

I am a migration agent and have been working on an essay for some months, so some of the content is now dated due to the

the release of the report as to the future of water. Also the comments of John Stone, and those of Professor Andrew Fraser and others who are now questioning the concept of multiculturalism following 7/7.

My view derives from the famous observation of Joseph Stalin , " one death is a tragedy, a million is a statistic". So the sympathetics see the tragedy, but the reality is there are so many they become statistics.

We worry about the individuals, but what about the ten thousand fold left behind? Hence my view is we should save the money for Baxter etc, opt out of the Refugee convention and spend the \$1 billion I would assume we are spending on the whole area of refugee and humanitarian aid in country . Did we really care about Rwanda, and there are still millions of Afghanis in Pakistan and elsewhere?

We should be sending aid and to countries in need. More value for the \$ Our program is but tokenism.

But please note my essay is a work in progress, but may have some interesting thoughts. And I am willing to comment further on any issues.

Yours Sincerely

Harold Jones

MIGRATION AND THE MYSTERY TARGET?

My Father was illiterate, but like most illiterate people developed a naïve shrewdness to compensate. When he was about 12 years old he went as a stable-boy to Calcutta with a shipment of Indian Army remounts, this was around 1912. He told the story of how he and other stable boys bought bananas and amused themselves by throwing at the beggars from their hotel balcony (Note 12) . So he brought back some what we may see as simplistic truisms. That too many people leads to poverty, and poverty leads to beggars. In Melbourne, recently, on a bright sunny day I was, whilst walking, approached by three beggars. So by my Father's simple reasoning we have too many people. And we are a country of poverty.

The writer has also noted the following in recent years :

{I have been writing for some time, as often happens there is now a crescendo of media reports on water issues. But none canvas the issue of reducing population}

Firstly, in WA they are building a desalination plant, talking of a channel to bring water to Perth from the North, and so water supply is a concern,

Secondly, the Weather Bureau has issued a statement advising that the Westerlies have moved South, the reason for the recent decline in Perth's rainfall. Adelaide and Melbourne are also affected by this movement which, may, or may not be a permanent shift. If so how does this impact on the Murray? People are also concerned in Canberra and greater NSW. And of course the Wimmera has had 8 straight years of drought, is this due to the Westerlies sliding southwards? If so, does this mean this area is finished as to cereal production apart from wool? There are also drought problems in NSW and I do not know if this arises from the shift of the Westerlies.

Thirdly, whilst we had a temporary political party at one election which opposed migration a recent article in a magazine stated that most Australians were against further migration, no discussion as to the basis of this thought, is this true(?) ;

Fourthly: in the same magazine a writer said we have no problem of over-population, look at Bangladesh (see note 11). A simple response and indicates he has not visited Bangladesh. In 2004 the statistics for Bangladesh are \$400 pa GNP per person whilst Australia's is \$21000, to meet Paul Keating's warning as to a Banana

Republic then to meet the Bangladesh target would be a severe test for Australian Government's.

Fifthly, in "The future Eaters" Tim Flannery gave his opinion that Australia's sustainable population is 10 million. I have heard other Scientists support this view but again, are there worked models? What are the thinking/assumptions? Why ten million? Why do we ignore these Scientists?

Sixthly, the writer once read a book where it was noted that the Barr Smith family of South Australia gained its wealth around the 1880's from supplying remounts to the Indian Army. Hence my Father's job. This was on country that only sheep can now live on. So as Tim Flannery notes human beings have had major impacts on the ecology of Australia.(both the earlier settlers and those from 1788) Do policy makers need a ecological atlas to give reference points for the Australian continent at say 1788, 1888, 1988 and say 2038 so we can see the impact of settlement? From my historical reading the outback seemed wetter and had a far larger population a century ago than now, but what are the factors apart from the mechanization of agriculture, railways etc.

We are now as a nation around 20 million, so if Tim Flannery and many in the scientific community are right, we should be ceasing a large migration program and encouraging people to move overseas. But we have a blip at the moment as to the labour market. If 10 million is a good target then continuing as we are will make the adjustment much more painful, and inter-generational issues need to be looked at. As a grandfather I am concerned my descendents do not live to appreciate (?) the living standards that are now the norm in Bangladesh.

