

Australian Adam Smith Club (Melbourne)

President: Timothy Warner, Editor: Mannie Gross, P.O. Box 950, Hawthorn, 3122

The combination of religious sentimentality, industrial insanity and moral obliquity.
F.J.C. Hearnshaw ('A survey of Socialism', 1928)

Hal Colebatch

on

How Red are the Greens?

The Adam Smith Club will host a meeting on Wednesday the 24th of November 2010, at the Curry Club Cafe, 396 Bridge Road, Richmond.

Hal G. P. Colebatch BA(Hons.), MA, BJuris, LLB, PhD, Kt. St. J. is the author of more than 20 books on a wide range of subjects, ranging from legal textbooks and sociology to poetry and science-fiction. He writes regularly for *The American Spectator Online* and frequently for *The Australian Op. Ed. Page* and for *Quadrant*. He has been described by Prof. Peter Alexander, Professor of English at the University of New South Wales, as among Australia's best writers. His book *Blair's Britain* was selected as a Book of the Year by the London *Spectator* in 1999. He received an Australian Centenary Medal for writing, law, poetry and political commentary, the only award for this combination of activities.

Only a few days prior the Victorian state election, where the Greens are seen as possibly gaining the balance of power, Hal Colebatch's topic promises to be highly stimulating.

Attendance is open to both members and non-members. Those desiring to attend should complete the attached slip and return it to the Club no later than Monday the 22nd of November 2010. Tickets will not be sent. Those attending should arrive at 6:30pm for dinner at 7:00pm. The cost is \$40.00 per head for members and \$45.00 per head for non-members (see next page for explanation of arrangements and for electronic booking details).

**Enquiries to The Hon Secretary, mob. 0403 933 786
or email: asmith@adamsmithclub.org**



detach and return

The Secretary,
Australian Adam Smith Club (Melbourne),
PO Box 950, Hawthorn, Victoria 3122.

Please reserve place(s) at \$40.00 dollars per member andplace(s) at \$45.00 per non-member for the November 24th meeting of the Australian Adam Smith Club. I enclose the amount of \$..... in payment for the same.

NAME (please print):

ADDRESS:

.....

SIGNATURE: TEL:

LAISSEZ FAIRE ON THE WEB

This newsletter has an address on the web: <http://www.adamsmithclub.org/laissez.htm>. The Club's web site can be found at <http://www.adamsmithclub.org/>

ELECTRONIC PAYMENTS

By popular demand, the AASC now offers electronic booking and payment to dinner meetings. Bookings can be made by emailing the number of members and non-members attending to asmith@adamsmithclub.org; a reply email from the club will then be sent with a link to PayPal where the payment can be made by Mastercard, Visa, AMEX, Diners or PayPal Account. Bookings made after Monday 22nd of November will not be accepted online. FEES - a \$2 card fee will apply for the transaction.

A SMITHIAN TOUR OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

The President and the Honorary Secretary have just returned from visiting the United Kingdom and what was once referred to as Europe (the UK not being part of that older term). As is outlined in the insert - we found the Master's Grave, Statue & Home. We also met many supporters of Smith in England. We attended a book launch for Eamon Butler's new Primer for Austrian Economics, this invitation was at the instigation of our own London based Committee member Dr Fred Hansen - who blogs for the Adam Smith Institute. Dr Fred is soon to move from London to Jerusalem, but he and Jutta have been flying the Adam Smith flag for two years now in Gloucester Rd.

The launch of the Primer was very well attended - with the editor of the Financial Times in the front row. The three speakers to launch the book had entirely differing briefs: one was a financial trader who talked of the lost decade of the 30's when the New Deal weighed down the US recovery; the second speaker told of the problems of regulating - as a 'reformed' man who was a retired regulator he now saw the error of his ways, and the third speaker was a young academic who listed the achievements of Austrian School economists in the last twenty years and the grudging acceptance of their significance to 'mainstream' economics.

Toward the end of our tour we traveled to Cheltenham Spa to visit former Club President and committee member Dr Michael James. He gave us a great welcome and dinner as we discussed the lost opportunities of the last few years and the glimmers of hope that can be seen through the financial and political carnage.

Cheltenham is a great Regency town and well worth a visit for the old 'Pump House' with Greek columns and copper dome to cover the not very tasty mineral water spring.

