

Five Voices for Lionel

edited by George Venturini; Federation Press 1994; \$16.95.

'Five Voices for Lionel' is a collection of the first five Lionel Murphy memorial lectures delivered between 1987 and 1991 by Ted Wheelwright, Faith Bandler, Clyde Cameron, Pat O'Shane and George Venturini.

Lionel Murphy was the most effective and progressive parliamentarian I have known. He was the strongest libertarian ever to sit on the High Court Bench. He died as a result of cancer much aggravated by pressure from the sanctimonious establishment, culminating in a two-year gaol sentence. Even at the end, as the photograph on the cover of the book shows, he was confident and at ease.

The method of government enquiry given form by Lionel Murphy has made it possible to expose and penalise 'appalling abuses and malpractices' of big business. Murphy led us into a new age of respect for the rebel, and the end of subservience to the men of power and reputation. Australia is far more realistic today than 20 years ago. But will it ever be possible really to change the capitalist establishment? Trying to do so led Murphy to his death, as it led also to the death of the Whitlam Government. There was a conspiracy in all this. Public servants, business men, Australian and American security operators were all involved. They convinced Kerr and others that men like Murphy were a danger to Australian security. But we must not forget that Murphy died at the hands of this conspiracy, and in 1975 the Whitlam Government was defeated with the ALP vote being about the lowest in history. It remained for Hawke and Keating to become part of the establishment, to replace lost working class votes with middle class votes and to vow never to be radical again. Will it ever be possible for an Australian government to go as far as Murphy and Whitlam and survive?

Few people can feel and understand what the Aboriginal people really need better than Faith Bandler. She can sense that Lionel Murphy was more than a humanist or libertarian. He did not just become what he was by education, by words, by reason. It all came to Lionel through the way he lived. Lionel Murphy had so much lived in sympathy with

those around him that he was in heart and mind a member of the suppressed classes. Faith Bandler saw the dynamics of Lionel Murphy. He was not just an Attorney-General, or later a judge. Becoming one of these did not take him away from people, as it does with most individuals who reach high office. It allowed him to do more for those he knew needed his help.

I didn't know until recently that Clyde Cameron agreed with me about Lionel Murphy going to the High Court. On 10 February 1975, Whitlam asked me to come to his office before we went to a Cabinet meeting. Lionel was sitting on the edge of Whitlam's desk. Gough said, 'I've told our comrade, he should fill the vacancy in the High Court'. I said I agreed. Lionel rang his wife Ingrid. On the way to the Cabinet meeting I said to Lionel: 'You'll have ten or twelve years on the High Court; the government will not last that many months'. I said to Whitlam: 'You would be able to appoint him Chief Justice'. Cabinet took Whitlam's statement that Lionel Murphy was on the High Court without comment although some did not agree. Clyde Cameron reminds us that it was on 7 May 1986 that the Hawke Government announced a judicial enquiry 'into the behaviour of Mr Justice Lionel Murphy'. On 1 August 1986 Lionel Murphy announced he had terminal cancer. How completely inhumane the Hawke Government must have been.

Whatever was the position of the Church hierarchy and B.A. Santamaria on state aid, they wanted it, and it was a powerful factor in Australian politics from 1951, but not so powerful as its running mate anti-communism. By 1968 both state aid and anti-communism were no longer an issue. Whitlam moved 'left', away from pro-DLP type plans when he came to see that his leadership of the ALP was in danger if he preferred Harridine to the 'faceless men'. My leadership challenge in 1968 seemed to move Whitlam to policy and away from personalities. It really was time in 1969, the first election in which anti-communism did not appear. I do not think Clyde Cameron's vote moved from 1955 to 1963 because of state aid. My vote moved in much the same way from 1955 to 1963 because working class voters came to see that the DLP was not a Labor Party, and then plum-

meted in 1966 with Holt doing better than Menzies because he announced he was going all the way with LBJ. In 1966 my vote in very middle class areas, never big, fell to less than half of what it had been, but the vote in working class areas fell very little. When one considers how much Labor failed to defend itself against anti-communism it's a wonder the Party survived at all. It was a better understanding of the war in Vietnam that eliminated anti-communism from Australian politics and made the election of a Whitlam Government possible in 1972.

Lionel Murphy was always there in the anti-Vietnam war campaign. He and I spoke to many meetings of over 2000 people. Murphy was not just a parliamentarian or a Party man as so many others were. He was always ready to fight for what he believed in, and he was ready to go outside parliament and Party meetings to do so. Labor had the choice in 1968 of going right or left, of Australian national identity or of being an image of America. Murphy was always left because the people who needed human rights could achieve them only in ways that were radical. He wanted office. Once he came to see me about replacing Pat Kennelly as deputy leader in the Senate, but office for him was always for a purpose never for status or money.

