$8.90 AUSTRALIA | OCTOBER 2013

QUADRANT

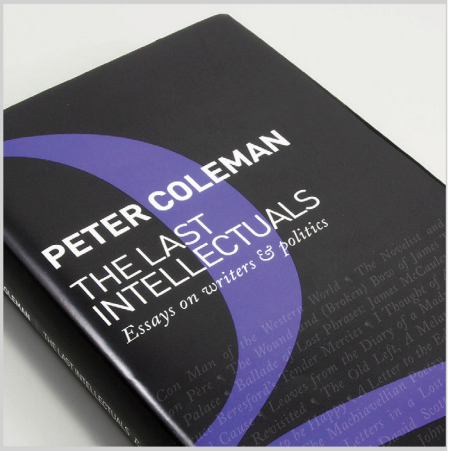
Reclaiming Democracy from Elites

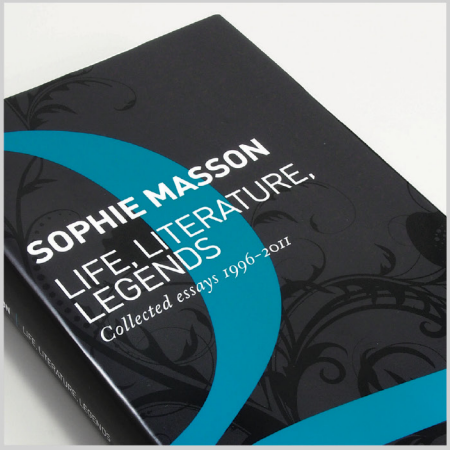
JOHN RUDDICK, HAL COLEBATCH

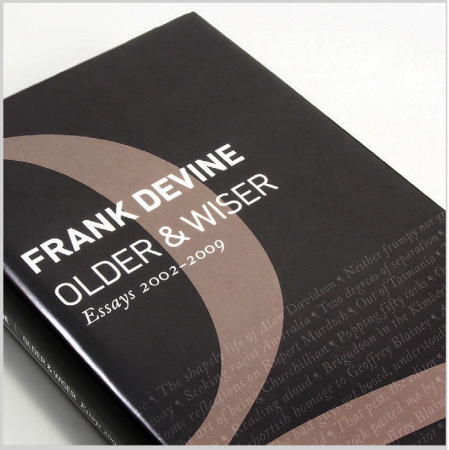
LETTERS | ENVIRONMENT | SCIENCE | LITERATURE | ECONOMICS | RELIGION | MEDIA
THEATRE | PHILOSOPHY | FILM | SOCIETY | HISTORY | POLITICS | EDUCATION | HEALTH

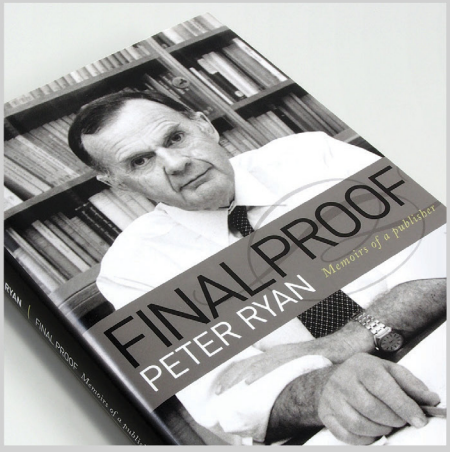
PURE PLEASURE

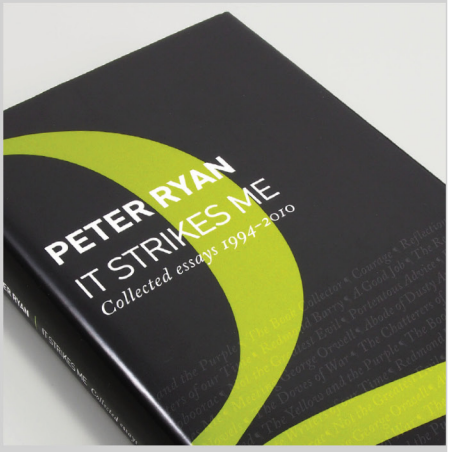
FOR BOOK LOVERS











Collected works of some of Australia's best writers

$44.95

ORDER YOUR BOOKS NOW

QUADRANT BOOKS

ONLINE www.quadrant.org.au/store
POST Quadrant, Locked Bag 1235, North Melbourne VIC 3051, Australia
PHONE (03) 8317 8147 **FAX** (03) 9320 9065

OCTOBER 2013
NO. 500
VOLUME LVII, NUMBER 10

QUADRANT

QUADRANT

Editor
Keith Windschuttle
keithwindschuttle@quadrant.org.au

Literary Editor
Les Murray

Deputy Editor
George Thomas

Contributing Editors
Books: Peter Coleman
Film: Neil McDonald
Theatre: Michael Connor

Columnist
Peter Ryan

Editor, Quadrant Online
Roger Franklin
rogerfranklin@quadrant.org.au

Chairman of the Board of Directors
Elizabeth Prior Jonson

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Phone: (03) 8317 8147
Fax: (03) 9320 9065
Post: Quadrant Magazine,
Locked Bag 1235,
North Melbourne VIC 3051
E-mail: *quadrantmagazine@data.com.au*

PUBLISHER

Quadrant (ISSN 0033-5002) is published ten times a year by Quadrant Magazine Limited, Suite 2/5 Rosebery Place, Balmain NSW 2041, Australia
ACN 133 708 424

PRODUCTION

Design Consultant: Reno Design
Art Director: Graham Rendoth

Printer: Ligare Pty Ltd
138–152 Bonds Road,
Riverwood NSW 2210

www.quadrant.org.au

LETTERS

Make it Merely Obligatory

SIR: Refreshing to read the reasoned opposition to compulsory voting by Peter Barry (September 2013). Why do we persist in compelling people to vote when some have no idea and no inclination to do so? An obvious reason given is that "most politicians find it difficult to believe there could be people out there who ... take no interest in government".

Without compulsory voting we could expect to follow the New Zealand voter turnout of 75 per cent, instead of our current 95 per cent. This 20 per cent of reluctant voters is not inclined to vote for a range of reasons such as being too young or too busy to care.

An easy first step to reform is to drop the fine for failing to vote. The voting system could then be re-described as "obligatory" rather than "compulsory". The savings in administering the penalty-free system could be used to combat electoral fraud such as multiple voting, an easily achieved fraud which is evident but rarely discussed.

Brian Doak
Lindfield, NSW

Maritime Security

SIR: Michael Cook's analysis of Australia's approach to security (September 2013) focuses on the First World War probably because our experience in that conflict defined the Australian approach for the next century and continues to do so. The analysis flies in the face of views common in our education system but, marked as it is by experience and wisdom, it carries much conviction.

Yet I would suggest that a critical element is missing in the wider community, as in his analysis. In the years before 1914, at least from a British perspective, the German challenge was maritime. For more than a century, the Royal Navy had guaranteed the freedom of navigation for all peaceful trade. The Royal Australian Navy was established in part for fear that Germany's naval ambitions drew the British away from their traditional defence of Australia's maritime interests. Australia's first military commitment in 1914 was to neutralise the German Navy's communications facility in New Guinea.

Australia's role in the First World War Palestine campaign, more so than the operations in France and Belgium, was critical to Australia's security interest through its protection of the Suez Canal.

I find it astonishing that Australians persistently ignore the reality that this country depends utterly upon secure seaborne trade—and has done so since 1788. That trade and the economic sustenance it brings represent our fundamental security interest and we must ever support those allies who share that interest. As the communications revolution develops, electronic security against cyber-attack is added because much of the money trade is vulnerable. The fact remains though that millions of tonnes of imports and exports, more than 30 per cent of our GDP, are carried in ships. This reality will continue into the future to define our primary security interest.

Michael O'Connor
Gisborne, Vic

Packer's Petty Cash

SIR: Given some of my later experiences with Kerry Packer I don't generally go rushing to his defence these days. The piece you published in the September issue, however, should not go unchallenged.

I appointed Peter Samuel as head of the Australian Consolidated

Press New York bureau. I also let him go. He was not happy about that but it is regrettable that he has sought vengeance in such a fashion.

I doubt Kerry ever spoke to Peter during his period in the New York office. The office was administered by a very capable woman and Peter had little to do with administration, although I remember he assisted in the negotiations for some new premises.

That Packer sought to "thieve" $10,000 cash to pay off a hooker is outrageous. The notion that our auditors and accountants would all be party to such an exercise is ridiculous. The fact that Pat Wheatley (Peter could not even remember her surname) is accused of being party to this "crime" demeans another deceased person who was totally honest and a great servant of the company and its shareholders. As do the equally demeaning remarks about dear old George McGann.

Certainly unconventional things happened in the corporation but the administration always sorted these things out so that everything was done strictly by the rules. And remember that Packer never even took a salary from the public company over the last several years.

Peter's claim that he was some sort of heroic defender of the shareholders' interests is delusional.

Trevor Kennedy
Kirribilli, NSW

The Hippocratic Oath

SIR: The behaviour of the geneticist towards Professor and Mrs Burcham and their daughter (September 2013) is outrageous; in fact, I wonder whether he is a registered medical practitioner at all. If he is, he has badly let down all the good will and respect which our profession has acquired since the time of Hippocrates. I shall quote in translation the relevant unabridged part of the Hippocratic oath:

"I will give no deadly medicine to anyone if asked, nor suggest any such counsel; and in like manner I will not give a woman a pessary to produce abortion."

Even though I am at the end of my career as a general surgeon, I still give tutorials to medical students twice or thrice a week, and always begin with a new group by taking them through the Hippocratic Oath unexpurgated, word by word, so that they know how to behave in all situations and what is expected of them. If we honour and bring distinction to our profession today, we honour our predecessors and have fulfilled our duty to our patients, so that that honour and duty will pass to our successors into the distant future.

William Renton-Power
Rockhampton, Qld

Reno Design congratulates *Quadrant* and its contributors for producing 500 issues

A terrific achievement in Australian publishing

Reno Design is located in Chippendale, Sydney. For over 20 years we have provided strategic creative solutions to diverse industries — finance, arts, events, publishing, nfp, health/beauty, industrial, hospitality. You may already know us by our new design of the *Quadrant* journal, its website and book covers.

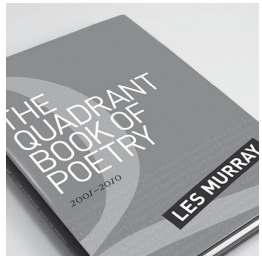
We like big and small. Recent projects include a prestige book about Hamilton Island, an architect's brand, brochures for accountants, Derryn Hinch's memoir, travel company ads and exhibition catalogues. Visit our website to find out a more about our work and ways in which we might grow with you.

Raena Lea-Shannon

We develop brand programs, logos, stationery, websites brochures and promotions. For Raena Lea-Shannon, an IP solicitor, we created an elegant 'type' solution.

Kelly+Partners

We value the long-term relationships we have with many of our clients. As design consultants to Kelly+Partners Chartered Accountants we've created intelligent solutions for over 8 years.



Quadrant Books

Having produced over 1,000 books in 20 years for international and self-publishers, our specialist book design and print services were a natural fit for Quadrant Books.

Oh!

renodesign.com.au

Reno Design
Brand Print Web Event Pack Publish
T +61 2 9698 4388
E graham@renodesign.com.au

CHRONICLE

Keith Windschuttle

It is an honour, on behalf of our staff and contributors, to present the 500th edition of *Quadrant*. It is also a pleasure to be able to do so at a time when the Australian political parties most congenial to our cause, the Liberal-National Coalition, have won such a decisive victory in the federal election on September 7. That cause, enshrined in the constitution of Quadrant Magazine Ltd, the non-profit company that publishes this journal, is political and cultural freedom. The constitution describes our principal purpose as "the defence of the values, practices, and institutions of free and open societies" by "fostering literary and cultural activity of the highest standard".

That objective is as relevant today as it was in 1956 when the magazine was founded at the height of the Cold War. *Quadrant* originated as the quarterly journal of the Australian Association for Cultural Freedom under publisher Richard Krygier and editor James McAuley. At the time, the association's main focus was the fight against communism, both internationally, where the communist regimes of the USSR, Eastern Europe and China jailed, murdered and terrorised dissident writers, artists and academics, and at home, where communist and Marxist ideas were less influential politically but seriously over-represented among the intelligentsia. Our longest-serving editor Peter Coleman (1967–1990, minus two breaks in 1976 and 1978–81) has recalled that, despite their different backgrounds and personalities, Krygier and McAuley shared "a scorn for the depressing, philistine, postwar Australian culture where almost every literary magazine was Leftist, pro-Soviet, anti-American and suicidally indifferent to the totalitarian threat to democracy".

The Marxist theory and communist practice of the 1950s, however, were only a part of *Quadrant*'s concerns. Over its life, the magazine has been Australia's most incisive and combative critic of left-wing intellectual fashions, in whatever form they materialised, including:

- the American New Left of the 1960s and the sexual revolution of the counter-culture;
- identity-group politics of gender, race and class that emerged in the 1970s to enshrine the policy and practice of political correctness;
- literary theory, postmodernism and cultural relativism that destabilised scholarship in the humanities in the 1990s;
- the radical green environmentalist movement and the hypothesis of anthropogenic global warming of the past decade;
- and over the whole period, the rise of the New Class of intellectual workers to dominate the bureaucracy, the universities, the arts and the public news media, seeking to regulate everyone else's life in an image of their own.

Quadrant editors were not always perfect in their responses to these topics. Sometimes they seemed part of the problem. In 1967, in an attempt to broaden readership, Donald Horne gave space to the views of a number of leftist authors, including promoters of the 1960s counter-culture, Richard Neville and Craig McGregor, plus a sympathetic treatment of communist novelist Frank Hardy. In 1997, Robert Manne endorsed the mendacious claim by the Human Rights Commission that Australia had committed genocide against the Aborigines by stealing their children. He also called for an increase in protectionism, causing then board member and former editor, Heinz Arndt, a real economist, to resign in protest.

By and large, however, the journal has been accurate in its targets and in its prescriptions for their demise. Its anti-communism was vindicated in 1989 by the mass defections of the populations of the communist countries of Eastern Europe. In the late 1970s and 1980s, it was an early champion of the economic ideas of Friedrich Hayek, Milton Friedman and Margaret Thatcher, well in advance of the Australian governments who followed suit. In philosophy and social theory, postmodernism and cultural relativism are now so discredited that even their once ardent advocates flinch in embarrassment. As I write, early leaks of the contents of the imminent fifth report of the IPCC show it has abandoned its more extreme claims about the consequences of global warming, meaning the Greens will have to discard their aim of using the scare to control our lives. Moreover, the newly-elected government of Tony Abbott seems more conscious than its Coalition predecessor of both the presence and presumptions of the New Class bureaucrats it will inherit in office.

Underlying the magazine's predisposition to get things right has been what Peter Coleman identifies as its long-standing tradition, manifested since the time of James McAuley, to mount a critique of modernity.

