

Achieving Both Justice and Good Economic Outcomes: Catholic Social Teaching and Human Work

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With the sociological reality of the embourgeoisment of many Catholics in Australia over the last three decades we encounter a question which has some relevance to our discussion today: what emphasis are we to give the phenomenon of Catholic parliamentarians and policy-makers enacting legislation that is criticised for its lack of empathy for Catholic social teaching? Today, I do not set out to answer this question directly, although it does provide an embarkation point from which I can set out my main claims. I mention the problem because, from federation to recent times, Australia has never seen either such Catholic presence in the non-Labor parties, or (within industrial relations at least) such an aggressive pursuit of what I am calling 'neo-liberalism'. The fact that we do now witness *the combination* of these political elements is a disturbing situation, not least for those Catholics who continue to adhere to the view that Catholic social teaching has serious objections to make to certain aspects of capitalism, especially the form it takes under neo-liberal construction.

Catholic parliamentarians and policy-makers — along with their supporters inside and outside the Church — who are subjected to criticism for adopting neo-

liberal industrial relations policies seen as being at odds with Catholic social thought marshal a variety of approaches to defend themselves.

One such approach is to attempt to lay claim to the proper understanding of CST and its relevance to economic theory and policy by what I would argue is selective use of CST: this can occur at the level of political practitioners, as it has with Howard Government Ministers (particularly Catholics, such as Tony Abbott, Kevin Andrews, and Joe Hockey); it can also occur at a more intellectual level, as it has in the US, with people such as Michael Novak, Richard Neuhaus, and George Weigel.

An even more ambitious project, taken up by a small minority from within the Church, is to state that CST is misguided; I am thinking here of some fringe thinkers and groups even further to the Right than those just mentioned. A similar view has been expressed sometimes by groups outside the Church — religious and secular — for example when the *Wall Street Journal* referred to *Populorum Progressio* as ‘warmed-over Marxism’.

Another, much more common approach — one which I want to focus on today — is to downplay the significance of CST by partitioning it off from the realm of ‘economic respectability’. CST is given a polite audience insofar as it can be superficially accommodated into the array of public policies of contemporary governments — seen as respectable at the level of compassion — but at a level that has anything serious to say about economics or economic systems, CST is relegated to a very lowly status indeed.

And there are sometimes combinations of these approaches: witness Kevin Andrews’ technique of selectively using CST to attempt to bolster his own position *and* implicitly consigning church leaders critical of the industrial

relations legislation to the realm of having nothing worthy to contribute to economic debate.¹

Interestingly, this introduces my main theme, because this is precisely where the debate needs to at. What I have to say will not surprise many working in, alongside, or in sympathy with church, community, and union organisations who observe on a daily basis not only the cruelty of many public policies but the shocking professional incompetence, economic waste, and social hypocrisy that pertains to those policies. Today, I confine myself to industrial relations, and my message is that all those sympathetic to CST should welcome the chance to enjoin the debate about the 2005-06 I.R. legislation both in terms of the unfairness of the legislation *and* in terms of its gross inefficiency, its destructive intent, and its perverse effects.

Judging by opinion polling data that show that two thirds of those surveyed believe the new laws will harm them as individuals, but that just over half of those surveyed also believe the laws will harm the country, there is still some work to be done to show how laws that are unfair to individuals and small groups are also unproductive, inefficient, and likely to lead to poorer economic outcomes overall.

Of course, the false dichotomy of efficiency versus equity — or prosperity versus justice — is not only utilized to keep church groups in their place; a fully secularized version of this thinking is long established. Even well-intentioned economists, some of whom, such as Fred Argy, commanding a far superior understanding of both efficiency and equity than the present generation of policy-makers, often, unfortunately, reinforce — rather than challenge — the dichotomy. At the international level, a highly influential book published by

¹ See comments attributed to Kevin Andrews by various Australian newspapers in July 2005.

Arthur Okun in 1975 entitled *Equality and Efficiency: the Big Tradeoff*,² while arguing that there was more room for a positive-sum approach, nevertheless proceeded on an assumption that there is a conflict between equality and efficiency.

