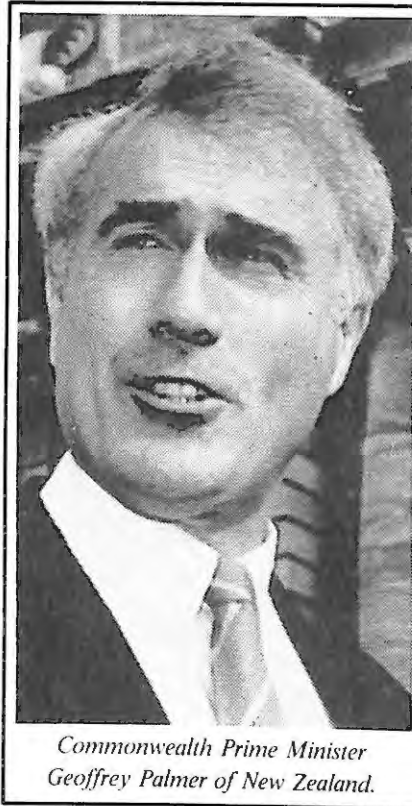
The people of those member countries embrace a wide variety of religions, races, cultures, and languages (as do the peoples of the Soviet Union). They are united by a heritage of law, moral values, and the desire for friendship and cooperation. They are also united, in one way or another, by the Crown.

The breakup of the British Empire did not come easily or peacefully in every case. The eventual presidents of Kenya, Malawi, and Zambia were all jailed by the British. The transition from Southern Rhodesia to Zimbabwe took 15 long, painful years. The struggle between Greeks and Turks on Cyprus has not ended with independence. Yet all of these countries became, and remain, active members of the Commonwealth. One of the key characteristics of the Common-

wealth has been its flexibility and tolerance. The Queen herself has said:

"We talk of ourselves as a Family of nations and perhaps our relations with one another are not so very different from those which exist between members of any family. We know that these are not always easy, for there is no law within a family which binds its members to think, act, or be alike.

And surely it is this very freedom of choice and decision which gives exceptional value to friendship in times of stress and disagreement. Such friendship is a gift for which we are truly and rightly grateful."



Commonwealth Prime Minister  
Geoffrey Palmer of New Zealand.

There is surely a *time of stress and disagreement* for the Soviet Empire, but one wonders if a future "Soviet Commonwealth" could achieve the same spirit and communication which exist in the Commonwealth of Nations.

The Soviet Commonwealth, even if all else were equal, would lack the keystone of the Commonwealth of Nations since 1952: the Queen. Queen Elizabeth II is, perhaps, the greatest proponent of the Commonwealth, and she has made it work. Her father did not live long enough to shape his role as Head of the Commonwealth. The Queen has created that role herself. She has visited every member of the Commonwealth at least once, and she knows the member nations intimately. Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamed of Malaysia said that, "*When I talk to her about my country, I feel she sknows what I'm talking about.*" Prime Minister Eugenia Charles of Dominica says, "*Well! Why should I be impressed? I should have*

*known she has a complete grasp of everything that's happening.*"<sup>5</sup> She is the symbol of the origins and unity of the association; "*The only person who symbolises the continuing health of that transformation from Empire to Commonwealth is Her Majesty the Queen,*" says Rajiv Gandhi.<sup>6</sup> She has experience; "*The Queen has been able to use her long personal connection with Commonwealth heads of government, and her personal knowledge, to follow the traditional injunction to warn, to consult, to advise, and to encourage,*" says James Callaghan.<sup>7</sup> In short, in the opinion of David Lange, former Prime Minister of New Zealand, "*She holds the Commonwealth together. She is the key figure.*"<sup>8</sup>

The Soviet Empire has reached a critical point in its history. Events and decisions this year may determine whether or not it survives, and in what form. The British Empire started to dissolve as soon as it had reached its peak, in a deliberate process by which greater and greater autonomy was granted to the dominions of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa, and as aspirations, expectations, and abilities reached higher and higher levels in the colonies. Cracks are forming across the rigid map of the Soviet Union, and the fissures may be beyond repair. In a positive sense, the British Empire did not dissolve at all, it evolved into a flexible voluntary association of four dozen equal and independent states, and is flourishing today as the Commonwealth of Nations.

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## NOTES

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1. Bill Keller, "After Communism," *The New York Times*, April 1, 1990.
2. Some of the changes appear to have been merely cosmetic, as well. In Romania, after the fall of the Ceausescu dictatorship, it was charged that the same old Party regulars remained in charge of key posts. When Mikhail Gorbachev was elected to an enhanced executive presidency of the Soviet Union, he was the only candidate. Plus a change!
3. The Queen's Christmas Broadcast, 1953.
4. Trevor McDonald with Peter Tiffin, *The Queen and the Commonwealth*, London 1986, 174.
5. Both quoted in *The Queen and the Commonwealth*, xvi.
6. Quoted in *The Queen and the Commonwealth*, xvii.
7. Quoted in *The Queen and the Commonwealth*, 153. The injunction is Walter Bagehot, *The English Constitution*.
8. Quoted in *The Queen and the Commonwealth*, xvii.



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## Books That Should Not Be Forgotten — Number 2

# DOUGLAS REED'S "NEMESIS: THE STORY OF OTTO STRASSER"

by Nigel Jackson

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This book was written in 1939 and published by Jonathan Cape in London in 1940. Towards the end of his life Reed wrote to me from South Africa that he regarded *Nemesis* and its sequel, *The Prisoner of Ottawa* (Cape, 1953) as irrelevant to the political struggles of the seventies. He was clearly ready to consign them to oblivion. However, they may turn out in the long run to be Reed's best work. As long as honourable men have to fight great odds in noble causes, the life of Otto Strasser will be relevant and will deserve a hallowed place in the European memory; and Reed has recounted that life incisively and dramatically.

Otto Strasser was born on September 10, 1897 at Windsheim in Bavaria. Reed saw him as the most important German political figure to actually fight against Hitler during the thirties. "Here was a man who had just missed playing a big part, a man who had called Hitler a fraud when all others were acclaiming him a genius... But for intrigues and stiletto-work that outdid the mediaeval Italian courts and the gang-wars of Chicago, the Strassers, and not Hitler, might have become the leaders of Germany. Germany would then never have known the orgasms of hysterical, mock-patriotic self-pity and self-applause which she knew under Hitler; but she and Europe would probably have been spared war." (pp. 23, 27) Reed stresses what a likeable and admirable man Otto Strasser was. "His natural disposition is a cheerful and hearty one... He remains a merry fellow, who lives hard, loves hard, eats and drinks with enjoyment, carries on his one-man war with gusto, never forgets his revolver, has a long score to settle, loves his country and likes to laugh." (24) Typically German traits noted in the man by Reed include staunchness, vigour, industry, thrift, practicality, decisiveness, energy, talent and clear-headedness.

From his family Otto Strasser inherited three qualities: a deep German patriotism, devotion to the Catholic Christian faith and strong Socialist convictions.

Otto Strasser was just under seventeen when World War One broke out. He volunteered for active service at once and acquired a magnificent war record. He

began in the 20th Bavarian Reserve Infantry Division and won the Iron Cross (second class) at Armentieres. In December 1916 he joined the Third Section of the First Bavarian Reserve Artillery Regiment, having been seriously wounded in May. By October 1917 he was an artillery lieutenant and in January 1918 a battery commander at the front. Reed reports that in March 1918 Otto Strasser, "who in the meantime had received the Iron Cross (first class) and the Bavarian Distinguished Service Order, was recommended twice for the Bavarian Max Josef Order. This was the rarest German decoration for valour, more highly coveted than the Prussian Pour le Merite... and carried the predicate of nobility with it... But the German collapse and the disappearance of the Bavarian monarchy ended his hopes of receiving the award." (42) Appendix II (330-334) gives the full record of Strasser's military service.

From his wartime experiences Otto Strasser acquired what he called "an undying hatred of militarism, as opposed to the calling of a soldier, which is something quite different" (38). He regarded many of the NCO's of that day as the most repulsive beings he had known. By one of them he was made to clean blocked latrines with his bare hands. "I have a hatred of these people which nothing can kill. They are the SS men of today." Hence a major reason for Strasser's hatred of Hitlerism, which he saw as Germany in the grip of such brutes. (34 to 38)

By contrast, he developed an immense

admiration for the German Officers' Corps and, inter alia, told Reed with delight an anecdote of how the Corps refused to bow to pressure from the King of Bavaria and the Bavarian War Minister to appoint the War Minister's son, an incompetent coward, an officer. (39) Reed reported that Otto and his brother Gregor "In the political events that followed the war... always stood well with the army, and had friends in its highest ranks. Indeed, after Hitler came to power the Army would have liked to unseat Hitler and put Gregor Strasser in his place; that was one reason for the great clean-up of June 30, 1934." (41)

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## II

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After the war Otto Strasser on one occasion defended the behaviour of German officers in the war against accusations by a Jewish revolutionary, Kurt Eisner, at a public meeting. Strasser pointed out that "proportionately the casualties among officers had been three times as high as those among the men." (53) He also took part in the suppression of the Munich Soviet, led by the Russian communist Jew, Levine, and was thus "entitled to wear on his left arm the golden lion of the Epp Free Corps." (59) One of the atrocities of the Munich Soviet (in which other Jews were Ernst Toller and Erich Muhsam) was the massacre of twenty-two members of the Tulle Society, a small group which fostered the cult of old German literature, traditions, folklore and legends.

By contrast, Reed pointed out, there was a mysterious lacuna in the career of Hitler. He was in Munich during the rule of the Soviet, yet there was no record of his having resisted the Bolsheviks. "There was much muttering and murmuring among the National Socialist leaders, much shaking of puzzled heads, in later years, about this, but not the hint of an



explanation of his doings in Munich at that time ever came from Hitler. This is a complete gap in *Mein Kampf*. It is one of the darkest things in all his dark history. I would give almost anything I have to know for whom that man really worked, not only then, but at all times later." (55) Reed believed that he "wore the red armband". (57)

Subsequently, Otto Strasser became a "revolutionary Socialist" (62), but it is vital to understand what this meant. Even when fighting in the war, Strasser had "wondered if it was fair to ask men to 'die for the Fatherland' when neither they nor their fathers owned any land — or when they were just moderately paid workers for capitalists." (49) In the early post-war years he "organized a League of ex-Service Students to uphold the rights of men whose studies had been interrupted by the war" and helped Dr Heinrich Brüning "form a Students' Emergency Association, charged to find employment for the masses of desperate young men who were wandering aimlessly about." (65)

Reed expounded the kind of "German Socialism" which Otto Strasser sought: "not a State Socialism, which simply meant one big Capitalist and a horde of officials in place of many capitalists; not a thing of international roots and affiliations, alien in its origins and leadership; and certainly not National Socialism as Hitler made it, which was but capitalist-militarism masquerading as a Socialist circus." (66)

Otto Strasser was a member of the National Socialist Party from 1925 until he broke with Hitler in 1930. He told Reed that even in 1924 "Hitler... was the only (party member) with any money. This he obtained from big business magnates and other interested parties behind the scenes, by selling out piecemeal, in private parleys, the Socialist parts of the (party) programme." (78-79) Reed stated that "the two Strassers, men of clear ideas and unimpeachable history, were at that time the real leaders of the party." (79) Neither of them ever called Hitler 'Mein Führer'. (80) Unfortunately, Gregor failed to see through him.