The destructive intellectual fashions that have rolled in, wave upon wave, almost every decade for a century, collectively amount to the edifice of ideas we know as modernity. Each wave has had two things in common: it has sought to radically transform society in the image of its authors, and it has captivated intellectuals. The whole process has produced a series of ongoing crises within Western civilisation. This has remained *Quadrant*'s preoccupation and long-standing theme.

As the late *Quadrant* editor Roger Sandall always insisted, the currently fashionable anthropologists' definition of culture as a group's "way of life", whatever that may happen to be in each case, is a mistake. We should insist on culture referring, in Matthew Arnold's words, to the best that has been thought and said in the world. In this sense, culture comes before politics. It grows out of long experience of contemplating the human condition through literature, art, philosophy and religion. "This has been *Quadrant*'s position since its beginnings," Coleman has written, "and that is why it has always known, for example, that poetry matters." This position emphasises cultural *traditions* and reserves the right to decide that some are superior to others.

The culture that *Quadrant* has defended derives from the Classical and Christian traditions of Greece, Rome and Jerusalem, as well as those of the British sceptical Enlightenment, especially the writers of eighteenth-century Edinburgh. The magazine has long opposed the French radical Enlightenment and German Romanticism, as well as their more recent derivatives: Marxism, Nazism, and contemporary identity group politics.

Although most editors witnessed the fall of communism in their own lifetimes, they have still had to endure one of the most disturbing breakdowns in our cultural traditions, which is occurring today within the very institution designed to preserve it. This is the crisis within the university. Its takeover by the forces of modernity—the belief at the departmental level in change or reform for its own sake, and at the institutional level in control by an ever-expanding secular state—is one of the great misfortunes of our time.

For more than a thousand years, the most important role of the university has been to produce and preserve knowledge within intellectually coherent fields of study known as academic disciplines. As Edward Gibbon, Isaac Newton and others openly acknowledged, our greatest intellects have always stood on the shoulders of their predecessors. The history of Western knowledge shows the importance of the structuring of disciplines, which allowed the West to benefit from two key innovations: the systematisation of research methods, which produced an accretion of consistent findings; and the organisation of effective teaching, which permitted a large and accumulating body of knowledge to be transmitted from one generation to the next. Intellectual disciplines were founded in ancient Greece and gained a considerable impetus from the work of Aristotle, who identified and organised a range of subjects into orderly bodies of learning.

In the university of today, there is a manic push to break down traditional disciplines in the name of reform, and to make them multi- and cross-disciplinary. The term "studies" reflects the new emphasis. Instead of being organised into disciplines such as history, law and English, teaching and research are being reorganised into cross-bred fields such as "cultural studies", "gender studies" and "communications studies". Some of these give the appearance of retaining a traditional discipline—"historical studies" and "legal studies", for example—but turn out on closer examination to bear only a marginal resemblance to the original, to which they are often strongly opposed.

The news coverage of last month's federal election drew attention to two stark examples of what I mean. In the immediate post-election coverage, one article in the *Age* thought fit to repeat some vile obscenities about Tony Abbott's daughters posted on Facebook. The author was Dr Michelle Smith, a research fellow in the Centre for Memory, Imagination and Invention at Deakin University. In a dispute over Senate preferences for Julian Assange's Wikileaks Party, one of the aggrieved parties was Dr Leslie Cannold, a lecturer at Monash University in the Gender, Leadership and Social Sustainability Research Unit of the Department of Medicine. It is bad enough that individual academics choose such political commitments, but the names and interests of the departments they represent are beyond parody. Committees within these universities must have approved these schools of pseudo-inquiry. Hence, the rot they represent must permeate their institutions.

As well as her expertise in gender, leadership and social sustainability, Leslie Cannold is a fellow of Monash University's School of Philosophy, Anthropology and Social Inquiry, a columnist for Fairfax, and a frequent guest on ABC radio and television. She lists her other responsibilities as President of Reproductive Choice Australia, Spokesperson for Pro Choice Victoria, an Ambassador with Dying with Dignity, and founder of the speaker site No Chicks, No Excuses. She describes her "by-words" as: "Think, Create, Communicate and Change". Yes, she would. This is the kind of person we now entrust to educate our future generations and transmit the cultural achievements of Western civilisation. In other words, we are witnessing today not just the crisis of modernity that James McAuley challenged. This is the complete disaster.

Claudio Véliz

The Infamous Omissions from Australian History

In Memoriam Kenneth Minogue

Australia is the first nation in modern history to secure full unification without killing anyone; Australia is the first major nation on earth to have achieved independence and sovereignty without killing anyone; Australia is the first nation in modern history to appoint a Jew as commander of its armed forces; Australia is the first nation in the English-speaking world to elect a Labor government led by a Labor prime minister; the first native-born governor-general of Australia was a Jew; and Australia, of course, is the only continent on Earth never to have been shamed by the institution of slavery.

These notable achievements have not received the attention they deserve as principal contributions to the social harmony, the institutional stability and the wellbeing of the Commonwealth. To list their inadvertent or studied exclusion from teaching texts and popular literature would be a thankless task. It suffices to observe that none is even mentioned in a much-publicised national school curriculum that finds little to praise and much to lament in the history of Australia. This is all the more important because the definitive worth of the discipline notwithstanding, the term "history" is afflicted by a semantic ambiguity that both illustrates and disguises the risks that can flow from its perversion. "History" refers simultaneously to everything that ever occurred and also, most tellingly, to what historians do. The immediate consequence of this is that even excluding charlatans who deny the existence of historical facts (Was Nelson killed at Trafalgar? Did Germany win the First World War?), the door remains ajar for the intrusion of all sorts of inane distortions, unnecessary emphasis and banging on tables by crafty manipulators of history at one remove.

Such sins of commission certainly corrupt historical scholarship, but not as subtly and insidiously as the less visible mendacity nourished by practised concealment of evidence and other sins of omission. It is a melancholy fact that the perversion of Australian history must be listed among the more outrageous exemplars of sinning by omission because in addition to the inevitable quota of politically coloured falsehoods it suffers grievously from the inspired exclusions listed above.

Much of the history of the nineteenth century is dominated by the violent and sanguinary struggles for unification which various kingdoms, principalities, electorates, imperial provinces and semi-autonomous regions felt was a condition *sine qua non* of their emergence as fully-fledged nations with privileges, rights and powers recognised and respected by the modern international community. Many Italians, not all, agreed that this was a deserving cause worth dying for and about sixty thousand did, mostly led by Mazzini and Garibaldi, over several decades until the 1870 fall of Rome ensured the *Risorgimento* of a unified Italian homeland.

Across the mountains, the normally quiet and kindly Swiss felt something similar and had their very own civil war in 1847 when the Catholic cantons of Lucerne, Uri, Valais, Fribourg, Schwyz, Zug and Unterwalden formed themselves into an alliance, the *Sonderbund*, and decided to secede. The other Swiss disagreed and the country was plunged into a civil war from which it emerged unified at a reasonable cost that did not exceed a thousand dead and wounded.

Further north, the unification of Germany under the leadership of Bismarck and his Kaiser proved harder and more costly and at the battle of Sadowa alone over fifty thousand Prussians, Austrians, Bavarians, Hanoverians and other assorted Germans slaughtered each other to ensure the unity that the Iron Chancellor considered to be an essential feature of modern nationhood.

Canada, being less out of this world than people think, twice endured secessionist rumblings that disturbed the surface of the prairie with the Red River Rebellion of 1869 and the Saskatchewan Rebellion of 1885, both led unsuccessfully and at the

cost of over five hundred casualties by Louis Riel, who was duly captured, tried and hanged.

Possibly the best-known of all wars of secession is the one that afflicted the United States which before the First World War qualified as the most sanguinary conflict in history. While it took the Vietnam War over seven years of fighting to claim 36,000 American battle casualties, the 1863 battle of Gettysburg reached the same horrifying total in two and a half days and the United States remained united.

These monumental, memorable and frequently heroic unifying ventures have also been visited by the ambiguities of history, and one suspects that what so clearly inspired a Lincoln or a Garibaldi may or may not be the same species of unity that motivated Napoleon, Ivan the Terrible, Tito, Stalin or Hitler. The leaders of these unifying attempts had in mind, and occasionally in hand, large territories inhabited by human beings that may or may not have been delighted with the prospect of continuing togetherness with their neighbours, and this may explain why the five elders of the national tribe have fared differently. Austria, France and Russia gave the task of unification a distinct imperial flavour and their progress reads like a military history of the modern world. Having for some years savoured extraordinary successes, they were ultimately undone by a failure to keep their vassal states under control and notwithstanding the many millions slaughtered during their unifying enterprises, they have survived as respectable nation-states in their own right. Britain and Spain managed a little better and emerged into modernity in fairly convincing control over helpfully clear geographical boundaries albeit reluctantly continuing to deploy heavily armed contingents to deal with Basque, Irish, Catalan, Welsh and Scottish obduracy. Everywhere on earth the path to unity is strewn with corpses—everywhere except in Australia.

Among the intriguing failures of the great nineteenth-century political and social thinkers was their inability even to suspect that nationalism would be the dominant creed of the twentieth and possibly of the twenty-first century. Before the First World War there were not more than two or three dozen independent nations on earth; a hundred years later they number 195 of which the overwhelming majority emerged during the twentieth century. Unity being the reverse face of independence it can only succeed by thwarting desires for self-government that must be secured at the expense of unity. Ergo, the unity of the United States was retained by denying independence to the Confederacy; Soviet unity depended on negating independence to Lithuania, Latvia, Byelorussia, Ukraine and other regional entities in the same manner that the independence of Bosnia and Croatia can only be secured at the expense of the unity of Yugoslavia, or that of the Basques at the expense of French and Spanish unity.

Before the twentieth century, such problems were invariably resolved by war, the midwife of all nascent nations, until the magnificent exception of the Australian Commonwealth rose over the world's horizon in 1901 as the first nation in history simultaneously to secure lasting unity and independence without killing anyone. Years of thoughtful discussion marked a progress that starting during the decade of 1850 with the granting of self-government to New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia and Queensland (Western Australia joined later, in 1889) and moved gradually through a series of judicious decisions until the matter was put to the people and resolved without dispossessing, raping, maiming or killing anyone.

Another important Australian contribution to the higher requirements of civilised modernity is the absence from the continent and the nation of any form of slavery.

Another important Australian contribution to the higher requirements of civilised modernity is the absence from the continent and the nation of any form of slavery. Bearing this fact very much in mind it is interesting to note that the index of Robert Hughes's *The Fatal Shore* has eleven entries for "slavery" in nineteenth-century Australia variously describing labour down under as being "tainted with slavery", or considering "convicts essentially as slaves", or noting that profits were being "consolidated through the use of slave labour", or describing the assignment system as "a form of slavery", or asserting that it was "slave labour that created the wealth of Australia", or complaining that after 1840 the value of convicts as "slave labour was falling". It is only on page 283, once the topic of Australian slavery has been firmly planted in the reader's mind, that the concoction is seasoned with a pinch of truthfulness by devoting one brief paragraph to listing the conditions that define the institution of slavery and asserting that "None of these conditions applied to the convicts Britain exiled to Australia."

Mr Hughes's recantation notwithstanding, it requires a very special kind of blindness to overlook the abundantly documented fact that Australia is the

only country and the only continent on earth never to have been shamed by the institution of slavery. Of course, in common with the rest of human society, during the past two centuries Australia has had its melancholy share of cruel treatment inflicted on fellow human beings, but these instances have been exceptional, invariably unlawful, have never been officially tolerated or in any way condoned either by the colonial or the Commonwealth authorities and cannot possibly be equated either with slavery or serfdom in any form.

Assertions about slavery in Australia are commonly based on an erroneous understanding of the assignment of convicts to work in public or private employment and of the use of indentured labour, especially in Queensland. The legal use of punitive forced labour is fundamentally different from slavery in that the "property in the services" given to the colonial governors under the terms of the Transportation Acts differs from the property in the person because the term of servitude is limited by law, its legal disabilities cease with the expiration of the sentence and cannot be transmitted to the offspring of the convict. Forced labour based on assignment disappeared from Australia in the mid-nineteenth century, but in its punitive form it survived in other countries well into the twentieth century and it would probably have astonished, or amused, Presidents Harry Truman or Bill Clinton to learn that some unusual Australian historians were busily equating slavery with the kind of forced labour in use in the United States until its abolition in 1950, only to be resurrected in 1995 and abolished again a year later with the exception of Arizona where male and female chain gangs are still repairing roads and bridges under the supervision of armed guards.

The other well-known excuse for charging Australia with the practice of slavery is based on the myth of Kanaka "blackbirding" expeditions to South Pacific islands where it was alleged that thousands of Melanesians were captured and forced into exploitative indentured agreements to work in the Queensland sugar industry. With respect to this episode it is important to recall that during the country's formative decades, Australian officialdom, including governors, civil servants and military personnel, was significantly influenced by the crusade to abolish slavery led by William Wilberforce with the telling political support of the younger Pitt and the towering moral imperative supplied by Quakers, non-conformists and the Evangelical revival of the Church of England which coalesced in 1787 to found the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade.

The prevailing foundation sentiments of this society were accurately reflected in the oft-quoted memorandum penned in 1786 by Captain Arthur Phillip, the Governor-designate of New South Wales who, well aware of the intended use of the antipodean settlement, correctly felt the need to address the crucial difference between slaves and the convicts under his care. Phillip noted that the laws of Britain would of course be introduced in New South Wales, but felt it necessary to add:

> There is one that I would wish to take place from the moment His Majesty's forces take possession of the country: that there can be no slavery in a free land, and consequently no slaves.

Although Phillip's religious sentiments were more pragmatic than spiritual or moralistic, his 1786 memorandum was consistent entirely with the contemporary emergence of an abolitionist Evangelicalism whose missionary efforts would eventually spread internationally, helping to bring about irreversible victories that changed forever the character of modern society. In 1772, when judging the case of a runaway slave, the Chief Justice Lord Mansfield declared that slavery was incompatible with English law and that on setting foot on English soil a slave would be free. This left the slave trade on British ships unaffected and it took some years of agitation by the abolitionists to secure parliamentary support, in 1807, to prohibit the slave trade and finally to complete the process with the 1833 total abolition of slavery throughout the British Empire. International public opinion was duly impressed: France abolished slavery in 1848, Russia put an end to serfdom in 1861 and two years later Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863, the same year that slavery was abolished throughout the Dutch colonies.

Obviously there was no need for Australia to abolish something that did not exist, but the international progress of the Evangelical abolitionist movement tended strongly to reinforce the attitude originally expressed by Captain Phillip and from which there were no indications of dissent from those in positions of public responsibility in the five Australian colonies that attained self-government in the decade of 1850. This disposition was additionally reinforced by the disinclination among the labour movement generally to accept without protest the importation, legal or otherwise, of what they regarded as cheap labour, a position that soon was to emerge as a principal component of the White Australia policy.

Even taken on their own these two factors would have explained why Australia was most unlikely to accept any policy or official decision that could possibly facilitate the introduction of forced labour or

disguised slavery, but precisely in 1862 a third factor was added that pushed to centre stage those feelings latent in Australian society that had first found expression in Captain Phillip's justly famous memorandum.

