

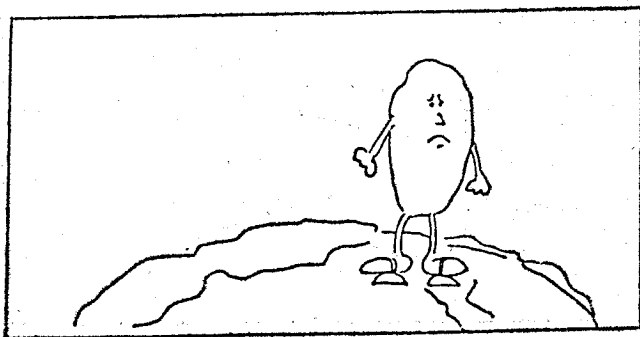
*Nada Rapp*

AUSTRALIAN SHOCK<sup>1</sup>

*ARRIVAL SHOCK*

Going to a continent which is upside down from the European point of view made me think about what would happen: was I going to walk there or hang upside-down?

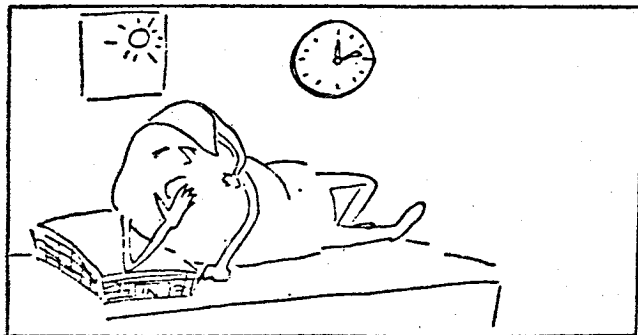
I was relieved to find out that Mr Peacock was standing firmly on his feet waiting for me at the Airport! But I'm still confused by the upsidedown map on the 10th floor at Nauru House, in which Australia is in the Northern Hemisphere!



*TIME SHOCK*

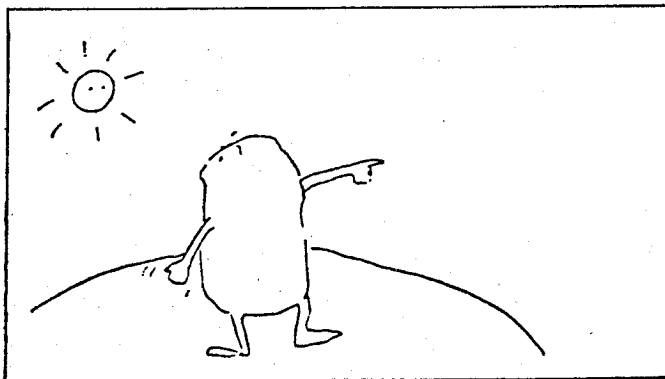
For the first time I heard about jet lag and soon found out it hasn't got anything to do with legs but with heads. At 2 a.m. I tried to sleep and at 2 p.m. I tried to wake up, sitting in the staff room of Kealba High. My biological clock was out of order for almost a month until Mr Adjustment — he must be a bad watchmaker — succeeded in putting me in order again.

<sup>1</sup> Nada Rapp boravila je godinu dana u Australiji kao nastavnik hrvatskog ili srpskog za djecu naših iseljenika.



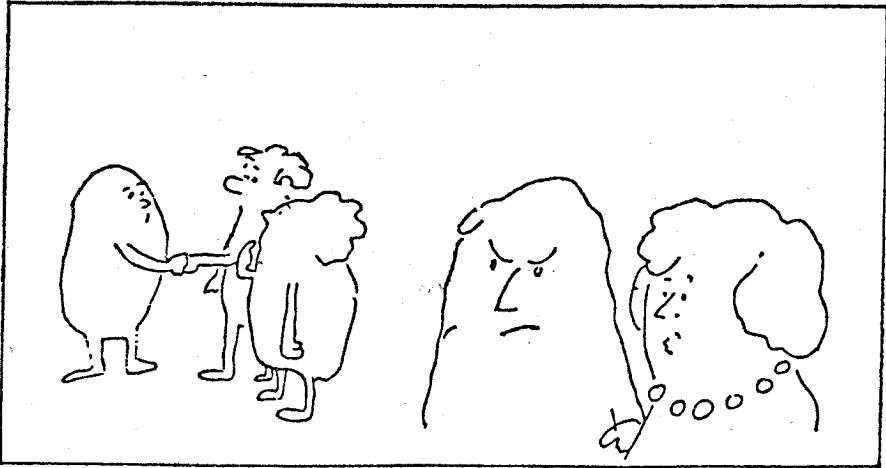
### ORIENTATION SHOCK

I was sure for weeks that my room faced north because the spring sun never came into it. I was surprised to learn that it was facing south. So don't ask me for any directions. Anyway it still seems to me that the sun comes out at the wrong side but what can we do about that?