The writer is an armchair economist/historian, but considers himself well read. If he can select the conflicting comments as above, and there are many he has forgot, and many still being made, then a good question is why we have failed to develop a population policy? . (I am not an academic and in still working cannot afford the luxury of seeking references held in the memory, so please, for the academics etc accept my imperfections)

So if I may be brave, my random and wandering thoughts are as follows before reaching some conclusions. These random comments are to reinforce the need for a population target. My thoughts must be random, undoubtedly a population policy is inextricably linked to an education policy, an incomes policy, an employment policy, a

conservation policy, an ecological policy etc. So I will throw in thoughts which arise from being an Accountant, Public Servant and Migration Agent and are necessarily skewed. In the past I have been quixotic, (see under), but now some 70+ years of age, concerned for the future of my country, why not one last tilt?

As a migration agent I promised some comments to my peers, I do not think this is what they expected, but we need a strong debate. So accept that what follows is only to provoke thought, but hopefully others will help move forward.

1 The obvious, it is a complex problem

Being complex I think we hide from the issue and we return to who has the time to sit down and join so many streams of inquiry into a whole. As often noted our Parliamentarians are very busy people, no time to research complex matters. They attend to the squeaking wheel. But as a people leaving a problem only exacerbates the eventual unhappy result if the answer is not greasing but to build a new wheel. When I was a young Accountant around 1956 I recall my tax Lecturer prophesying that the Tax Act at 300 pages was too complex and would shortly be revised, its now I understand nearly 10000 pages (Note 7) . I think we should now pick say 21 million and ensure we stop migration when we think this figure will be reached according to the demographic projections. But see my summing up. My simple thought is we should share Australia with the animals , birds, bees, trees etc and I would like to see 50% of our land (both the good and the bad however we define) returned to wilderness, with such a policy what should the population be? But I think we need a conservation policy which recognizes the rights of other species. We are undoubtedly arrogant in our land use, but choose to ignore this fact. Perhaps 10 million is still too many?

2 Let's ask the people

The writer who thought most were against migration has a point. We are talking up migration because of the low birth rate. The writer knows of some 30+year old women who have said they will not have children as they feel the environmental problems are just too hazardous and unknown to bring children into the world. Magazine articles describe the lifestyles of DINKS, people are making choices not to have children and are we recognizing those choices socially that people are choosing not to have

children. . If these people have concerns as to having children, and they are the generation prior to today's leaders, then are the leaders listening? As follows they have a different mindset. And are their thoughts closer to reality? We have this furphy of the "Mandate", but what does the population really think? Others have pointed out we need more voting flexibility to indicate the concerns of the majority (as the USA) so people can vote individually on major issues, or at least give an indication. And O'K we have an ageing problem, but with water shortages would we be better of coping as best we can rather than increasing the population.

3 **Populate or Perish and the MEME**

The writer grew up in the Menzies era {The Yellow peril etc.}, married and our marriage was blessed with 5 children. Growing up today I would probably marry, but have no children. I consider the current Government and the Opposition are prisoners of a mindset which is out of date. Historically we know that a publicly perceived wisdom changes slowly. Gailbraith talked of the conventional wisdom, I do not know where it overlaps with what is called political correctness but there are many terms for what are the conventional/accepted beliefs. I see the US Senate has talked of "group think" to describe the mindset which stuck with the weapons of mass destruction hypothesis and dominate the thinking of the Intelligence Agencies. The old joke that military intelligence is an oxymoron? But a critical point, if the CIA with a budget of billions gets it wrong why are we any better with much more limited resources in our policy thinking. One recalls the failure to foresee the collapse of the "Evil Empire" with 40 years of intelligence gathering.

Thus accepted beliefs whether true or not dominate thinking. Whether these beliefs are or are not correct, creationists and flat earthers still exist. In 1976 Richard Dawkins coined the word memes "*A unit of cultural information, such as a cultural practice or idea, that is transmitted verbally or by repeated action from one mind to another.*" (Note 1)

It is now in dictionaries and is the partner to gene, being the genetically transmitted information between generations. Thus Dawkins and others see

us as influenced by both genes and memes in our development as individuals.

I will use this term in discussing some accepted beliefs. Do we have the time to allow memes to change?

4 **That we are a country of migration**

This is a major meme. We were so because other countries were full or whatever for practical purposes when Australia was seen as Terra Nullius and settled for the second time (See Flannery, could be 3rd etc) When will we be full? How does one define full in this context? As above history tells us that usually decision makers find out too late. Perhaps we hide from a population target because we do not wish to change our pre-conceptions. Or the meme is still dominant. But if you read "The Future Eaters" as to Easter Island and NZ, history re the collapses of the civilizations of the Tigris/Euphrates valley and other civilizations that have collapsed (Note 2), all over used or grew past the point of sustainability and destroyed/over-used the base that had allowed population growth. (See note 3 re Athens of the South). As Tim Flannery argues we have one of the world's most fragile environments. Thus the need for a buffer, do we have a buffer? The Tigris/Ephrates populations could move and as Toynbee proposed there has been continuous movement until recently in Asia as civilizations waxed and waned. Australia is landlocked, and with the deserts (our fertile land is not large) how mobile can we be? Do we need to keep a reserve for our neighbours? I saw a program on 4 Corners and the Maldives are sinking, the population of 350,000 is looking to Australia as a home. We know India, Sri Lanka and other surrounding countries do not want these people (they consider themselves full?), and what about the Pacific Islanders who have made noises of looking to Australia for re-settlement. If global warming is real (see note 4) . So adding another million or so to the social security budget is a frightening thought, as most of these people are unskilled.