In late 1925 a dispute about the confiscation of the property of the former reigning dynasties was in progress. "On the ground that war-disabled men, inflation victims and others had had no compensation, the Strassers, and the bulk of the party were for confiscation." (88) Hitler, in pawn to big-business and big-landowner interests, was against.

Otto Strasser described a conversation about 1930 when Hitler tried to buy him and Gregor out. "Hitler behaved like a madman. He shrieked and roared at us, and then flattered us. He offered to buy the Kampverlag (a publishing business) from us at any price we liked to name, and offered (us) deputies' seats in the

Reichstag... (He) shouted: 'I cannot err; everything that I do and say is history!' (91-92)

Reed was furious that no translation had appeared by 1940 of Otto Strasser's 1931 book *Aufbau des Deutschen Sozialismus* (Structure of German Socialism) in which were included a record of two terrific conversations between Strasser and Hitler in the spring of 1930. "Here (was) the true picture of Hitler. A thimble-rigger, a three-card-trickster, a mountebank who sought to make his trashy wares look genuine by shouting them ever more loudly... a man without truth, honour or loyalty, a third-rank political swindler destined through intrigue to be borne to the loftiest heights of power... the greatest traitor and renegade that Germany ever had." (95-96)

Reed reported many interesting contrasts in these conversations. At one stage Otto Strasser defended Chinese and Egyptian art, but Hitler said that there was no such thing. Hitler claimed that 'the Führer and the Idea of National Socialism were one', but Strasser retorted that the Idea preceded the Führer, since "an idea was of divine origin and eternal". Hitler asserted: "The great bulk of the workers want nothing but bread and circuses; they have no use for 'ideas'... We want a hand-picked new ruling class, one not moved, as you are moved, by love-my-fellow-man feelings, but one that clearly realizes that its superior race gives it the right to rule, and one that will ruthlessly maintain and ensure this rule over the masses." Strasser pointed out that the race was but the raw material and that, in the case of the German people, four or five races had contributed to make them a nation. Hitler replied: "The Nordic race has a right to rule the world and we must make this right the guiding star of our foreign policy." Strasser responded that the only priority with him was whether this or that line in foreign policy would benefit or harm Germany.

Strasser was determined to press for revolutionary policies of land sharing. "All civilization rests on property... Precisely because the material circumstances of a man govern his possibilities of developing his personality and evolving a manly and upright bearing; precisely because property is thus the basis of independence, is it necessary to give those eight-tenths of the German people who are today without property the possibility of acquiring property." But Hitler stubbornly rejected all such ideas and also the idea of co-ownership and co-management for industrial workers. Strasser also opposed Hitler's messianic conception of history. He "questioned the whole assumption about 'the progress of mankind' and by no means admitted 'that the invention of the water closet was a contribution to civilization'... He said he did not believe that mankind had progressed, but rather that

mankind had remained unchanged for thousands of years... He did not accept this dogma about the part played by great leaders either, for man was neither the maker nor the inventor of historical epochs, but the tool of destiny." (98-113)

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### III

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After breaking with Hitler, Otto Strasser formed the Black Front. His strategy was to corrode the Nazi Party from within, by infiltration. The Black Front "from the beginning worked for a distant day — the day when Hitler should have come to power, betrayed his promised Socialism, brought Germany into war, and been overthrown." (115) Reed listed the names of many of those who worked for the Front: Major Buchrucker, Herbert Blank, Dr. Grantz, Dr. Becker, Captain Stennes and Rudolph Formis; and he recounted their noble struggles and sufferings under the Nazi tyranny. "The Black Front... only attracted, outside Germany, the languid and slightly contemptuous interest with which the majority of people always regard fighters for a lost cause... It was formed of resolute men who would not compromise and clung to their beliefs, at whatever cost... (Otto Strasser's) leading associates also lost money, position, liberty and sometimes life... The fight never stopped, and neither exile, outlawry nor even the War itself could completely sever the bond that existed between them." (116)

Collaborators with the Black Front included the Young German Order of Lt. Artur Mahraun, the revolutionary peasants of Schleswig-Holstein under Klaus Hein, the National Socialists of Silesia led by Richard Schlapke and the *Tatkreis*, led by Hans Zehrer and Ferdinand Fried.

According to Reed, August 1932 was a critical moment for the history of Germany and Europe. Hindenburg had rejected Hitler and vowed that we would never make him Chancellor. The Nazi party was in debt. Then in the November elections the Party lost two million votes and Hitler threatened to commit suicide. Gregor Strasser, still loyal to Hitler, saw two possible roads forward for Germany. Firstly, there was the way of **Socialist Revolution**, which he favoured. This meant a genuinely new social order, a better Germany, peace, alliance with the Socialist workers led by the trade union leader Leipart (but not with the Communist Party or the Socialist Party) and national salvation. The Army, under the Chancellor, General Schleicher, would have been in favour; and either Schleicher or Gregor Strasser would have been head of government. The other way was a **Return to Prussian Militarism**. This meant an alliance with heavy industry and the big landowners, the disappointment of hopes



of a better social order and, finally, war. Goring and Goebbels supported this choice.

Reed recounted the series of intrigues that destroyed Gregor Strasser and his hopes. Hindenburg broke his word to Gregor that he would never offer Hitler the Chancellorship. Von Papen intrigued with Hitler and the banker Schroeder. Goring and Goebbels falsely persuaded Hitler that Gregor was a traitor, whereupon Hitler accused him of treachery, broke his spirit and hounded him out of all his Party offices. "Schleicher released material collected by a parliamentary committee of investigation into the misuse of the Eastern Help Fund... great but bankrupt landowners had 'whored, drunk and gambled' away the money they received... He aroused in them a mortal enmity that brought Hitler to power within a fortnight." (139-141) Reed felt that Schleicher was on the right track but underplayed his hand, that he should have dissolved the Reichstag, arrested the chief intriguers (Papen, Hitler, Hindenburg's son Oscar and the leading Junkers) and rallied the mass of National Socialists and Leipart's trade unionists by an explanatory manifesto. The ultimate intrigue that gained the Chancellorship for Hitler was the lie brought to Hindenburg that Schleicher intended to march on Berlin. Reed regarded the murders of June 30th, 1934 in the context of this decisive struggle. "After eighteen months of Hitlerism, and of public disillusionment, this coalition (General Streicher, Gregor Strasser and Leipart) became a practical possibility again, and was again crushed, this time by killing its leaders, by Goring and his associates." (227)

It is understandable that thereafter Otto Strasser nursed an unrelenting personal hatred of Goring, Goebbels and Heydrich. He did not feel so strongly about Hitler, because he regarded him as "a curiosity, a freak" and could not take him quite seriously. He could not help laughing a little when he looked at him, and described him to Reed as "A feminine type, with a destructive mission, not a constructive one... Hitler gave the best description of himself — a drummer, or showman, and a sleepwalker. Nothing is real or genuine about him." (143) It is interesting to link this insight with Carl Jung's conception of Hitler as a modern medicine man who aroused deep and atavistic forces in the Germans.

During the thirties Otto Strasser had to flee from Hitler's regime many times. He went from Germany to Austria to Czechoslovakia to Switzerland to France, where Reed interviewed him for *Nemesis*, the book taking its name from Reed's fervent hope that his hero would prove to be Hitler's nemesis. Later, Strasser sought refuge in Canada, where, after the War ended, he was kept a virtual prisoner by bureaucratic procedures for many years,



*Otto Strasser: Here was a man who called Hitler a fraud when others were acclaiming him a genius.*

so that he could not take part in the restoration of his nation. The explanation for this peculiar hostility of the Allies to one of their Enemy's greatest enemies may lie in Otto Strasser's policy on the Jewish question.

Reed several times in *Nemesis* stressed that one of the oddest contradictions in Hitler was that he was "an arch-anti-Semite who often used the Jews as his agents". Several examples of this are given, including an assassination attempt on Otto. (103, 172-175, 183)

Here are two revealing comments by Reed about Otto Strasser's approach to the Jews: "Strasser... finds the Streicher-Sturmer form of anti-Semitism, as practised in Hitler's Germany, as stupid as it is repugnant, but in the Fourth Reich he dreams of would retain, in dignified form, measures of restriction against the excessive spread of Jewish influence." (175) "The Black Front was a purely German organization, without the normal, usually Jewish, sources of financial support which are open to all other, internationally-

affiliated anti-Hitlerist organizations." (180) Otto Strasser was well aware in 1939 of the likelihood of the partition of his beloved Germany after defeat in war under Hitler. And Reed reported grimly: "There is... among these exiles another anti-Hitlerist group which has its eyes on the succession — the group consisting of the International Socialists, the Communists, the Jews, and assorted intellectuals. They would prefer the complete, and even annihilating defeat of Germany, her division into two or more pieces, and would not be averse from the chaotic, Soviet Germany." (229)

Reed returned to the Jewish question later. "Otto Strasser's view is... that the Jews are an alien community, with a fiercely anti-Gentile religion that gives them a concealed inward feeling of antagonism towards the non-Jewish communities among which they live, and anti-Gentile religious laws far more rabid than Hitler's anti-Jewish laws... As they have this inborn, overriding, supernatural, international, mutually anti-Gentile allegiance,

they cannot claim, as they do claim, the full and unrestricted rights and privileges, and more, of the native-born citizens... Otto Strasser would place such restrictions as the welfare of the whole community demands upon the spread of immoderate Jewish influence in the thought of the country, in the professions, and, through the power of money, in the control of power. His endeavour would be to find, in agreement with the Jews, a means by which they could lead a dignified and worthy existence in the State, subject to the limits which their own religion, ineradicable traits and implacable refusal to be assimilated dictate." (273-274)

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#### IV

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The heart of *Nemesis* is the forty-page Chapter II which gives a detailed study of Otto Strasser's German Socialism. Strasser's plan "came to him, complete in all its details, almost vision-like, during a long railway journey between Berlin and Munich." (238)

Reed saw Strasser as a **conservative revolutionary**. Strasser had a "deep hatred of officialdom; he (saw) no merit in dispossessing one class of over-propertied and over-privileged people in order to put an aristocracy of officials in its place, as the Bolsheviks (did)." Strasser saw Socialism as "the gradual upraising of the unpropertied masses towards the level of those more fortunate". He aimed at "the abolition of proletarianism". (237)

Strasser told Reed that he discerned a rhythm of recurrent epochs in post-Reformation European history, epochs of communal feeling alternating with those of individualist feeling. He considered that, as part of that pattern, the epoch of Liberalism was nearing its end and would carry away with it internationalism, the doctrine of the class struggle and materialism. It would be replaced by a new era of Conservatism, featuring Socialism proper, patriotism and national idealism. (241-242)

Strasser's theory made a sharp distinction between **monopoly goods** (the land, coal, mineral products, other products of the earth and the means of production) and goods which can more or less be produced without limit. He proposed the abolition of private ownership of monopoly goods. Yet he firmly believed that every German should share in 'the sacred right of private property', in order to be able to attain independence, creativity and manliness.

