Intended originally as a short overview of twentieth century immigration to Australia, to mark the centenary of Federation and accompany a photographic history on the same theme and period, *Destination Australia* has benefited from being able to take in a longer perspective and include the end of the controversial Howard years of immigration policy. It is also no longer short, and that is also the reader’s gain. The book’s first chapter gives contrasting snapshots of Australia’s people and demographics in 1900 and 2000. Its last chapter is a retrospective view that systematically summarises the key changes throughout the entire period of European occupation. Between these bookends lies the enormous substance of this book, eleven chapters that provide a chronological account and analysis of the transformation of white and British Australia into one of the most culturally heterogenous countries in the world. While inevitably traversing some of the same ground as James Jupp’s *From White Australia to Woomera* (2002) and Gwenda Tavan’s *The long, slow death of White Australia* (2005), Eric Richards’ *Destination Australia* does not have the personal slant of Jupp’s book or the polemical stance of Tavan’s. It is more measured in its apportioning of the decades and in its engaging narrative style. It is, from first to last, an authoritative account by an historian who has worked in the field of migration history, particularly British emigration history, for over two decades.

Richards identifies two extended periods in Australia’s immigration history in the twentieth century with three crucial shifts in policy. The century started with Federation and the unanimous agreement amongst the States in passing the *Immigration Restriction Act* of 1901. Australia was a monocultural society that had drawn the majority of its immigrants, both assisted and non-assisted, from the British
Isles and was determined to keep it that way. In the long period from 1901 to 1973 which was dominated by the White Australia policy, the over-riding concern was to exclude immigrants who were non-white, particularly those from Asian and African countries. Within this period, Richards identifies the second major shift in national policy in 1947 to include Europeans in the catchment, when insufficient numbers of Britons were immigrating to fill Australia’s postwar industrial needs. Arthur Calwell, Minister for Immigration in the Chifley government, was the architect of this crucial change and Richards devotes a lively chapter to Calwell’s strategies and development of a ‘New Australia’. Even then, distinctions were made between the Nordic ‘races’ and the darker skinned southern Europeans with a strong preference for the former. A parallel change was the shift from the obsession with attracting British immigrants to develop the land and expand the rural population to the employment of immigrants in industrial development.

For Richards, 1947 was a linchpin year, the first step needed in expanding the horizons of insular Australians so they became accustomed to living and working with people whose primary language was not English and who were proud of their own (non-British) cultural heritage. Immigrants brought links with the wider world with them. The 1950s and 1960s were the heroic years of ‘the great diversification’ of the population. Between 1947 and 1971 ‘2.5 million people from all over Europe were persuaded, assisted and conveyed to Australia’ (p. 204). In 1973 the Whitlam government dismantled the White Australia policy by removing any element of racial discrimination from the basis of the selection of immigrants. Australia thus entered the second overarching phase of immigration and third major shift in policy when it opened its doors to immigrants from every part of the world and introduced multiculturalism. The arrival of thousands of Indo-Chinese refugees along Australia’s coastline after the end of the war in Vietnam put this new policy severely to the test, but was ultimately decisive in moving Australia away from White Australia.

Within the overarching context of these two periods of White Australia for the first three quarters of the century and the more liberated multicultural one since then, Richards weaves together the many strands that make Australia’s immigration history into an absorbing narrative. Personal stories of success and tragedy in the lives of some of the immigrants through each decade, the policy-makers as well as their
policies, influential demographers and their thinking, and even key bureaucrats, are the actors in this mammoth-scale drama. Equally absorbing and informative are the accounts of the controversies that various policies, proposals and some new arrivals provoked and the author’s sympathetic descriptions of the unfortunates who were excluded at different times by Australia’s rigid thinking about who and how many would be allowed in. He highlights the importance of control to planners and policy-makers throughout the century. Yet what also emerges from placing Australia within the wider international context of immigration is an acknowledgement of the surprisingly generous scale of Australia’s humanitarian response. Surprising because the draconian measures of detention exercised by the Howard government are still very much part of public memory.