Beginning in 1862, at the other side of the Pacific, the consuls of the King of Hawaii and the governments of Britain, Chile and France joined forces in a campaign to put an end to the excesses perpetrated on Pacific islanders who had been either kidnapped or entrapped into signing fraudulent contracts to mine guano in the Chincha Islands off the coast of Peru. Details of this campaign did not emerge until much later and it is sobering to note that practically everything that has been said recently by publicity-hungry politicians and academic scribblers of the "black armband" persuasion about the capture, transport and abusive working conditions of Pacific islanders in Queensland is almost word-for-word a repetition of what transpired during the international protests that brought about the swift end of the demeaning Chincha trade and eased the way for the Peruvian government to purchase the shady service contracts and order the repatriation of the Polynesians to their places of origin.

An unintended consequence of these timely and welcome decisions was that when chased away by British, Chilean and French warships, the vessels that under various flags of convenience had plied the trade in the Eastern Pacific turned their attention to the opposite shore. At first, before the authorities could deploy officers in numbers sufficient to enforce the laws and regulations and prevent abuses, the trans-Pacific piratical crews managed to capture a few hapless Melanesians and transport them to Queensland. The abundantly documented evidence about this episode shows conclusively that, well attuned to the public mood, the response of the government of Queensland was very distant from tolerating any form of slavery, serfdom or forced labour even when official intervention was hindered by the relative inexperience of a fledgling bureaucracy operating over a huge and inaccessible region. It is a matter of fact, as Clive Moore has noted, that between 1863 and 1904,

> some 50,000 Kanakas signed a total of 62,000 indentured labour contracts to work in Queensland. The great majority ... were Melanesians from the New Hebrides, Solomon Islands, New Caledonia and New Guinea. At first their agreements were made under the auspices of the Master and Servants Act that applied to all contract workers. After 1868, a series of regulations and legislation were introduced by both the Queensland and British parliaments to oversee the process. From then until 1906, the Kanakas were governed by thirteen specific Acts of Parliament, fifty regulations and forty instructions. After 1871, all the recruiting voyages to Queensland and the return journeys that took the labourers home had government agents on board to ensure all relevant laws and regulations were observed and all health and medical standards were enforced. The hundreds of government agents who filled these positions had the power to halt recruiting, to refuse recruits or to turn the vessel home if they decided. They had to keep a daily official log of each voyage. The ships were also inspected regularly by captains of Royal Navy Australia Station vessels. Once in Queensland, magistrates, government agents, immigration officials and Inspectors of Pacific Islanders supervised their contracts, payments and conditions of employment. They were responsible for overseeing the arrival of recruits, ensuring they had entered contracts voluntarily, were of legal age, and were healthy enough to work for the term of their contract.

Far from becoming a disguised form of slavery, the regular importation of Pacific Islanders to work in Queensland soon "became the most government-regulated employment project in Australian history". Once completing their three-year term of indenture, the Melanesians were free to remain in Australia and work in other activities. "Some formed trade unions and bargained collectively for wages. Others eventually became landowners and sugar farmers themselves and employers of their own countrymen."

It is now clear that the mendacious and degrading charges of disguised slave labour and cruel treatment of kidnapped islanders corresponds not to the importation of Melanesians to work in Queensland, but to that of the Polynesians captured in the Eastern Pacific and transported to work in the Chincha Islands. Whether the journalists and politicians who have so unfairly defamed their own nation are knowingly peddling lies is something best filed under petty crime and forgotten. Considerably more important is that their distortions and untruths overshadow the strong and well-supported rejection of slavery and forced labour that rightly deserves a place of honour in the nation's history.

Writing in the 1980s, Manning Clark thought it appropriate to enlighten his readers about social attitudes prevailing in Australia one hundred years earlier by quoting and paraphrasing from articles in the *Bulletin* of which he evidently approved affirming that

> Under the existing social order ... men who belonged to the first families in New South Wales got so beastly drunk in fashionable clubs that they whooped and encouraged riots and uproar until they fell unconscious into a street gutter where they lay in their own vomit. Such men had the effrontery to encourage Australians to continue a servile imitation of English conventions and behaviour in public life and to indulge in a "toadying" worship of those very Englishmen whose presence in the colony in the leading positions in church and state cut off most "local possibilities of advancement". Englishmen were the colonial governors, the bishops, judges, bankers, directors, professors and head-masters ... At the same time the poor all over the world were becoming a little poorer and a little hungrier and more desperate than before ... Already fitful battles between Capital and Labour foreshadowed a showdown between the two ...

Confirming Clark's stupefying inability to understand the past even when confronted with a sufficiency of unassailable evidence, these quotations highlight the magnificence of the rebuttal delivered by a society that he thought moribund and about to be overwhelmed by a violent popular uprising but that turned out to be healthy, remarkably stable and more than prepared to open up its commanding heights to talented newcomers without the doubtful assistance of multicultural proclamations or affirmative-action directives. Within a few years Australia responded not only by choosing native Australians as school headmasters, bank managers and hospital matrons, but with three appointments at the highest level of public responsibility within the Commonwealth aptly symbolising the vitality and aplomb of the fledgling nation.

Whether the journalists and politicians who have so unfairly defamed their own nation are knowingly peddling lies is something best filed under petty crime and forgotten.

In 1904 John Christian Watson, a Chilean-born and New Zealand-educated politician, became the first Labor Prime Minister of Australia and the first labour prime minister in the world; in 1918 Sir John Monash became the first Jew to command the armed forces of any major Western nation; in 1931 Sir Isaac Isaacs, also a Jew, became the first Australian-born governor-general of the Commonwealth. These were not the random result of a scattering of titles and sinecures by the party godfathers, but advancement fairly earned by disciplined talent and hard work.

Watson was chosen by his peers, he was their leader and not an exhausted bureaucrat in search of a diplomatic posting. Monash was a successful civil engineer who "took up soldiering as a peacetime hobby. In August 1918, in command of some 200,000 soldiers, including Americans, he was foremost in the advance that broke through the German lines and helped force Germany to the point of surrender." Isaacs, who perhaps unexpectedly was strongly opposed to Zionism, was elected to both the Victorian and federal parliaments before being appointed attorney-general, a position he left when promoted to the High Court where he served for twenty-four years before becoming the first native-born governor-general of the Commonwealth.

The ease should cause alarm with which intellectually unscrupulous journalists, politicians and academic mediocrities distort and inflate the assignment system or the meticulously regulated importation of Melanesian workers to transform them into back-door conspiracies to bring slavery into Australia. Even more disquieting is to discover that the appointments of John Christian Watson, Sir John Monash or Sir Isaac Isaacs seldom merit more than a perfunctory note in most of the books on Australian history published in the last few decades, with only a couple mentioning the fact that Watson was the world's first labour prime minister.

No doubt Australian society has been greatly enriched by the gradual incorporation of immigrants originating from practically every nation, culture and society on earth, but it is difficult to find any with antecedents functionally related to the decisions behind the three appointments and the other achievements listed above. Risking invidiousness, it is fair to think that before the Second World War it would be as unrealistic, for example, to expect to find a Jewish prime minister or president of Italy, Poland, Spain, Greece, Turkey, Denmark or Portugal as it would be to have a Jew in command of the armed forces of Dreyfusard France. Only one nation has the credentials and the antecedents convincingly to claim responsibility for such an exceptional legacy, and this is the England that was able twice to elect to the highest office in the land an individual who could not possibly even begin to aspire to anything comparable anywhere else on earth. The office was that of prime minister and the man was Benjamin Disraeli.

It would be difficult to find someone less likely than young Benjamin Disraeli ever to command sufficient electoral support to take him to the House of Commons, and even harder to imagine his colleagues in Westminster choosing him as their leader and prime minister. At the time of his venture into politics, Disraeli was going through a particularly notorious Byronic stage; his colourful dandyism designed to shock as much as his finances, for he was heavily in debt, he had acquired a largely false reputation as a frivolous albeit charming and loquacious womaniser and, worst of all, he wrote novels. All this, if Manning Clark's inane rants are to be taken seriously, within a social ambit so impermeable, so prejudiced, so stratified and so vigorous that it could even project its nefarious influence to Australia and keep those born in the antipodes in their allotted subordinate places. If all this were true, Disraeli's fate would have been exclusion multiplied, from recognition, advancement or elevation to the Commons.

What Clark and his disciples failed to observe is that Burke's English society believed that careers should be open to talent and had no hesitation in overriding personal dislike and prejudice and offer an aristocratic embrace to worthy newcomers. The rest is not only history, but emphatically, biography, because Disraeli's life offers the clearest possible indication of the social latitude, political wisdom and overwhelming pragmatism of the English moment in the aftermath of 1688 and the Industrial Revolution. What Palmerston memorably said of the foreign policy of England—"England has neither friends nor enemies; she has interests"—is also applicable to Disraeli's political trajectory and social ascent. More, it can also be correctly understood as symbolising a cultural disposition able to place in the hands of a Jewish engineer the armed forces of the Commonwealth of Australia at the time engaged as vanguard troops in the greatest war in human history. The earthy political pragmatism inherited from the cultural mainstream of the English-speaking peoples can also be recruited in the quest to understand how and why those in power did not think it necessary to kill their opponents in order to secure the unification and independence of the Australian self-governing colonies.

The omission of these eminently positive and significant episodes not only perverts the course of Australian history, but exacerbates the danger of severing the Commonwealth from the distinguished cultural tradition outlined by Edmund Burke when he observed:

> from Magna Charta [*sic*] to the Declaration of Right, it has been the uniform policy of our constitution to claim and assert our liberties, as an entailed inheritance derived to us from our forefathers, and to be transmitted to our posterity; as an estate especially belonging to the people of this kingdom without any reference whatever to any other more general or prior right. By this means our constitution preserves an unity in so great a diversity of its parts.

And so it is, and so it does. Which more than justifies the question posed by Professor Kenneth Minogue, the distinguished thinker whose life and work bridged the Burkean world, who noting that millions are now voting with their feet and emigrating in a Western cultural direction:

> Why is it that they want to come and live among us and, in a sense, live as we do? This is an important question, not only for them, but also for us. Is it democracy? Is it liberty? Is it merely our affluence? Is it perhaps the individualism that might release them from the bondage of custom? Is it perhaps even Christianity, which has so totally shaped the culture of Western life, and which has now in its broad ecumenical tolerances almost begun to merge with Western life? The West is all these things and a great deal more. Modernity is, at the very least, a historical moment exhibiting a pattern of life that very few people in the world do not wish to join and emulate.

Both this world and this modernity bear the imprimatur of an English Burkean bequest that few nations have honoured and put to work better than Australia. The positive achievements listed here are not accidental, but consistent with the generous sentiments in Captain Phillip's memorandum and especially with Burke's concept of an inheritance of freedom that reiterates forcefully the continuity of a tradition of values and dispositions ultimately responsible for the thoughtful moderate reforms, social harmony, economic efficiency and overwhelming common decency and respect for the law characteristic of the modern Commonwealth of Australia.

Claudio Véliz has contributed to ***Quadrant*** *for more than thirty years. After holding professorships at a number of universities in several countries, including Australia, he now lives in retirement along the Great Ocean Road in Victoria. A footnoted version of this article appears on* ***Quadrant Online****.*

James Spigelman

The Greatness of Arthur Phillip

Sydney's Powerhouse Museum is the home of one of the most significant cultural objects in Australia. The Boulton and Watt engine is the oldest rotative steam engine in the world. Originally installed in 1785 at Whitbread's Brewery, London, it operated for a century: grinding and lifting malt, stirring vats and pumping water and beer. It was on its way to the scrap-yard in 1887, when a trustee of what became the Powerhouse acquired it as a donation.

The engine arrived in Sydney in 1888 on the centenary of the foundation of modern Australia and was a feature of the original museum for decades. After a full restoration, it was given pride of place in the new Powerhouse Museum, opened for the Bicentenary in 1988. The engine represents a critical turning point in the industrial revolution. It was the first commercially successful stationary power plant that operated without wind, water or muscle. In the case of Whitbread's Brewery, it replaced a horse wheel.

The importance of this innovation was recognised at the time. King George III came to inspect this marvel of the new age in 1787, a public relations triumph for the brewery. Its historical significance was recognised two years ago when the Bank of England issued a £50 note displaying portraits of the entrepreneur Matthew Boulton and the engineer James Watt, together with an image of the Powerhouse Museum's engine.

Here on display in working order is a visual image of the nation which had the confidence and the competence to dispatch over 1000 people in eleven wooden boats over thousands of miles to create an open-air prison and found a new colony, at a place about which virtually nothing was known. No other object in Australia so powerfully represents this extraordinary period of British history.

The Boulton and Watt engine—created at the time of the founding, acquired on the centenary and re-installed on the bicentenary—joins other national treasures which celebrate our British heritage.

I refer to the *Endeavour* journal, the hand-written account by Captain Cook of his first Pacific voyage, bought in 1923 for the then huge sum of £5000, to great controversy, at the direction of Prime Minister Stanley Melbourne Bruce, which is on display in the Treasures Gallery of the National Library.

I refer also to the copy of the Magna Carta, acquired by Prime Minister Robert Menzies in 1952, for the sum of £15,600, on display at Parliament House in Canberra. This is one of only two original versions in existence of the reissue of Magna Carta by Edward I in 1297. This version is of greater practical significance than the original, somewhat different, charter of 1215, of which four originals exist. It was the 1297 version that became the first piece of legislation in the English statute book and is, accordingly, of greater constitutional significance than the medieval peace treaty of 1215, the 800th anniversary of which will, I trust, not be overwhelmed in Australia by popular enthusiasm for the Gallipoli centenary.

A third example is the colossal fifty-foot fountain in Sydney's Botanic Gardens, with its fifteen-foot statue of Governor Arthur Phillip, surrounded by four classic bronze figures, representing Commerce, Agriculture, Navigation and Mining and featuring four marble consoles with bronze plaques of Aboriginal Australians. Commissioned by Sir Henry Parkes from an Italian-born and -trained resident

---

The Hon. James Spigelman AC QC, former Chief Justice of New South Wales and now Chairman of the ABC, delivered this address to launch ***Arthur Phillip: Sailor, Mercenary, Governor, Spy*** *in Sydney in August.*

Arthur Phillip: Sailor, Mercenary, Governor, Spy
by Michael Pembroke
Hardie Grant, 2013, 304 pages, $45

of Sydney, Achille Simonetti, it suffered years of controversy over both style and cost, particularly after Parkes lost office. It was eventually unveiled on the occasion of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in June 1897. It cost £14,000, about $1.5 million in today's dollars, and is probably the most expensive statue in Australia.

This monumental fountain in Sydney is the only significant memorial to the outstanding achievements of an extraordinary man, so well documented in Michael Pembroke's new biography.

A few years ago, on the basis of a ruling by the Consistory Court of the Church of England, which permitted the remains of a national hero to be returned to the nation he had served, Geoffrey Robertson QC led a campaign to bring Phillip's remains to Australia, if they could be found after the change of orientation of the plaque in the modest church in Bathampton where Phillip is buried. The church, as Geoffrey put it, in his inimitable style, had literally "lost the plot". However, if we can find Richard III, I suppose we can find Phillip.