The end of the visit saw us catching up with Dr Fred Hansen, his wife Jutta and visiting Adam Smith Committee member Samuel Hearne. Sam is in England to try his hand at European modelling and was soon off to the fashion spots of Europe. We had a fine lunch all together in Thayer Street near Marylebone Rd. TW

CHRISTOPHER LINGLE IN AUSTRALIA

Former speaker to our club and outspoken fighter for freedom, Dr Christopher Lingle, visited our shores in October starting with the Mont Pelerin Society meeting in Sydney and then a quick visit to Melbourne. He contacted Club President Tim Warner when he arrived in Melbourne wishing to catch up with some of the Club members he remembered fondly from his previous trip in March 2000 (see Laissez Faire 50). Rather than have a poorly attended meeting on a few days' notice, we passed his request on to the inestimable Prodos Marinakis - who speedily re-

arranged his regular Monday Night Topic to present an interview with Christopher Lingle.

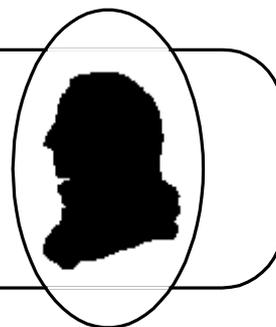
The meeting was a great success with twenty plus attendees and a very good set of questions from Prodos and guests. Christopher gave some very strong personal answers to conundrums such as the Gold Standard, Central Banks (who, he suggested, should be on criminal charges). Dr Lingle talked of the power of the Green Political message and how it was more insidious than Marx and democratic socialism as its lack of philosophy made it hard to argue against. TW

VENUE ARRANGEMENTS

For the Curry Club Cafe, drink is not included in the price. You may bring your own drinks (no corkage will be charged) or purchase from the restaurant which is fully licensed. A room has been reserved for the dinner meeting. We hope these arrangements do not cause inconvenience and we welcome your feedback.

Laissez Faire

Newsletter of the Australian Adam Smith Club (Melbourne), No 97, November 2010



VICTORIA IS A POLICE STATE

It is said that freedom is rarely lost overnight. Rather it is lost gradually over time, slowly eaten away, incrementally, imperceptibly, until suddenly it becomes clear, as though overnight, that it no longer exists. This stage has now been reached in Victoria, which likes to refer to itself as the Garden State.

Police state status was, in fact, reached last December when new laws were introduced to enable police to conduct random searches, without warrant, of anyone in any public place, designated, without notice, as a designated area, to seize any knife or controlled weapon found, to issue on the spot fines of \$1000, and to direct anyone in the area to move on, or to leave an internal area. Failure to submit to a search or to move on or leave, as directed, constitutes obstruction, likewise subject to an on the spot fine, or if thought necessary or desirable, arrest. As well, sale of a knife to anyone under the age of 16 was banned.

The full enormity of what has occurred has now become much more apparent, with the State government running a series of advertisements to inform the citizenry of their new status. Yet rather than taking to the streets, en masse, to protest their outrage at what has occurred, the new measures have largely been greeted with polite applause. The State opposition contented itself with complaining that the government had stolen its policies.

It seems not that long ago that Victorians could justifiably claim to be free. Rights that had taken hundreds of years and much blood and sacrifice to achieve, were enjoyed, respected, and enforced by the courts. The right to be free from arbitrary and unreasonable search and seizure is one of the most fundamental protections of the Common Law. Who remembers now the successful epic struggle of the redoubtable Canberra publisher Maxwell Newton to overturn search warrants purporting to authorize searches of his home, office and bank account?. In 1969 Justice Fox in the ACT Supreme Court ruled the warrants invalid for failing properly to disclose reasonable grounds.

Opposition to so-called writs of assistance, which purported to permit arbitrary searches and seizure of smuggled goods was one of the causes of the American Revolution. American Supreme Court Justice Jackson in 1949 stated that "uncontrolled search and seizure is one of the first and more effective weapons in the arsenal of every arbitrary government." In 1967, the US Supreme Court in *Katz v USA* declared, "Wherever a man may be, he is entitled to know that he will remain free from unreasonable search and seizure.