Richards emphasises that the historian’s task is to take the longer view, which he duly does in the final and retrospective chapter. It is a piece that could stand alone and equally serve as an introduction to the topic. It will be well-used by students in the future. But it is the vignettes of contemporary lives and thoughts that stay with the reader long after closing the book. From the period of the White Australia policy, take for example the influence of the writer Rider Haggard who visited Australia in 1913 and was a great advocate of “a global British nation” to stem the tides threatened by the Yellow and Jewish perils’. He reported that ‘fifty million people might well find a home in Australia … The great need of the Empire today is population’ (p. 73). There were frequent expressions of anti-Semitism and a quota of 5100 was imposed by Cabinet in 1938 when faced by the large number of applications from refugees from Nazism. There was even an extraordinary proposal to create a Jewish settlement near the Ord River in the north so as to remove the Jews to a safe distance from the southern cities and populate the north at the same time. The misguided obsession with the possibilities of rural expansion found its saddest form in the attempt to settle 6000 immigrants in group settlements on ‘land not fit for grazing let alone cultivation’ in Western Australia. By 1924, 30 per cent of immigrant British settlers and 42 per cent of Australians had walked away from their holdings with bitterness and ill-feeling (p.105).

The dismantling of the White Australia policy in the 1970s and the settlement of large numbers of refugees by the Fraser government led to the introduction of the policy
and implementation of multiculturalism. Negative and conservative public attitudes to both the refugees and multiculturalism surfaced and found a powerful voice in the historian Geoffrey Blainey. Richards captures this prelude to what later became the ‘History Wars’. The Hawke government responded with the Fitzgerald Committee’s inquiry into immigration policies. Instead of creating a bipartisan approach to immigration as in previous decades, the Committee’s report further divided the community and policy makers. For Richards this is yet another turning point. Never again would immigration policies receive the type of national consensus they had achieved in the past.

*Destination Australia* combines a vast amount of information with a remarkable clarity of historical perspective. It seems churlish then to ask for more, yet I would have liked to have seen the 1995 Roach Report into the temporary entry of business and skilled people given some attention. The outcomes of that inquiry led to the introduction of the 457 temporary visas and a substantial change in migration patterns to Australia by reducing the dominance of permanent settlers in the annual intakes. The book is underpinned by the importance of statistics throughout, yet its author explains just how problematic collecting those statistics can be, particularly in recent years of increased global mobility. Richards points out that: ‘While the nation argued vociferously about the issue of immigration there was no agreed formula by which to calculate actual net migration. This was not by any means peculiar to Australia: the same confusions reigned in Britain and elsewhere’ (p. 322).

Nevertheless, the statistics stand as indicators of the enormous changes that have been wrought in Australian society over the past century. The transformation of a mostly monocultural population of under four million into a culturally diverse population of over twenty million in just over a hundred years is an astonishing achievement, made more so by Australia’s remote location from its major sources of immigrants for the larger part of the century, and by the single-mindedness of successive governments in their pursuit of growth. Richards narrates, with some compassion, the human costs borne by immigrants and refugees in the long process of making modern Australia. His account avoids the pitfalls of E.P. Thompson’s ‘enormous condescension of posterity’. Given the views on race voiced by national leaders as the rationale for a
white Australia and subscribed to by most of the population for most of the century that is no mean achievement either.

Christine Finnimore
Migration Museum
Strategic Asia 2007-08: Domestic Political Change and Grand Strategy

Ashley L. Tellis and Michael Wills (eds)

The seventh edition of the Strategic Asia series continues the tradition of providing insightful, accessible and policy-relevant analysis for students of international relations. The focus on the internal drivers of strategic change is a welcome addition to the series, which in the past has focused on Asian military modernisation, economic development and the region’s response to America’s global war on terror. The contributions are from a collection of leading area specialists. In addition to five chapters on regional great powers, China, Japan, the Koreas, Russia and India, the book boasts three addition chapters on regional developments in South Asia, Southeast Asia and Central Asia. The book concludes with three chapters on topical issues of concern to the US, if not regional states as well; the Iranian nuclear issue, multilateral security efforts and environmental security issues.

Tellis sets up the book with an introductory chapter exploring the justification for the study in light of realism’s past tendency to overlook the ‘black box’ of the state in its analyses of international politics. Importantly, Tellis notes, integral to exploring the impact of domestic politics on grand strategy is a recognition that domestic politics in turn affected by external factors such as globalisation, modernisation and the shifting global balance of power. Each of these brings change to domestic politics through economic development, institutional evolution and political and ideological transformation. In analysing these trends, according to Tellis, the book refocuses contemporary realism on its classical realist roots: Thucydides’ analysis of the domestic roots of the Peloponnesian War, ‘the spiritedness of Athens and the passivity of Sparta’ (p. 3).