### NAMES SHOCK

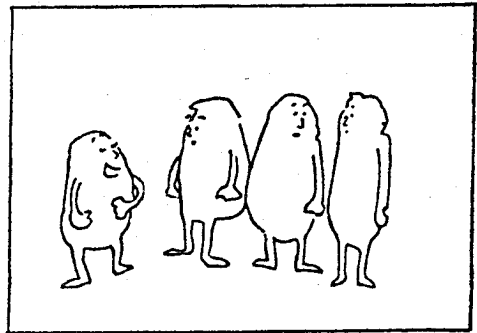
I met more people in a couple of weeks than in a year in Yugoslavia and it seemed to me that they all had the most difficult names and so I couldn't remember them, or maybe that was always my weak point. I also can't remember where I met all these people. So if I ask you how your lovely lover is in front of your husband or wife, or how many children you have and you're a bachelor or single woman, I don't want to break up your marriage or destroy your good name — I've just mixed things up.



### JOKE SHOCK

In my first week, still in my jet-lag condition, I was asked to tell a joke to some gentlemen in the Education Department. I hardly managed to remember a joke and when I did, and told the joke in my nice sleepy voice —

Silence,  
nobody laughed,  
not even a smile.  
Being used to  
quite another effect  
after telling jokes  
I thought —  
English sense of humour!  
They can't understand  
Yugoslav jokes!



Much later the truth struck me like a thunderbolt — they misunderstood a word I was using, a slang word and an un-ladylike expression at that (don't ask me the word — after all I am lady!) and of course the whole joke became very dirty. So the gentlemen proved to be gentlemen and didn't respond at all. I am still wondering — how did it happen that all of them took for granted the dirty slang meaning and not the regular one — so are they gentlemen

or not? (If you wonder how I know the meaning here is the answer: I have read a few modern American novels (Miller, Mailer).) In Yugoslavia the people, gentlemen or not, would roar with laughter after this nice double joke. That is a cultural shock, don't you think?

### LANGUAGE SHOCK

I have learnt that a language in Victoria can be taught as a first language, second language, foreign language, community language, maintenance language and as Mother Tongue. Mother Tongue I'll change into Parents Tongue, or Mother and Father Tongue — think about equality. Bilingual children speak the language of their parents, nicely mixed and flavoured with English words. A good example of this is how the story of Little Red Riding Hood (Crvenkapica) is told in Croatian:



Crvenkapica isla kod grama.  
Mother joj dala basket of meso i bread.  
I talkovala joj da nejde u bush.  
Ona je isla i meetovala foxa...

(I was puzzled that the wolf became a fox but anything could happen in this large country).

And what about me — speaking a mixture of Croatian and English.

I don't know about anyone else but I understand myself completely!

What kind of English do I speak? There's such a nice choice — the British English I studied, flavoured with Australian, American and Canadian offerings and the whole seasoned with my Yugoslav intonation. Don't worry — I still make the same mistakes I used to.

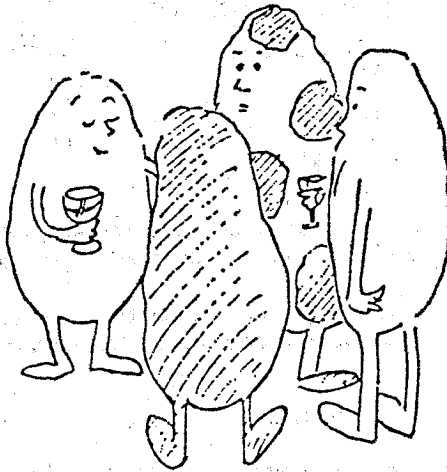
## MULTICULTURAL SHOCK

It's bad if you have a cultural shock — even worse if it's a multicultural one as all we ITF's know. It's also a geographical shock because you find out very soon you have forgotten what you learned in your student days and don't have the slightest idea where all these 'blokes' come from. But, never mind, they don't know where Zagreb is either — just smile and keep smiling if they try to explain all the problems of the countries they have come from. (Do you know where Zagreb is — no worries, I am not quite sure in which direction it lies but don't worry — the pilot will know and he can take me home!).