To resolve this apparent paradox, Strasser made another distinction between **ownership** (a conception without any limits) and **possession** (an occupancy subject to limits). He then proposed the re-introduction of the hereditary fief, or fee. The Nation (the community of Germans) would become the sole owner of land and estate and other monopoly

goods, the management of which would be entrusted to individuals according to their ability and merits. This amounted to a reversion to feudal practice with the State as prince or baron. Possession would involve administration, having the use and enjoyment of the goods, which would be held in usufruct for the owner. "The usufructuaries, though their occupancy is hereditary, would be unable to sell, mortgage, or otherwise alienate their possessions... The most vital possessions of the nation (would be) secured against the secret, sinister and often anti-patriotic operations of big banking, international finance and stock-market manipulation." (243-250)

Strasser was very much a back-to-the-land advocate, aiming to check the processes of over-industrialization that create gigantic machine-slave hives. He told Reed: "Conservative thought cannot regard a process as retrograde because it will lead to a certain twilight of the mechanical gods... work is but the means to the maintenance of life." And this far-seeing statesman intended to transfer the capital of Germany from Berlin to some tradition-filled historical centre such as Regensburg or Goslar. (250-251)

Land would be given to those able to work it at the proposal of local Peasants' Councils. No man would have more land than he could himself farm or less than was essential for the maintenance of himself and his family with a reasonable surplus. The estates of the great landlords in Eastern Germany would be confiscated. (Reed regarded this as a challenge to the most powerful group in Germany. Both Bruning and Schleicher had tried for this and failed.) The 1925 census showed that of 5, 096, 533 holdings in Germany, only 18, 668 were great estates; yet these estates comprised nearly a fifth of all agricultural land. The peasant, farmer or smallholder would pay to the State one single due: a tithe, payable in cash or kind. The annulment of mortgages would liberate German agriculture from debt permanently. "To preserve the creditors of the old system from ruin, existing mortgages would be exchanged for non-interest-bearing bonds, paying 3% amortization annually, and these would be financed from the proceeds of the tithe-payments." There would also be compensation for dispossession. (251-256)

In the sphere of industry, Strasser demanded an economic and trade policy of the greatest possible self-sufficiency in Germany, coupled with a foreign trade monopoly, for the supervision of exports and imports. The State would be represented with the other participants in industrial undertakings. Strasser advocated common ownership by the trinity of interests (owner, workers, community), no one of these having the right to absolute authority. "The community (the State) would... become the owner of industrial

undertakings which... would be held in hereditary fee from it... (and it would) receive from the earnings of the undertaking a single payment, assessed from time to time, which would go to cover the expenditure of the State and would have precedence over profits and reserves... The head of the undertaking would under that order, as now, depend upon his energy and ingenuity for a greater or smaller income. He, the community and his workers would hold equal shares in the management, capital and profits of the undertaking. From their third-share, the workers would derive a payment, of necessity not very large, additional to their wages; but they would have the feeling of co-ownership and co-responsibility."

Strasser articulated methods whereby the change of systems could occur. "The simplest method would be to transform all industrial concerns and great undertakings... into joint-stock companies... 'shares' would be... inscribed in the National Register of Property, exclusively in the name of the holder; they would be neither saleable nor mortgageable... Capitalism... could not reappear, for not even the richest man could buy shares in an undertaking, since these would only be granted-in-fee from the State." (256-260)

As regards "independent small concerns, which employ relatively few hands... (who) have fair prospect of becoming masters themselves", tradesmen, craftsmen, professional men, Strasser advocated the revival of the Guilds, with management remaining entirely in the hands of the masters. "Handicraftsmen..., manual workers, traders, and men of the professions would be organized in Guilds, which would receive from the State certain rights and in return undertake the collection from their members of the sum assessed as the contribution of the Guilds to the State's expenditure. The Guilds would bestow the master's title and the right to practise a calling, craft or profession." One great benefit of this approach would be "the abolition of the fiendishly complicated and onerous burden of taxes as it has taken its satanic shape in our modern life; the Guilds would pay a lump sum to the State, recoverable in one contribution from their members." (261-263)

As far as the **political structure of the State** was concerned, Strasser aimed for the fullest possible self-government in every branch of German life. He stood for federation, as opposed to centralization. A key aspect of Strasser's model was the deliberate destruction of Prussia and the other dynastically-derived states and statelets. "The real German will... have that European conscience the lack of which is so sinister in the Prussian product... The German Union... must not be centrally governed from one place. It must be a uniform Reich, but federally constructed, in twelve to fifteen cantons..., their boundaries drawn according to religious,

traditional, historical and tribal considerations."

Otto Strasser believed that the Head of State should be elected for life. "This would give him independence of the electorate and enable him to make far-sighted plans." He would be elected by a Federal Council (composed of the cantonal presidents). All parliaments, Reich and Cantonal, would be elected by five corporate groups: those of the peasants, the workers, the employees-and-officials, the employers-and-tradesmen, and the professions. This would avoid the domination of political parties. The workers could only elect a worker, the professional men only one of their own kind, and so on. No one group would be allowed more than 49% of seats in any parliament. The officials in the cantons would be natives. Strasser hoped that the principle of federation could be extended to the whole of Europe. (264-274)

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Reed could only write about the first forty-seven years of Otto Strasser's life in *Nemesis*. In *The Prisoner of Ottawa* he could extend the drama by another twelve years. I have seen only one item dealing with Strasser's subsequent life: it was a feature article in the Melbourne "Herald" in, I think, the seventies. Strasser was living in Germany, an old man, still expressing forthright and unexpected political opinions. One of these was that Australia might have more to fear from India than any of the nations further to the east. Strasser hardly seems to rate a

mention in David Irving's studies of the Nazi period.

As presented by Reed, Otto Strasser reminds me in many ways of Australia's Bob Santamaria, though there are certain striking dissimilarities. Reed himself achieved fame as the author of *Insanity Fair*, a picaresque tale of his early life and subsequent experiences as a German and Central European correspondent for the London "Times" in the thirties. He strikes me as a journalist of exceptional integrity, with an astonishing passion for digging out the truth; but his opinions and predictions were often astray. A friend of mine, born during World War Two in the Sudetenland, tells me that he considers Reed to have badly underestimated Hitler. It is certainly true that Reed had a strong animus against ruling classes and the successful in this world, for he came from the lower orders of a very class-stratified and class-conscious nation, England. There is something in his writings of the eternal schoolboy, ever ready to cock his snook. Even many readers of "Heritage" may not know that he wrote a play about Hitler, *Downfall* (Jonathan Cape, 1942). His studies of America (*Far and Wide*) and the Jewish Question (*The Controversy of Zion*) are of monumental importance.

Otto Strasser never attained the importance in German political life that Reed hoped he would. But, now that German reunion is in the wind and the revisionist historians have exposed the enormous deceits that went into the creation of West Germany after the War, it may be that Reed will be found to have done Germany a service by preserving this detailed account of Strasser, his struggles and

ideals. And many an Australian reader may feel that a better Australia might be modelled largely on the Strasser principles. There is a strong Catholic Christian element in them, of course (Strasser must have been well-read in Papal encyclicals on social and political issues), and comparisons could be made with the government of Portugal under Salazar and Spain under Franco.

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STRASSER'S PUBLICATIONS

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This list is incomplete and also omits the book mentioned above.

*Europäische Föderation* (European Federation), 1935.

*Die Deutsche Bartholomäusnacht* (The German St. Bartholomew's Night) (An account of the June 30, 1934 killings)

*Erlebte Weltgeschichte* (World History in My Time), Zurich 1938. (An account of events from Sarajevo to the triumph of Hitler in 1933, under the pseudonym 'D. G.')

*Wir Suchen Deutschland* (We Seek Germany).

*Wohin Reibt Hitler?* (Whither Hitler?)

*Europa Von Morgen* (Europe of Tomorrow) (based on the ideals of T. G. Masaryk)

Gregor Strasser (published under the name 'Michael Geismeyer')



## Sonnets of Shakespeare

### SHALL I COMPARE THEE

*Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate;  
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,  
And summer's lease hath all too short a date;  
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,  
And often is his gold complexion dimmed;  
And every fair from fair sometime declines,  
By chance, or nature's changing course untrimmed;  
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,  
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest  
Nor shall death brag thou wanderest in his shade,  
When in eternal lines to time thou growest;  
So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,  
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.*

William Shakespeare

### LET ME NOT TO THE MARRIAGE

*Let me not to the marriage of true minds  
Admit impediments, Love is not love  
Which alters when it alteration finds,  
Or bends with the remover to remove,  
O, no! it is an ever-fixed mark,  
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;  
It is the star to every wandering bark,  
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken,  
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks  
Within his bending sickle's compass come;  
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,  
But bears it out even to the edge of doom,  
If this be error, and upon me proved,  
I never writ, nor no more ever loved.*

William Shakespeare

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# THE COVERED WAGON THAT BROKE THE GREENHOUSE TAX

by David Keane

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*In June, 1986 Tom Keane travelled with his wife to Cairns, Queensland, to see the Great Barrier Reef — they were not disappointed.*

*On the way home they had a friend travelling with them, a retired Chief Prosecutor.*

*Tom discussed the problems he was having with the Local Council over his backyard greenhouses. He had refused to pay any fees for the greenhouses, believing they were chattels, and, therefore, excluded from rating and taxing valuations.*

*"After all" said Tom, "I had been taught the principles of Magna Carta as a lad in Grade 5. I knew it encompassed many of the ancient laws of man, including the ones dealing with goods and chattels."*

*His friend advised him the present laws on chattels were mainly based on Magna Carta and other ancient laws.*

*On his return, Tom haunted the libraries of Adelaide, in particular the Adelaide University's library in his search for the truth.*

*He came upon a book by J.C. Holt of Cambridge University which spurred him on in his mammoth task. J.C. Holt reaffirmed there were still seven laws of Magna Carta that could be referred to directly in Court; one of them being the laws of goods and chattels.*

*Tom's battle and subsequent victory ended on the 30/8/1988 when the Supreme Court in South Australia handed down its judgement on the matter.*

*Tom's son David takes up the story for Heritage.*

**O**n 30/8/88, a decision was handed down by the full bench of the Supreme Court of South Australia, which was a victory of great significance for the man on the land.