The blind spot is the tendency of some to see the market as in every circumstance natural, to believe that there can be such a thing as a self-regulating market, and to see these supposed free markets as the most efficient way to allocate resources. Efficiency in this context is conceived as an ideologically neutral social good that can be pursued by governments of all political colours. Efficiency and equity are juxtaposed as entities to be traded off: governments of the Right ostensibly favour more emphasis on efficiency, arguing that increased prosperity and growth will mean more for everyone eventually, including the poor; governments of the Left, at least traditionally, would argue that there was more room for equity and — those more in keeping with this tradition — that equity and greater equality ought to be their starting point. However, in the past two to three decades, many on the nominal Left have increasingly come to accept a fundamental position that equity is something to worry about when we have the economic basics in place. Once this much ground is conceded by those economists and policy-makers who see themselves as progressive, questions dealing with power imbalance, economic inequality, exploitation, and fairness — together with the supposed efficiency of the market in the first place — are marginalised.

Fortunately, not all economists, and not all social scientists, concede this ground. In the United States, Robert Kuttner is one prominent public intellectual pursuing an approach emphasising that, more often than we think, when we increase inequality, or harshness to those who are more vulnerable, we end up

² Arthur Okun, *Equality and Efficiency: The Big Tradeoff*, Brookings Institution, 1975.

reducing economic benefits to society as a whole.³ In the United Kingdom, Richard Wilkinson writes in a similar tradition, documenting how significant inequality is not merely open to criticism on grounds of distributive justice, but on the grounds of its breathtaking social and economic costs.⁴

Of course the fundamental flaw in setting up the dichotomy of efficiency (residing in the market) versus equity (residing in government action) is in the belief that markets are in opposition to the state. The relationship between states and markets is much more complex than this — something that must be obvious to business lobby groups who regularly use the state to get what they want in the market.

One important thinker in the secular tradition who has some resonance in CST is Karl Polanyi (1886-1964). Hungarian-born to a Jewish family that later converted to Protestant Christianity, Polanyi reached his intellectual height at a time when the world could look back to see the horrors brought by what he termed ‘disembedded markets’ and the ‘market society’ of the nineteenth century, or what we might term ‘market fundamentalism’. These horrors included depression and world war in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, to be repeated all over again a generation later. For Polanyi, the immediate period after the Second World War sees an attempt to re-moralize and re-politicise the economy by embedding it once more in society.

It is interesting to note that Polanyi and Catholic social doctrine share a common influence: Aristotle. The influence of Aristotle is most evident of course in Thomas Aquinas. In Aristotle’s reckoning, “society is superordinate to the

³ Robert Kuttner, *The Economic Illusion: False Choices Between Prosperity and Social Justice*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1984; *Everything for Sale: the Virtues and Limits of Markets*, Alfred A Knopf, New York, 1997.

⁴ Richard Wilkinson, *The Impact of Inequality: How to Make Sick Societies Healthier*, Routledge, London, 2005.

economy because society culturally determines what should be reproduced and what is just".⁵ The commonality in Aristotle, in Karl Polanyi's work, and in Christian social thought is that economic wealth is not an end in itself, but a means to an end — human provisioning — and is then bounded by its relation to that end.⁶

It should be emphasised that, on the negative side, Polanyi does not object to markets per se; it is market *society* — or the notion that the market shall impose its precepts to the exclusion of social precepts — that needs to be replaced. And replaced by what? Replaced by the idea that, in one way or another, all markets are socially and politically constructed. Markets do not just happen; still less does market society spontaneously arise. Polanyi's 1944 classic, *The Great Transformation*, shows how the nineteenth century is replete with Herculean efforts to bring about markets.

So, the choice is not between the state and the market. Knowing that all markets are constructed, or shaped, by legal and political infrastructure, by transport, housing, communication, educational, and health infrastructure, by our welfare system, our childcare system, together with many other dimensions of our society, the debate is transformed from the sterility of whether or not to have government intervention — for there is no such thing as **no** government intervention — into a discussion about *what kinds* of interventions, institutions, and arrangements are most likely to bring about socially desirable goals.

Industrial relations policy is both *a response to* the present labour market conditions and a major factor *in shaping the future* of labour markets. As Chris Briggs, John Buchanan and Ian Watson argue, "the prevailing industrial relations landscape...shapes what types of work emerge, and what types of work are not

⁵ J R Stanfield, *The Economic Thought of Karl Polanyi*, Macmillan, London, 1986, p.10.