I think the people of PNG are a potential refugee hazard and we are lucky that there has been so little movement.

We are a Rich Country

This is a major myth/meme. As Barry Jones pointed in 'The Future Eaters' around the year 1900 Australia had the world's highest GNP per person and with the vote for women and other innovations we were an exciting country. We are now an attractive country for migration; our luck is seen as continuing, but an exciting country?

See note 5 where I expand this issue.

POPULATION AND IMMIGRATION MATTERS

Some what I consider memes.

There has been much comment as to stateless persons and that we should extend help to people in detention. What we do not discuss is why other countries ignore these people. The 2/3 examples I know of were born of guest workers and births were not registered in the country of origin of the guest workers. These countries showed no compassion, WHY?

Simply in most cases they are full, or racial/religious issues arise etc, but these countries are recognizing a reality and as above how far away from this situation are we? Why should we accept other countries' problems, whilst DIMIA has been criticized as to these people lets really consider the refugee issue. There are simply too many people in the world.

Others have pointed out there are millions of true refugees and hundreds of millions of economic refugees in the world. Our program is but tokenism, if we really cared we should take a million a year of both. I think if we want to have a program for refugees we should offer temporary residence so they can have training at TAFE/University and then return with skills to their own country. In fact, if the money we used in settling refugees in our present program was used to send workers, materials, etc to such as Afghanistan I think the benefits would be more beneficial to those countries.

I have been told by several women of African origin who were admitted as refugees where in their tribe men did not work then they still do not work in

Australia. There is still the culture gap. They leave it to the women and as a result broken marriages and the men are often social security recipients. Some migrants regard Centrelink as a treasure chest. (Unfortunately so do many Australian born). Most of the refugees we allow in are unskilled, are they helping the Budget when we have unemployed/unskilled TCF workers on benefits. As I write we see strong moves being taken by European countries to stop people flows. Apart from China and its one child policy most countries observe religious values that support large families. O'K western counties such as ours are standstill, but prophets are forecasting several billion more before the world population stabilises. And we need to see in a world context. I would prefer to spend our refugee money in Africa in voluntarily providing condoms or to sterilize people to prevent the spread of AIDS and hopefully lift living standards by reducing the population, thus more resources for those living.

Who do we want?

Are we realistic enough and are we still blinded by multiculturalism?

We have stopped, possibly too late the Islander entry from NZ. Should we have moved sooner? A friend of the writer's was severely bashed and hospitalized by Islanders. His attitude to Maoris is unprintable. I know now he is opposed to multiculturalism. Can we blame him? As I write some Islanders have been arrested by NSW police for murdering a Sydney publican, most are unskilled. There are incidents at hotels where they are crowd controllers. But raises the point that were we selective enough? Islanders are a potentially explosive people. As a group how do they factor into the public safety budget compared to other groups. If an ethnic group incurs greater than average costs in the social budget then are they suitable migrants as taxation revenues are skewed to their favour. We need to relate crime statistics to country of descent, most migration agents would say which country would be number 1 if statistics were available.

Interestingly I cannot recall the exact quote but in the USA people of Jewish descent were 15% of the mentions in Who's Who with being less than 5% of the population. Similarly 50% of Melbourne's richest families are Jewish and

again they are 7% of Melbourne's population. A good reason to give extra points or place Jewish genes on the MODL.

We are in a current wave of attacking obesity and blaming junk food etc. It's not that simple. The writer recalls TB, Diphtheria, Polio and many other nasties that penicillin and its descendants stopped. This changes the gene pool when those who would have been culled are not (Note 6). As Dawkins notes there has been an increase of colour blindness in western populations, whereas still small in those who need to hunt. I think the same applies to Sickle Cell Anemia. And we do not know the reasons behind the Asthma epidemic. So I can see an argument to give priority to Bangladeshis who are a small people. But an ironic thought, through the success of DIMIA we have prevented TB entering Australia, but as above this success may have helped add to the obesity issue.