At stake was the implementation by councils of a greenhouse/glasshouse tax, which if given legal clearance, and if pursued in full by councils could have netted councils an estimated potential of at least \$10 million annually. This could have virtually wiped out most greenhouse orientated industries in the State, such as tomato growers, flower growers, nurserymen etc... Quite apart from the financial burden, the moving of greenhouses and alterations would have been subject to council approval every time, and with council specifications. The bureaucratic burden of this alone could have ruined the industry.

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## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

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Under the old Building Act prior to 1971, there was no provision to require greenhouse owners to approach councils on matters of construction, moving or

alteration of greenhouses etc... When the regulations to the amended Building Act 1971 appeared in 1973, however, those regulations for the first time specified "greenhouse". Some local councils immediately saw their opportunity and started to charge for the construction and moving of agricultural greenhouses.

The State Government stand, as reflected by the Building Act Regulations and the Building Advisory Committee has remained consistent over the last 15 years, preceding the recent Supreme Court decision. The official policy has been that "Councils in this State should be allowed to set their own fees within limits to be stated", and that "greenhouses" were subject to the provisions of the Building Act.

Some councils, being "sensitive" to the plight of growers at first charged only partial maximum fees for greenhouses, but the recent trend is for councils to charge the maximum rate. The maximum rates are set by Regulation, and from 1988 they are, whether for construction or moving, 74 cents per square metre with an engineer's specifications, or \$1.14 per square metre if no engineer has been privately hired to provide specifications. If one puts the average size of a greenhouse

at 300 square metres, then the application costs incidental to constructing or moving a greenhouse is about \$400 per greenhouse. When one considers that most crops require their greenhouses rotated after a certain number of years (which could vary from annually to every 10 years depending on type of crop and other variables), then each greenhouse not only attracts an initial erection fee, but also a regular maintenance fee under the Building Act for moving. In this article this fee is called a "greenhouse tax". Such maintenance taxation has never applied to stationary buildings like houses, and so the whole scheme places an exorbitant and unprecedented taxation levy upon the Horticultural Industry.

As great as the financial burden has been (it is financially devastating to many growers) the incidental problems are just as enormous. These include the presentation of plans and specifications to council for each greenhouse being moved, the need to hire an engineering consultant, the bureaucratic delay for approval, etc... Councils have been known to refuse permits (thus forcing the deterioration of a crop requiring protection). Other Councils have insisted on posts being concreted in (even when the crop needs regular rotation). A number of growers have been reluctant to move their greenhouses for fear of attracting greenhouse tax — such practice could affect the quality and health of their crops.

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## THE COVERED WAGON

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It was inevitable that in time the issue would have to be sorted out in the Courtroom, but when this did eventually happen, it was over such a small, and perhaps insignificant type of greenhouse, that many wondered what the fuss was all about.

Mr A.T. Keane, of Salisbury East South Australia, had been a nurseryman for most of his life, and is now retired. He chose to fill in his later years with plant



breeding Carnations and Double Gerberas, as well as sports activities. For the protection of his plants for propagation purposes he built a greenhouse, the skeleton was made up of six semi-circular bent pipes, connected to three horizontal pipes into a shape that Justice White compared in looks with "a covered wagon used last century in the United States". There was no floor in the structure, except the garden soil. A plastic cover was laid over the skeletal structure, and held down by clips and soil. The semi-circular pipes themselves did not touch the ground, but were held up by being inserted into larger pipes protruding from the ground.

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### PROSECUTION

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Mr Keane was a leading advocate among growers, of non-payment of the greenhouse tax, so naturally when he erected his greenhouse in 1986 he chose not to seek council approval, nor to submit plans or specifications to Salisbury Council. He did however, advise the council about the erection, saying that the greenhouse was a chattel, and not a "building". The council in turn advised him that he was breaking the law, and threatened prosecution, but at this stage did no more. Mr Keane then publicly challenged council by a newspaper advertisement. This was too much for some of the council members, who considered that Mr Keane had to be taught a lesson.

The Council issued a complaint of performing building work, without first obtaining permission of the Council, contrary to sec.10(1) of the Building Act 1971. On this charge he was convicted in a Magistrate's Court. Mr Keane then appealed to a single Judge of the Supreme Court, where on 21/1/88 Justice Bollen held that the conviction should stand.

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### THE BUILDING ACT AND REGULATIONS

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To understand Justice Bollen's decision, we need to look at the Building Act and Regulations. Section 10 of the Act requires that a person:—

- (1) doing building work must first get council approval
- (2) doing building work can do so only according to plans approved by council.
- (3) doing building work must comply with all requirements of the Building Act.
- (4) cannot sell or lease land on which there is an approved building unless council further approves the sale or lease. The word "building" is not defined directly in the Building Act, but the phrase "building work" is

defined to mean any work prescribed in the Regulations.

The Regulations (sec.8.1) declare "out-buildings in which human activity is primary" (kitchens, sleepouts, studios etc.) as "building work". And "outbuildings in which human activity is secondary including aviaries, conservatories, cycle sheds, fowl houses, fuel sheds, greenhouses, kennels, pigeon lofts, shade houses, summer houses, tool houses and water tanks" are prescribed to be building work only if the size is above a certain minimum, i.e. only if floor area exceeds 6 square metres, or span exceeds 3 metres, or height exceeds 2 1/2 metres.

Justice Bollen concluded that the floor area for Mr Keane's greenhouse was over 6 square metres, and therefore described by the Regulations as "building work".

Noting that "greenhouses" were specified in the Building Regulations, Justice Bollen rejected Mr Keane's defence that his greenhouse was not a "building" but a "chattel".

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### THE FULL COURT DECISION

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Mr Keane then appealed against the single court decision of Justice Bollen, and on 30/8/88 the Full Supreme Court delivered its judgement, which completely overturned Justice Bollen's decision, and proclaimed that Mr Keane was quite within his rights in not applying to council for building approval, for the erection of his greenhouse.

Justice White was the leading Judge of the Full Court on that occasion, and all three Judges upheld Mr Keane's appeal.

Justice White made two rulings, contrary to Justice Bollen's decision. Firstly as to whether a structure is a building in the sense as used in the Building Act, it cannot be demonstrated to be a "building" simply because it is mentioned in the Regulations. The Regulations only apply if first of all it is a "building" in the sense used in the Building Act. Secondly, for a structure to be considered a "building" in the sense as used in the Building Act, it must satisfy two conditions,

- (1) that it is prescribed in the Regulations.
- (2) that the structure must be "part of the land".

This last condition that a structure must be "part of the land" is critical to the final decision, and was completely overlooked by Justice Bollen. This condition is the very point that swings the case in favour of the man on the land.

Justice White indicates that the critical words in the Building Act come in (1) sec.6 in which "site" is defined as meaning "the area upon which a building or structure is built", and (2) sec.8 which requires the owner of any land upon which building work is to be performed to apply to Council.

The two sections strongly indicated that a "building" referred to in the Act must be "part of the land".

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### CHATELS AND BUILDINGS

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In his decision, Justice White went to great lengths to separate what he regarded as a chattel from a "building" as defined in the Building Act.

A chattel has its separate existence quite apart from the land. For example a clock may rest upon the land, but may be easily taken off the land, and so classified as a chattel. Chattels do not have to be applied for or approved under the Building Act.

On the other hand a house or factory is a fixture to the land, is part of realty, and so requires approval under the Building Act.

There are many situations where the man on the land, may ask whether a certain structure is a chattel or a building, in the sense as used in the Building Act, and therefore requiring council approval. Justice White indicates many examples in his report, and I list the most important here. In the case "Fraser v Corp. of Noarlunga (1986)" a 38ft yacht being built on a moveable sling in a backyard, was considered to have its own existence, separate from the land, and was declared a chattel. A doll's house, even though it may be attached to the ground, is easily movable and considered a chattel.

Mr Keane's greenhouse was constructed with an obvious intention to be moved, so as to rotate the soil. It was declared a chattel.

All of the above therefore are not affected under the Building Act.

On the other hand, habitable structures such as kitchens, garages and studios are "solid types of buildings obviously forming part of the land", and therefore, according to Justice White, come under the Building Act.

In "City of West Torrens v McDonalds", a 36ft high pylon was not attached to any building. It was however buried deep in the ground, in a large concrete foundation. The court considered it a fixture, as part of the land, therefore subject to the Building Act.

A cement factory with a concrete base simply resting on the ground, but not embedded in the ground, would nevertheless be considered a permanent fixture forming "part of the land".

In "Skaventzos v Vander-Lee (1974)" a structure made out of two converted caravans had been so extensively modified, "to provide the attributes usually manifest by a building", and there was an obvious intention of permanence in the existing location. It was therefore declared to be a Building to which the Building Act applied.

Post and fences are part of the land but would not come under the Building Act

Regulations unless they were exceedingly high.

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**ADVICE TO THE GREENHOUSE/  
GLASSHOUSE OWNER**

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Most glass/greenhouses used in this State are designed to be temporary, and

rotated from spot to spot or property to property for various reasons. Like Mr Keane's greenhouse all of these can unquestionably be regarded as chattels, with no fixation to the land, and therefore outside the control of councils under the Building Act. For such structures, the grower needs to make no contact with council, needs to pay no greenhouse tax everytime it is moved, and is not bound in

anyway by the requirements of the Building Act.

This advice is not necessarily correct if the greenhouse has been modified in order to give an impression of permanent attachment to a single location, for example if the greenhouse is provided with a concrete floor, the matter of whether a concrete floor brings a greenhouse under the Building Act is debatable, and may need further clarification in the Court Room, before one can speak with certainty on the matter.

Some councils in the past have been demanding that greenhouse owners reinforce the greenhouse in concrete, or be modified in other ways. Not only has such advice been illegal and unethical, but it also constitutes a trap for the unwary grower. It just may happen that the modification may change the nature of the greenhouse, into an apparently more permanent structure, which therefore may come within the control of the Building Act.

Just because we don't have to conform to the Building Act with our greenhouses, does not say that we ignore other Acts and Laws. We must obey the Laws of Health, Fire and the Common Laws of Environment etc.