⁶ *The Economic Thought of Karl Polanyi*, p.9.

allowed to emerge”.⁷ Legislation that makes casual employment more prevalent is but one example of how government intervention can shape what kinds of work emerge. Apart from the obvious disadvantages of casual employment to individual people, casualisation is also notorious for its lowering of overall spending on training and skills formation.

The general point to come back to is to acknowledge explicitly that labour markets are the product of an array of past and present government decisions and action, and then to assert that it is the prerogative of the polity to decide what kinds of work it is going to allow to emerge, and how markets can best serve socially desired outcomes. Markets are better viewed as a means of efficiently allocating resources (in specified areas) once the goals of a society have been determined.

The enunciation of this principle may have been what upset the *Wall Street Journal* when it referred to Paul VI’s encyclical letter, *Populorum Progressio*, as warmed-over Marxism. In his 1967 letter, Paul VI attempted to strike the balance between the principle of socialization and the principle of subsidiarity:

Individual initiative alone and the mere free play of competition could never assure successful development...Hence programmes are necessary in order to “encourage, stimulate, coordinate, supplement and integrate” the activity of individuals and of intermediary bodies. It pertains to the public authorities to choose, even to lay down the objectives to be pursued, the ends to be achieved, and the means for attaining these, and it is for them to stimulate all the forces engaged in this common activity. But let them take care to associate private initiative and intermediary bodies with this work. They will thus avoid the danger of complete

⁷ Chris Briggs, John Buchanan, and Ian Watson, ‘Wages Policy in an Era of Deepening Wage Inequality’ Policy Paper No.4, The Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia, Canberra, 2006, p.7.

collectivisation or of arbitrary planning, which, by denying liberty, would prevent the exercise of the fundamental rights of the human person.

When we compare and contrast this thinking to neo-liberal conceptions of human work in our present era we are struck by the contradictions of the latter: neo-liberalism is a doctrine that says it is for free labour markets yet it heavily contrives and circumscribes social and industrial outcomes; it says it is against third party involvement in the employment relationship yet it has made government an imposing and authoritarian entity; it says it favours individualism over collectivism yet it has favoured the collective strength of capital.⁸

Perhaps the most central claim that the Howard Government makes in defending its position is the claim that increasing productivity growth is the key to greater prosperity, and that its new laws are the means to achieve this productivity growth. Many are agreed that productivity growth is indeed the key to greater prosperity, but that is where agreement with the Howard Government starts and stops. As David Peetz has been at pains to point out, the Government's position on productivity has been quite disingenuous; it has conflated productivity with *profitability*.⁹ Because it is a measure of output per unit of input, productivity is measuring something different from profitability. While an increase in productivity will — all other things being equal — lead to an increase in profits (productivity growth being the positive means by which costs may be reduced), the reverse cannot be said to be true: an increase in profits — all other things left the same — will not lead to productivity growth. An increase in profits arrived at without productivity growth is as it appears to be: a

⁸ David Peetz, *Brave New Workplace: How Individual Contracts are Changing Our Jobs*, Allen and Unwin, 2006.

⁹ Peetz, *Brave New Workplace*, p.74.

transfer of income from workers to employers, and represents no net gain. Joseph Schumpeter, a sophisticated and intelligent proponent of entrepreneurialism, observed long ago that profitability and productivity will often work in opposite directions if the preoccupation is with profits rather than productivity.¹⁰

This is not merely a theoretical abstraction. Attacks on, or resistance to the improvement of, workers' entitlements may lead to lower labour productivity growth, as it did in the US between 1973 and the late 1990s, and ensure that the benefits of whatever productivity growth that does occur are not distributed to workers in terms that protect — still less improve — their real incomes.¹¹ Similarly, labour productivity growth in New Zealand halted throughout the 1990s alongside the implementation of the *Employment Contracts Act* of 1991.

Moreover, the Howard Government has not properly distinguished between *labour* productivity on the one hand and *multi-factor* or *total-factor* productivity on the other. These latter terms take into account all inputs that go into the production process, so a focus on a measurement of this kind takes us back to big picture issues like technical progress, which is determined by technical innovation, skills formation, education (which feeds back into technical innovation), training and re-training, the state of infrastructure: these big-ticket items, which have an important bearing on productivity growth, have been neglected by the Howard Government because, we are entitled to say, they require public investment.