The second section of the book is focused on the five regional great powers. Chapters on China and Japan are comprehensive and put to bed many of the myths associated with the domestic sources of grand strategy. Mochizuki notes that the popular perception that the younger generation of Japanese tend to be more nationalistic than their older counterparts needs to be re-evaluated. This in turn has implications for the argument that Japan’s evolution to towards ‘normalcy’ is in fact a forgone conclusion.
Despite the more centralised foreign policy decision making process developed under Koizumi, Japan’s strategic orientation will remain beholden to domestic palatability. It may become more ‘normal’ than under the Yoshida doctrine, but remain uniquely Japanese in the way it exercises its foreign and security policy. Lieberthal’s analysis of China is particularly timely in light of a turbulent 2008 which laid bare some of the problems underlying China’s rise, as well as the internal political turmoil which can result. According to Lieberthal, China’s internal factional rivalries are the strongest determinants of China’s international posture because the CCP’s new-found legitimacy is derived from its nationalist credentials. In this context it may have relevant for Lieberthal to comment growing speculation that certain Chinese international behaviour, such as its ASAT test in January 2007 and the surfacing of a Song class submarine the wake of the USS Kitty Hawk, are the product of internal bureaucratic wrangling rather than of directives from the central government. Kim provides an excellent synopsis of the domestic sources of grand strategy within the two Korean states. Most intriguingly, he notes that the geographic location of the North may in fact be the most defining characteristic of its grand strategy. Being surrounded by great powers and its primary rival has allowed the North to achieve a great deal of success with its brinksmanship and collapse strategy. It is somewhat a shame that analysis of the Koreas continues to treat them as one state, yet in a book of this scope it is defensible.

In light of the recent focus on the ‘rise of India’ and ‘Russian resurgence’ these two chapters are particularly timely for scholars who are broadly focused on the Asia-Pacific. Wallander provides a healthy dose of scepticism to claims that Russia has indeed returned to its former glory. Serious demographic issues and the misallocation of its substantial resource wealth will anchor Russian strategic ambitions. Mohan’s chapter on India puts many of the hyperbolic predictions about India’s future role in the international system into context. This is a state with deeply engrained reservations about playing an active role in world affairs and which continues to be hamstrung by domestic political bickering. Nevertheless, there is a degree of inevitability about India’s path; it wants deeper security relations with the United States and domestic economic reforms will not be reversed. The primary debate relates to India’s ability and willingness to embrace the trappings of great power
status in light of weak national leadership, a defensive strategic culture and an entrenched suspicion of the outside world.

The third section of the book explores case studies within Asia’s subregions. The primary critique here relates to case selection. While Pakistan may be an obvious choice as a case study in light of its relationship with India and with the war on terror, and Bangladesh a valid comparison to Pakistan, the absence of Nepal and Bhutan, both of which underwent dramatic political change in 2006-07 should be noted. Even if their omission is a product of their irrelevance to American grand strategy in Asia, this should be admitted up front. Nevertheless, Grare’s chapter provides a sobering analysis of the prospects of Pakistani political reform and the likelihood that Bangladesh may follow in its footsteps towards domination by the political Islamist minority. Weatherbee’s chapter stands in stark contrast to the others as it focuses largely on America’s relations with the region, rather than on the domestic sources of grand strategy within ASEAN states. The analysis is enlightening, particularly Weatherbee’s argument that ASEAN states have begun to look beyond America’s preoccupation with the war on terror. They still find good cause to maintain and strengthen their military ties with the United States, regardless of China’s dominant economic presence and recent efforts to ‘carve out a nexus of security relationships’ (p. 263). Cornell’s chapter on Central Asia explores domestic grand strategy in the two dominant Central Asian states, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. The strength of Cornell’s analysis is the balance he strikes between his two cases, larger regional dynamics and American interests in the region.