So back to multiculturalism, back to festivals, of all nations, Moomba, Australia Day... I don't have time to mention all the different national days but I have to mention folk dancing and food. Oh, we can't leave food out.

I'm not just speaking of the hundreds of different restaurants — and I've been to a few — Chinese, Turkish, Italian, a Greek sweet shop, even a Yugoslav restaurant!

But then there are themulticultural programs in schools, and — guess what the main topic is? — right — food. My first week at St. Alban's Primary School was Easter week. I spent it baking with the kids — I was lucky that they were trained in this subject already. We made a Greek Easter nest (dough with red eggs in the middle), baked Italian biscuits, dyed Croatian eggs, wrote English cards and at lunch time I enjoyed the typical Australian sandwich. And so we come to Food Shock.

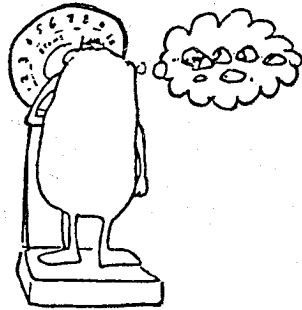


## FOOD SHOCK

To be brief: sandwiches — ham and cheese, ham without cheese, cheese without ham — and all other varieties — sausage rolls, salad without dressing and *hamburgers!* From a few to almost fifty centimetres! — I wonder where there are people with such big mouths! I'm not going to translate centimetres into inches because I'm fed up with

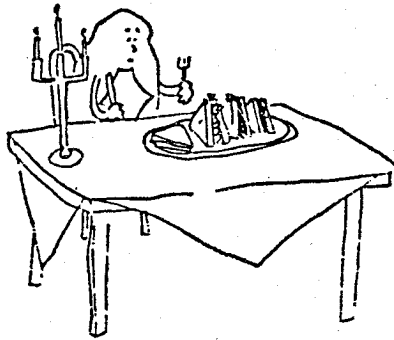
### MEASUREMENT SHOCK

having to find out  
what are feet, inches and stones.  
I wonder — 8½ stones —  
is it something to worry about?  
Do it need to go on a diet?



There are also sandwich BARS but I'm not sure if you can get sandwiches there.

Meal times? I am hungry at the lunch hour and am supposed to have just a nice dry sandwich — a bite! But I'm not hungry at 6 p.m.! Tell me honestly, what kind of meal time it is — too late for lunch and too early for dinner.

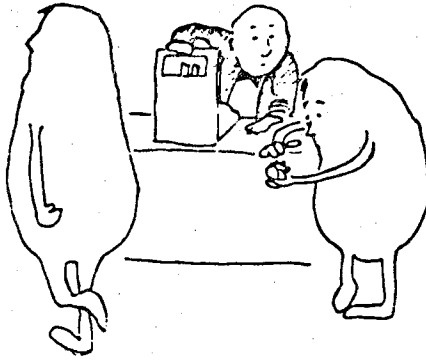


Anyway when I return to Yugoslavia, and somebody offers me sandwiches, I'll really get mad because I've had my 'lifetime's share of all kinds of sandwiches.

There are a lot of "take away food" shops but be careful — you can take it away but, mate, first you have to pay for it. And so we come to CUSTOMS SHOCK.

### CUSTOMS SHOCK

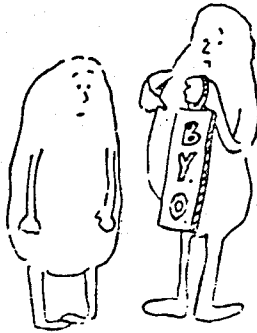
BYO means bring your own wine, but there is also PYO — pay your own. So be careful. If somebody, all friendly, invites you to have lunch or dinner with him, her or them, it means the following: we are going to the same restaurant; we may order the same dish, have a nice talk but PYO. I was introduced to this custom in time so I didn't make a fool of myself by expecting the gentlemen to pay for my lunch. (I must confess there were some who did they must some interesting ethnic backgrounds.) I don't know if I'm going to speak about this custom to Yugoslavs because I like to be invited by them and not to worry about whether I've left my purse at home or if the meal will be too expensive.