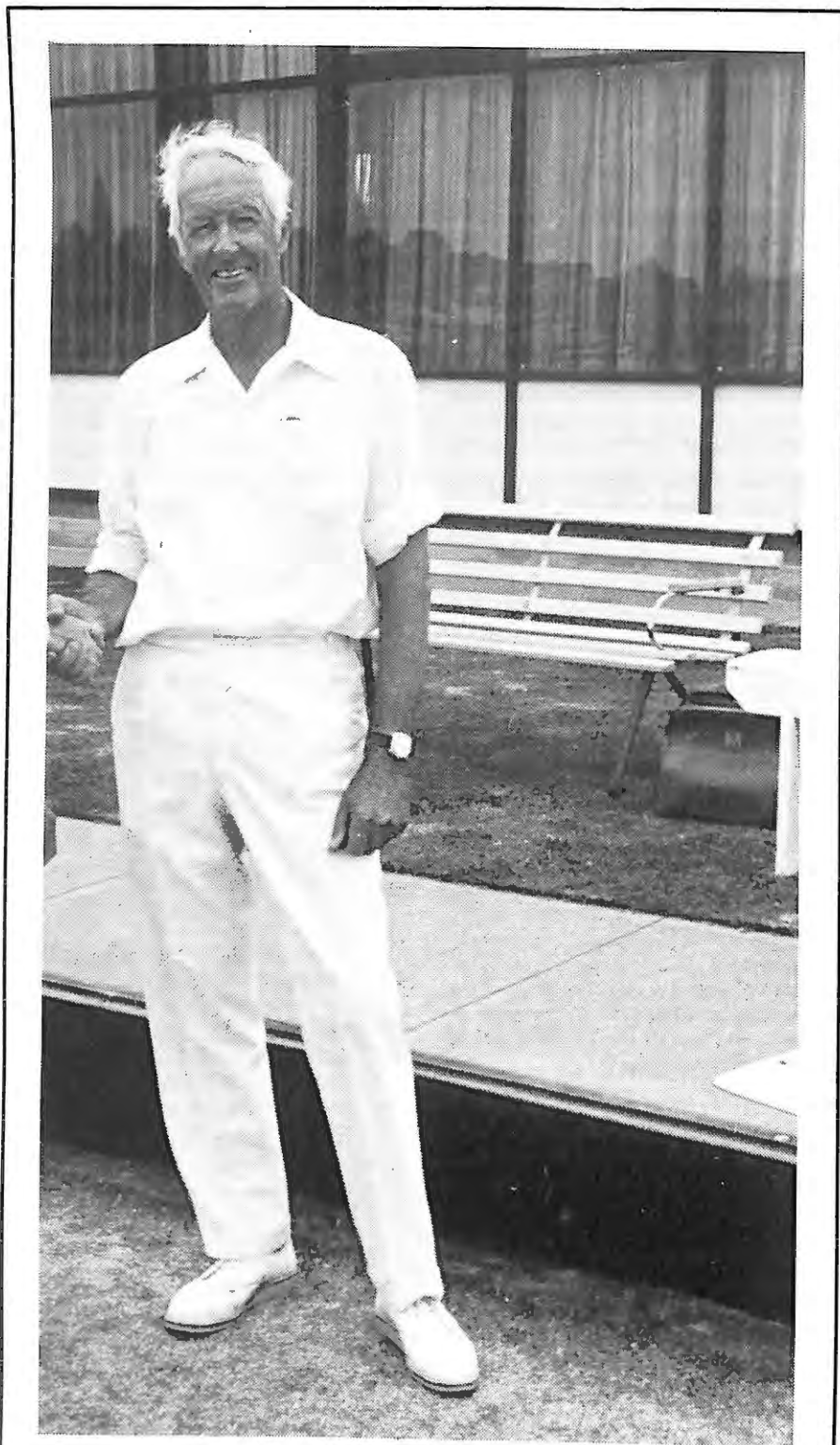
Over the years, some growers have conceded to council demands, and have regularly been paying the greenhouse tax everytime a greenhouse has been constructed or moved. Such growers have every right to approach their council, and insist on a full refund of all greenhouse taxes if improperly charged.

Likewise, the various growers' Associations could each formally complain to the State Government on behalf of their members, and insist on a State audit of all council records, and reimbursement of all improperly charged moneys.

Greenhouses are clearly the most important structure wrongly charged by councils but by no means are they the only ones. When considering whether or not to contact the council for approval before building or moving a structure, one should ask one-self whether that structure has a degree of permanence and fixation to the land. If it does have, and if it is above the minimum size stated in the Regulations, then one is required to apply for council approval. If it is a chattel, with its own separate existence separate from the land, one need not apply to the council.

For those interested, the relevant laws of Magna Carta are: Sec.9, 26, 27, 28.

Mr Keane can be contacted at: 2/8 Dunne Crescent, Salisbury East, South Australia, 5109. Phone (08) 250 6838



*Mr A.T. (Tom) Keane.  
The man who broke the Greenhouse Tax.*

# A PART 'HISTORY' OF THE WORLD

The source of this 'History of the World' writes...

"One of the fringe benefits of being an English or history teacher is receiving the occasional jewel of a student blooper in an essay. I have pasted together the following 'history' of the world from certifiably genuine student bloopers collected by teachers throughout the United States, from eighth grade through college level. Read carefully, and you will learn a lot."

**T**hen came the Middle Ages when *King Alfred* conquered the Dames. *King Arthur* lived in the Age of Shivery. King Arthur mustered his troops before the Battle of Hastings. *Joan of Arc* was canonized by Bernard. Finally, *Magna Carta* provided that no free man should be hanged *twice* for the same offence.

In midevil times most of the people were illiterate. The greatest writer of the time was **Chaucer**, who wrote many poems and verses and also wrote literature. Another tale tells of **William Tell**, who shot an arrow through an apple while standing on his son's head.



Martin Luther (c.1483-1546)

The Renaissance was an age in which individuals felt the value of their human-being. **Martin Luther** was nailed to the church door for selling papal indulgences. He died a horrible death, being excommunicated by a bull. It was the painter **Donatello's** interest in an age of great inventions and discoveries. **Gutenberg** invented the Bible. **Sir Walter Raleigh** is a historical figure because he invented cigarettes. Another important invention was the **circulation of blood**.

The government of England was a limited mockery. **Henry VIII** found walking difficult because he had an abcess on his knee. **Queen Elizabeth** was the "Virgin Queen". As a queen she was a success. Then her navy went out and defeated the **Spanish Armadillo**.

The greatest writer of the Renaissance was **William Shakespeare**. Shakespeare never made much money and is famous only because of his plays. He lived at

Windsor with his merry wives, writing tragedies, comedies and errors. In one of Shakespeare's famous plays **Hamlet** rations out his situation by relieving himself in a long soliloquy. In another, Lady Macbeth tries to convince **Macbeth** to kill the king by attacking his manhood. **Romeo and Juliet** are an example of a heroic couplet.



Writing at the same time as Shakespeare was Miguel Cervantes. He wrote "Donkey Hote". The next great author was **John Milton**. Milton wrote "Paradise Lost". Then his wife died and he wrote "**Paradise Regained**".

During the Renaissance, **America** began. **Christopher Columbus** was a great navigator who discovered America while cursing about the Atlantic. His ships were called the Nina, the Pinta and the Santa Fe. Later, the **Pilgrims** crossed the Ocean, and this was known as **Pilgrims Progress**. When they landed at **Plymouth Rock**, they were greeted by the Indians, who came down the hill rolling their war hoops before them. The Indian squabs carried porpoises on their backs. Many of the Indian heroes were killed along with their cabooses, which proved very fatal to them. The winter of 1620 was a hard one for the settlers. Many people died and many babies were born. **Captain John Smith** was responsible for this.

One of the causes of the **Revolutionary Wars** was the English put tacks in their tea. Also the colonists would send their parcels through the post without stamps. During the War, the **Red Coats** and **Paul Revere** were throwing balls over stone walls. The dogs were barking and the peacocks were crowing. Finally, the colonists won the War and no longer had to pay for taxis.

Delegates from the original thirteen states formed the **Contended Congress**. **Thomas Jefferson** and **Benjamin Franklin** were two singers of the Declaration of Independence. Franklin had gone to Boston carrying all his clothes in his pocket and a loaf of bread under each arm. He invented electricity by **rubbing cats backwards** and declared "A horse divided against itself cannot stand." Franklin died in 1790 and is **still dead**.

**George Washington** married Martha Curtis and in due time became the Father of Our Country. Then the **Constitution of the United States** was adopted to secure domestic hostility. Under the Constitution, the people enjoyed the right to keep **bare arms**.

**Abraham Lincoln** became America's greatest Precedent. Lincoln's mother died in infancy, and he was born in a log cabin which he built with his own hands. When Lincoln became President he wore only a tall silk hat. He said, "In onion **there is strength**".

Abraham Lincoln wrote the Gettysburg Address while travelling from Washington to Gettysburg on the back of an envelope. He also freed the slaves by signing the **Emasculation Proclamation**, and the Frouteenth Clan would torcher and lynch the ex-Negroes and other innocent victims. It claimed it represented **law and odor**. On the night of April 14, 1965, Abraham Lincoln went to the theater and got shot in his seat by one of the actors in a moving picture show. The believed assassin was John Wilkes Booth, a supposedly insane actor. This **ruined Booth's career**.

"**Light of Life**", P.O. Box 966, Dickson, A.C.T. 2602.

Our thanks to "Light of Life" for these "Gems".

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# JOSEPH DARLING AND THE COMMONWEALTH POWERS BILL

by Reg. A. Watson

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**J**oseph "Jo" Darling was an exceptional man. His life is best remembered for his outstanding cricketing career — he captained Australia in 18 Tests.

An astute state politician, he led the campaign against the Commonwealth Powers Bill.

This Bill was brought in during the 1940s when it was blocked repeatedly, forcing it to go before the people in referenda. There it failed in August 1944.

The Commonwealth Powers Bill was an issue of State Rights which divided the community much the same way as the Franklin-below Gordon dam issue of later years.

Before we look at the part Joseph Darling played in this campaign it is worthwhile to review his earlier life.

He was born on November 21, 1870 at Glen Osmond, South Australia — his parents, John and Isabella had emigrated from Scotland in 1853 to South Australia. His father had many occupations such as miller, merchant and wheat farmer.

He also involved himself in local politics, becoming a member of the House of Assembly and the Legislative Council. No doubt he influenced his son in this regard.

Jo was educated at Prince Alfred College in Adelaide and on his 15th birthday he displayed his incredible cricket ability by scoring 252 runs against St Peters College. He batted for six hours.