However Is corruption increasing in Australia? I feel the social contract is not as strong. As above we have allowed displaced TCF workers to sit on the dole and Canberra is making strong statements that too many people are working cash in hand and ripping off the system. But see it from their point of view, the system has failed them. We are again treating the result. There are so many issues hidden in this problem. But under our open door policy we are allowing migrants from societies that are corrupt; Bangladesh is no 2 in the world ranking of most corrupt countries. And cultural norms are not left at a quarantine station, and anecdotal evidence from other Agents is a cause for concern. As about 10 people from one country told me, we can lie at giving an affirmation as not the Koran, we are the selected race and Australians are inferior, so lying is O'K to Australians. And many people from this country do not pay their bills, why pay when you are the chosen people? So it is an arguable point that migration has reduced the level of morality in the Australian community. Many overseas students manage to run up credit card bills in the thousands before leaving Australia, I think the card companies have now woken up, but the Students I met who did this regarded as acceptable behavior. And we need only point to the scams as to IT guest workers where many of the initiators were of Indian descent. I rely on

anecdotal evidence but some of the scams as to forged documents were set up by recent arrivals.

As to the business program, if we are a rich country and also “Lucky”, why do we require business migrants? The record of Australian companies succeeding overseas is poor and we are only wall papering over our own failings. And again anecdotal evidence is that too many criminals have migrated as they have money, especially in the poor countries, can you be honest and rich? Why can't we grow our own entrepreneurs? O'K, we can point to the disasters of the Cain/Bannon etc. era, Governments cannot pick winners, but we still need to find winners, and will second-rate people from overseas be the answer ?

I have had over 100 People in my Office who have said, find me a good business and I will migrate. I have asked them to pay for my searching as I advise is at their risk. All disappear as they cannot find a good business to buy especially when they factor the competitive environment. I once knew an Australian entrepreneur with about 1 million in capital and it took him 3 years to find a good business to buy. But all of these people did not have a skill/technological edge.

We are a mature economy and we only need to look at the wasted investment in Ostriches, Emus, Grapes* (have been 3 cycles I think) , Olives , Films (Note 8) and other Tax driven schemes to know the capital is available, it's the ideas that are in short supply. How do we find ideas?

(* Its about 20 years ago when we had a vine pull scheme, looking like we a need another similar scheme to remove capacity)

Similarly I dislike the programs as to regions, our own people are moving out, why won't they move back? Again we recall the proposed programs of Whitlam as to de-centralization and we have done nothing since then to reverse the trend. Why think migration can correct what earlier policies or lack of did not. Reminds me of the movie “Field of Dreams “ build it and they will come, or perhaps a sophisticated example of cargo cult mentality.

Should we return to a White Australia policy? The writer knows some English migrants who saw the Brixton riots and are appalled at our policy of allowing

in all. I tend to agree, as at what point does a minority move from being accepted to being rejected by the majority. The history of the Jews, the Chinese in Indonesia, and riots in the UK, USA etc are all warning signs. We do not have ghettos in Australia, but when and where can they form?

I recently had a taxi driver who was a Architect from a middle Asian country who was still driving after migrating some 7 years ago. He will never get a job as an Architect as he is unemployable in this field. Whilst qualifications are one way of selecting I consider some of the Occupations that are on the list have barriers due to local knowledge which prevent migrants being accepted . I have had several Russian engineers who have had the same problem and have been driving cabs for years, some were bitter as they expected better. They consider Australia failed them. Do they observe the social contract? .Do we need taxi drivers when unemployed TCF workers could do, why they do not is of course another unanswered question.

The above are my major thoughts on migration, but a puzzle to me and relevant has been the concept enunciated by Don Dunstan of Adelaide being the “Athens of the South” (note 3) . But a thought relevant to all of Australia’s major cities.

TO Conclude

Arthur Koestler pointed out, and many others express in different ways that our technical abilities far exceed that of our psychological abilities. With the growth of populations so the difficulty/complexities of governing, why, if Donald Horne sounded a well read warning (was it read?) 30 years ago did we ignore it?

As above there are so many issues clamouring for policy attention, so the loudest squeaky wheel gets oiled. How do we locate and work on possible squeaky wheels, if we can succeed and get ahead of the world then this benefits all Australians.

Lets look at two matters, the public service and intelligence/information gathering for policy planning.

As I see history our system grew up in a time when Parliament was one of the hobbies of the landed gentry and the aristocrats of the UK. They needed people (servants) to carry out tasks and so a Public service. In those days all educated people had read the same books and talked the same jargon. As Toynbee pointed out in the period of greatest growth of the British Empire all senior officers were Oxbridge graduates who studied the Classics and they went forth to administer the empire. And it was a glorious achievement the British Empire. Whilst there are many factors in the decline of the British Empire several writers have pointed to the introduction of vocation related degrees paralleling the decline and the loss of a common jargon.