Phillip set a high moral tone and promoted an egalitarian ethos for the colony, which proved to be resurgent despite subsequent regimes with a contrary persuasion.

Laying the foundations for a successful nation in Australia was, all Australians would agree, Phillip's crowning achievement. Phillip has never received appropriate recognition in England. His treatment does not suggest that there is any sense of pride in England about Australia's success. Indeed, often it appears that the British attitude to us is that we are too successful for our proper station in life, of which we need to be reminded from time to time. (As is happening in the current cricket Test series.) This is, unfortunately, the same as our own attitude towards the success of New Zealand.

Past indifference in England will change next year, on the 200th anniversary of Phillip's death. Most significantly, a memorial stone is to be placed in Westminster Abbey, to commemorate his service to the Royal Navy and as the first Governor of Australia. Joining many of the most famous names in British history, this is a high, and entirely appropriate, form of recognition. Under the Abbey Statutes, the Dean of Westminster has authority to direct the creation of memorials. I am informed by the Abbey that the Dean has approved such a memorial after representations by the Britain-Australia Society, supported by the Australian High Commission.

Further, suitably etched glass doors will be installed at the entrance of the church where he is buried, to enhance access to the Memorial Chapel and the Phillip ledgerstone. A new tribute sculpture is to be erected, across from his former house, in the garden of the classical Upper Refreshment Rooms—of great social significance, as Michael Pembroke tells us—in the Bath of Phillip's day.

From an Australian perspective, the greatest interest is Phillip's remarkable contribution to our history. For me, two aspects of this contribution stand out. First, the high level of organisational skill involved in ensuring the proper provisioning of the First Fleet and its safe journey across more than half the world, to Sydney. Second, the strength of Phillip's humanitarianism and sense of moral responsibility. This was manifest in his early rejection of the possibility of allowing slavery in the new colony, in his empathetic dealing with subordinates, in his efforts to ensure good relations with indigenous Australians, and in his regime for convicts based more on the principle of rehabilitation than that of punishment. He set a high moral tone and promoted an egalitarian ethos for the colony, which proved to be resurgent despite subsequent regimes with a contrary persuasion.

Michael Pembroke's biography is not, however, a book only about Australia. Other historians set out and assess Phillip's contribution in that respect in great detail. This is a biography in the true sense: a story of a man's life in his times, with equal weight given to each phase of that life. Phillip's life is placed in its context. That context is British. The Australian years are only one part of his life.

In 2009, when I delivered the Annual History Lecture on the Bicentennial of Lachlan Macquarie, I sought to place the Bigge Reports in their British context, rejecting the parochial perspective of most Australian writing on the subject. Michael Pembroke's book is another example of the importance of that historical context.

Unlike so much history writing, this is an exceptionally readable book. The narrative never flags and the reader is borne along effortlessly through the personal chronology, whilst absorbing an enormous amount of detailed information about life in the eighteenth century.

The author takes us through the contemporary streets of the city of London, to the Hampshire countryside, to Rio de Janeiro and to Cape Town—

when Rio was full of Catholic churches and Cape Town had only two churches, one Lutheran and one Calvinist. We are introduced to fashions in music and clothes, to the virtues recognised in Enlightenment England, to the legal incidents of a marriage breakdown, to the development of London's pleasure gardens, to the presumed health benefits of the hot springs at Bath, and to the difference between a subscription library and a circulating library. We are given short vignettes on the conduct of whaling operations, on the textile trade and on the uses of cochineal, providing the dye essential for the red coats of British soldiers.

Although all this detail is fascinating and informative, the life of Arthur Phillip is dominated by one central theme: the Royal Navy. This is the world within which he made his life, from a young recruit with origins in genteel poverty until his final rank as a full admiral of the blue, at the top of the nine ranks of British admirals.

The key to the long-term success of the Royal Navy was that, within the limits of an aristocratic culture, it was a meritocracy. Contrast this with the British Army, where commissions were available for purchase, until the costs became manifestly too great after the incompetence displayed in the Crimean War. That is not to say that patronage, in accordance with the standards of a status-bound society, was not important in the Navy. Phillip's career manifests such, both received and given. Nevertheless, this book records the story of a man promoted on merit.

I am reinforced in the view I have earlier expressed about the importance of the financial incentives, by way of prize money, to the success of the Royal Navy over the centuries. To this I was able to add information, of which I was hitherto unaware, about the monetary rewards for the successful deployment of fire ships.

This book provides considerable insight about an institution at the heart of English power and empire, a fascinating array of fact that drives the narrative and entrances the reader. We learn of the employment of young boys, as Phillip was when first recruited, and the operations of the charity school he attended. We are introduced to the operation of press gangs, to the duties and entitlements of different levels of the complex hierarchy of ranks in the Navy, to the differentiation of kinds of ships and the rating system of vessels based on number of cannons. There are short but incisive descriptions of the rhythms of shipboard life, of the symptoms and treatment of scurvy, of the mechanics of cannon firing and battle tactics.

The reader is also given sketches of the crucial international disputes in which Phillip was involved: including the Seven Years War, the Third Colonial War between Spain and Portugal, the American Revolutionary War and the Napoleonic War. Phillip served on secondment to the navy of Portugal, England's oldest ally, and was involved in the border disputes of the Plate estuary in South America, where, we are informed, his capacity for covert work developed. We are told of the espionage priorities in his subsequent secret missions in France.

And always there is the sea: the currents and winds of the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, the perils of the Cape of Good Hope and Cape Horn, the dramatic perils of the Southern Ocean and the tactics involved in saving a ship in huge seas.

This was a life lived in service of the Royal Navy; an honourable, distinguished life. It is well told and I commend this biography to you.

Daryl McCann

Reassessing the Iron Curtain

I: Secret Police and Political Terror

Anne Applebaum's *Iron Curtain: The Crushing of Eastern Europe* challenges the revisionist notion that the Sovietisation of Eastern Europe was a response to American belligerence. Roosevelt and then Truman, according to Applebaum, were essentially bystanders during the process. *Iron Curtain* convincingly demonstrates that Soviet-style communism, operating in the vacuum created by the collapse of the Nazi empire, obeyed a totalitarian logic all of its own.

Roosevelt and Churchill had contrasting attitudes to the Soviet Union at the time of Yalta, February 1945. Roosevelt hoped that if the Stalin's postwar demands were satisfied, then all might be right. Churchill was far less sanguine, but neither Western power wanted war with their erstwhile Grand Alliance partner. Roosevelt and Churchill, contends Applebaum, decided it would be impossible to "sell" a new war to their respective countries, given that wartime propaganda had "portrayed Stalin as jovial 'Uncle Joe', rough-edged friend of the working man". Churchill resigned himself to the bitter truth: "once the Red Army was in place, it wasn't going to move". For the American President, the fate of Eastern Europe "was only of marginal interest".

Iron Curtain dispenses with *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (1959) by William Appleman Williams, the prototype revisionist account of the origins of the Cold War. According to Williams, Roosevelt's insistence on an "Open Door Policy" at the conclusion of the Second World War, with its implication that capitalism should be universal, forced Stalin to re-evaluate his relationship with the West. Had the United States continued its Lend-Lease program after Germany's defeat, or otherwise aided the postwar reconstruction of the USSR, the Cold War could have been avoided. Stalin would not have felt the need to tighten his grip on Eastern Europe which resulted in its complete Sovietisation and "all pretence of national autonomy" forsaken.

Applebaum has a different take on why "political terror was stepped up, the media muzzled and elections manipulated" in Eastern Europe between 1944 and 1947. The key factor in this nightmarish process, she argues, had little to do with the machinations of Roosevelt or Truman, let alone Churchill's 1946 "Iron Curtain" speech:

> First and foremost, the Soviet NKVD, in collaboration with local communist parties, immediately created a secret police force in its own image, often using people whom they had already trained in Moscow. Everywhere the Red Army went … these newly minted secret policemen immediately began to use selective violence, carefully targeting their political enemies according to previously composed lists and criteria.

The Sovietisation of every Eastern European country "liberated" by the Red Army followed this pattern to the letter.

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989–90 allowed the former inmates of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) to speak about "the looting, the arbitrary violence and above all the mass rape which followed the Soviet invasion" in 1945. Throughout other parts of Eastern Europe, people never forgot that the Red Army dispatched not only Nazi sympathisers but also "local partisans who had been fighting the Germans but who happened not to be communists". Nowadays, says Applebaum, the Red Army's 1944–45 conduct in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania and Bulgaria is "rarely remembered as pure liberation", but more "as the brutal beginning of a new occupation".

Iron Curtain, in large part, is an exploration of

Iron Curtain: The Crushing of Eastern Europe
by Anne Applebaum
Penguin, 2013, 614 pages, $22.99

how and why Eastern Europeans allowed themselves to be so thoroughly subjugated by their new Soviet masters. The obvious answer, of course, is that there were not a lot of options unless people were willing to risk prosecution, persecution or even execution. The one possible exception was the East Germans, who could flee to West Berlin, which they did in astonishing numbers: 3.5 million out of a total population of 18 million before the erection of the Berlin Wall (or "Antifascist Defence Barrier") in 1961.

The reality of Soviet-style communism was not identical to Nazism, and yet Applebaum persuasively argues that they were both totalitarian. She rejects as spurious the claims of revisionist historians in the 1970s and 1980s that "even Stalin's Soviet Union had never really been totalitarian at all". The Soviet archives, opened in 1990, lend support to Applebaum's assertion. She is equally dismissive of postmodernist theories asserting that "totalitarian" signifies nothing more than a self-serving "negative template" used in the West to exalt liberal capitalism and denigrate "The Other".

Continually switching from East German examples to Polish or Hungarian, *Iron Curtain* methodically builds the case that totalitarianism not only penetrates the "soul of a nation", but also "proves just how fragile 'civilisation' can be". It is a phenomenon that did not disappear with Soviet-style communism. The Egyptian historian Sherif Younis recently depicted his country's Muslim Brotherhood as "a sectarian organisation that locks itself within its own moral and behaviour codes".

Younis's characterisation of Egypt's year-long Muslim Brotherhood government as an entity "driven by its own interests, rendering it difficult to ally with anyone" could serve as a description of the Walter Ulbricht group. This clique of Soviet-trained German communists arrived from Moscow in the aftermath of the Battle of Berlin in May 1945. Their Plan A was to co-opt all of Germany, but in the end they had to be satisfied with ruling the Soviet-occupied zone, or what became in October 1949 the German Democratic Republic. Virtually all attempts by Ulbricht's coterie to form an understanding with non-communist political and social forces ended in the capitulation of the latter. For instance, by 1946 the Communist Party could no longer compete with the popularity garnered by the other workers' party in the country, the Social Democrats, and so Stalin ordered the two socialist parties in the Soviet Zone to "unite" and form the Socialist Unity Party. This signified the death of social democracy in East Germany.

It was the same story—as Applebaum explains in the chapter titled "Radio"—with the media. At first, small independent newspapers in the Soviet Zone were allowed to compete with the larger Moscow-sponsored publications, but any "political incorrectness" was punished by the enforced reduction of a newspaper's circulation, the communist authorities having control of paper production and distribution. A similar despotic impulse affected radio content. Until the Americans established a station in the western part of Berlin in July 1945, the Walter Ulbricht group ruled the airwaves. The communists tried something approximating subtlety in the beginning, but their plunging popularity soon forced them to reconsider: "Their conclusion: There should be more ideology, not less—on the radio and everywhere else."

All teachers, from kindergarten onwards, had to play their part: "Politics was a lie at the centre of the curriculum for every child." Universities throughout Eastern Europe became institutions for the dissemination of communist ideology.

Another key aspect of the Eastern bloc states was the attempt to brainwash the young so they would "never even conceive of opposing communism". This dark fantasy involved, as a Soviet dissident once put it, the attempt to create a new species—*Homo sovieticus*. All teachers, from kindergarten onwards, had to play their part: "Politics was a lie at the centre of the curriculum for every child." Increasingly, universities throughout Eastern Europe became institutions for the dissemination of communist ideology: "History became Marxist history, philosophy became Marxist philosophy, law became Marxist law, and sociology often disappeared altogether."

Every "people's community" must have its enemies and so it proved in Eastern Europe. In their early days, at least, the Soviet-backed regimes made some show of accommodating Catholic and Protestant churches in their midst, but by the time of High Stalinism (1949–53) the gloves had come off. Applebaum contrasts the struggle for ecclesiastical autonomy by Hungary's Cardinal József Mindszenty with that of his Polish counterpart, Stefan Wyszynski. Wyszynski enjoyed more success, but it was only relative. The Jews were next

on the hit list, even though Moscow supported the establishment of the State of Israel in May 1948. Echoing the Nazi epoch that preceded Soviet ascendancy in the region, Stalin and his East European underlings "clearly believed, not without justification, that the persecution of Jewish communities would be welcomed by everyone else".

Ultimately, though, a sizeable percentage of the East European population were—at some level—complicit, or the Soviet-backed regimes would not have survived for almost half a century. This goes beyond the local *nomenklatura* enjoying the power and privileges of a communist aristocracy and inhabiting "the villas left behind by the displaced bourgeoisie". As an example, Applebaum writes about a typical owner of a private printing press in East Germany who did the bidding of the regime and so contributed to the "creation of totalitarianism", and yet would not have necessarily "considered himself a collaborator, let alone a communist". *Iron Curtain* employs the expression "reluctant collaborator" to depict people who outwardly conformed and yet "retained an inner sense of disjunction or discomfort".

The "genius" of communism, getting people to obey the system's rules, was also its "fatal flaw". Applebaum quotes Jacek Fedorowicz, a citizen of the People's Republic of Poland, and his claim that from the earliest age even those with "zero knowledge of politics" understood the code of survival: "we knew exactly what could be said in different settings, at school, among close friends and not so close, at home and on holiday". In other words, the captive people of Eastern Europe sabotaged the *Homo sovieticus* project to an extent that communist dictators such as Erich Honecker (GDR) and Nicolae Ceausescu (Romania) never grasped—despite the ubiquitous surveillance systems—until it was too late.

A more emboldened category than the "reluctant collaborators" was that of the "passive opponents", although Applebaum allows that they were often the same people. These people expressed their hostility to a communist regime "in jokes, graffiti and unsigned letters". Their contrariness was "often anonymous and frequently ambivalent". Radio Luxemburg broadcasts were "weirdly popular" among the young, Western music serving as the sound of freedom and the promise of a different way of experiencing life. (Leslie Woodhead's recently released *How the Beatles Rocked the Kremlin* explores this theme in greater depth.) In 1951, one of the GDR's official musicologists denounced American "jazz, swing and big band music" as "just as dangerous as a military attack with poison gases". The regime's hardliners and so-called liberals never did work out a coherent solution for managing the "degenerate" cultural influences that kept infiltrating the Iron Curtain.

