

Wednesday, May 19, 1993

Identification have proved ventures, indeed.

As with so many matters of public controversy

in Australia, the only people who seem to have

gained anything at the end of the day are the

squad of lawyers who pocket fat fees.

The inescapable conclusion is that those who

approved the initial measures that led to the

charges and ensuing hearings simply did not

think it through.

An attempt to bring justice, however belated,

to the perpetrators of unspeakable mass murder

is, in principle, the unarguable expression

of a civilized society.

But it is not a matter of principle alone: is it

whether a conviction is likely given practical

problems.

As things stand today, the innocence of Ivan

Poljakovich is established in law at the price

of a very expensive muddle.

Nonetheless, questions of recollection and

memory are not the only ones that must be

asked.

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conducted on the basis of revenge rather than

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Extremely affirmative

The prominent Liberal, Mr Jim Carlton,

has done his party much service over the years

but it is being doubtful about his proposal that

the electoral system should be changed to give

equal numbers of men and women in Federal

Parliament.

His proposal is that each electorate should

have two members — one man, one woman. This

electoral affirmative action would require

large number of existing MPs to be dumped,

which means it from the start.

Mr Carlton is quite right in pointing to the

present imbalance with only 13 women in the

House of Representatives of 147 and an additional

16 in the 76-member Senate.

It is an imbalance to which any party seriously

claiming to be responsive to the mood of the '90s

must react.

The position is no better in the State Parlia-

ment, 10, remains a male stronghold. All

parties publicly espouse the value and worth of

women yet select women candidates in mainly

marginal seats. That trend may thankfully be

changing. There are signs that women and the

promotion of women for perceived political

advantage is being overtaken by a sober recog-

nition of the special talents women bring to

politics.

Ultimately it must be the people, not some

artificial system, who rectify the current gross

under-representation of women.

It has been widely believed that until quite

recently women have followed the general voting

patterns of their fathers or husbands.

That is not true. The party who does not

present a large number of high-calibre

women candidates if any election will do so at

its peril. It is a party with a forehead for the

Opposition benches.

But that is a far cry from distorting the system

to provide an artificial result.

In fact, it must be that Mr Carlton, while

surely pure in heart, insults women by inferring

they need this special treatment.

Such a quota system would not so much

remedy an undoubted injustice as install one

of its own.

Trinity Gardens.

Briefly...

Smokers forced to underwrite debt

Mr smokers of South Australia have been

compelled to underwrite, firstly, a large

part of the State's debt, and secondly, an

even larger part of the State's debt.

It is a double whammy that has left many

smokers in a state of shock. The debt is

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Lofty principle and a very costly muddle

Ours is a century of grandees. Staggering

advances in science and technology have been

matched with the staid barbarism in Europe,

Africa and Asia.

But Hitler's Holocaust stands out even against

this blood-drenched record.

It represents the nation of Goethe and Be-

ethoven. It was conducted with chilling, but

humanistic efficiency.

The crimes which make up the horror now

collected against the Holocaust were an abom-

ination and cannot be forgiven.

Despite all this, there are flaws in the concept

of the 1986 war crimes trials of Australia which

have resulted so far in the not guilty verdict

recorded against Ivan Poljakovich.

That is not to say we must not remain con-

stantly vigilant. There must be no mercy shown

to contemporary dictators who seek to emulate

the horrors of five decades ago.

However, if the Poljakovich case is the

worst precedent that the trial was in Aus-

tralia for a crime not committed here,

There is a faint consensus that the trial was

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