Toynbee made the point that truly successful civilizations had a committed civil service which ensured effective administration and policy advice. That is the leaders received good advice. Apart from the British he pointed to the Ottoman, Early Chinese and Romans as effective administrators, and all rewarded merit and often promoted by exams or other methods of selecting a meritorious elite. I think we have forgotten some of those lessons, whilst times are different who in Canberra today (as others have noted) can be compared to Coombs and his peers? Can we develop Administrators whose mental breadth would match the Oxbridge graduates of the British Empire? I think not at this time. The emphasis is on technocrats, and I do not decry their worth, but how do they become administrators of wisdom? We need that level of sage advice above the technocrats and below the Government. I am not a philosopher but this is a complex issue and is an eternal problem as discussed by Plato in the need for philosopher/kings. We cannot achieve with our system of Government, but how close can we get?

As I see it wisdom is what is lacking. We place emphasis on youth and technocracy.. I recently read a book by Jacques Barzun, it was a work of learning and wisdom, he was 90 years old when it was published, and as he wrote at 60 years of age he could not have written as he was not learned enough. I was staggered and humbled by his wisdom and his achievement. As above we return to the concept of Plato as to philosopher/kings, how do we move closer to this concept with our Public Administrators, whether elected or tenured?

But first as to intelligence gathering.

I have mentioned memes, and these are part of life. The question is how to recognize a meme has gone past its use by date and a new meme is needed. To give an

example I come from the western suburbs and attended a technical school. When these were phased out 25 years or so ago I wrote to the then Minister of Education and said this was a retrograde step. The all purpose high school was introduced to give all equality of opportunity to enter University. Am not sure who were *the most* vocal supporters, but I blame the University educated Chardonnay drinkers who emerged from the Whitlam years and dominated policy thinking. However the earlier model recognized that there is a difference in talents. As I wrote then the all purpose high school does not sit well with people who are going to be our garbage collectors, and to me these are just as needy of education to year 12 as University graduates. But the educational needs are different. And we compromised the concept by having specialist musical schools which is Vocational training for the children of the bourgeoisie.

However during this period there was an economic downturn and many State Government departments such as Railways, Power, Public Buildings etc stopped their apprentice programs or reduced. This compounded the problem as they usually provided a surplus to the labour market. The Federal Government through Defense was also a strong supplier. Whether Telstra and Australia Post are also suppliers as they used to be I do not know. No we are facing a skills shortage, bringing in labour, and what happens if we have oversupplied for the future?

So several memes supported one another and have lasted for over 25+ years and we are now publicly admitting failure to train trades-people . But many voices have clamored and there have been various palliative initiatives. So how are the voices to be heard?

In business as an Accountant I would have calculated the waste of capacity as say 25000 unskilled could be trained trades people, their cost, say base income support say \$200 per person, plus hospital and other support say \$50 per week and loss of income tax say \$100 per week, so a gross generalization of 25000 people x \$350 X 52 weeks = say \$4.5 billion negative effect on the budget. In business the need to call in either McKinseys or AI (Chainsaw) Dunlap and of course new management.

But as written about by Barbara Tuchman in "The March of Folly" once a meme is rampant in a society it is extremely difficult to change as those opposing are marginalized.

Well, what I propose will cost, but if we make better decisions sooner, then the cost will be offset.

First proposal

A public service training college for both State and Federal public servants where people seconded at say at 35+ years of age, selected on merit for 2 year period to

study full time. Say a college of 36 members. At least 25% of the time spent studying the classics to give a grounded education and 25 % public policy failures so they hopefully develop thinking at the level above technocracy. Text books would include Barbara Tuchman's "The March of Folly", and the summing up by such as Robert S McNamara of their careers including both their successes and failures. I have read as to the strength of the French in this area also, perhaps we can learn from them. The other 50% of their time would have the Students divided into two groups and both to produce a paper on a public policy issue and ideas. They would be encouraged to challenge current thinking (Memes). If the policy papers are good then would be adopted on a bipartisan approach by the Parliament. To lift our ability in "intelligence" gathering. There are past precedents as I have mentioned in the Oxbridge concept of a shared standard of education and my knowledge is imperfect but the Mandarins were also the outcome of shared values.