In her overview of the era, Applebaum explains the Sovietisation of Eastern Europe from 1944 in terms of Stalin abandoning his long-standing "Socialism in One Country" doctrine and replacing it with a Trotsky-like embrace of "the international revolution". This fits with a fairly traditionalist understanding of the origins of the Cold War, and yet there is not a lot of evidence that Stalin set out to destroy relations with the United States. Moreover, Stalin drastically reduced the size of the Red Army throughout 1945 and well into 1946. Additionally, no less than 27 million Soviet citizens had perished in the Great Patriotic War, and much of the Soviet Union's newly acquired "sphere of influence" lay in ruins. Was this the right moment to be launching the Third World War?

The possibility that Stalin might not have *meant* to precipitate the Cold War does not excuse him from blame. Stalin did not *mean* for a lot of things to happen—the 1940 Katyn Massacre in Soviet-controlled Poland, for instance. Jonathan Brent's *Inside the Stalin Archives* (2009) reveals that originally neither Stalin nor Beria had any "clear intention of executing the Polish officers". The trouble was, the Poles refused to "alter their political opinions", and eventually Stalin and Beria "decided they had no option but to shoot them".

The Katyn Massacre presaged what happened—metaphorically and, on occasion, literally—in Central Europe during the postwar years. Revisionists often blame Truman for raising Stalin's ire, but by the end of 1945 the United States had officially recognised the communist regimes in Bulgaria and Romania. In addition, America never lifted a finger to assist the captive nations of Central Europe—short-wave radio programs aside—even when East Berliners rose up against communist despotism in 1953 and the Hungarians and Poles did the same in 1956. The Truman Doctrine spoke not of rollback but containment.

The exception—the one place in Central Europe where the Americans boldly and heroically fought Sovietisation—was Germany. Applebaum somewhat unfairly discounts Wilfred Loth's *Stalin's Unwanted Child: The Soviet Union, the German Question and the Founding of the GDR* (1998) as merely a "more sophisticated" version of the revisionist thesis first promulgated by William Appleman Williams. Surely Loth is right to argue that the formation of the GDR would have been Plan B for Stalin; and that he watched with alarm the establishment of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Stalin lost whatever chance existed of post-war Germany remaining in one piece, albeit as a "Finlandised" state, when he arranged a shotgun marriage between the Social Democrats and the Communist Party in the Soviet Zone in March 1946. From that moment onwards, most Social Democrats in the three Western-occupied zones abandoned all thought of a united Germany and joined their conservative compatriots in agitating for some form of sovereign *West* German state. America's creation of Bizonia and then Trizonia, along with the currency reform of 1948, was a response to this groundswell of popular German agitation, which in turn reflected a response to the machinations of the Stalinists in the Soviet Zone.

German currency reform, to continue the chain of events, resulted in Stalin laying siege to Berlin and the ensuing Berlin Airlift (1948–49), the establishment of the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic (1949), NATO (1949), and quite possibly Kim Il-Sung's Soviet-approved invasion of South Korea (1950). Carolyn Eisenberg's modern-day revisionist account, *Drawing the Line: The American Decision to Divide Germany* (1997), uses archival material to argue that US officials privately welcomed the siege of Berlin because it served as perfect anti-Soviet propaganda, thus making the job of finalising plans for a pro-American West German state that much easier. Of course they did, but that does not mean the USA was responsible for Germany's division in the first place—quite the opposite, in fact.

To Applebaum's picture of totalitarianism, therefore, we should add *obtuseness informed by insatiability*. Witness Adolf Hitler calling for maps of British India with Operation Barbarossa still in its infancy. Closer to the present day, we might consider the Muslim Brotherhood government overreaching before it had co-opted the Egyptian Armed Forces. In contrast with their fellow nationals trapped in the Soviet Zone, West Germans—even those marooned in West Berlin—could count on the President of the United States of America to protect them from Stalin and his henchmen, the NKVD included. Here, quite possibly, we have the real origins of the Cold War.

One of Applebaum's objectives in *Iron Curtain* is to revive the use of the term "totalitarian" because it "remains a useful and necessary empirical description", something more than an "ill-defined insult". One problem, in Applebaum's estimation, is that in the 1950s American Cold War warriors, both Democratic and Republican, wielded the word about as a weapon for their own political advancement: "Was 'totalitarianism' a real threat, or was it an exaggeration, a bogeyman, an invention of Senator Joseph McCarthy?" *Iron Curtain*, drawing on the now-opened archives of the former Soviet bloc countries, confirms for us that totalitarianism was an only too real phenomenon.

Iron Curtain finishes, appropriately, on a cautiously optimistic note. One of the lessons of the Sovietisation of Eastern Europe, Applebaum maintains, is that totalitarian regimes only *seem* to be "very nearly invincible". Ideology inevitably departs from reality and, in the first instance, this makes refuting totalitarian apologists difficult. As Orwell once said about Newspeak, the theory rises "above the facts on clouds of nonsense, rather like a theological system".

In the long haul, however, the discrepancy between theory and reality allows a growing number of sceptics to "live in truth", as Vaclav Havel wrote in his 1978 essay "The Power of the Powerless". It is in this conjunction, argues Applebaum, that the astonishing ambition of totalitarianism contains the seeds of its own destruction: "By trying to control every aspect of society, the regimes had turned every aspect of society into a potential form of protest." Thus, over time the Poles created an unofficial union (Solidarity), the East Germans an unofficial peace movement, and so on *ad infinitum*. The tyrannical impulse might always be with us, waiting there in the wings ready to enslave humankind in the name of some novel form of so-called emancipation, but at least we can be assured that the human spirit is not so easily vanquished.

Daryl McCann wrote on Margaret Thatcher in the September issue. He has a blog at http://darylmccann.blogspot.com.au.

Australian Government | Australia Council for the Arts

This project has been assisted by the Commonwealth Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.

Peter Coleman

Reassessing the Iron Curtain

II: The Displaced Persons of Bonegilla

And so it was necessary to teach people not to think and make judgments, to compel them to see the non-existent, and to argue the opposite of what was obvious to everyone …

—Boris Pasternak, *Doctor Zhivago*

The brutality of the First World War created a generation of fascist leaders, idealistic intellectuals and expressionist artists—according to Anne Applebaum in *Iron Curtain: The Crushing of Eastern Europe.* But, she goes on, the Second World War "entered far more deeply into everyday life". It involved not only brutal fighting but occupation, deportation, the mass displacement of civilian populations and constant daily violence which shaped the human psyche in ways that are hard to articulate.

The experience of this "reshaping" was far more profound in Eastern Europe than in Anglo-Saxon countries. The Polish poet Czeslaw Milosz tried to explain why. The war in Eastern Europe, he said, shattered a man's sense of the natural order:

> Once, had he stumbled upon a corpse on the street, he would have called the police. A crowd would have gathered and much talk and comment would have ensued. Now he knows he must avoid the dark body lying in the gutter and refrain from asking unnecessary questions …

During the Nazi occupations respectable citizens no longer regarded banditry as a crime if it was in the service of the underground. Boys from law-abiding families became hardened criminals for whom "the killing of a man presents no great moral problem".

The experience of national defeat and alien occupation is hard to convey to those who have not endured the disintegration of one's entire civilisation, the collapse of the moral world of one's parents and teachers, and the failure of respected leaders. Words like *emptiness* and *vacuum* are feeble indicators of the abyss into which so many fell. Hannah Arendt saw in it the emergence of the "totalitarian personality", the "completely isolated human being who, without any other social ties to family, friends, comrades, or even mere acquaintances", looks to the party and the state for any sense of having a place in the world.

Applebaum's theme is totalitarianism in daily life. The idea of totalitarianism fell into disrepute in the 1970s and 1980s. She believes "it is long overdue for a revival". It is a necessary concept to explain the crushing of Eastern Europe. One of Mussolini's critics (Giovanni Amendola) invented the word in 1923 but Mussolini adopted it enthusiastically and gave what is still the best definition: *Everything within the state, nothing outside the state, nothing against the state.* There is, in a totalitarian regime, only one political party, one educational system, one cultural policy, one centrally planned economy, one united media, and one moral code. "In a totalitarian state there are no independent schools, no private businesses, no grassroots organisations, and no critical thought." The secret police are there to enforce the totalitarian ideal.

The word *totalitarianism* spread around the world and by the 1940s was regularly used to describe the Nazi and Soviet states. It was a common currency in such famous books as Friedrich Hayek's *Road to Serfdom*, Karl Popper's *Open Society and its Enemies*, George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and Hannah Arendt's *Origins of Totalitarianism*. Churchill used it in his famous speeches, it became explicitly part of the Truman Doctrine in 1947, and President Eisenhower drew on it during the Korean War. By this time revisionists and sceptics had begun to

---

Iron Curtain: The Crushing of Eastern Europe
by Anne Applebaum
Penguin, 2013, 614 pages, $22.99

To Bonegilla from Somewhere
by Wanda Skowronska
Connor Court, 2013, 276 pages, $29.95

question the term as crude and too ideological. No society can be completely totalitarian, these critics said. Yet this was always the view of its theorists: totalitarianism is against human nature in all its manifestations and will not or cannot last. By trying to control every aspect of society, the communists turned every aspect into a potential protest. But the revisionists succeeded in one sense: the term lost respectability and became a loose synonym for authoritarianism. Used in this more or less benign way it misses the ruthless and uncompromising attempt by totalitarian rulers, most famously Stalin, to impose total uniformity on their subjects. Applebaum insists that it is impossible to describe the crushing of Eastern Europe between 1945 (the Soviet occupation) and 1956 (the Hungarian Revolution) without deploying the idea of totalitarianism. As an historian she persuasively restores its centrality.

In Part One of *Iron Curtain*, which she calls "False Dawn", Applebaum outlines the comparatively benign communist rule of 1944 to 1946. But she also shows how from the very beginning, the Soviet Union imported key elements of the Stalinist system, especially the Sovietised and sometimes Moscow-trained secret police, into the eight nations occupied by the Red Army. They used selective violence targeting listed political enemies. They took control of the ministries of the interior and defence. They also took control of national radio. They harassed and often banned independent organisations—church groups, women's groups, boys' and girls' scouts, youth groups. There was mass ethnic cleansing—displacing millions of Germans, Poles, Ukrainians, Hungarians from towns and villages where they had lived for centuries.

Yet there was still in 1944 and 1945 some genuine democracy. Private farming and private business and non-communist political parties and newspapers survived briefly. There were even some free elections—permitted because, strange as it may seem now, the Stalinists thought they would win them. They lost badly in Germany, Austria, Hungary. They lost a referendum in Poland. They did quite well in Czechoslovakia (winning a third of the vote) but when it became clear that they would do badly in a proposed election in 1948, they staged a coup and put an end to any prospect of democratic elections.

After these failures the Stalinists adopted a harsher, fully totalitarian program. In Part Two of *Iron Curtain*, which she calls "High Stalinism", Applebaum outlines the new Stalinist policies: the waves of arrests and show trials, the expansion of labour camps, and the tighter controls over journalists, intellectuals and artists. Anti-communist parties were eliminated as well as non-communist leftists, non-conforming communists and independent organisations. They attempted to subvert the Catholic and Protestant churches. "They created new, all-encompassing forms of educational propaganda, they sponsored public parades and lectures, hung banners and posters, organised petition signing campaigns and sporting events." Between 1946 and 1953 the Soviet Union succeeded in radically transforming the entire region from the Baltic to the Adriatic.

It was as if a space ship had landed in the bush, bringing the flotsam and jetsam of Hitler's and Stalin's wars—all desperate, penniless, still fearful of the Soviet Gulag, all more than willing to work.

But the totalitarian enterprise failed again. After Stalin's death in 1953 major and minor rebellions broke out throughout the Sovietised world. There was a major protest in East Berlin, suppressed with tanks, and great uprisings in Poland and Hungary. The Soviet authorities tried once more to moderate its totalitarian drive, but continued to fail right up to 1989. It did an enormous amount of damage, although the most successful post-communist societies are those which successfully resisted the totalitarian embrace. "This is not an accident."

Applebaum sums up her inquiry: "Above all, I sought to gain an understanding of real totalitarianism—not totalitarianism in theory, but totalitarianism in practice—and how it shaped the lives of millions of Europeans in the twentieth century." She has succeeded superbly.

Wanda Skowronska, in her family memoir *To Bonegilla from Somewhere*, fills out the story. The *somewhere* of her title is the postwar European world of Displaced Persons, as they were called then, the hundreds of thousands of refugees from Eastern Europe who knew that if they returned to their native lands they would end up in Stalin's Gulag. The Bonegilla of the title is the Australian transit camp in north-eastern Victoria through which some 170,000 of them passed on their way to jobs and later to citizenship in Australia.

As the DPs stepped off the boats in Melbourne, with their gaunt frames, worn coats, old suitcases and European manners, they faced an Australia of which they knew nothing and which knew nothing of them. They and the Australians exemplified that

gulf which Czeslaw Milosz described between refugees whose lives had been shaped by defeat, alien occupation, deportation, death camps and daily violence, and their new Anglo-Saxon hosts, almost all of whom had had no experience of any of these horrors.

The newcomers' first mainland stop was Bonegilla, a railway siding in the bush not far from Wodonga and near a disused army camp which would house them until they left it for work somewhere in Australia. It was here that Wanda Skowronska was born and lived for five years. Her parents found jobs in the camp. It remains for her an indelible memory.

It is for me too. I was a student, aged nineteen, when I signed up as a teacher for the summer vacation in 1948–49. The Australia of those days was a now forgotten country—a land of Smithy and Bradman, Peter (and Smoky) Dawson, Stiffy and Mo, the Pyjama Girl, *bona fide* travellers, CRTS students, deeners, donahs, gramophones, roll-your-owns and Lux Radio Theatre. Then in the middle of nowhere emerged this extraordinary Bonegilla. It was as if, Skowronska says, a space ship had landed in the bush, bringing the flotsam and jetsam of Hitler's and Stalin's wars—"Balts" (Lithuanians, Estonians, Latvians), Hungarians, Czechs, Ukrainians, Germans—all desperate, penniless, still fearful of the Soviet Gulag, all more than willing to work. For Skowronska as a child Bonegilla was a kind of Eden, "a melange of European manners, possums, open land, stories of intense and remembered worlds from far away".

For me, it was a strange new Australia, the beginning of multiculturalism (although the word had not yet been invented). It was not just that the men wore hairnets and schoolgirls walked the tracks arm in arm. The *lingua franca* was German, with loudspeakers ("*Achtung! Achtung!*") for camp announcements and some entertainments. There were also ethnic tensions, camp informers, infidelities. It was for me a formative and transformative experience.

The tireless sponsor of it all was the Minister for Immigration, Arthur ("Populate or Perish") Calwell. He welcomed these exotic foreigners and urged all Australians to follow his example—and to dismiss any "wicked" allegations about their background in Hitler's Reich. (It was easy enough for a few Nazi collaborators to slip through the immigration nets designed to catch them, but they were a tiny, almost insignificant minority.) The teachers or "instructors" in Bonegilla took Calwell's advice. We urged the DPs to become British subjects as soon as possible.