As much as that exposure should give the Government and some prominent business groups reason for pause, we are able also to place this discussion of

¹⁰ Joseph Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*, Allen and Unwin, London, 1976, pp.76 and 81.

¹¹ See Robert Pollin, *Contours of Descent: US Economic Fractures and the Landscape of Global Austerity*, Verso, New York, 2003.

productivity into the broader issue of the *types* of industrial relations systems that are more likely to enhance productivity growth. I can illustrate the point by referring to one Australian pioneer of economic theory and policy in the middle of the twentieth century, Wilfred Salter. After achieving an outstanding academic record as an undergraduate at the University of Western Australia, Salter went on to write a brilliant doctoral thesis at the University of Cambridge between 1953 and 1955. After a post-doctoral stint in the US, where he incorporated American data, Salter published his *Productivity and Technical Change* with Cambridge University Press in 1960. Salter's interest was to enquire into what it is that brings about investment in new techniques at the margins of existing capital goods.

For Salter to be interested in this *economic* question he first had to recognize a *political* reality — a reality that, with the benefit of the recent experience of the 2005-06 industrial relations legislation, we can all now recognize: business has no direct interest in productivity growth per se: productivity growth is attractive to business only because it is a means to an end — reducing labour costs and maintaining or increasing profits.

If labour costs can be reduced by an individual business, that business risks a threat to its profitability if it does not exploit the ability to reduce labour costs, especially if other businesses in a particular market are going to attempt to reduce their labour costs. From the point of view of an individual business, the optimum situation is for it to be able to reduce its labour costs while wages overall are *not* reduced. In a competitive environment it is clear that an individual business cannot achieve this outcome. What is likely — almost certainly inevitable — is that a vicious cycle is set up by a race to the bottom. The solution, argued Salter (and people such as Eric Russell), was essentially political: institutional auspices were needed to keep pay levels in line with effective overall productivity. This meant that relatively high-productivity

industries (which tended to be those that were expanding) would not have to pay overly high money-wages and would have more funds for re-investment while relatively low-productivity industries (which tended to be those that were declining) would have to rationalise, and would not be assisted to linger on, certainly not by being allowed to pay lower wages.

Salter's three policy conclusions may be summarized as follows:

- (a) government economic policy should be directed to creating a flexible *economy*, rather than engaging in the empty rhetoric of 'flexible labour markets'. A more flexible economy is one that enables an easier transference of resources from declining industries to expanding ones;
- (b) wages policy should be national in scope. 'Capacity-to-pay' arguments are applicable to the overall economy rather than at the level of the industry and still less at the level of the firm;
- (c) the structure of production will change more quickly and easily if there is a higher level of gross investment, increasing the output and productivity of those industries where technical advances are most rapid.¹²

The guiding principle underlying Salter's analysis is one of justice *and* efficiency. It is *just* that all citizens share in the benefits that flow from the complementarity of capital and labour and their joint contribution to the rise in overall productivity — that productivity growth is seen to be the responsibility of both capital and labour. And it is *efficient* to remove a process that would prop up industries (or firms) that are unable to pay socially acceptable wages; and it is efficient to remove a process that erodes the capacity for re-investment in higher-productivity firms and industries. Many scholars in the tradition of institutionalist economics have continued research in this field, some of them

¹² Geoff Harcourt, 'Economic Policy, Accumulation, and Productivity', in Jonathan Michie and John Grieve Smith (eds), *Employment and Economic Performance: Jobs, Inflation, and Growth*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1997, pp.194-204, at pp.198-9.

looking at the phenomenon of higher productivity occurring in firms with higher rates of unionisation.¹³

There are also social benefits or public goods that result from productivity growth. Once full employment is achieved, and then maintained, the social benefits of further productivity growth can be realised in the form of reduced working time. This is in fact what occurred in many countries, including Australia, in the years between 1945 and the early to mid 1980s.

When we turn to Catholic social thought to ascertain how well these sorts of principles are upheld, we find that it is unequivocal on the principle of complementarity, and therefore on the responsibility of society to provide for the proper conditions for a level of productivity that leads to the payment of adequate wages.¹⁴ *Quadragesimo Anno* is perhaps the clearest statement of this principle.¹⁵ On the deeper principle of not treating human labour as a mere market commodity, CST is adamant.¹⁶ It is also worth stressing that the economic concept of public goods finds an ally in CST's principle of universal access: that no one may be excluded from the benefits of the created world and its economic activity. *Gaudium et Spes*, *Populorum Progressio*, and *Laborem Exercens* contain perhaps the strongest statements defending universal access.