Second Proposal

A college of Elders for each State. As David Suzuki has pointed out in Tribal and slightly larger societies a Council of Elders are the custodian of the tribe's knowledge and learnt wisdom. Our Houses of Parliament are bound by Party policies, memes that freeze change and are products of the past, can they change fast enough? For these to change you need input and why not select recognized community leaders who are over 65 years of age and preferably not associated with any party. They would receive a small stipend. Have support and perhaps meet for one day a month. Required to produce papers on policy for the guidance of the Parliament, but are freed from party discipline. I consider I have some wisdom, but it is of no use as how do I pass on? As earlier I opposed with many others the phasing out of the Technical School, but how to make my dissenting voice heard. No use writing to Parliamentarians as they are too busy. The Letters pages are too busy and follow what's the current in thing. This is of course why memes change so slowly as the balance in each generation has to learn and then move to change, so the need to hasten the passing of knowledge and wisdom between generations, as Suzuki noted earlier generations did it better. That is we have a group who are wise and may/will challenge the existing group mind set. (Note 9)

The foregoing is a rambling document, but there is much that can be written, especially as to reporting needs etc. But I hope the readers do find points of interest .

Harold Jones

Note 1 meme

n : a cultural unit (an idea or value or pattern of behavior) that is passed from one generation to another by nongenetic means (as by imitation); "memes are the cultural counterpart of genes"

Note 2 : After I wrote this I heard Jarred Diamond being interviewed as to his recently released book, "Collapses". He identifies and discusses in depth various civilizations that have collapsed or have declined. Obviously required reading for the Training College proposed.

NOTE 3 THE ATHENS OF THE SOUTH

I met several families who came from NZ and Canada and who had migrated to S.A. as they were excited by the concepts of Don Dunstan as to industrial democracy etc. I have never found what went behind the grand policies or if political rhetoric and cliché. But it raises the issue of can Australia have a city that is recognized internationally as a Center of ?.

Interestingly Dunstan's own party spoiled any opportunity for Adelaide. I worked for Philips Electrical Industries which had a major manufacturing site in Adelaide. Now a shell as with many other manufacturing operations. The policy of the Liberal Premier Playford was to keep Adelaide wages 5-10% below the east coast hegemony so that this would overcome freight and other "tyranny of distance" costs. When the Playford Government lost power and

labour had the reins it introduced Long Service Leave etc and destroyed the margin. And the slow decline of SA began. Remember in the fifties it was significantly bigger than Brisbane or Perth and was Australia's third city.

Talking of Memes, it was Playford who in the public interest nationalized the Adelaide Electric Supply Company because of its failure to move to provide a service to all. His Liberal party successors have a different meme, who is the wiser?

But the great cities evolved as I read it on economic strength as well as a flowering in other areas based on that wealth, they had capital to spend on culture. In the most famous example the glory of Florence flowed from the wealth of the Medici and the parallel success of other Florentine families. They controlled the wool trade of Europe as well as being bankers etc. But most of the great cities were based on a monopoly, Athens with Pottery and shipping, Venice with control of trade in the Eastern Mediterranean, Britain with its monopolistic control of trade with the colonies. Britain lost the USA because of its greed for taxes and thus overused its monopoly position.

Interestingly I think Australian academics need to compare the economic history of Australia with Spain. Spain grew rich on the gold and silver of the Americas, but never built a sustainable economy on this wealth and was a basket case 100 years or so after the economic (if not military) glory of the Armada. There are similarities to Australia. I am still trying to find a good reference to this issue. We have lived the good life on wool, gold and now coal and iron ore, but I witness the coal miners of Emerald earning \$50000+ pa and compare this with a friend who is working for \$7.00 per hour (cash in hand) in a Restaurant. I think there is a lack of balance as both are unskilled workers.

The mansions of Newport in the USA are all testimony to the use of monopoly to gain great wealth, we have a meme as to fair trade, but the great cities and empires were not built on the concept of free trade. And the reverse of this concept is equality of cost to compete, as earlier I am a Cost Accountant. If we import textile products from China should we to match their cost base by having the same public health standards? Moving jobs overseas and placing people on the dole diverts money and so we see the introduction of HECS

and the appalling problems associated with public health. As elsewhere, are we still a rich country?

Are we better off reducing population, bring in guest worker (for servile jobs) so that most Australians work in the coal and gold mines and so push up average income?

NOTE 5 We are a rich country

Donald Horne pointed out with the ironic title "The Lucky Country" that it was lucky we found gold and the Golden Fleece. But that our luck is running out and this is also a theme of Barry Jones. Note well the warning from Donald Horne was I think some 30 years ago, so did we listen? But as Barry also notes the changes are long in coming and noticed after they come.