Skowronska develops her theme with the story of her Polish father Bogdan and Latvian mother Valerie. You cannot understand the earliest Polish DPs without some awareness of their role in the great Warsaw Uprising of 1944, the biggest military action ever undertaken by any anti-Nazi resistance movement and one of which little is known to this day. It lasted about two months. Skowronska's father, then a boy of sixteen, was among the 50,000 insurgents in the Polish Home Army. Meanwhile across the Vistula the Red Army waited and watched, determined to see the Nazis destroy the Polish resistance before it crossed over. The Nazis killed some 200,000 Poles and, on Hitler's orders, destroyed historic Warsaw, building by building. George Orwell was one of the few journalists, in a British press heavily influenced by communist moles and fellow travellers, to draw attention to the Polish tragedy. The Nazis drove some 800,000 Poles out of Warsaw. Wounded and emaciated, they limped their way to the West. Some lived on in the margins of society. Some went mad. Others like Bogdan finally found a haven in Australia. Small wonder that from Bonegilla he closely followed the battle of Dien Bien Phu in 1954.

Wanda Skowronska's mother Valerie survived two foreign occupations of Latvia—in 1940 by the Soviets (who deported 35,000 Latvians to Siberia in cattle trains) and in 1941 by the Nazis (who exterminated 90,000, including 70,000 Jews, 18,000 Latvians and 2000 gypsies). As the Red Army drew near in 1944 she escaped to the West where, bombed in Hamburg, she was left for dead. She miraculously survived. In 1950 she arrived in Bonegilla, a few months after Bogdan. They married in Bonegilla in 1951. Wanda was born soon afterwards.

The town of Bonegilla is now demolished. The wind blows over the old streets, mess hall, pit toilets, movie theatre, canteen, banks, school. Only Block 19 still stands—a national heritage site, a sort of Ellis Island museum without the hype. It touches anyone who had any experience of it, especially the DPs. Wanda Skowronska reminds us all of that gulf of which Czeslaw Milosz so grimly wrote and of how Australia bridged it.

Peter Coleman is a former member of both the New South Wales and Commonwealth parliaments, and a former editor of ***Quadrant****. His latest book is* ***The Last Intellectuals*** *(Quadrant Books).*

Raising an Only Child

Dad, this is none of your business!
You never had sisters or brothers
to fight. And you stand abashed

again, an only child. Lone species
from two multi-sibling parents
who found you a mystery.

You can be made an only child
by rivals who fail early
and give back your lullaby.

You can see sibbling taught
by the instant rally of a cohort
that, were you theirs, would defend you

though with the same giggles
about bossiness or dalliance—
You do have brains, but no sense!

Employable only solo or top,
making friends from your own kind
is relief with blades in it,

assorted long adolescences
with whoop and giddy wit:
You can't have anything!

and *I, the only true human.*
But also reproach from your own:
Dad, you laughed and joked way more

with your rat-pack adopted children
than us. And you stammer
I wasn't answerable for them—

Some go off to reboot
and you sit, recalling sorrier
links of your self-raising chain.

Les Murray

Door

This door is becoming art with parallels
of weather diverting at wood knots.

These knots are vicinities of texture—
their ingrained paint fast with lead base.

Intervals of dent highlight entry of nails,
now covert grip playing foil to a rusted latch.

Token brass offers a flit of light conjured
by the spit and polish of storm gust.

This door becoming art, is the weather's Braille,
read by the fingertip halt and hurry of rain.

This door's inner face conserves its craft,
its enamel cloistered from abstractive sun and water.

Behind this door's climatic etch dwells
musty air and forsaken moments.

This door secures a room of phobic spiders,
their webs like crochet of an ancient aunt.

Behind this door becoming art, silence
threads needles and moves slipper quiet.

Silence sits at a hearth near tongue and groove,
whose key denies outside changes.

Silence sits listening for Bogong moths,
those fluttering chimney sweeps of chance.

Ken Stone

Patrick Morgan

Mac Ball and Anti-Anti-Communism

Best known for his early championing of Australia's role in Asia, Professor William Macmahon Ball (1901–86) was Australia's first Professor of Political Science when appointed to the post at the University of Melbourne in 1949. Mac Ball, as he was known, began as a tutor in Psychology and Philosophy, but moved to Political Science after a stint under Professor Harold Laski at the London School of Economics (LSE). He also became well known because of his two additional careers. He was a fluent foreign affairs commentator on ABC radio and in the Melbourne *Herald*. In addition he was appointed by the federal government during the 1940s to four important posts: controller of broadcasting during the war; part of the Australian delegation to the 1945 San Francisco conference which founded the United Nations; special observer to postwar Netherlands East Indies; and in 1946 Commonwealth representative on the Allied Council for Japan in Tokyo. The author of this biography, who is Japanese, has a fascinating chapter on the workings of the Allied Council, its relations with General Douglas MacArthur, and Mac Ball's role on the Council.

Mac Ball played all sides. His academic credentials helped him to get broadcasting and diplomatic posts, and these in turn helped his academic career. This dual-track career made him a widely-known public intellectual, which did not happen to his fellow left-wing commentator at the time, Dr Peter Russo, who had no academic base. The danger for Mac Ball was of becoming something of a dilettante, dabbling in a number of areas but outstanding in none. Two senior professors at the University of Melbourne were wary of his seemingly effortless rise. Kenneth Bailey, Professor of Public Law, thought Ball displayed "the spirit of the propagandist rather than of the scholar"; Boyce Gibson, Professor of Philosophy, thought he displayed a "brilliant superficiality".

How did Ball have such a golden run, with all these wonderful positions? He was personally popular, known to the general public, and with few competitors in the days when academics and media pundits were thin on the ground. Professor Richard Posner has written that in the United States "many public intellectuals are of modest distinction fortuitously thrust into the limelight".

He worked well with both Labor and Liberal regimes in acquiring these important government positions, making seamless transitions as the federal government changed hands in the 1940s. In partisan politics he was primarily a committed left-wing socialist, yet he also managed in public life to present himself as a detached authoritative observer. During his post in Japan he acted like a mandarin, imperiously demanding better conditions for himself, yet in Melbourne he was an easy-going egalitarian, mixing in semi-bohemian circles. He was able to work for traditional bodies like the ABC, the Australian Institute of International Affairs, and the Herald & Weekly Times, while at the same time being prominent in various peace and anti-censorship bodies. He worked through personal contacts as much as through ideological positions. He had a wide circle of acquaintances from all walks of life and political persuasions, he was what we would today call a consummate networker, and he did not fall out with people whose views may have differed from his. His all-round personality made him attractive to politicians of all sides, to men and women, to academics and to people in public life. All this emerges clearly in Ai Kobayashi's biography of him.

His first coherent view of things emerged in the 1920s. After relinquishing the faith of his Anglican clergyman father, he took up a position of rational tolerance. On any political issue he sought to look objectively at the factors, to understand the

---

W. Macmahon Ball: Politics for the People
by Ai Kobayashi
Australian Scholarly, 2013, 278 pages, $39.95

arguments of others, to put aside his prejudices, and to try to come to some agreement with people of good will. He applied this technique all his life. It is an important and essential approach to political debate, which I admire greatly, especially since it has been in such short supply in intellectual circles over recent decades. It is an essential step, but only a preliminary one, as tolerance itself does not constitute belief. Instead of taking up a strong position of his own, Mac Ball tended to defend the position of others, taking a peace-loving Quaker-like line. This sometimes incapacitated him from taking a firm stance against the many evils in the world that emanated from people who did not share his presumption of good will. Instead he would try to understand them and blame his own society for not doing likewise. He thought wars were caused by bad economic and social conditions, and did not understand that aggressive ideologies like fascism and communism were inherently expansionist.

His more directly political views were formed in the 1930s. At the LSE, Harold Laski convinced him of the "myth of 1917", that the Russian Revolution was a key turning point in world history, a view Mac Ball passed on to his student Manning Clark. He adopted a familiar brand of mild peace-loving socialism. His view of the Soviet Union in the 1930s reveals him as a standard fellow traveller:

> Though I think it likely that Russia has discovered more just and efficient economic methods than are yet adopted anywhere under the British flag, I still feel that British political principles are superior to those of any other country.

This quote also illustrates his penchant for walking on both sides of the street. But what he saw on a trip to Germany in the late 1930s convinced him to drop his pacifism and to oppose Nazism. In the 1930s crying "peace, peace" all the time objectively helped the Nazis—it blamed our side and let the Nazis off scot-free, as Mac Ball then realised. Nations need liberty as well as peace; they can't have peace without it.

Mac Ball was right to argue in the early 1940s that sending our troops to the European theatre of war endangered our security. After the war he focused on the rise of anti-colonialism, nationalism and communism in Asia. But he unlearnt some of the lessons of the 1930s. He reverted to calling for peace on all occasions, criticising the West for its failings but not, except on a few occasions, the Asian communist regimes, which he even supported in the belief that they would improve Asian economic conditions more than any Western ideologies. He seems to have been inoculated against anti-communism by his training under Laski.

Mac Ball became such a popular broadcaster that by the early 1950s he had a virtual monopoly of political comment on the ABC. But Menzies was now Prime Minister, and anti-communism the dominant foreign policy view in the community and in government. The ABC, being a traditionalist organisation in those days (in contrast to today) suggested that other commentators should be employed to "balance" Mac Ball's frequently anti-anti-communist, anti-US viewpoint. Mac Ball, who had headed a prominent anti-censorship lobby in the 1930s, alleged censorship by the ABC. This was strange, as it contradicted his earlier promotion of tolerance and hearing all sides.

He had no strong positive beliefs, and the hazy 1930s socialist outlook, which he never bothered to develop or critique, became less and less plausible as the decades rolled on.

Ai Kobayashi speculates that Mac Ball's poor academic output was because he was populariser who didn't bother to research details, an argument advanced by his colleagues at the time. A more likely reason was that he had no strong positive beliefs, and that the hazy 1930s socialist outlook, which he never bothered to develop or critique, became less and less plausible as the decades rolled on.

One difficulty with this book is that Ms Kobayashi does not clearly distinguish between her own views and those of her subject whom she is paraphrasing. She writes that during the Korean War period Mac Ball faced the problem of

> the political climate of the Cold War loaded with strong anti-communist sentiments—in which the principles of liberal democracy—freedom of thought and freedom of expression and association—seemed to be jeopardized.

This seems to me a peculiarly lop-sided view, seeing anti-communism as the suppressor of liberty rather than communism, Senator McCarthy as the villain rather than Mao. But it also comes troublingly close to some of Mac Ball's own lop-sided anti-Western sentiments at the time, without making it clear if Ms Kobayashi was intending to make that connection.

This book raises an allegation by Dr Frank Knopfelmacher in the 1960s of "undue Stalinist influence among academics" at the university, including the Political Science Department. Having thought it an important enough issue to raise in her book, Ms Kobayashi is obliged to treat it properly. Instead all we get is a few pages on how unbalanced Dr Knopfelmacher was, and how the lectures on the Soviet Union by Dr Lloyd Churchward, a hard-line Stalinist communist, were "virtually devoid of ideological bias", and "balanced" and "fair". To cap it off, Ms Kobayashi tells us that "as Churchward was a member of the CPA, so [David] Kemp had strong political allegiance to the Liberal Party". This was the fallacious argument used at the time by Churchward's defenders, which Ms Kobayashi has now adopted as her own, without telling the reader of its origin. (I hope I don't have to rehearse the reasons why the supposed parallel is spurious.)

This is a hoary and much discussed problem, with an extensive literature which Ms Kobayashi, having raised the issue, treats as though it does not exist. The Political Science Department was gradually formed out of the History Department during the 1940s. The key figure was the notorious communist and spy Ian Milner, who is not even mentioned in this book, even though the on-line *Australian Dictionary of Biography* entry on Mac Ball lists Milner as a work colleague. Milner was Acting Head of the Political Science Department in 1944. Another early staff member, Norman Richmond, is briefly mentioned here, though we are not told he also was a Communist Party member, as was Lloyd Churchward. Manning Clark, a fellow traveller and admirer of the Soviet Union, was Acting Head of the Department in 1946. Not a bad start for a small department. Coincidence is hardly enough to explain this tight cabal of comrades; someone or some group must have been behind this startling sequence of appointments. I hasten to add that Mac Ball was away from the department for most of the 1940s on government missions, and as far as I know was not involved in these appointments, and has never been under any suspicion of espionage or other improper activities, unlike some of his colleagues. A number of Melbourne University academics were subjects of interest at the 1949 Victorian government's Royal Commission on Communism, and the federal government's Petrov Royal Commission. Assessing all this information is essential in coming to a conclusion either way on Dr Knopfelmacher's charge, but it has largely gone down the memory hole in Ai Kobayshi's account.

The problem with this biography is not that it is hagiographic, as it gives a fair account of Mac Ball's weaknesses, but that it is too close to its subject. Ms Kobayashi recounts an incident where a university staff member, Hugo Wolfsohn, publicly accused Mac Ball of "administrative terrorism". Instead of asking if there was any truth in this claim, she simply repeats in favourable terms reactions at the time. Wolfsohn was declared to be "idiosyncratic", "unpredictable", "prickly" and "difficult". One staff member said: "Mac was a gentleman. He always behaved in a very proper and decent way towards people." These claims are simply a diversion from the issue of how Mac Ball ran his department. There is evidence in the book itself that he made "abrupt and arbitrary decisions". As Central European émigré Jews, Wolfsohn and Knopfelmacher were being put through what the US author Thomas Cuddihy has called "the ordeal of civility", the series of tests and hoops newcomers were put through in WASP-run societies to demonstrate they were not *salonfähig*, not acceptable in polite society, whereas Mac was a gentleman.

Patrick Morgan wrote on Julian Assange in the September issue. Peter Ryan also wrote about Macmahon Ball in his July–August column.

Happiness

There are mornings when you wake up
And everything is good—
No frown on the horizon,
Hosannas in your blood;

And believing in God is easy
And it helps against the times
When God is a tsunami
And nothing, nothing rhymes.

Prayer

It's easy to dismiss it
In the light of day
But when dark descends
And you need help
You pray.

Gabriel Fitzmaurice

In Two Minds

It's three a.m. and black as pitch
when the minds in my head begin a fight
that tosses me from side to side.
The stern one dreads the day ahead,
reviews a list of pressing tasks
and resurrects embarrassment,
quick ripostes I failed to make,
anxiety for friends at risk.

My dreaming mind will show a film
whenever it can seize the chance:
troupes of actors fill the screen
in fleeting guest appearances.
The plots are often quite obscure
with little shape, beginning or end
but entertaining twists and turns;
riddling symbols come and go

before I work out what they mean.
After all, I'm here to *rest*.
Just when the action's warming up
my other mind butts in:
a switch is flicked, the movie fades,
hordes of morbid moods arrive.
Exhausted by the struggle, I rise
at five to face the wait for light.

Incineration

I reckon they'll be sorry,
historians and poets,
the archeologists.
They won't know about our lives:

what we ate, how we walked,
our illnesses and why we died.
We won't be down below,
or not in numbers to supply

a statistician's set.
When people went to earth
they could always be exhumed,
their fragile bones read.