At only 16 years of age he was elected to play for South Australia against the 1886 Australian XI.

When 23 years of age he married Alice Minna Blanche Francis from the Port Broughton district in South Australia.

Moving to Adelaide, he opened up a sports store in Rundle Street, and planned to devote much of his time to cricket. Previously he spent 12 months at an agricultural college, followed by working in a bank then a period where he managed his family's farms.

Jo was selected to play in various interstate matches (or then, intercolonial) and in 1894 A.E. Stoddard's English team arrived in Australia, which he played against for South Australia.



*Joseph "Jo" Darling  
"The Federal Government  
had too much power already."*

Jo was to eventually captain Australia in no fewer than 18 test matches against England — a record. He played 31 test matches against England and scored 1632 runs. He visited England in 1896, 1899, 1902 and 1905. He headed the Australian XI's batting average for four years (1896-99). In 1899, 1902 and 1905 he captained Australia. In addition he was captain for three of the five tests in Australia in the season 1901-1902.

He eventually quit cricket, because he said it was not fair on his wife and children and brought a sheep farm in the Tasmanian midlands, Stonehenge, which was purchased for him by his father. Later he sold his Adelaide sports store.

His distinctions while a pastoralist were numerous. He pioneered the eradication of rabbits which overran his and other properties. He took a leading part in the Tasmanian Farmers Stockowners and Orchardists' Association and was on the committee of the Royal Hobart Show

Council for over 25 years.

With South Australian merino rams he built up one of the best half-breed and comeback flocks in the state. His wool topped the Hobart sales on several occasions. In 1920 he introduced subterranean clover to Tasmania.

In 1919 he sold Stonehenge and brought a property, Claremont House, at Claremont, just north of Hobart City. He continued to take an interest in local cricket and with the persuasion of friends he became involved in State politics.

He was elected to the Legislative Council in May 1921, and served continuously till his death in 1946.

By late 1942, World War 2 was at its height, Japan was in the war and had some startling successes. The Australian mainland was threatened.

Canberra, through Prime Minister John Curtin and his Attorney-General Dr Evatt, believed that if Australia was to effectively fight the war, the States would have to surrender certain powers which could then be managed by the centralized government in Canberra.

The proposal was backed by all state premiers, including Tasmania's Cosgrove, who was only too willing to surrender these powers; and the Opposition Leader, Mr Henry Baker, supported the Bill. In their eagerness to pass these powers on, the State Minister for Agriculture Mr D'Alton hoped the Bill would be accepted without amendment and Sir Walter Lee for the Liberals said he was firmly convinced that the time had arrived to give the Commonwealth more power. He went on to say "they (the powers) should be given without reservation."

The Bill was called the Commonwealth Powers Bill, transferring to the Commonwealth, employment and unemployment, organized marketing of commodities, uniform company legislation, trusts, combines and monopolies, profiteering and prices, the production (other than primary production) and distribution of goods, and with the consent of the Governor, primary production, but in such a way there would be no discrimination between states; control of overseas exchange and



investment and the regulation of the raising of money in accordance with plans approved by the Loans Council; air transport, uniformity of railway gauges, national works in co-operation with the states, family allowances and aborigines.

The Leader of the Opposition said that the powers would expire automatically after five years or when the war ended, so that the powers were given only on probation.

"If used wisely," he said, "they might be given permanently." This is a Liberal leader eagerly handing the power to a federal Labor Government. Sir Walter Lee added, "No state would dare take away the powers after the expiration of the five year period." Once gone, in other words, they were gone forever.

The only opposition came from Tasmania, in particular from the Chamber of Commerce. The Premier was upset and said: "If I were to receive 100 letters from all the Chambers of Commerce in all Christendom, it would not make the slightest difference."

On December 16, 1942, the Commonwealth Powers Bill, with one dissenter — Mr Ockerby — passed the House of Assembly in Tasmania. It was presented to the Legislative Council but was rejected by 10 votes to 6. Its most vocal opponent was Jo Darling who now carried the letters CBE after his name. His objection was that the states could suffer permanent damage and stated that only the people had the right to change the Constitution and it was not the right of Parliament to do so.

Mr Ockerby MLA stated in reference to his fellow parliamentarians, "Dr Evatt and comrades Ward and Dedman had beautifully put it over the lambs."

Darling's stand was endorsed by Sir John McPhee and Darling's fellow cricketer, C.J. Eddy.

In January 1943, a second reading of the Bill was presented to the House of Assembly. The State Attorney-General, Mr McDonald, thundered, "The Commonwealth could not be hamstrung by restrictions in the Constitution. The Bill gave power to the Commonwealth for a limited time."

Mr Lillico L.C. charged that these powers were "vague" and it was not necessary to transfer them.

"The Federal Government had too much power already," Jo said.

The fear remained that if the Commonwealth got those powers there would be a destruction of "individuality, incentive and independence." (Lillico)

The Assembly passed it again.

Determined to see it pass the Upper House, the Premier of Tasmania took the unusual step of addressing the Legislative Council with the help of Mr Baker, the Opposition Leader.

Endeavouring to win favour with the Council, Premier Cosgrove promised an

amendment that would render the Commonwealth Powers Bill nugatory if it was found that the limit of five years was ineffective. Sensing the timing, a move was made to defer the Bill for another occasion.

Jo rose: "The Government," he said, "wanted the Bill rushed through in a night last December. Now it has made a complete somersault. It knew that if a vote were taken at the moment it would be defeated."

"The delay was a matter of tactics."

There were further rumblings of concern from Western Australia and in the House of Assembly in Hobart, Sir Walter Lee attacked the government's strategy. Opponents of the Bill were described by the government as "preparing to sacrifice the interest of the state."

There was vigorous debate in the Council.

On February 3, 1943, the Bill was again rejected by the Upper House by 10 votes to 7. In the opinion of Jo the state would not recover its lost power if it went through.

According to Premier Cosgrove, unless the Federal Government was given power over employment and unemployment a depression could be expected after the war. He said this before the reintroduction of yet another Commonwealth Powers Bill.

"The possibility of a depression was a danger I want to overcome by giving powers to the Commonwealth for a period," he is quoted in the Mercury (daily newspaper) as having said.

Knowing of Jo's opposition to the Bill, Dr Evatt wrote to him personally. It read:

"Dear Mr Darling... When I was a boy I saw you play cricket and was a great admirer of yours. Your name as a sportsman was well known throughout Australia, so continue to be a good sport and vote for the Bill."

Jo's son was to write: "This letter was like a 'red rag to a bull' as father disliked flattery. When he received the letter he showed it to me remarking that he thought Dr Evatt's aim was to become Prime Minister and a dictator."

Jo said of Evatt's letter "I regard this as an insult. He started off to flatter me for all I was worth and then said, 'change your vote old chap'."

For a third time, the Bill was passed in the Assembly on April 14, 1943. Finally, the opposition was forced to rethink its position. The leader said it was advisable for the government to drop the measure. Baker said the Council had shut the door firmly on the Bill and if the Commonwealth desired the powers it should submit a Bill to the Federal Parliament for a referendum of the electors of Australia.

On May 26, 1943, it was again resubmitted to the Council and again it was 'killed' by 8 votes to 6. The call for a referendum for the people to decide now

became stronger than ever. Opposition was mounting; only two states had passed the Bill unchanged, one had passed it conditionally and two had mutilated it.

In April 1944, the Premier again announced that the Bill would be reintroduced for the fourth time. Tasmania was clearly a thorn in the Federal Governments side. To help their case along Dr Evatt journeyed to Hobart to be entertained at lunch.

Evatt made no bones about it. The Bill had to go through to avoid a general upset at a referendum. While in Hobart he made himself available to discuss the Bill with those who opposed it. The Premier announced that it would be introduced in the Legislative Council, but it was becoming abundantly clear to Evatt that there was little prospect of the government securing a sufficient swing for the Bill to be passed.

Lillico and Darling both voiced the opinion that Evatt said nothing new. Jo stated that he had not wavered in his opposition.

The Bill was a failure. It eventually went to the people as the "Fourteen Powers or Fourteen Points" Referendum. It obtained a majority in two states, W.A. and S.A., and an overall minority of 342,018.

Jo was of course delighted, and his campaigning continued on other matters. In 1945 he brought charges of corruption in the administration of the Tasmanian Forestry Department, but died before the inquiry started. He staked his political existence on his sweeping indictment and although some of his counts failed, others were established to the satisfaction of Mr Justice Kirby of N.S.W. who headed the Royal Commission.

Aged 75 years Jo developed gallstones and peritonitis occurred. He died after an operation on January 2, 1946. He is buried at Cornelian Bay, Hobart.

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LET'S KEEP  
THEM!



OUR FLAG

OUR HERITAGE

OUR FREEDOM

## LETTERS

Dear Mrs Luks,

Your first edition of "Heritage" was excellent! I hope you were pleased with it.

I am enclosing a copy of the programme for Sydney's Anzac Dawn Service. I went this year, as we were in Sydney, and it was extremely good. Martin Place was absolutely packed, with people blocking George and Pitt Streets as well. The impressive thing about it was that the vast majority were young people. There was a huge contingent of Scouts and Guides, who laid a wreath.

I did not know its origins, I had assumed that it was an official function, since the Forces were also involved. However, the back page of the programme sets out the history of the Service. It is clear that it just grew organically, and the spirit of that Service simply confirms it. It would have been utterly impossible for a public servant to have organised that memorial Service. It seemed to me that it was just the expression of how Australians regard their Anzac traditions.

Regards,

David Thompson  
Robertson, N.S.W.

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### THE DAWN SERVICE ANZAC DAY SYDNEY

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Wending their way home after an Anzac Eve function in the early hours of Anzac Day 1927, five members of the Australian Legion of Ex-Service Clubs observed an elderly woman laying a sheaf of flowers on the Cenotaph. One of them asked the woman if she would allow them to join her in her tribute and they all bowed their heads in silent prayer.

At a subsequent meeting of the Legion, it was decided that a Wreath Laying Ceremony would take place at the Sydney Cenotaph at Dawn every Anzac Day.

Very little publicity was accorded that first simple ceremony, however, in 1928, about 150 people were present. The following year, 1929, an open invitation brought 250 and prayers by Dean Talbot and Bugle calls were added.

In 1930, representatives of the Federal and State Governments and more than 1000 attended. The State Governor of the day, Sir Phillip Game, began what was to become almost a Vice Regal duty when he attended in 1931. Another first that year was the provision of special trams, trains and buses, which greatly increased the public participation.

