any stimulus to the economy often exacerbates the next downturn.

The overseas role models chosen by the authors are extremely selective. The most praised models are those of Europe (Norway, Switzerland, Portugal, Germany, and Austria), with some further generally approving references to the corporatist models of Asia, especially Japan. Since Norway relies on oil revenues and Switzerland is a small country with a very strong financial sector (the book disapproves of this in Australia) neither of these are appropriate role models. The pro-business outlook of the people, and governments, of many Asian countries and to a lesser extent Germany and Austria, is at odds with the book's advocacy of redistributing income from business to causes such as the arts, aborigines, foreign aid, the environment, social welfare, and expanding the public service. Most Asian countries also have very flexible labour markets and limited welfare states, developments the authors are most keen to resist in Australia.

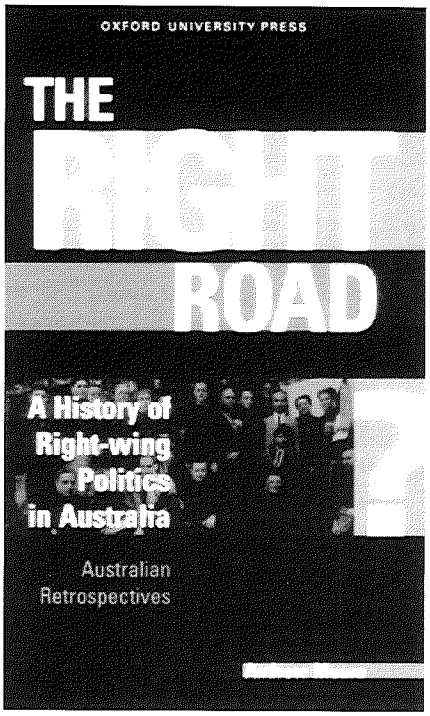
The economies that best fit the book's policy prescriptions, but are not cited as role models, are those of France, Spain and Italy (embodying rigid industrial relations systems, large welfare states, and a general hostility to business) where unemployment is even worse than it is in Australia.

The book aims to provide a policy prescription to solve Australia's ongoing unemployment problems. It has failed. Instead of policy prescriptions for the future this book is really about perpetuating the mistakes of the past.

Reviewed by John Rogers.

The Right Road: A History of Right-wing Politics in Australia

by Andrew Moore
Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1995, 166 pp.
ISBN 019553512X, $22.95



This is not a good book. Dr Moore's previous publications have been on the topic of secret armies in Australia during the 1920s and 1930s and these clandestine organisations would seem to be his model of what 'right-wing' politics is all about. So what is really the subject of his book is extreme right-wing politics or the loony right. Or is it? In his Introduction he says that by right-wing he means those who operate from a more extreme position than mainstream conservative organisations such as the Liberal Party. But in his account of the Right in Australia he constantly keeps dragging in more mainstream groups and attempts to associate them with the extreme right so that ultimately all right of centre politics in Australia can be tarred with the extremist brush. The 'New Right', despite its concern with liberalism and free market economics, is placed alongside fringe groups such as the League of Rights and various other racist organisations. The Institute of Public Affairs is named as an extreme 'Right-wing' organisation! Dr Moore also states that the reason the Right failed to flourish in Australia during the 1930s was because the parliamentary Right achieved so much of its program for it. In other words scratch a conservative and you will find a fascist hidden underneath.

The real problem with this book is that it does not attempt to come to terms with what is meant by the Right in Australia largely because its perspective is that of someone still trying to man the barricades of the old left and for whom everyone right-of-centre is THE ENEMY. For example Dr Moore points to Edmund Burke as some sort of conservative mentor for the colonial gentry of mid-nineteenth century New South Wales despite the lack of any concrete evidence to establish this fact. The problem is that Burke, like many of the colonial political figures Dr Moore wishes to disparage, was not so much a conservative as a reformist Whig who opposed violent upheaval but supported constructive change. By English standards Australian conservatives were Whigs and liberals, not die-hard Tories. Such a view, however, would spoil Dr Moore's argument, which is that these colonial Burkians were the ancestors of the leaders of the secret armies of the twenties and thirties. There is more than a whiff of a conspiratorial view of the world here; the view of course that is found in abundance amongst those who constitute the extreme right.