Burning human bodies
to throw the ashes away
with treasured rings and things
leaves puzzles unresolved

by those who follow on.
No bog men's jaws for them
if relics are shovelled off
to ovens where fires are lit.

A Glutton

on reading Szymborska

Her book's as good as a box of chocolates
and arrives in the mail as neatly wrapped,
causing squeaks of surprise and glee.
Save them for later, I tell myself
then lift the lid and look inside—
are their centres the sort I like?
I might try one, or maybe two.
Soon every poem draws me in
and piques my appetite for more.
I savour line after subtle line,
its texture on my tongue, the tang.
By ten o'clock I've devoured the lot.
And better, even, than chocolate,
they'll still be there for another day.

Suzanne Edgar

George Pell

The Struggle for Religious Freedom in an Age of Militant Secularism

Context is always essential for understanding, and so it is with religious freedom. Therefore, before discussing religious freedom in Australia it might be helpful to look briefly outside our own English-speaking tribes.

In large parts of the world beyond the West, religious freedom is a life-or-death issue. In response to the recent military crackdown in Egypt which has killed hundreds of people and injured many more, supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood targeted Coptic Christians in a twelve-hour rampage, destroying at least forty-seven churches and attacking Coptic schools, hospitals, monasteries and businesses across the country. Coptic families have been attacked in their homes, and the Coptic leader, His Holiness Pope Tawadros II, has been unable to leave his home or to celebrate Mass in his cathedral because of death threats. The violence has continued, and it is now estimated that one thousand people have been killed.

This is just the latest episode in the persecution of Christians in Egypt that predated the fall of the Mubarak regime. This persecution has escalated dramatically since then, and has pursued Coptic communities even outside Egypt. In January 2011, sixty Coptic churches around the world received threats of terror attacks, including four churches in Sydney. While the Coptic community in Sydney was not attacked, the increased security required in response to these threats cut short the community's celebration of the Orthodox Christmas, which is of course one of the holiest times of the year.

There is also continuing violent persecution of Christians in Syria, Iraq, Nigeria (where about 900 Christians have been killed since 2012) and Sudan. Men, women and children in Pakistan and India are targeted regularly for violence because they are Christian. Todd Johnson, an expert on Christian demography with the World Christian Database, has estimated that there were 100,000 new Christian martyrs each year between 2000 and 2010, many from Sudan and Congo. Citing Johnson's research, Italian sociologist Massimo Introvigne has claimed that a Christian is killed every five minutes. Aid to the Church in Need, a German-based Catholic relief organisation, recently estimated the martyrs at 150,000 a year.

Johnson also estimates that 45 million Christians perished in the twentieth century, most of them under the Nazis and the Soviet communists. Obviously a lot depends on how you define a martyr. Is a martyr only someone who is "actively proclaiming" their faith when they are targeted and killed? Are people martyrs if they are killed simply because their persecutors identify them as Christian believers, irrespective of the strength or otherwise of their commitment to their faith? Attending Mass is a form of proclaiming your faith and I think there is a strong case for counting as martyrs those killed at St Rita's parish in North Kaduna in Nigeria in October 2012, when a suicide bomber attacked the church during Mass. They too witnessed to the truth of the faith "even unto death".

A special commission established as part of the Church's preparations for the Great Jubilee of 2000 arrived at a lower estimate than Johnson. It concluded that were perhaps 27 million Christian martyrs in the twentieth century, making up "two thirds of the entire martyrology of the first two millennia". However the estimates might be drawn up, it seems clear that more Christians were killed for their faith in the twentieth century "than in the previous nineteen centuries combined".

Of course it is not just Christians who suffer religious persecution. The US State Department's International Religious Freedom Report for 2012 named eight nations as "Countries of Particular Concern" because of their record of "particularly severe violations of religious freedom": Burma, China, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Uzbekistan. In several countries on this list Muslim communities (including minority Muslim groups in Muslim majority countries) are among those persecuted. In Nigeria, which is not on

the US State Department's list, Muslims as well as Christians are being killed by the Muslim extremist group Boko Haram. Laws in some countries against criticising a particular religion ("blasphemy"), changing one's religion ("apostasy"), or preaching another religion ("proselytising") are a source of violence and human rights violations for minority Muslim groups as well as Christians and others.

While many instances of religious persecution and violence arise in the Muslim world, attacks against religious minorities have also arisen from Hindu groups in India and from Buddhist groups in Sri Lanka. Predictably, explicitly atheist regimes are significant persecutors of religious people. It is no surprise that China and North Korea are on the US State Department's list of "Countries of Particular Concern". All religious groups, including Christians, are restricted, harassed and subject to arrest in China, with groups such as Tibetan Buddhists, Uighur Muslims and practitioners of Falun Gong being subject to particularly serious human rights violations.

In North Korea the small Christian community seems to have been almost completely wiped out soon after the Communist Party consolidated its hold in the country in the late 1940s. The bishop of Pyongyang, Bishop Francis Hong Yong-ho, appointed by Pope Pius XII in 1944, was among those who disappeared. However, right up until this year he continued to be listed in the *Annuario Pontificio* (the Vatican's directory of bishops) as the bishop of Pyongyang, with the simple and poignant notation, "missing". This small and beautiful act of remembrance has now been brought to an end as preparations are made to open the cause for his canonisation, along with the other martyrs of North Korea.

As the Second Vatican Council declared, the Catholic Church rejects every form of persecution. Mindful of the great patrimony we share with the Jewish people, we also condemn hatred, persecution and displays of anti-Semitism. In the Middle East and Iran there are sometimes anti-Semitic statements from government leaders, including Holocaust denial and calling for the destruction of Israel. Anti-Semitism also continues to be a problem in some European countries, where there have been some isolated but nonetheless shocking anti-Semitic crimes, including murder. This problem does not always seem to receive the attention it deserves. I am not sure whether this is simply a specific instance of a more general lack of interest in religious-freedom issues on the part of politicians, opinion leaders and human rights groups, or an indication of something more worrying at the bottom of the garden of political and religious life.

Two American researchers, Brian Grim and Roger Finke, have attempted to gauge the scale of religious persecution for adherents of all faiths across the globe. They carefully analysed the data for the period between July 1, 2000, and June 30, 2007, focusing on the 143 countries in the world with a population of two million people or more. In 123 of these countries, people were physically abused or displaced from their homes because of their religion. In each of thirty-six countries more than 1000 people were abused or displaced because of their religion, and in twenty-five of these countries the number exceeded 10,000 people.

The researchers emphasise that these figures "are almost certainly low" and underestimate the level of persecution, because they mainly capture well-documented incidents. Whatever we might make of the estimates of the number of Christian martyrs referred to earlier, Grim and Finke provide a baseline figure of at least 250,000 people of all faiths physically abused or displaced because of their religion during the seven years from mid-2000 to mid-2007. Although this is a minimal figure, it is more than sufficient to demonstrate that the violation of religious freedom is a major problem, not just for those who are killed, hurt and exiled, but also for peace and stability in many regions throughout the world.

Religious freedom in the West

Thankfully, in Australia and most Western countries religious freedom is not a matter of life or death. The challenges we face are of a different order altogether, but nonetheless serious. It is no longer unusual in places such as the UK, the USA and Canada for people to be penalised or dismissed from their jobs, excluded from providing services to children and counselling, and dragged through human rights, employment and anti-discrimination tribunals simply for holding to, or merely expressing, their religious and conscientious convictions about issues such as abortion, marriage and sexuality. In this situation religious-freedom issues arise not from violent persecution but from the determination of government authorities, courts and tribunals to enforce a particular worldview, especially in two closely related areas: relationships, family and sexuality, on the one hand; and abortion and reproductive technology on the other.

Diversity and tolerance are indispensable features of a free society. As words, they have become part of the mantra of an officially sanctioned view of democracy. However religious-freedom issues tend to highlight just how limited the appetite for genuine diversity and tolerance is in some quarters. For

example, there is little tolerance for diversity if this means (as it should) making room for people whose convictions lead them to oppose abortion or contraception or the promotion of homosexual activity.

An Oxford academic, Julian Savulescu, has argued that "Doctors who compromise the delivery of medical services to patients on conscience grounds must be punished through removal of licence to practise and other legal mechanisms", and medical students who are not prepared to undertake a commitment to provide "the full range of services" should not become doctors. The law and practice seem to be already well advanced in this direction. The Victorian Abortion Law Reform Act (2008) requires doctors with conscientious objections to abortion to facilitate access to it by referring patients to other doctors who will perform the procedure. In cases where there is a threat to the life of the woman, doctors and nurses are compelled to assist in abortion, regardless of any religious or conscientious objections. For medical students it is increasingly expected that they will not go into certain areas of medicine, or even go into the profession at all, unless they are prepared to accept the practice of abortion and other life-destroying procedures.

In societies which purport to value diversity, the way Catholic teaching on contraception provokes some people to fury is notable. It is primarily a teaching for Catholics, and no one is forced to be a Catholic or to remain one. As with all Catholic teachings, this teaching is not imposed on anyone. It is proposed for consideration and free acceptance, and even some Catholics decline to accept it for themselves. Despite this, and despite the abundant availability of affordable or even free contraception in a society like the United States, the federal government there is determined to require Catholic and other Christian employers to ensure that contraception, abortion and sterilisation are covered in the health insurance packages they provide their employees. This is a flagrant attempt to use the power of the government to impose a set of beliefs on communities and individuals who hold very different beliefs, and to restrict them from upholding and acting on what they believe. Church groups, including the Catholic Church and the Baptists, are challenging the legality of these laws.

Those who promote the homosexual agenda regularly do so by invoking tolerance and diversity and the beauty of the rainbow. Once again, however, it seems that diversity and tolerance only go one way. After the Australian government conceded that it had overreached in its efforts to produce a consolidated anti-discrimination law earlier in the year, it moved to amend the Sex Discrimination Act in some significant ways. One of these amendments removed the protection for religious providers of Commonwealth-funded residential aged care services to provide services in accordance with their beliefs; for example, by providing shared rooms to married couples only. They are now being coerced to act against their religious beliefs. Surprisingly, Catholic Health Australia supported this amendment. When it came before the parliament the Opposition voted against it in the Senate, but when it came back to the House of Representatives it was passed on the voices.

The tolerance that is preached seems to be limited to allowing Christians to think differently if they really must, as long as they keep these thoughts to themselves and under no circumstances seek to act upon them.

The importance of this amendment lies not so much in the particular matter it addressed (the number of unmarried or homosexual couples seeking a shared room in a Catholic nursing home is unlikely to be large), as in the precedent it establishes for withdrawing religious freedom protections in anti-discrimination legislation. One week after this amendment passed in the federal parliament, a New South Wales independent MP proposed amending the state's Anti-Discrimination Act to remove the religious freedom protections for religious schools. These protect the right of the communities which established these schools to conduct them in accordance with their beliefs and teachings, and to ensure that those they employ and enrol will be happy to support the ethos and witness of these schools.

These sorts of attacks on religious freedom, whether made directly or by salami tactics, slice by successive slice, are usually promoted by arguing that they enhance diversity, tolerance and human rights. However, the diversity that is sought seems to be more about enforcing compliance with the objectives of an imperialistic concept of secularism. The tolerance that is preached seems to be limited to allowing Christians to think differently if they really must, as long as they keep these thoughts to themselves and under no circumstances seek to act upon them. Human rights arguments invoking equality and freedom end up in practice treating some rights as being strong enough to extinguish other rights.

An approach to human rights which applies some rights so broadly that they can almost always be predicted to trump others, while others are read

down, given the narrowest possible application, and always forced to yield to more privileged rights, is fatal to respect for human rights in the longer term. Religious freedom is one canary in the mineshaft. If it becomes enfeebled, other fundamental rights such as freedom of association and freedom of speech will rapidly take on a sickly hue as well.

Recently at Sydney University, a pro-life group founded Life Choice, a society to promote discussion about abortion and euthanasia. For such a group to be affiliated with the Student Union and receive some funding, they are required to hold an initial meeting with at least twenty members and then make application. Their first application was denied by a subcommittee because such a group would not enhance student life! An appeal against this exclusion was made to the full Student Union board and the Life Choice group won affiliation by one vote.

Professor Peter Singer, the Australian philosopher from Princeton University, intervened to support the right of Life Choice to affiliate. But one of the Student Union opponents proclaimed that a woman's right to choose abortion comes before freedom of expression. Here we have a glimpse of the future.

The situation is serious, but we also need to keep things in perspective. There is no present danger of religious persecution in Australia. We have the benefit of seeing where the trends are leading in other English-speaking countries and can make a noise about it. As in the United States, Catholics make up about a quarter of the population, and with the percentage of people of other faiths who are seriously religious we have the capacity to exercise our democratic rights to freedom of speech and make our presence felt. This is not so much the case in the United Kingdom or New Zealand, where the percentage of Catholics and serious believers is much lower. The strains of anti-Catholicism here are also more muted than they are in the USA and the UK, and we should work to keep it that way.

The co-operation of Catholics and Baptists to oppose Obama's contraception mandate is an example of religious co-operation which we should do more to follow here. The Australian Christian Lobby has already played an important part in fostering this sort of co-operation. In Sydney, Archbishop Jensen was always open to dialogue and co-operation, which I am sure will continue with Archbishop Davies. It will be interesting to see whether the existing co-operation between Catholics and evangelical Anglicans in Sydney can go to the next level. Co-operation between the different Christian communities should be natural to us, not just because of a common interest in preserving religious freedom and the freedom to present Christian teaching, but also because of our shared commitment to a free society and respecting the rights of others.

Some people would like to see religious voices and witness driven from the public square. By and large I suspect this goal will be pursued by small successive regulations or changes to legislation (such as the aged-care amendment to the Sex Discrimination Act I discussed earlier), rather than by frontal assault. Both the charities and not-for-profit reforms and the Gonski reforms of school funding initially included attempts to increase significantly the power of government to intervene and control charities and schools.

The original ambition was to establish the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission (ACNC) along the lines of the Charities Commission for England and Wales, with the capacity to withhold or withdraw charitable status from religious and other non-government agencies if they do not comply with government objectives, not least in the area of equality and non-discrimination. The Gonski proposals, which promise to deliver enormous increases in school funding to all sectors, entailed to the very last moment significantly enhanced powers for the government to make decisions about matters which had never previously been part of normal oversight and regulation of school funding. Both these dangers have been seen off, but vigilance is going to be more and more indispensable into the future.

While I think that greater regulation and administrative control represent the more likely strategy for those who want to wind back religious freedom in the longer term, there will also be open political conflict from time to time. This will certainly be the case if same-sex marriage is ever legalised in Australia. In saying this, it is important to note that I do not think same-sex marriage is inevitable here. I am not surprised that supporters of same-sex marriage do not want a referendum on the issue.

But if same-sex marriage comes to pass in Australia, there will then be enormous pressure to present homosexual unions as being as valid as real marriage, and to prevent the teaching of the Christian understanding of sexuality, marriage and family, even in church schools. There will be even more pressure to silence people who oppose same-sex marriage and to force them to co-operate with it, as experience from the USA, the UK and Canada has put beyond doubt, with any legislative protections for religious communities quickly shown to be of little value. If those pursuing this goal expect Catholic parishes, schools and agencies to fall into line with these requirements, they are

making a serious miscalculation.