BYO is not a favourite custom of mine because I always forget about it. And anyway, how do you look ladylike with a few bottles under your arms? I am lucky my Aussie friends are used to BYO and they generously fill my glass from the four litre cask under the table. But I do like BYO parties because I remember how my friends were dead tired when we came to their parties — they'd spent hours preparing food. I suspect they were relieved when at last we were on our way home. But that's tradition and it means suffering in keeping it.

I don't like the custom of having business talk during lunch time and trying to swallow and digest food and problems at the same time. What about just enjoying eating for a change?

A child of Yugoslav background was once told about a custom in Yugoslavia when you visit somebody you bring flowers to the lady of the house and sometimes a bottle of spirit to her husband. The child, very puzzled, asked, "And what do they bring for eating?" A real Aussie child!



### SHOPPING SHOCK

Where do you buy some certain object if there is not a Myer (Myer is Melbourne) or Coles or any other big store where you can, maybe, find the object after miles of walking? Don't ask me, I haven't yet found what I looked for!

You can't even trust the shop sings. 'Opal Shop' doesn't always mean that you can go in and admire the glittering rainbow stones but buy jeans or dresses. 'Take Away Food' doesn't include wine. And sales — Sales — SALES! When do people sell goods for their real value?



And you can't buy wine when you feel like it (you can in Yugoslavia in each corner shop). Yes, there are 'drive-in' shops, but not open on Sundays. No, you can't get drunk so easily — ask some of us how we were left dry in the country after two days of drinking in the beauties of the Ocean Road and the Grampians.

So here are two pieces of advice: 1. Don't go anywhere without carrying some casks of wine; 2. Go to the nearest pub (if there is one) and order a shout. If the pub is crowded you'll have a hell of a good time — if they don't close. But remember — shout means to pay for drinks for the other blokes, then the other blokes shout. (If you just come in and shout loudly, I don't think you'll get what you want.)



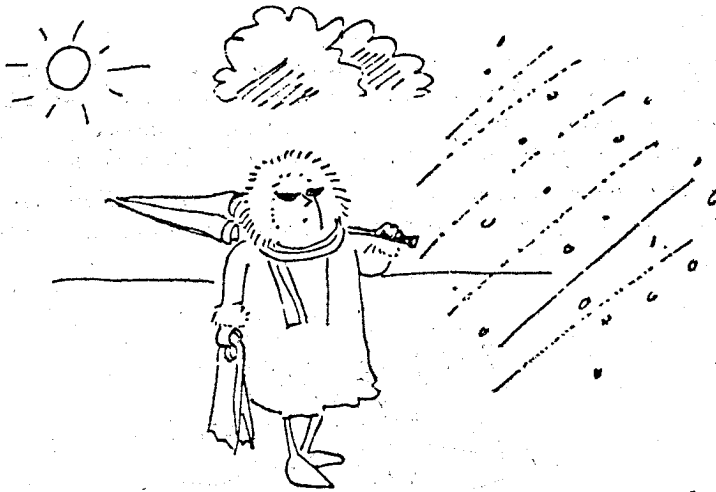
By the way, have you noticed that Aussies speak quietly? So take care of your voice, especially in public transport, because otherwise they'll know you're a bloody foreigner!

#### WEATHER SHOCK

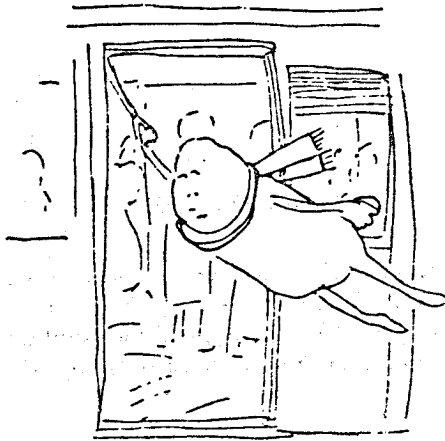
It's nice when June comes again — that nice spring month — excuse me, I mean to say winter month. The trees are without leaves — pardon — the gum trees decided to take off their bark coats, not their hair of leaves.