The volume’s special case studies are an accurate reflection of topical regional issues. Chubin’s chapter provides an important reminder that nuclear programs develop as much as a response to domestic motivations as they do to international factors. Indeed, the fate of Iran’s nuclear program is tied to ongoing debates about its national identity and how it will conduct itself in international affairs. Nevertheless, international actors can influence how deeply Iran engages with the nuclear fuel cycle. While Iran is vulnerable to international economic sanctions, their impact on the program are likely to be a function of resultant ‘public discontent and support for the regime (p. 335). On the subject of long-running development of Asia’s security institutions, Bisely’s chapter argues that major powers in Asia continue to be hostage
to mistrust and suspicion. In light of the absence of a regional consensus on the most pressing security issues, the opportunity exists for the United States to move beyond the ‘hubs and spokes’ system into something that allows it to dictate the regional security agenda more explicitly. Bisely adds another voice calling for the Six-Party Talks agenda to be widened beyond the North Korean nuclear issue. Elliot’s chapter provides a timely warning of the consequences of environmental degradation for Asia. The reader could be forgiven for expecting a more thorough engagement, in light of recent developments, with debates over an international response to climate change. Nevertheless, Elliot identifies key reasons why environmental degradation threatens US security interests in the region, yet paradoxically offers the most feasible avenue for engagement with a region that has historically resisted excessive American influence.

In an academic environment in which Asia specialists are asked to teach a widening range of issues across the world’s largest geographic region, Strategic Asia 2007-2008 provides a valuable reference for international relations scholars who need to understand the contemporary domestic political trends in Asia. Specialists may also derive some comparative insights from the case studies. The book will also serve as a valuable reference to graduate and senior undergraduate students of international relations and Asian studies.

James Manicom
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Political Tourists:
Travellers from Australia to the Soviet Union in the 1920s-1940s

Sheila Fitzpatrick & Carolyn Rasmussen (eds)
Melbourne: MUP, 2008, 312 pp. AUD $49.95

In both Australia and Britain, the Communist Party of each country respectively dissolved in 1991 as the Eastern bloc collapsed and did so in a similar manner, from both internal schisms and outside influences. In the past decade and a half, both Communist Parties have been the focus of much academic interest, with significant research devoted to the analysis of the Parties’ domestic politics, as well as its relationship to the Soviet Union. In Britain, the CPGB has been criticised by both the centre-right and the left (much more the latter in scholarly circles) for its uncritical support for the Soviet Union, especially during the height of Stalin’s dictatorship. However at the same time, there has been a move by some academics to approach the Party from a grass-roots perspective and analyse the Party’s role in local and national politics, most prominently in the areas of unemployment, anti-fascism, industrial relations and peace movements. The most recent work published in this area has been Kevin Morgan, Andrew Flinn and Gidon Cohen’s Communists and British Society, 1920-1991, with other works by Alan Campbell and John McIlroy to be published in the near future. This focus on grass-roots politics has been criticised by some for not emphasising the massive influence the Soviet Union had upon the CPGB throughout its existence, which has led to continuing debates between those who focus on the macro-history of the CPGB in its domestic context and those who focus on the presence of the Soviet Union. This debate has tended to engulf the whole historiography of the CPGB and historians now have to negotiate any primary research through this schism. John Newsinger has possibly been closest to reconciling the two conflicting ends of this discourse, stating that while the CPGB should be seen ‘as a party that certainly engaged in campaigns and struggles carried on in the interests of the British working class’, the Party ‘has to be defined by its uncritical support for the brutal, murderous tyranny that was emerging in the Soviet Union and by its willingness to subordinate itself to the changing requirements of the Stalin regime’. These two histories are not contradictory, but, as Newsinger declares, ‘the first is contained within the second’ – study of the Communist Party’s domestic work.
without mention of its ties to the Soviet Union, especially up until 1956, cannot be done satisfactorily.