Pat O'Shane has, like Faith Bandler, seen life in Australia primarily as a better life for her own people. That means not only land rights, but removing the old cultural pattern. It means no longer being British royalist, reactionary and anti-intellectual. Pat O'Shane has followed a road in law, education and the public service and it seems she often found Lionel Murphy. As O'Shane points out in her lecture, no matter how important human rights and anti-discrimination are, the main problems faced by those who are deprived of human rights are 'social problems which society cannot solve'. As far as human rights for Aboriginal people are concerned, Pat O'Shane thinks that it has to begin with land rights. There is much truth in that and Aborigines with land rights have in their hands a partial solution to the 'social problem' which 'society cannot solve'. But 25% of the people in Australia are an outcast class for whom land rights do not exist. Given the resistance there is to taxation and the rejection of government deficits, there is no money for the outcast class, and even if there is money the experts and others would not know

what to do with it. The central aim now is economic growth but economic growth only reaches or benefits the top 60% of income earners. For the rest the other great economic principle applies — 25% of the people cannot afford to use anything much and privatisation is taking away much of what they can afford to use.

Lionel Murphy would never have believed that within less than a decade of his death economic rationalism would have become so powerful. And economic rationalism is not just a way of thinking. It is a way of living. It is the rule of inhumane values and alienation. It is not just the impact of some law or authority on individuals or groups of individuals. It is not something that can be much dealt with by libertarians. It is a total social condition, a collective of government authorities and capitalist institutions. It is an impersonal authoritarian system which reaches everyone.

I think George Venturini deserves much of the credit for producing *Five Voices of Lionel*. There have been few books apart from his own capable of opening the reader to a more productive response to Lionel Murphy's ideas. In his lecture, George Venturini shows the libertarian and egalitarian quality of the Republic (not nationalism as it is for so many other Republicans), which made Lionel Murphy a Republican. The Republic, in the sense of cutting ties with Britain and the Crown, will change things very little. No one in Canberra is likely to be more libertarian and egalitarian than those in London. Constitutional changes in Australia must go much further than installing a Republic. But how far and in what form? Is representative government of any kind really government by the people? And apart from direct action like the Vietnam moratorium, or to save a swimming pool, a secondary school, an Albert Park, or a market how can we have government by the people?

The 'social problem' looks as if it becomes more intense every day, and society does not know what to do about it. However important are Lionel Murphy's principles, I conclude by reminding the reader that Teilhard de Chardin wrote that what we are involved in is nothing less than an 'organic crisis; an organic crisis in evolution'. Human beings have always solved their organic crises in evolution.

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Zoos and Animal Rights. The Ethics of Keeping Animals

by Stephen St C. Bostock; Routledge 1993, distributed by Thomas Nelson; \$32.95.

Why should we be interested in the way animals are treated in zoos? Having been a vegetarian for the past 15 years as well as a member of *Friends of the Zoos* for the past four years, I have often wondered how we can reconcile the pleasure we derive from contact with animals with the likelihood that such animals would be better off not having contact with humans. Let's face it, zoos must be pretty mind-numbing places for some animals. I hoped Bostock would provide me with some useful insights into how such issues might be dealt with. While I found *Zoos and Animal Rights* an interesting book, several important issues such as the regulation of private zoos deserved more detailed consideration.

Bostock, an education officer for Glasgow Zoo, seems to have been writing for several audiences with this book. Some sections of the book are accessible and informative while others have a much more philosophical, theoretical flavour. I found the chapter on the history of animal keeping and the two chapters on conservation to be the most interesting and useful.

Chapter 2 of the book outlines the history of animal keeping from Egyptian and Mesopotamian times, through the relatively enlightened practices of the Ancient Greeks, to the astounding brutality of Roman times. Thousands of animals, mainly lions and leopards, were slaughtered each year from the second century BC until the first century AD as part of a range of activities for the pleasure of the citizens. In the book's introduction, Bostock relates an incident in Versailles in 1792 where the menagerie founded by Louis XIV was now the property of the fledgling French republic. A group of Jacobin sympathisers demanded 'the liberty of beings intended by their Creator for freedom but detained by the pride and pomp of tyrants'. The director of the park in which the menagerie was housed agreed but must have been worried that the liberators would be eaten by the liberated and so offered the Jacobins the keys. At this stage it was decided to leave the beasts provisionally where they were.

Bostock devotes considerable attention to conservation issues. He views conservational captive breeding as the most important role and most proper justification for the continuing existence of zoos. This is especially so in the context of the growing number of endangered species. He also deals effectively with the issue of reintroducing captive bred animals to the wild as well as the taking of an animal from the wild, a practice which 'is considerably more difficult to justify than keeping it in a zoo'.

Several important issues which would have provided fertile ground for argument are dealt with only briefly in *Zoos and Animal Rights*. Amongst these are the following.

- The tension caused by zoos giving humans a false sense of security in relation to the continuing existence of endangered animals by having them displayed in easily accessible places. On the other hand, zoos act as 'honey pots' helping to divert a large proportion of visitors from visiting and most likely damaging endangered habitats.
- The importance of preserving habitats and ecosystems. It must be acknowledged that there is little value in keeping species alive in zoos in unsustainable small numbers while doing little or nothing to preserve their habitat.
- The way in which zoos decide which species they will work with and expend their resources on. Generally, it is the cuddly, big and rare which receive the attention, leading to the suggestion that zoos could better be called 'selected charismatic megavertebrate conservation centres'.
- The difficult issue regarding the relationship between conservation objectives and hunting in situations where the recreational hunting lobby is actively working to 'preserve' remnant or pressured habitats for the purpose of their 'sport'. Bostock states 'Hunters appreciate, as laymen don't, that there is no contradiction between conservation and hunting. Historically, hunting provided the motivation for wildlife conservation.' If such an argument can be