The Service continued to grow and in 1933 representatives of the Battalions of the 3rd Brigade who were the first troops

to land on the shore at Gallipoli, 9th Bn. (Qld), 10th Bn. (S.A.), 11th Bn. (W.A.), 12th Bn. (Tas), were invited to attend and that year the attendance was more than 8000.

1935, the 20th Anniversary of Anzac, was one of the biggest to that time when 10,000 attended and in 1939 with the threat of another war imminent, 20,000 were there. During the W.W.II years large gatherings were not encouraged, but the Dawn Service was still carried on.

From 1946 and into the sixties the numbers continued to grow as people sought to honour the dead of that terrible conflict.

The St. John Ambulance Brigade have always attended the Dawn Service, dealing with any emergencies arising. The Sydney Male Choir have been attending since 1930, which year also saw the commencement of the radio broadcast from Martin Place. Mr Frank Grose, known by all as "Uncle" Frank, being the announcer then and continually till 1969, when on his retirement, Mr Howard Craven succeeded him and is still serving. Several Trumpeters have performed over the years, but none so long as Mr Adam Martin who served for 19 years. The Lakemba Caledonian Pipe Band has also served since 1930. A special tribute should be paid to the Guide and Scouting Movement for their assistance.

Since 1986, when the Royal Australian Navy celebrated their 75th Anniversary, the Sydney Dawn Service has been placed on the agenda of the Tri-Services Ceremonial Committee and each year in rotation, one of the Defence Forces provide a Band and Guard which has added to the solemnity of the service.

Naturally, as founders and organisers of the Service, the Clubs and members of the

Australian Legion of Ex-Service Clubs have been strong supporters. The returned Nurses, War Widows, Legacy and the R.S.L. are always well represented, as are Federal, State and Civic leaders. The State Governor is the Patron in Chief of the Legion during his term of office. To all who have helped over the years, all say, "Thank you very much."

Dear Mr Nixon,

On your retirement as Editor, allow me to express my appreciation of the sentiments expressed in "Heritage" over the last eight years. The Society is performing a very important function in endeavouring to make Australian citizens appreciate the significance of our links with Britain, and the debt we owe to our fore-bears. The attention given to the associated importance of religious conviction is also praiseworthy.

It is sad that so much of the good material you have published is read mainly by the "converted". I have failed to arouse in my own children the "empirical" fervour which is so much part of my make-up.

With best wishes for a happy retirement.

Yours sincerely,

Laurie Snook



## YE THAT HAVE FAITH

*Ye that have faith to look with fearless eyes  
Beyond the tragedy of a world at strife,  
And know that out of death and night shall rise  
The dawn of ampler life,*

*Rejoice whatever anguish rend the heart,  
That God has given you a priceless dower,  
To live in these great times and have your part  
In Freedom's crowning hour,*

*That ye may tell your sons who see the light  
High in the heavens — their heritage to take —  
"I saw the powers of Darkness put to flight,  
I saw the morning break,"*

Lines found pencilled on a sheet of paper in the pocket of a young Australian who died in the trenches at Gallipoli.

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# BOOK REVIEW

by Dawn Thompson & Dan O'Donnell

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## THE MERRY BRONHILL

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An autobiography by June Bronhill



Little June Gough came of humble beginnings in one of Australia's outposts, and her wonderful contribution to the world of music is the result of the spirit, determination and "cheek" of this child of the out-back, who began singing at the age of three.

Her story pays full tribute to her stable loving home life, rich in encouragement and support from parents, family, friends and teachers. The people of her city, Broken Hill, raised £1500 to augment her Sun Aria prize money to launch her singing career and in gratitude she changed her name to Bronhill, approximating the name of the Silver City she loved, and which was so proud of her.

Miss Bronhill writes her autobiography in a chatty manner, just as she would talk, recounting little incidents of her childhood, family, friends and learning experiences, and moves from early days in Broken Hill and Robe, South Australia, to Sydney, and London, where she studied and worked hard. Predictably, her narrative abounds in superlatives, giving it a true theatrical

touch!

Joining Sadler's Wells Opera Company, she became their principal singer for many years, and her story is full of reminiscences of the performances and associates, audiences and players. Many people both humble and famous became her friends, and with her inimitable and irrepressible sense of humour — directed against herself, as often as not — she recounts so many stories of life behind the scenes, on tour, performing in all sorts of media from opera, operetta, music-hall clubs, plays — even to guest appearance on television in low comedy. A true trouper, she ventured into every avenue, and also travelled widely performing in New York and New Zealand as well as Britain and Australia.

It is not all superlatives, however. Her life of course held disappointments and sorrows, one being that she would have enjoyed a larger family, but derived much joy from her daughter. She would also have liked to sing more extensively in America, but she does not dwell on the darker moments of her life. It is, in fact, a remarkably happy story, with no hints of jealousies or cattiness.

In 1976, at the age of forty-eight, she decided to come home and settle in Australia, but continues to pursue her career, taking time recently to set down this delightful, funny — if at time outrageous story of her fantastic life as an international celebrity.

The book's title comes of course from one of the roles in which June was outstandingly successful, *The Merry Widow*, which, in fact, retrieved the fortunes of the Sadler's Wells Company at that time.

**A light, entertaining, extremely readable book, which gives an authentic picture of the life and times of one of Australia's "greats", it was published in 1987 by Methuen Haynes, and is available from booksellers for \$25.00 plus postage.**

### Correction please:

The price of the new edition of "Never a Dull" (reviewed in *Heritage* No.56) is \$19.95 posted within Australia from Ausbooks, Box 59, Camperdown, Vic, 3260.

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## IN THE TRACKS OF THE CAMELMEN

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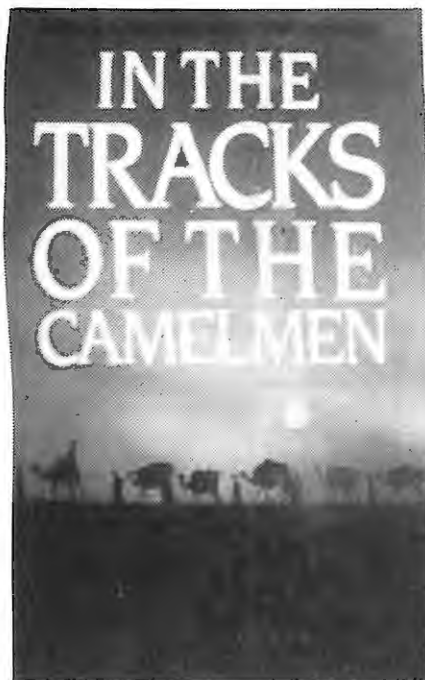
by Pamela Raikowski

The horse is a well-loved symbol of early pioneering in Australia, and the bullock team has a firm place in our history, but how many realize how much the camel contributed to progress in early times?

This is the first book written in recognition of our indebtedness to camels, and Pamela Raikowski has researched widely to bring together a history of this era. She begins with the origins of the camel in Northern India, and the camelmens, some of whom were Afghans and some from other Indian states though they were mostly known as Afghans, or "Ghans". Although British subjects, as at that time the Empire extended throughout India, the camelmens were mostly Moslem or Sikhs: a race apart from the predominantly European majority, and with quite different religion, customs and habits. Not permitted to bring in their wives and families, many of them intermarried with the Aborigines, with whom they generally got on quite well.

The harsh interior of Australia proved too difficult in many cases for the usual beasts of burden when in the mid-nineteenth century many daring men were pushing out the boundaries of civilization. The early explorers included camels in their forays into the unknown. The Burke and Wills expedition in 1860 had a contingent of camels and their attendants in their successful journey from Melbourne to the Gulf of Carpentaria, as did Edward John Eyre's east — west journey, and many others traversing arid country.

Settlers taking up far outback land realized the need for transport for stores and goods in, and produce out, of their holdings. Thomas Elder and Samuel Stuckey were two who helped make camels popular in these regions, and by the 1890s throughout the whole of the arid interior teams of camels and their Afghan attendants were in great demand to carry in stores, building and mining materials, machinery — anything required to run



The dust-cover of this book shows the vivid inland colour, traversed by a string of laden camels and their attendants — most evocative of the atmosphere of its contents.

Published by Angus and Robertson, it is available from booksellers for \$39.95 plus postage.

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### LEAVES FROM THE PENINSULA

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Back in the hazy past as a young lad of 13, I first read "We of the Never Never", the Australian classic on outback life by Mrs Aeneas Gunn whose images of deprivation and hardship, endured with such marvellous good cheer by our pioneers, moved me deeply. The very style, unforced and unpretentious befitting the man-on-the-land, enhanced the sheer magnitude of the achievements of battlers prepared to face the cruel isolation and excruciating loneliness in quest of their own destiny. In short, it was an heroic book about ordinary Australians, whose actual record, in face of relentless adversity, identified them as superior human beings. My most enduring recollection of the book, however, is of the authoress herself, the very embodiment of the woman of the outback: gutsy, unshakeably loyal, an unfathomable reservoir of skills, and terrific mate. Now, forty-five years on, I have read a worthy sequel about our pioneers and their unsung contributions to this land of ours: **LEAVES FROM THE PENINSULA** by Lennie Wallace. It, too, is a classic, its poignancy tugging at the heartstrings, and its account of the cattle industry in Cape country in the 1950s a valuable contribution to the history of both the cattle industry and the Cape York Peninsula.

**Leaves from the Peninsula** (just published in 1990 by Pinevale Publications, Mareeba, North Queensland) begins in 1950 with Lennie's arrival in the far north of Queensland. Born Lenore Waddell, daughter of a Government official — a Coroner — Lenny arrived in Cooktown after a sheltered life at Nanango, Goondiwindi, Tully, Roma, Injune, Kingaroy, and Bundaberg, having been educated at Brisbane Girls' Grammar School. Now, barely out of her teens, she fell instantly in love with the empty, roadless, harsh and demanding Cape Country, the setting for her autobiographical sketches of Queensland's last frontier. Almost immediately she immersed herself in the cattle industry of which she is today an integral part.

Not well known—certainly no clue is betrayed in her self-effacing account of the early vicissitudes of the cattle business — is the fundamentally crucial role of Lenny herself (and other women who tirelessly backstopped for their menfolk) in this unbelievably demanding life that puts meat on city tables. From 1976 when the Cattlemen's Union seceded from the United Graziers' Association, Lennie Wallace herself, mere female, has played a leading role in this vitally important organisation. Lennie was actually there voting at the critical meeting which was determined to give cattlemen a more public profile and which saw Rick Farley installed as inaugural Secretary. As Australia now knows, Rick (formerly Research Officer for Federal Member Dr. Everingham) was able to bring the plight of cattlemen to public attention when both the U.G.A. and the National Party had failed lamentably to do so.