The literature in the historiography of the Communist Party of Australia has followed a similar path to that of the Communist Party of Great Britain. Before the 1990s, the literature on the CPA could be generally categorised into Party hagiographies, far left critiques, anti-communist Cold War publications and autobiographies, which fit into the three former categories. Scholarly work on the CPA was limited to a few monographs, theses and journal articles, before the collapse of the organisation seemed to generate a new wave of academic interest. Like the literature on the CPGB, the historians writing about the CPA were especially concerned with the role of the Comintern in the development of the Communist movement in Australia and the sinister connotations of ‘Moscow Gold’. This has led to specialist histories in journal articles that focus on the correspondence between the CPA and the Comintern, microfilms of which are stored in the Mitchell Library in Sydney and more recently, the ADFA Library in Canberra. General and narrative histories of the Communist Party of Australia, unlike the Lawrence & Wishart series or those by Willie Thompson, Francis Beckett, David Renton and James Eaden on the CPGB, are yet to be published, although Stuart Macintyre’s 1998 book, *The Reds*, is an excellent start. Macintyre’s book is a commanding text and makes excellent use of Comintern archival material, as well as internal Party documents held by the Search Foundation, what Macintyre describes as the ‘successor of the Communist Party’. However Macintyre’s history ends with the Allied victory in the Second World War and the post-war history of the CPA still to be written. Recent work by Phillip Deery and Rachael Calkin on the events of 1956 upon the CPA has been published in the Australian Journal of History & Politics and is a promising beacon for further research.

One area of communism in Australian history that has been developed, where British scholarship has yet to, concerns the relationship between the Soviet Union and intellectuals on the left, particularly those who visited the Soviet Union during the inter-war period. Cohen and Morgan have studied what they described as ‘Stalin’s Sausage Machine’, the International Lenin School in Moscow, where prestigious Communist Party members were sent to be ‘Bolshevised’ and become leading Party
cadres, but this is only limited to the approximately 160 CPGB members who attended the school between 1926 and 1937. While authors, such as Martin Amis in his debates with Eric Hobsbawm, question why intellectuals inside the Communist Party held the CPSU in such high regard, even after visiting the Soviet Union, what has not been adequately analysed in recent years is how the Soviet Union affected others who sympathised with the Soviet Union, but were not hardened Party members. This is what Political Tourists: Travellers from Australia to the Soviet Union in the 1920s-1940s has done.

Based on the proceedings of the ‘Australian Visitors to the Soviet Union’ conference held at the University of Melbourne in 2006, distinguished Russian historian Sheila Fitzpatrick and Carolyn Rasmussen have collected a series of accounts of Australians who visited, for one reason or another, the Soviet Union between the early 1920s and the 1950s. Most of the authors included in this book have written extensively on the Communist Party of Australia elsewhere, such as Joy Damousi, Terry Irving, Phillip Deery and John MacNair, and should be well known to labour and social historians in Australia, but also internationally. However there is a difference between the histories included in this book and the general socio-political histories of the CPA, with the accounts here very much focusing on the individual and their experiences in the Soviet Union, rather than a wider Party context. What are drawn upon in many of the accounts are the writings of the visitors, particularly their contemporary political writing and later autobiographical accounts, as well as personal papers and archived material from Australia and Russia. In contrast to the documentation of the individual, Fitzpatrick, who provides the preface and introduction chapter, utilises the continual openings of the Russian archives to provide a wider historical context for the book’s other accounts, focusing on the opened archive of the VOKS organisation. VOKS, the All-Union Society for Ties with Abroad or vsesoiuznoe obshchestvo kul’turnoi sviazi s zagranitsei, was a quasi-official organisation which assisted foreign visitors in their travels to the Soviet Union, whose main task, according to Fitzpatrick, was ‘to ensure that the visitors went away with a good impression of the Soviet Union’. Fitzpatrick’s analysis of the archived VOKS material demonstrates that this was sometimes a difficult task, especially when dealing with visitors who came for a multitude of reasons, rather than merely disciplined CPA members.
One of the purposes of the book, as Fitzpatrick states, is to address the notion of the political tourist or ‘pilgrim’, which Paul Hollander explored in his 1981 work, *Political Pilgrims*, and whether the stereotype of a manipulative Soviet Union and an unwitting visitor was an accurate description. As Fitzpatrick and the other accounts demonstrate, the title of the book and the notion of the political tourist might actually be a misnomer, as there were a number of reasons that people outside the Communist Party (and even some within) ventured to the Soviet Union. Some visited the Soviet Union in the early days of the Socialist Republic, as the Russian Civil War was concluding, drawn by the romanticism of the 1917 revolution, such as Muriel Heagney, as described by Rosemary Francis in her chapter. Others came in the late 1920s and 1930s as the Soviet Union started to undergo a campaign of massive industrialisation and Josef Stalin took dictatorial control of the CPSU, where people wanted to witness the development of a modern society based on an alternative to capitalism, which seemed to grow as the Great Depression plunged the rest of the world into economic crisis. This included many people who came in a professional capacity, such as Professor J. Neill Greenwood and Reginald Ellery, whose visits are explored by Rasmussen and Damousi respectively. There was also a sense of adventure and the idea of the Soviet Union as an ‘exotic travel destination’, which drew visitors to the USSR, including a large number of women. As Fitzpatrick notes, and is amply reflected in several of the book’s chapters, ‘Almost 40 per cent… were women travelling independently… What these women liked about the Soviet Union was women’s equality’, no matter their political allegiance.