Of course, one defining feature of the times in which we now live is that neo-liberals (at least in Australia) — when faced with compelling counter-arguments to their proposals — are increasingly resorting to labeling their critics as hopelessly out-dated relics. This approach seems quite deliberately designed to avoid having to engage in substantive argument by attempting to put the

¹³ See the findings of David Peetz's research in *Brave New Workplace*, pp. 62-74.

¹⁴ Albino Barrera, *Modern Catholic Social Documents and Political Economy*, Georgetown University Press, Washington DC, 2001, p.70.

¹⁵ § 72

¹⁶ Barrera, *Modern Catholic Social Documents*, p.70.

opponents of change on the defensive — and to discharge supporters of the change from ever having to show how their policies will be of either general benefit or to the benefit of the least well-off.

An effective means of meeting head-on the rhetoric of neo-liberalism is to show how anachronistic, and misleading, its own language is. The language of regulation versus deregulation is (and has always been) misleading because there is no such thing as an unregulated labour market. The language of ‘centralised versus decentralised’ is becoming increasingly anachronistic as contemporary institutionalist scholars adopt the terminology of *coordination*, and identify the public goods that are to be realised from coordinated systems — for instance, settling the more contentious matters concerning pay and conditions at a higher level while opening up space for consultation and negotiation at the level of the enterprise.¹⁷

In this scenario, the terms ‘flexibility’ and ‘choice’ can be rescued and given the positive meaning they once had — a meaning which has been stripped from them over the last fifteen years or so. Emphasis on the *quality* of the coordination underpinning industrial relations systems — whether they are in the context of Henry Bournes Higgins’ minimum wage decision in 1907, Wilfred Salter’s commitment to justice and efficiency in the 1950s, or contemporary institutionalist theorists in 2007 — is what society needs, rather than infantile sloganeering about ‘getting with the times’.

Some policies and ideas become dated over time; others don’t. There is a lineage that can be traced through the aforementioned thinkers, and through Christian social thought, that has stood the test of time. Neo-liberals who claim that the opponents of their changes are caught in a time warp — apart from failing to

¹⁷ Chris Briggs, John Buchanan, and Ian Watson, ‘Wages Policy in an Era of Deepening Wage Inequality’.

explain how their framework is **not** itself a return to nineteenth century forms of bargaining — have failed to explain how the new arrangements will bring about greater equity between occupational groups, greater equality between men and women, increased security — *or* a growth in productivity.

That the most careful empirical research shows that uncoordinated labour markets and neo-liberal institutions have not performed well (according to criteria based on either efficiency or fairness) is something that church and community groups need to make more of.

For all its insistence on change, much of neo-liberalism has been sold on a predetermined and highly rigid view that the many other aspects of economic life must be accepted as they are: governments cannot create jobs, public investment is generally wasteful (or at least less efficient than private investment), governments cannot pick winners (except when it is squandering public money to prop up the Advanced Institute of Sport), and so on. These and similar rigid views comprise the intellectual infrastructure that forces a false choice on the citizenry.

One specific instance of how this process plays out has considerable practical effect in the present industrial relations debate. When Howard Government ministers are challenged about how the new legislation erodes workers' rights and entitlements, a defensive tactic is to set up a kind of hierarchy of rights: 'the most fundamental right a worker has is to have a job'. Kevin Andrews made use of this tactic in 2005, while the legislation was still being drafted, when he argued on the ABC's *Religion Report* that the first task of government was to ensure 'that the conditions for creating employment' were established 'in the economy'. This

principle, he said, citing John Paul II's 1981 encyclical letter, *Laborem Exercens*, was 'fundamental'.¹⁸

The principle of enough jobs for everyone is indeed a critical one, but, as the host of the program intimated, this principle is itself derived from the fundamental criterion of the objective rights of the worker. We shall leave aside the obvious objection that there exists expert opinion that the new legislation will not create (and has not been responsible for creating) net employment, and make the objection at another level: as a point of principle, public policy designed to achieve one outcome at the expense of another is contrary to both Christian social thought and to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which sets this out in the principle of the 'indivisibility of human rights'. Christian social thought, insofar as it is expressed in Catholic social teaching, holds that