When you land on these nice Aussie shores, forget that there are four seasons in a year, each approximately three months. Oh, no, the Melbournians have four seasons in one day and one can last just half an hour. If you don't





believe, wait for September! I go out in the mornings wrapped up like an Antarctic explorer and during the day I have to take off some clothes to prevent a heat stroke and so I keep taking off my clothes till — STOP — CENSORSHIP!



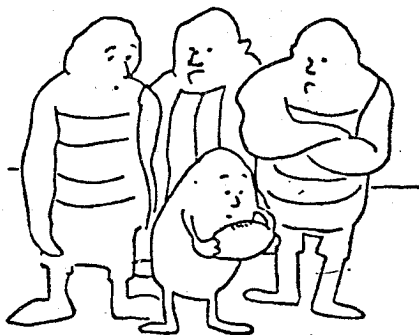
### TRANSPORTATION SHOCK

Don't forget TRANSPORTATION SHOCK riding in nice vintage trams with open sides and a nice draught. It's a nice experience during the hot summer months if you dare go out and face 40 °C, but it's like going for a ride in a refrigerator during cold winter months. I get the idea we're supposed to be in a warm climate — after all, the green trams aren't heated, even in winter. Maybe there is something wrong with my senses — I freeze and opposite me sit people in short sleeves and summer dresses.

### SPORT SHOCK

You're not fit? — go and have some outdoor activities — play golf, or football — or is it soccer? You know the one — sometimes they run around like mad after a round ball, other times after an egg-shaped one. There are some rules but who cares about them — often the players don't.

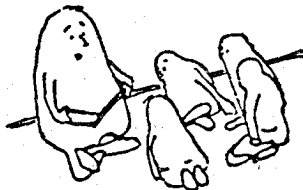
Or you can choose squash. After half an hour you'll surely have a heart attack. Then you can have a nice rest to recover from all these shocks.



### TEACHING SHOCK

Teaching is too serious to make fun of, but there are some shocks too in this field. What about teaching children 5 — 11 when you are used to 17 — 18 year olds, and you are too far past your childhood period to remember all the games that make the 5 and 6 year olds happy.

What about me,  
a respected teacher,  
and a stand-up personality  
for 22 years,  
to be reduced  
in a few weeks  
to a yoga sitting position  
during my hours of Croatian —  
on the floor —  
luckey I am  
it's a carpeted one.



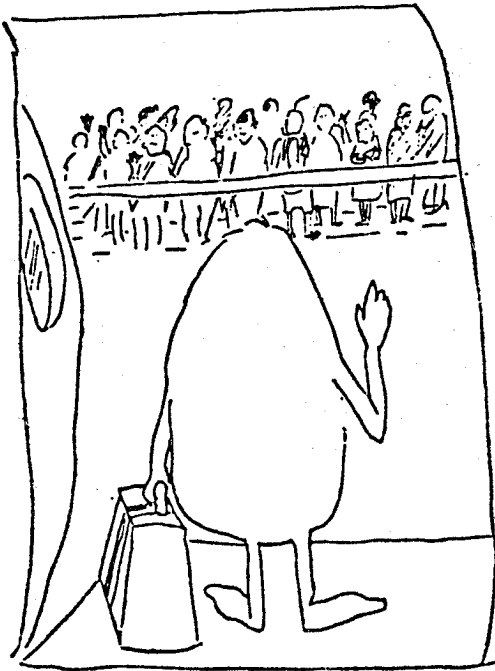
Could you imagine me going back to my Zagreb Technical School and taking with me the habit of sitting on the floor during my lessons? It's good that I still keep some of my old stubborn habits to help get me out of trouble after the chock of returning home.

*LAST BUT NOT LEAST*

Remember the slogans —

Take it easy.  
Life. Be in it.  
No worries.

So here we are — we live here — we've survived some of the shocks and we don't dare to ask the Aussies what kind of shock we are for them. They seem to understand us and we're trying to understand them. Take it easy, Aussie mates, and don't be mad at all the shocks I've given you with this report. Keep smiling — we like you all very much and when we return to our countries we'll carry with us a love for this beautiful country and friendship for all the people of Australia. It doesn't matter which kind of language we ITF's speak, we are all a nice bunch of fellows with the warm hearts of teachers whose Australian experience is and will be an important piece of our lives. Anyway, after a good shock, life is always nice again.



Crteži: Dale Leach, Melbourne 1982