It is instructive to examine the impact of the youthful Cattlemen's Union of which Lennie Wallace has been a State Councillor since 1977. Queensland cattle-

stations, mines or townships. The outward loads were often bales of wool or sheep skins, or ores. At the height of their usefulness, up to 2,000 camels were operating out of the South Australian town of Oodnadatta alone. Camels carried the wire, insulators and steel poles, and workmen's provisions for the building of the North — South telegraph line, linking Australia with Europe. It was a mammoth undertaking over 1,800 miles of trackless and waterless country.

Even after the railways began to penetrate outback, the camel teams worked out from sidings and railheads. The internal combustion engine finally spelt the decline and final demise of this splendid era of service, at some time between the Great Wars. Sadly, a great many camels were shot as vermin, using precious food and water, but many escaped to roam free in the arid areas they had served so well. Ironically, Middle East countries now import the descendants of these hardy beasts from Australia as superior racing and freight animals.

The author has sought out and interviewed a great many descendants of these camelmen, and their stories make very interesting reading. Outback life was never easy, certainly not for those of alien race and culture who faithfully retained their customs and religious duties. They built their own Ghan towns on the outskirts of European settlements, constructed their mosques, appointed their holy men, kept their women secluded, and passed on their culture to their children.

Pamela Raikowski, born in Horsham, and now a teacher in Adelaide, is to be congratulated on presenting this facet of our history in such an entertaining manner, and no doubt her forthcoming biography of the descendant of an Afghan camelman will also be worthwhile.



*Lennie Wallace with her favourite stock horse, Ranger.*





*Bush girls of Cape York Peninsula, 1955 — Shirley Porter, Lennie Wallace (author) and the late Ruth Wallace.*

men demonstrate their own impeccable standards in retaining, year after year, a person who has served the most rigorous apprenticeship in every aspect of the cattle industry: ringer, drover, tailer, horse-breaker, breeder, cook, leather-craftsman. And, in the course of doing a man's job in Marlboro Country, being full-time wife and mother-of-five at the same time. Indeed, she knows the industry intimately from the perspective of both cattlegirl and cattlemaster, enduring the cruel deprivation and hardship of mother and wife alone for weeks on end, and the harsh rigour of the ringer's lot, while the nation waxed fat on the wealth they created. Their rewards, until the Cattlemen's Union became vocal: no roads to drive their herds to market; appallingly antiquated communication systems; the most primitive of medical services; and dispiriting and frustrating education facilities for their children. Lennie's book touches fleetingly on all of these, from the perspective of ringer, young wife, mother, and station owner. Her duties and loyalties, always selfless but often in conflict, centred on her "mate", the much-loved husband Bill Wallace and his dreams of their own place. Witness, for example, the conflict for the young wife, just reunited with her firstborn after weeks on the three-hundred mile trail from Coen to

Mareeba on receiving a desperate plea from husband Bill:

*"Joyce will mind Nancy at Butcher Hill. Short-handed. Blight and footrot bad. Swam the river five times between Laura and the block. Leaving Molly and your saddle at Maitland. Hurry.*

*Your loving mate."*

Bill and his undermanned team, including Lennie, had set out from Coen with 1200 head, encountering the full gamut of obstacles, including drought, flood, blight, footrot, and three-day sickness. Within minutes, Lennie was headed back to help her mate.

**Leaves from the Peninsula** covers Lennie's first decade in cattle-growing in the Cape, 1950-1960, when Cape York was indeed the unknown frontier of our nation, but it is a moot point whether the lot of cattlemen has improved all that much. Synthetic improvements yes, but massive scope for bringing the Cape into the modern world, or at the very least, acknowledging the contribution of men and women of the outback. Lennie, ever gentle even in her criticism, occasionally allows a wryly ironic aside on how distant Brisbane treats the outback:

*"The Laura-Cooktown railway line had a 'new' rail motor. That meant a second-hand cast off by some more up-to-date*

*line but of a slightly later vintage than the old 'Leaping Lena'."*

At least it was an improvement on its predecessor, in which "the only glass in the windows seemed to be the windscreen in front of the driver." On one typical trip, Lennie, clad in "riding clothes, boots, leggings, a ten-gallon hat and a raincoat" had arrived in Cooktown drenched, even in the rail motor. The question begged by Lennie's book, as relevant today as in the 1950s is, does Brisbane really comprehend the huge sacrifices made by those on the remote frontier? More to the point, does the populous south-east corner of Queensland care what happens in the Far North? Perhaps we need another state or two in place of the present massively-unwieldy administrative unit called Queensland.

But back to the book! Almost straight from Brisbane Girls' Grammar School, Lennie went with her hosom buddy, Ruth Wallace, to Butcher's Hill, some fifty miles inland from Cooktown, the property owned and run by Ruth's father. Her job? Station-hand or Ringer, the designation "jillaroo" spurned by independent-minded women whose contribution to station life was equally important, often identical, to that of male musterers. Not that there weren't distinctive female roles, as well. Lennie and Ruth repaired the gear:

## RICE IN THE WEEVILS

by Iris Wallace

This is an unpretentious little gem written by a sister-in-law of Lennie Wallace, whose 'Leaves from the Peninsular' is reviewed here, and makes an interesting companion volume.

Iris's pioneering adventure began some four years later than Lennie's, and this account is simply some of the highlights, and low spots, of day-to-day living under conditions most of us find hard to imagine.

Their Cape York property in Northern Queensland was 100 miles from the nearest tiny township of Coen, and 60 miles from the nearest neighbours, missionaries to the Aborigines at Weipa, long before the bauxite boom. The isolation was compounded by floods in the wet season rendering the roads impassable, sometimes for up to six months at a time. Add to this no phone, no radio and no Flying Doctor — now that is isolation! And all this less than fifty years ago.

Iris was pregnant when she and her husband and two small boys aged four and five took up the station, with its staff of blacks. The house was extremely basic and facilities non-existent, but in reading Iris's account, just a matter-of-fact description of settling in and getting used to it all, one almost loses sight of what a heart-breaking task it must have been.

However, in the stout-hearted style of a true pioneer, Iris kept her sense of humour to the fore, and coped with everything, making even the near-tragic seem humorous in retrospect.

She tells of life with the Aboriginal staff, the wild-life in the form of insects, snakes, wild pigs, horses and cattle; the loneliness and longing for the company of a white woman. Her description of the work of the station, the very occasional visitors, bush races, and a great treat — a trip to town — vividly brings to life an era long gone.

One hilarious incident concerns Iris's attempt to clean up an infestation of hookworm in both blacks and whites. Firstly she attempted to explain delicately to the natives the collecting of the faeces samples — quite a wasted effort! And then when she dispensed the treatment, the piccannies for some reason all collapsed, to everyone's consternation. But all's well that ends well, and all survived.

The title is a wry comment on the condition of the stores when arrival of fresh supplies was delayed — not only were weevils in the rice, it became a degree worse!

This is only a small book of 55 pages, but alive with incident describing a human contribution to Australian history that deserves to be widely enjoyed.

A paper-back, it is published by Pinevale Publications and printed by The Cairns Post Pty Ltd, Cairns, North Queensland, 4870 and priced at \$5.00.

## LEAVES FROM THE PENINSULA

by Lennie Wallace



making straps, hammering rivets into broken bits of leatherwork, and making saddlebags. And there was always the cooking.

Within a year, Lennie had married Ruth's brother Bill, becoming a permanent part of the cattle business, settling first at Butcher's Hill, a "small" run of some 350 square miles west of Cooktown. At the time of Lennie's arrival in 1950, the property ran Herefords mainly, with a dash of Zebus, the cross-breeding proving highly successful, and the saleyards at Mareeba a mere 17 or 18 days' drive across the Byerstown Range. Race Week at Laura was the social highlight of the year, Lennie's faithful portrayal a sociological insight into rural Australia in the 1950s. Take, for example:

*"Every evening after we had eaten it was customary to dress in our fanciest clothes (it was the only chance we had of showing them off) and to wend our way through the antbeds and the Pub's milking cows to the hotel verandah. Once there it was a case of ladies to the Right and Gents to the Left, to which latter direction lay the bar."*

The dominant topic of conversation was horses, after all, it was the equivalent of the local Melbourne Cup, especially for the ringers with "cattle re-mustered, bulls re-thrown, and buckjumpers re-ridden." Lennie tosses in a gentle sally at the arbitrary and artificial division between the sexes in the ritual of rounds:

*"All exciting stuff and well worth the price we had to pay of drinking endless glasses of sarsaparilla offered to us as each new round of drinks was ordered."*

The laconic sense of humour of the

North Queenslander pervades the book, a conspicuous absence of self-pitying and self-importance denoting the breed. Note the incident when the cattle-buyer in his newfangled "horseless carriage" slammed his car door. Startled, Lennie's horse, Ranger, reared up and bolted. Some time later, she met the buyer's wife and the incident was recalled:

*"Remember that day we met you? The kids were thrilled to bits. You were their first real live cowgirl."*

*I shifted Nancy to the other hip, changed my string bag to the other hand, disentangled Johnnie from my skirts and smirked.*

*'And when you made your horse rear up for them before you galloped away, they went wild. We heard nothing but you for weeks.'*

*Leaves from the Peninsula* spans the decade of the 1950s, but it marks but the beginning of Lennie Wallace's connection with the cattle industry. After establishing a number of properties of their own Lennie and Bill today reside at Newburgh Station, north of Pentland in Charters Towers country. Sadly, her crusading for the cattle industry is by no means over since the Pentland Meatworks has just closed down. Across the State, similar obstacles have been placed in the way of cattlemen with the closure of abattoirs at Mt. Isa, Mareeba and Cairns. What a great tragedy our politicians cannot find time to read *Leaves from the Peninsula*. It is easily procurable from the authoress herself, or Pinevale Publications at Mareeba, or any office of the Flying Doctor Service. The cost? A trifling \$13 (postage included) for a very moving glimpse of recent history.



## WHY DO PEOPLE OBEY THE LAW?

*The people do not obey the law because they are commanded to do so; nor because they are afraid of sanctions or of being punished. They obey the law because they know it is a thing they ought to do. There are of course some wicked persons who do not recognise it to be their duty to obey the law: and for them sanctions and punishment must be inflicted. But this does not alter the fact that the great majority of the people obey the law simply because they recognise it to be obligatory on them. They recognise that they are under a moral obligation to obey it. For this reason, it is most important that the law should be just. People will respect rules of law which are intrinsically right and just, and will expect their neighbours to obey them, as well of course as obeying the rules themselves: but they will not feel the same about rules which are unrighteous or unjust. If people are to feel a sense of obligation to the law, then the law must correspond, as near as may be, with justice.*

***Lord Denning: The Family Story***