What is surprising about the book is the number of ‘fellow travellers’ that returned to Australia with enthusiasm for the Soviet Union and the socialist project, which seems to challenge recent assertions made by authors, such as Francis Beckett. That is not to say that people did not return disillusioned from what they had witnessed in the Soviet Union or that their keenness for Marxism-Leninism did not wane in the coming years, as clearly it did for some. The chapters by Irving, Damousi and Jeff Sparrow all demonstrate that some objected to, or found distasteful, the Soviet Union’s version of socialism and the CPA’s uncritical support of the Stalinist dictatorship. But it is quite remarkable to note that at least half of those who visited the Soviet Union in the Stalin era deemed their visit to be positive and maintained their support for the USSR into the Cold War period. Although Fitzpatrick’s archival analysis makes a fascinating
introduction, the lack of a concluding chapter to re-emphasise this seems to leave the book without a wider historical conclusion. After the individual accounts, a final chapter to demonstrate how these macro-histories fit into the wider historical context of the international communist movement and the history of communism in Australia would have been beneficial. For the most part though, Political Tourists is a welcome addition to the literature and will prove engaging for other historians entering the historiographical debates over the Soviet Union and its relationship with domestic Communist Parties.

Evan Smith
Flinders University
In her introduction to *Spinning the Dream* Haebich states that the central focus of the work is the ‘imaginings of assimilation in the 1950s and 60s’ (p. 14) and, while the title of this work places it within the key period of mass migration to Australia and the indigenous ‘issues’ of the time, Haebich’s study extends well beyond these years, in either direction, to consider her subjects within the much broader context of Australian immigration and indigenous history, policy and perception.

Haebich’s consideration of assimilation as not just a policy or an ideal that was imposed upon post-war migrants and Indigenous Australians in the period, but as a broader concept or philosophy that was ‘spun’ to, and grasped by, an anxious post-war society is an important premise of the book. Furthermore, the importance and necessity of understanding this ideal of assimilation in Australia’s history is highlighted by the fact that although formally abandoned, this ‘phoney dream’ and imagined ideal of a united Australian nation is one to which we remain susceptible in today’s climate of global fears of terrorist threats, continuing migrations and renewed issues of national identity and nationhood. As Haebich herself explains, one of the most important underlying premises of this work is the need to ‘set the record straight on these distorted imaginings’ (p. 9) and to place in context the potential nostalgic appeal of a simpler, safer time where, ‘once they agree[d] to cast off their differences and become the same’ (p. 8), immigrants and Indigenous Australians, could live as one in suburban dream homes.

Physically the book is divided into four parts. Part one, *White Nation*, looks at the period in question placing the beginnings of assimilation into the broader historical setting both within Australian and within the wider world. Australia, an anxious nation, under international pressure in the more humanitarian immediate post-war period, looked towards assimilation as a compromise solution ‘to contain change within the parameters of a modified White Australia’ (p. 81). In part two, *Selling Assimilation* suggests this solution had to be sold, not only to immigrants, Indigenous Australians and the world, but also to the white citizens of Australia themselves. In
part three, *Assimilation in Nyungar Country*, the focus of the work moves to Western Australia and shifts towards the attempted Indigenous assimilation of the period. Finally, part four, *Cracks in the Mirror*, considers the paradoxes, the gaps between the rhetoric of assimilation and the actual practical experiences of the people upon whom it was applied.

Through all four sections, there is extensive use of cultural artefacts both as sources and as indictors of the period. Through such artefacts we gain insight into the governmental propaganda (spin) that was applied to the issue of assimilation and how the general population perceived it. The use of such a broad array of cultural sources, from exhibitions such as *The Family Man*, events such as the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games, official films and photographs, the popular press, feature films, books, organisations such as the Good Neighbour Movement and even the use of good old British/Australian colloquial idioms such as ‘a cup of tea, a Bex and a good lie down’, provides a wonderful mental picture of the spin from a number of different perspectives.