Accountants use inter-firm comparisons to compare companies and this is reflected in values on the Stock Exchange. We do not have a Stock Exchange for countries but let us compare ourselves with Singapore

"According to UN figures the Singapore per capita GDP in 1980 was 4854 (\$us) and has increased to 20544 in 2002, a factor of 4.23. Australia has gone from 9917 to 19528, a factor of 1.97. Alright, we can factor in good leadership for Singapore and other excuses, that the Chinese are hard workers etc but without our resources where would we be? Singapore also gives another example of differing memes with some of theirs being the opposite of ours. We are selling Telstra etc and privatization is the conventional wisdom. The Singapore Government as I understand is a major shareholder in Singapore Airlines and Singtel which controls Optus and I understand is committed to these Companies. I wrote to The Australian Accountant a Letter suggesting they should commission an article on this matter. But like Don Quixote one achieves little. I understand the Telcos of France and Germany still have substantial Government shareholdings.

Again I think we have dodged the question of how to make public enterprises effective, should we back Telstra to be a world player, or let it be privatized and then taken over at a point in the future. Let's not kid ourselves, the march of globalization will see Telstra taken over, only I doubt if I will live long enough to see. Apart from Singapore, I have watched as Japan and Germany rose from the ashes and do we really

compare their success to our slipping down the table. We have talked about, but achieved little.

Many have commented on the failure of GNP as an indicator, but I know from personal experience that my pensioner parents lived better on the pension 20 years ago than pensioners do today. How to measure?

As a Cost Accountant I was trained to measure a Companies capacity (note 4)and if products changed, went out of fashion etc then machinery was sold and labour sacked. Fortunately for companies the downsized labour could often find other jobs. The necessity to survive. Countries are much bigger and more complex, but the same forces are at work. However much harder to see. So I find it an interesting thought that companies that move jobs overseas should really send the workers overseas as well, that way we do not as a country have excess capacity problems as to labour, and the associated social security costs and loss of tax revenues. Does China need more people? To the Economists and others I have met who support these concepts of free trade etc I have a simple test, give your job to an unemployed TCF worker and you go to Centrelink for support or go and work in a Chinese factory with no work-cover etc. The response is that it is a stupid suggestion, but this is not a real answer. But I do not have the skills to tackle the subject of how a community accepts a collective responsibility and rises to the challenge of ensuring equity to all. Sweden I think pays the unemployed about 90% of the income in their last job, if we were a rich country we should be doing the same. Why should a TCF worker suffer because his job is sent to Fiji, Bangladesh or China with the endorsement of Government policy? Do the Decision Makers vote themselves a pay cut in sympathy?

And of course we talk about world's best practice, why do we not match Sweden's?

After the Great Depression and WW2 we had a white paper that committed to full employment, now but a ghost.

As to capacity, I recently had a retrenched executive as a taxi driver, he had once enjoyed an income of \$150,000 a year and was now earning \$30,000. How do you factor into GNP the people whose expectations are not being met and so the failure as they see it of the Social contract?

I once knew a Restaurant proprietor who opened a Restaurant to cater for the business-men's lunches about 3 months before the Fringe Benefits tax was introduced. He went bankrupt in a year and told me he

was going to rip the tax system off as much as he could to restore his lost capital. I wonder how many TCF workers, retrenched older executives etc consider that the social contract between them and Canberra is broken. I cannot recall the Black economy in my youth, if it existed it was small, the great depression and the war left a sense of unity/duty now missing in the current social convention.

A leader is supposed to lead by example, another person had their job outsourced in changes introduced by Hawke/Keating who said it was the recession we had to have, this person suffered a 20% loss of income, but did Parliament reduce the salaries of its Members? And of course we saw the lack of enthusiasm when Hawke and Keating did not want to change jobs.

Great leaders suffer as an example to the led. This thinking parallels that of the Aristocrats of the Old Regime, they went so far that they were tragically sacked; I often think if we had tumbrels for failed business leaders instead of golden packages things might improve in business. It is interesting in all the comment as to the growth of credit card debt most blame people seeking luxury goods, my own theory is many people are finding the cost of living increasing faster than income and so borrowing to lift living standards. In the reverse, people save, and so another point as to the meme of being a "rich country"..

So we have a meme, we are a rich country which is not true as measured by the past. As others have pointed out many of today's Members of the House were educated in the virtually no fee days of the Universities, now we have HECS and its descendants. My children received free University education and I know that on today's income as a public servant (as I was then) I could not afford to pay their fees. So are we a rich country? How do we measure? And as the President of the AMA pointed out why are we sucking in Doctors from third world countries, should we not be training a surplus to send to third world countries? My own thinking based on anecdotal evidence is that if the TCF workers, retrenched executives etc all had their earnings restored to fair past earnings then the salaries/wages share of GNP needs to increase by at least 25% as shown in the national accounts..