Human rights are to be defended not only individually but also as a whole: protecting them only partially would imply a kind of failure to recognize them... Together they form a single whole, directed unambiguously towards the promotion of every aspect of the good of both the person and society... The integral promotion of every category of human rights is the true guarantee of full respect for each individual right.¹⁹

The importance of this principle cannot be overstated. The right to security in employment cannot be contingent on other rights of employment; nor can it be derived from other rights. Any assertion to the contrary relies on rigid, ideological views of economic possibilities.

An appraisal of Catholic social thought would risk a level of deficiency if it neglected to draw from the deep wellspring that sustains and contextualises Church thought on human labour: the principle of the priority of labour over

¹⁸ 'Faith, Works and Industrial Relations', *The Religion Report*, Radio National, ABC, 17 August 2005, available at <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/religionreport/stories/2005/1470408.htm#>.

¹⁹ *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, St Paul's, Sydney, § 154, at p. 77.

capital. *Laborem Exercens* and *Gaudium et Spes* are well-known sites for the exposition of this principle, but there are rudimentary forms of it in earlier encyclicals. Its expression in *Laborem Exercens* is worth citing at length:

[W]e must first of all recall a principle that has always been taught by the Church: *the principle of the priority of labour over capital*. This principle directly concerns the process of production: in this process labour is always a primary *efficient cause*, while capital, the whole collection of means of production, remains a mere *instrument* or instrumental cause. This principle is an evident truth that emerges from the whole of man's historical experience.²⁰

Capital is the *result* of work, while the human person is the *subject* of work. John Paul continues:

Obviously, it remains clear that every human being sharing in the production process, even if he or she is only doing the kind of work for which no special training or qualifications are required, is the real efficient subject in this production process, while the whole collection of instruments, no matter how perfect they may be in themselves, are only a mere instrument subordinate to human labour.

This truth, which is part of the abiding heritage of the Church's teaching, must always be emphasized with reference to the question of the labour system and with regard to the whole socioeconomic system.²¹

It is clear that the present industrial relations legislation is fundamentally inconsistent with these views.

²⁰ *Laborem Exercens*, § 12

²¹ *Laborem Exercens*, § 12

My task today has not been so much about pointing to the more flagrant injustices of the 2005-2006 industrial relations legislation. Presuming that this audience would qualify as the converted, I took it for granted that it would not need convincing that a legal-institutional shift to give capital even more power than it already enjoyed is an outrageous breach of Catholic social justice principles, as well as Australian ideals as they have evolved since federation. I took it for granted that you would need no convincing that a government prohibition of specified employment matters — backed up by fines and imprisonment — is a gross violation of both secular and religious principles of social justice.

Assuming you would need no convincing on those matters, my aim has been to confront head-on some of the more pivotal tactics utilised by the Howard Government in its pursuit of this brutopia. No government since federation has been more the captive of employers — quite possibly because no government since federation has identified so strongly with employers as a class. In this context it is ironic indeed that the Howard Government accuses its adversaries of engaging in class warfare. The blatant attack by neo-liberals on working conditions and on working people has necessitated a marshalling of specious argument about moving with the times and disingenuous promise about protection. But, most of all, it has necessitated a presentation of a false choice. Neo-liberals would have us believe not only that equity and security have to be traded off against opportunity and prosperity (and that the latter have to be favoured over the former) but that — in the increasingly strident tones of neo-liberals — efforts to achieve equity and security to the exclusion of what they regard as the means to opportunity and prosperity constitute a chimera.

It is a matter of only small speculation to suggest that such a false choice is critical to propping up what is left of the neo-liberal project. Were it widely recognized that human society can enjoy security and a just social order on the

one hand and opportunity and prosperity on the other, any attraction in the policies proffered by neo-liberalism would vanish in an instant.

“Anyone with a social conscience and a public voice should be using every opportunity to tell the world, again and again and again, why the offending policies are not just immoral, but also frighteningly incompetent”.²²

²² Hugh Stretton, ‘The Poor Laws of 1834 and 1996’, *Quadrant*, December 1996, pp.9-18, at p.18.