A large number of examples of the paradoxes of assimilation, such as the increasing interest in Aboriginal art and culture at a time when Australian officials aimed at assimilation or the contrast between the rhetoric of the spin and the reality of the life of post war migrants, help to highlight Haebich’s underlying theses. Furthermore, her admitted personal connections to the subject, in her own migrant heritage, and the indigenous heritage of her partner, add to both the personal nature of assimilation and the broad impact it has had on Australian society in general, especially when we consider that so many of us today are descendent from the 1.3 million post war migrants at whom this policy was aimed.

As Australia has moved on from this period of its history and as it now emerges from the more recent period under the Howard government, this book and Haebich’s important premise labelled ‘retro-assimilation’, that is the ‘paradox of public denial of assimilation and hidden allegiance to its tenets’, (p. 8) is particularly relevant.

This well written, engaging read, is extremely well researched (with an extensive bibliography) and easily accomplishes its aims in placing the policy and practice of
assimilation within the context of Australian history and providing a critical framework with which to assess more recent immigration trends, refugees and current Indigenous issues.

Karen Agutter

Flinders University
Boucher and Sharpe have provided a significant contribution to the examination of the Howard government and its effect upon Australian politics and society. Their work is ambitious whilst being thoroughly detailed, forming a refreshing perspective on Howard’s place in contemporary political history. Drawing upon a number of disparate academic disciplines, their analysis displays an interestingly original interpretation on the current state of Australian politics and society. The book is divided into two broadly linked sections, politics and society, demonstrating an interesting interaction between these two spheres of Australian life.

The Howard era is portrayed as a significant departure from the liberal and democratic heritage of modern Australia, into a postmodern time of confused relativism and irreconcilable social divisions. The first half of the book seeks to define Howard’s politics as something new and dangerously different to the ideological precedents of the Liberal Party. The policies and rhetoric of Howard departed significantly from the Burkean conservatism and the ‘middle-of-the-road’ liberalism that the Liberal Party espoused at least up until the end of the Fraser government. Certainly, it is a facile argument to suggest that the ways in which Howard departure from Liberal Party traditions can be merely put down to pragmatism. As the title suggests, the times suited the Howard government and its politics were shaped by much more significant societal changes than mere events.

What makes the political argument so intriguing is the portrayal of Howard and the contemporary Australian right as ‘postmodern’. Whilst the term by its very nature is a careless label that defines quite a divergent body of thought, the authors carefully place the New Right along the same spectrum as the relativistic and critical Left, the same postmodern ‘elites’ that were often the ire of Howard. The authors connect this New Right with the reactionary counter-Enlightenment thought of Nietzsche, Heidegger and Schmitt, who all bore an influence upon the late twentieth century development of postmodern philosophy. Definitive to this postmodern perspective is a profound scepticism of the modernists’ universalistic worldview. The New Right
accepts that there is a multiplicity of differing narratives in postmodern society. However, unlike the postmodern Left, the Right sees this as irreconcilable and divisive within a singular political society. In order to restrain this division, the New Right is increasingly willing to employ authoritarian and illiberal means to ward against the fragmentation of society and culture, contrarily in order to preserve its liberal democratic traditions. Whilst, the book illustrates this notion in great detail, citing the Tampa crisis, the ‘culture wars’ and so on, this initial framework and its significance are not entirely fleshed out beyond the politics of Howard. Nonetheless, the authors have identified and articulated an interesting trend on the Right that merits further discussion.

The sociological half of the book encounters an interesting contradiction in the approach of the Howard government. The authors contend that the Howard government’s neoliberal agenda, specifically its economic reforms, created an atomistic and divided society that was contrary to its broadly religious and traditional conservative views. The authors cite a number of troubling trends within Australian society within the last quarter of a century and broadly claim that they are symptoms of a society that increasingly reflects what are seen as facets of a postmodern and atomistic society. Howard’s 1996 election campaign was able to capitalize upon the cultural and social insecurities caused in part by the economic reforms of the Keating treasury, only to further perpetuate what the authors see as a radical transformation from the security of the Fordist economy. Boucher and Sharpe may be accused of mistaking association for causation at this point however, tying a diverse number of trends such as rising private debt, obesity, mental illness and divorce rates, to the period of neoliberal deregulation. Whilst their angle on this issue may well be true, so to could a number of other factors of which economic deregulation is just one example. At best, Howard is portrayed as having unwittingly perpetuated a cultural crisis that could only be resolved through radically illiberal and authoritarian means. At worst, his government deliberately manipulated these social insecurities for electoral ends.