This failure to distinguish be-

tween the Right as a respectable and mainstream political grouping and the extreme Right means that this book has only limited value. Its lack of theoretical sophistication means that it cannot even conceive of the other Right found in Australia, i.e. the Right found on the Labor side of politics. After all there was as much racism and economic ratbaggery to be found in those circles during the first half of this century as amongst those who leaned to fascism. And it was not unknown for individuals to begin as Bolsheviks and to end up as fascists. Equally Dr Moore is at a loss to know what to do with Catholic social theory and rather unfairly lumps Santamaria and the National Civic Council (NCC) in with a couple of fringe Protestant sects as representing the 'religious Right'.

We need a good study of the Right in Australia, but we need one that is willing to engage with the topic and not use it to promote an ideological line. Basic to any such enterprise is a capacity to distinguish amongst conservatives, liberals and those fringe groups who view the world in terms of giant conspiracies, and are best termed fascist. For political reasons Dr Moore refuses to make these distinctions with the consequence that his view of the Right begins to assume the quality of a conspiracy theory.

Reviewed by Gregory Melleuish,
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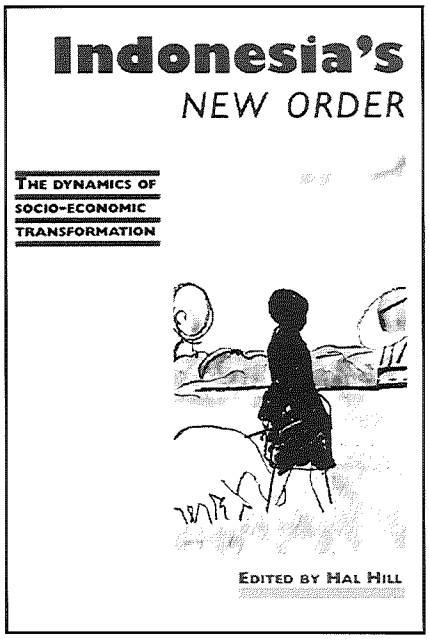
Indonesia's New Order: The Dynamics of Socio-Economic Transformation

edited by Hal Hill, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1994, 364 pp., ISBN 1 86373 229 2, $29.95

The study of history is interesting in itself, but what converts an historical account from being merely a 'good read' (an item of consumption) into a useful tool (a business and policy input) is the predictions about the future to which it leads. For Australia, what is really interesting about Indonesia is not simply where it has been but where it is likely to go. In recent years, Australia has built up a pool of academics well versed in Indonesian affairs. At this time, with the departure of Soeharto from the presidency increasingly imminent, analysis from this pool about the likely shape of the presidential transition, its effect on the Indonesian economy and ultimately, the implications for Australia, would be timely and useful. Instead, what we have been given in *Indonesia's New Order: The Dynamics of Socio-Economic Transformation* is an interesting account of Indonesia's recent economic, political and social history, but few leads, if any, as to what the past suggests about the future.

Despite Indonesia's economy currently being just one third the size of Australia's, our tenth largest export destination and twelfth largest source for imports, Indonesia's proximity to Australia, position in the region and 190 million-strong population mean that the bilateral relationship between the two countries is important. That the Australian Government and Federal Opposition consider it so is verified by the inputs being put into the relationship. Such inputs include, for example, numerous ministerial and shadow ministerial visits and an embassy that, with 67 Australian staff, is Australia's largest abroad. Managing present and future relations with Indonesia clearly is an Australian national priority; managing the past is not.

The contributions of the eight Indonesia specialists *Indonesia's New Order: The Dynamics of Socio-Economic Transformation* are relatively thorough, although there are some important issues that are given only cursory treatment. The extraordinary com-



mercial rise of Indonesia's Chinese under Soeharto's New Order is mentioned rather than tackled. Around 3.5 per cent of Indonesia's population is of Chinese descent. This small minority is estimated to control around 70 per cent of Indonesia's non-land capital and, according to recent figures, 68 per cent of its wealthiest 300 conglomerates. Despite exhortations for a better distribution of wealth, the concentration of ethnic Chinese ownership of the nation's top conglomerates has increased rather than decreased. In 1988, for example, 74.6 per cent of the assets of the top 300