ECONOMICS as a Social Science and Belief System

A society needs beliefs/memes. Marx made the point much better than I as to the need for Christianity. Gailbraith bucketed, and I agree with him, the economists who build models and discern reality, others have compared this with the old practice of reading the future from the entrails of chickens. People are seeking a vision. However the disciples of Economics believe it is a true science because we need a belief system, what else do we have? As we found the cult of personality has its limitations. We have to have good thinkers as I discussed in my conclusion. Part of my thinking is that economics and accountancy have to be wedded. What is the true cost of drugs to Australia from lost tax, prison costs, law enforcement etc? If we knew would we change our approach? Drug Czars lead lives of luxury and we ordinary Australians are exhorted to pay tax. Again this saps the social contract. Working in the Law precinct of Melbourne and observing the infrastructure it's an interesting thought that we should allow criminals to be on the MODL list (most wanted migrant occupation groups). The multiple factor as to GNP is much higher than most skilled jobs. Which illustrates the stupidity of economics as to some issues, but luckily its obvious.

That is, I would argue we need Accounting/Economics exercises to produce papers to aid public policy. As a possible client of public hospitals I would rather have money spent on me than on prisoners. Christopher Lasch pointed out that the technical elites such as Educators, Accountants, Engineers, Economists etc all talk in their own terminology, and not well to other elites and so we have as the Bible told us a "Tower of Babel". So the conventional wisdoms of economics need be challenged. The problem is what do we replace the measuring stick of GNP with?

Again as to Management Accounting, Schumacher pointed out in the 1950's that we are under pricing natural resources and intergenerational issues are still not fully discussed. Values are shadowy and this is anathema to conventional model building Economists. I refer to the issue of inter-firm comparisons above. So both economics and accounting are imperfect.

However, as Einstein looked for his Grand theory so I see the world seeking a new Keynes so that as Popper explained we move to the next plateau from where thinking is stuck in a circle. I would have loved to have been the

thinker that united Accounting and Economics in a grand theory, but I do not have the talent or intellectual skills.

NOTE 6 re Obesity

Again we are rushing off and blaming the obvious. In my street lives a couple who are both size 16's, they have a daughter who will, if the genes determine grow up to be a size 24. We know that people tend to pick partners who often mirror their body shape. One often sees two generous in body shape parents with children who are going to be larger than their parents and junk food is not the reason, but we do not license people to marry, so how do we stop marriages which are going to have offspring who will be obese?

It is now some 150 years since sanitation etc changed public health and then penicillin so people who in earlier generations would have been culled are not. If it were not for penicillin at least two of my children would not have survived to adulthood. I ponder on what this means for their children?

On Sixty Minutes we see regular calls for help for parents whose children etc have incapacities where help is needed. These calls are more numerous as these people would not have survived in earlier generations. Again as above are we rich enough to carry the burden of increasing calls for help?

I also wonder as to the role of the genes that direct an especially female body to store fat in case of need. My wife put on about 1 stone for every child she bore, she stopped breast feeding early and I wonder if the genes told her to keep storing even though a pill said otherwise, which was the stronger message?

Note 6 The writer is an opponent of the GST as he sees it as re-arranging the deckchairs. Why did we need a new tax? If the tax base was not producing the required revenue as it had for say 100+ years then this indicated that we are not producing the income to support the expenses. As with the 10000 page tax act are resources being directed to maintain rather than develop? Whilst I have referred to the dichotomy between accounting and economics, in accounting if you do not have the sales/profit/expenses etc mix right you

finish up broke. How to establish an accounting profit and loss account etc for Australia Pty Ltd. The writer once worked for Phillips Electrical Industries and their accounting system had developed in a different environment and was more influenced by economics than the equivalent Australian/English/USA derived systems. Philips attempted to establish what the operation's' capacity was and to measure their capital so that they maintained capacity so as not to pay dividends out of capital or otherwise diminish operating capacity.

Note 11 The USA web site npg.org which belongs to an organization campaigning against immigration states its surveys show 72% of Americans are opposed to further immigration. Yet the US Government still has an active program.

Note 12, I am not a Sociologist or Psychologist but what my Father did was common to his time and reflected a culture where bullying was rampant. I saw instances of bullying when I was a young man in the 50's and then it disappeared in the 60's and 70's and 80's but is now common in schools as in media reports and I think very much in the workplace, although well hidden. People who work in call centres have many stories to tell. To return to theme above does the return of bullying signify that we are no longer a rich country?