However, at the heart of this sociological problem is the inherent, but not irreconcilable, tension between classical liberal ideology and conservatism. This is the certainly not a new dilemma and certainly not particular to the postmodern
conservatives. Although within the historical context of the Liberal Party of Australia, this tension may have reached an apex during the Howard government’s term, I would argue that the authors have overstated its peculiarity. In defence of the classical liberal and conservative amalgamation, I would argue that the strong community values of conservatism can act as a safeguard against the acute individualism and atomization of society that the neoliberal agenda seems to create and this is something that the popularity of the Howard government can be attributed. Regardless, the sense of social disintegration was certainly felt by the electorate and this was crucial to the success of Howard government.

*The Times Will Suit Them* appears to have two key purposes. Whilst succeeded convincingly in the first, it is the second more original notion that remains unfulfilled. The first is distinctly “anti-Howard”, (p. ix) a comprehensive critique of the Howard government, its policies and ideology. Whilst they present a compelling argument in their favour, they tend to cover familiar ground, something that the authors would most likely acknowledge has been played out amongst academics and commentators before. To their credit, they have presented their argument in a comprehensive and original fashion, examining all aspects of the Howard era that made it so unique and definitive. However, it is this second element, the idea that Howard’s New Right represents a postmodern break from its Burkean past, which is a far more intriguing prospect. Unfortunately the authors do not do their idea justice, leaving it ambivalently floating throughout the work. This does not detract however, from the appeal of the book and its inventive perspective on the contemporary history of the Howard era.

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In the early years of the Clinton administration, at a time when the Japanese were suffering an economic recession brought on by a bubble in real estate, the US economy entered into a growth spurt that lasted more or less until the coming of George W. Bush. Today, ‘the Clinton Boom’ stands as the most sustained period of US peacetime growth in the whole of the twentieth century, outpacing ‘the roaring twenties’ by a reasonable margin. The trouble, however, was that it was hard to find any policy drivers at all for this expansion. Save for his adjustments to the system of welfare entitlements, there was very little that Clinton implemented which could be called fundamental, and even his welfare adjustments came too late in the boom to be regarded as causal.

The ending of the Clinton boom therefore brought on a sequence of books bearing titles that sought to penetrate the sense of amazement about this seemingly effortless American experience and its global context. The sequence began in 1999 when Edward Luttwak left behind his more normal concerns with strategy and geopolitics to write about *Turbo-Capitalism*, and was carried on four years later when Joseph Stiglitz left behind his World Bank years to write about *The Roaring Nineties*. And now Robert Reich, formerly Clinton’s Secretary for Labor, gives us *Supercapitalism*.

As one would expect, Reich’s book is the most political of the three, if politics is conceived in a relatively broad kind of way. His basic argument is that the triumph of free market capitalism has not been accompanied by any similar democratic success, where democracy is generously defined as the ability to make trade-offs between economic growth and non-economic social objectives such as equity or environmental sustainability. Capitalism has therefore yielded the triumph of ‘the consumer as investor’ but also its more malign handmaiden, the death of the citizen. His book explores the evolution of this one-sided victory, while never letting go of his central preoccupation with citizen-based measures that might be implemented to strengthen democracy.
Reich concluded his research for this book in 2006, and he therefore missed out on what may well be the final chapter in this story of wonder and shame, the global financial crisis. For in the last two years, the most obvious of the many shortcomings of democracy has manifested itself right in the heart of Reich’s supercapitalist economic engine. It exemplifies the main long-term problem with one-sided victories of the kind that Reich describes – that the negatives will eventually begin to consume the positives. Indeed, at the time of writing, and on top of the many failures associated with the sub-prime crisis, US regulatory authorities have seemingly not had the capacity to detect a multi-billion pyramid scheme operating out of Wall Street. Perhaps a new chapter on the failures of economic democracy could be grafted on to Reich’s text. But perhaps not, since this book was otherwise keen to defend the institutions of supercapitalism. One way or another, his twelfth book will therefore be worth waiting for.

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