Arbitrary search and seizure is not the only crime perpetrated by the new measures. They also abolish the right to self-defence, permit punishment before conviction, and reverse the presumption of innocent until proven guilty, with guilty until proven innocent. If indeed knife attacks are on the rise, which is open to question, then there is a need for self-defence. To say, as the Victorian Minister for Police Bob Cameron said, that "knives are not defensive weapons", is inane. To proscribe them will deprive the law-abiding of the ability to defend themselves, and render them criminals.

Those who carry knives for offensive purposes are indeed criminals, and are unlikely to be deterred by the new laws. Nor are the new laws likely to achieve their stated purpose of reducing knife crime. As UK criminology professor Ben Bowling of King's College, a world leading authority on the subject, has stated, there is simply no robust evidence to such effect. What they have done, however is to open the door to tyranny, and made a mockery of Victoria's Charter of Human Rights. *DBS*

IN PRAISE OF SLUMS

Slums don't get a lot of support from town planners or governments. They see them as festering urban sores that must be 'cleared'. Indeed, most of Melbourne's inner city suburbs were just such slums before they became trendy. Inner city suburbs such as Richmond and the recently gentrified Footscray have always attracted immigrants because rents were low and property was cheap. These suburbs are now commercial hotspots, all due to the vigor of their immigrant communities.

Slums tend to be relative to the place and nation where they are located, just as is poverty. Take the infamous slums of Mumbai, the commercial hub of India, once known as Bombay. The Dharavi slum, within spitting distance of Mumbai's flash hotels and skyscrapers, is a one square mile in area, with a population of one million. It is also a major economic engine, with \$1 billion of output annually.

Dharavi is in its own way well governed and well organized. The writ of officialdom does not go far, but the slum is self-governing and effectively managed. Once one has become accustomed to people crapping in the middle of the road and the sight of rats, it's not such a bad place to live. It has a great sense of community,

the people are cheerful and courteous and everyone works. Education is highly valued and many children leave the slum daily to go to school. Dharavi even has a resident millionaire manufacturer.

While Prince Charles is full of praise for the slum, Kevin McLeod in 'Slumming It' on ABC1, (26 October 2010, 8:30 p.m) is not so sure: Cholera and diphtheria are rampant, many (though not all) dwellings are little more than piles of junk and rats seem to find their way into everything.

In all, not many people are likely to sell up their comfortable houses to move to Dharavi but as a place to live and work, this self-contained community has a lot going for it. The slum, however, is generally regarded as an eyesore and the land it stands on is very valuable real estate, so Mumbai's civic fathers would demolish it if they could get away with it. If Melbourne is any guide, any slum clearance would not be all roses for the slum dwellers. Melbourne's slum were replaced by soulless tower blocks that have been colonised by the reasonably well off. If nothing else, Dharavi is proof that, given a chance, the less privileged can manage their own lives effectively with minimal government interference.

JRB

SPEED CAMERAS GET HOT RECEPTION IN ARIZONA

News that automated speed cameras had malfunctioned and innocent drivers fined in Victoria would not have surprised the citizens of the US state of Arizona, who have over overwhelmingly rejected these detested machines.

Redflex, the Australian-based maker of speed cameras, had seemed to have struck gold in the US with its promise of a never ending stream of fines to bolster government revenues. But they underestimated the outraged reaction in the land of the free to these imposts.

Redflex had to pull its 'photo enforcement vehicles' out of Arizona and Louisiana after an employee,

Douglas Georgianni, was shot dead while snapping speeders. Shocked competitors did the same and also pulled out.

After a big profit fall, the company said there were 'major challenges ahead.'

"One of these 'major challenges' is hostility in the US to authorities using automated technology to catch and fine drivers, a technique viewed by conservatives as a form of entrapment. So hated are enforcement cameras in some states that they have triggered not only popular protests but popular ballots to let citizens decide if they are needed", reported the Australian

Financial Review (AFR 28 August, 2010.)

In Arizona, less than a third of speeding motorists paid their fines, due to a provision that notices had to be served on violators in person. The popular revolt was so effective that it blew a hole in revenue projections and the State abandoned the Redflex contract.

But that has not stopped Australian governments from rolling out the Redflex cameras in earnest, with Victoria and New South Wales leading the way.

Will Australian motorists revolt, as their American cousins did? JRB