The awareness of this is one reason why individuals such as President Obama seek to separate Catholics whose default position tends to follow secular or "informed" opinion on some or all moral issues, from the bishops and the teaching of the Church which they are committed to upholding. Obama has started with contraception. If he succeeds, pressure will follow to oblige Catholic hospitals to provide abortion and euthanasia, for religious celebrants to bless homosexual unions, and for church schools to refrain from teaching Christian doctrines.

The meaning of religious freedom

Professor Mary Ann Glendon has drawn attention to one of the major problems surrounding religious freedom, namely "the persistent lack of consensus on its meaning, foundation, and relation to other rights". It might be helpful to offer some brief thoughts on this problem.

The Second Vatican Council's landmark declaration on religious freedom takes us quickly to the essential meaning of the concept. It means freedom from coercion in matters of religious belief and conscience. Everyone is "to be immune from coercion on the part of individuals or of social groups and of any human power, in such wise that no one is to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his own belief, whether privately or publicly, whether alone or in association with others, within due limits".

Unless it is tempered by solidarity, freedom can quickly come to be a radical assertion of the self against others. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) did not stop at declaring: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." The very next sentence bound this claim for freedom and legitimate personal autonomy to solidarity, declaring that we "are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood".

What this means for religious freedom is that, like other rights, it is not unlimited. This is acknowledged in the major international human rights instruments, and also in *Dignitatis Humanae*. We are to exercise our rights—all rights, not just the right to religious freedom—with "respect both for the rights of others and for [our] own duties towards others and for the common welfare of all". It is also acknowledged (as *Dignitatis Humanae* puts it) that "society has the right to defend itself against possible abuses committed on the pretext of freedom of religion". At the same time, as the United Nations Human Rights Council emphasised in 2010, "restrictions on the freedom to manifest one's religion and belief" must be non-discriminatory and "applied in a manner that does not vitiate the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion".

With these principles in mind we can identify four basic points to show what religious freedom means in practice:

1. Freedom of religion is not just freedom to go to church on Sundays or pray at home. It also means being free to act on your beliefs in the public square, to speak about them and seek to persuade others. It means not being coerced or bullied into silence by speech-control and equality laws or by accusations of "Homophobe!" "Discrimination!" "Anti-Choice!" or "I'm offended!"

2. Freedom of religion means being free to provide services that are consistent with the beliefs of the sponsoring religion. Neither the government nor anyone else has the right to say to religious agencies, "We like your work with vulnerable women; we just need you to offer them abortion as well"; or "We really like your schools, but we can't allow you to teach that marriage between a man and a woman is better or truer than other expressions of love and sexuality". Our agencies are there for everyone without discrimination, but provide distinctive teachings and operations. In a wealthy, sophisticated country like Australia, leaving space for religious agencies should not be difficult.

3. Religious freedom means being able to employ at least a critical mass of employees who support the ethos of the sponsoring religion. All Catholic works are first and foremost works of religion. Our hospitals, schools, universities, welfare agencies, services for the refugees, the disabled and the homeless are established because this is what our faith in Christ the Lord impels us to do. The good people happy to help us in these works as staff or volunteers do not all need to share the faith, but they need to be happy to support it and work within it. It is also essential that a preference can be exercised for people who are actively committed to the religious convictions at the heart of these services. It is not enough for just the CEO or the religion teacher to be Catholic. It is not unjust discrimination to prefer committed Catholics to staff Catholic services, but it is coercion to attempt to interfere in or restrict our freedom to do so. No one would dream of suggesting that (for example) the ALP must employ some activist members of the Liberal Party.

4. Religious freedom and government funding. The secular state is religiously neutral and has no mandate to exclude religion, especially when a large majority of the population are Christians or followers of other major religions. Church members also pay taxes. Substantial levels of government funding are no reason to prohibit religious schools, hospitals and welfare agencies from offering services compatible

with their beliefs; no sufficient reason to coerce them to act against their principles. The separation of church and state provides important protections for religious communities against the intrusions of governments. In a free society, different groups have a right to make distinctive offerings, provided they are not damaging the common good. We need to foster a tolerant pluralism, not intolerant secularism.

Protecting religious freedom

This year marks 1700 years since the Edict of Milan, when the Emperor Constantine granted religious freedom to Christians after nearly three hundred years of intermittent and increasingly ferocious persecution. This anniversary year is then a good opportunity for considering how we might strengthen respect for religious freedom as a fundamental human right, one of a handful of rights under the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights which cannot be abrogated ("derogated") even in a "time of public emergency which threatens the life of the nation". To conclude then, a few preliminary suggestions:

Protections, not exemptions. Federal and state anti-discrimination laws usually include a range of "exemptions" or "exceptions" for religious organisations (and other groups). The purpose of these exemptions is to protect other rights, but the language of exemptions creates the impression that they are simply concessions or special permissions to discriminate, granted by the state for political reasons. This is completely misleading and helpful to no one, except those who want to misrepresent the situation and remove protections for religious freedom. The language of exemptions should be replaced with the language of protections, clearly identifying the human right that is being protected.

Exercising other rights is not discrimination. Professor Nicholas Aroney and Professor Patrick Parkinson have suggested that the prohibition of unlawful discrimination ought to be drafted in such a way that when a right to freedom of religion, association or cultural expression is being legitimately exercised, this cannot be seen or judged to be unlawful discrimination. They are not the first to make suggestions along these lines, and I think they are worth serious consideration. Treating these rights as exemptions reinforces the strong impression that anti-discrimination is more important than other rights and will always trump them. John Finnis has observed that anti-discrimination law is concerned with whether differential treatment is justified. Using the language of "discrimination" is dangerous because it suggests that differential treatment is not justified, even when it is "exempted".

Protection for individuals as well as groups. Individuals are the bearers of rights, and it is strange that protections for religious freedom in anti-discrimination laws focus on groups and institutions rather than on individuals. As always, the rights of others to goods and services have to be protected, but there should be explicit scope to provide protections for individuals so that they are not coerced to act against their beliefs in their work or businesses.

Legislate conscience protections. Rather than coercing people to act against their religious or conscientious convictions, as the Victorian Abortion Law Reform Act does, the states and Commonwealth should legislate protections for them, perhaps along the lines of the resolution adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in 2010. While requiring states to ensure timely access to "lawful medical care", it also holds that "No person, hospital or institution shall be coerced, held liable or discriminated against in any manner because of a refusal to perform, accommodate, assist, or submit to an abortion, the performance of a human miscarriage, or euthanasia or any act which could cause the death of a human foetus or embryo, for any reason."

Last year the first lady of the United States, Mrs Michelle Obama, summed up very well what religious freedom means in practice. She told a conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church:

> Our faith journey isn't just about showing up on Sunday. It's about what we do Monday through Saturday as well—especially in those quiet moments, when the spotlight's not on us, and we're making those daily choices about how to live our lives. Jesus didn't limit his ministry to the four walls of the church. We know that. He was out there fighting injustice and speaking truth to power every day. He was out there spreading a message of grace and redemption to the least, the last, and the lost. And our charge is to find Him everywhere, every day by how we live our lives ... This is how we practice our faith.

As Pope Benedict XVI said in 2011, "the Church seeks no privileges, nor does she seek to intervene in areas unrelated to her mission". All we claim is the right to carry out that mission with freedom. In the end, this is what religious freedom is all about.

This is the text of the University of Notre Dame Australia School of Law Annual Lecture on Religious Freedom, delivered by Cardinal George Pell AC, the Archbishop of Sydney, on August 22. A footnoted version appears on ***Quadrant Online****.*

Michael Giffin

Is the Diocese of Sydney Still Anglican?

Michael Jensen has published an engaging book, *Sydney Anglicanism: An Apology*, which deserves to be widely read as a discussion document. His purpose is clear. He believes the Diocese is misunderstood. Its critics savagely attack it, he says, and use poisonous words against it, but he wears it all as a badge of honour, because he believes in the church's mission. I admire him for that.

Jensen argues that Sydney isn't the monolithic, power-obsessed Diocese it's portrayed to be. He says the Diocese isn't, as its critics insist, extremist and hardline, or conservative and fundamentalist, or isolated and eccentric. Instead, he insists:

> Evangelical Anglicans of the sort found in Sydney have good ground for claiming the Anglican heritage as their own and ought not to accept the view that they are in some way the illegitimate children of the Anglican family.

On the whole, Jensen's apology is charming, perhaps deceptively so, as he tends to gloss over contentious issues, skip lightly over large subjects, and his real motives are not always apparent. Perhaps this is because he's set himself a difficult task. He needs to tread cautiously when trying to engage two different readerships: first, the broader Anglican communion, most of which is quite unlike Sydney; second, the Diocese itself, some of which might not agree with him. Sometimes he makes a lot of sense; other times he doesn't. Unless the reader is completely within his mind—and only he can reconcile what's happening in there—the overall effect is dynamic but baffling.

On reading his apology, one senses the Diocese is a mixture of insecurity and confidence; perhaps like the broader Anglican communion; perhaps like the broader Christian church.

Sydney Anglicanism: An Apology
by Michael P. Jensen
Wipf & Stock, 2012, 194 pages, $37.99

Part One: The Bible

The first chapter of Part One, discussing whether Sydney Anglicans are fundamentalists, is perhaps unnecessary, as the term "fundamentalist"—like "conservative" and "puritan"—has become a meaningless pejorative aimed at anyone who takes their faith seriously. In particular, it isn't necessary for Jensen to waste so much time defending the Diocese against Muriel Porter, whose views can be gleaned from the titles of her books, *The New Puritans: The Rise of Fundamentalism in the Anglican Church* (2006) and *Sydney Anglicans and the Threat to World Anglicanism* (2011), both of which assume Anglicanism is—or ought to be—indistinguishable from the liberal agenda. While there are some aspects of this liberal agenda I agree with—such as the ordination of women to the priesthood and consecration of women as bishops—I find liberals within the church are, more often than not, as intolerant as the "fundamentalists" they demonise.

The next chapter, on Biblical Theology, is the book's most interesting read. Jensen's description of how Biblical Theology developed under Donald Robinson is illuminating, as is the discovery that Robinson was a friend of Brevard Childs (1923–2007), the influential Old Testament scholar from Yale. Why is Biblical Theology important? Because, generally speaking, since the Enlightenment, biblical studies has increasingly focused on what is known as the historical-critical method, which is dedicated to unearthing the multiple and complex sources behind the biblical text and dissecting its development. This method has encouraged many Christians to approach the Bible as literature, which Robinson knew to be an inadequate method of studying it as scripture. Robinson and Childs, and other academics in their mould, developed a different approach called the canonical-critical

method, which works alongside the historical-critical method to reclaim a sense of the Bible as divine revelation. On its own the historical-critical method tends to rob the Bible of its revelatory sense, and the canonical-critical method provides a corrective balance to that tendency.

The concept of the biblical canon is important here, as immediately we're forced to distinguish between those texts that were canonised and those that weren't, and we're invited to consider how divine inspiration operates in this canonical process. In my own words (not Jensen's) the fact that the texts of the Bible may have been written and redacted over a long period of time isn't as important as understanding why the ancient Jews codified an Old Testament canon and why the ancient Christians accepted the canonicity of that Jewish canon and codified their own complementary New Testament canon. Not all ancient texts are of equal value, and Jews and Christians have made collective decisions about which texts are normative to Judeo-Christianity and which texts aren't. Again in my own words, these collective decisions may well be how divine inspiration operates.

While there are some aspects of this liberal agenda I agree with, I find liberals within the church are, more often than not, as intolerant as the "fundamentalists" they demonise.

Jensen argues that Sydney's focus on Biblical Theology distinguishes it from other dioceses and is important to the Diocese's polity. He's proud that, for a long time now, Biblical Theology has been a bedrock first-year subject at Moore College and he believes there's scope to expand the subject beyond first year and study it at the advanced level. While I agree with him in principle—since the dialectic of historical-critical and canonical-critical is crucial—there are a few unknowns to consider before I can agree with him in practice.

As Jensen insists, the focus of Biblical Theology—as taught at Moore College—is studying the Old Testament as foreshadowing the New Testament, and the New Testament as fulfilling the Old Testament. He believes it's fundamental to see the Bible's theological coherence as a means of understanding its literary unity, not the other way around:

> It coheres not because it corresponds to a certain interpretational scheme but because it is the work of a single divine author. This singularity finds its outworking in the centrality of Jesus Christ to the Christian understanding of Scripture. Whatever one might say about the framework and literary structure of Scripture, it cannot be Holy Scripture if it is not Christocentric.

The problem with this Christocentric formula, however, isn't that it's wrong but that it needs to be approached with caution. There's an emerging consensus—among Christian and Jewish academics—that the New Testament is Jewish literature, that the Jesus movement was originally a variety of Second Temple Judaism, and that the antithetical identities of Patristic Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism emerged only gradually after the first century and were not fixed until late antiquity, which means anywhere between the second and eighth centuries. Ultimately, therefore, Biblical Theology needs to be aware of inter-faith sensitivities and the inevitable question of "replacement theology" otherwise known as supersessionism. As inter-faith dialogue occurs on many interdependent levels—official, academic and individual—the broader Anglican communion, the broader Christian church, and the varieties of Rabbinic Judaism, all need to know whether Biblical Theology at Moore College teaches replacement theology in any form. The challenge Christians face, and which isn't impossible, is how to be Christocentric without also being—or even appearing to be—supersessionist.

The next chapter, on Propositional Revelation, will appear somewhat esoteric to many readers—ordained and non-ordained—and should have begun with a clearer definition to ground the subject. It would appear Jensen wants to clarify what Broughton Knox really said, in a polemical but misunderstood article he wrote in 1960: "Propositional Revelation, the Only Revelation". Because of the confusion generated, "This small article has had a distorting rather than clarifying influence on how Sydney Anglican theology has sometimes perceived itself and how it has been perceived." Jensen reminds us that Sydney's position is that the Bible is God's word, and:

> in its words, God *speaks* to human beings so that they may hear and understand. Though he himself is beyond human comprehension, God's self-revelation is intelligible.

Jensen defends Sydney's understanding of God's word against those who counter it; for example, the former Archbishop of Perth, Peter Carnley,

whose book *Reflections in Glass* (2004) targets the Sydney view of Propositional Revelation, mainly by arguing that, as human reason is limited, "the index of Christian orthodoxy" is the proposition that God is "an infinite mystery, an ineffable, transcendent reality" and therefore shouldn't be reduced to our statements about him nor contained by our thoughts about him. As far as Carnley is concerned, this dogma of infinite mystery and transcendent reality is essential to understanding the Anglican ethos; it's a single truth with massive implications for our speech about God; it explains why when we speak of God we can only use metaphors which we project "onto a heavenly screen".

In defending Sydney's Propositional Revelation against this kind of "negative" or "apophatic" theology, Jensen argues that:

> if we follow Carnley, the revelation we have of God is no revelation at all. God is not with us, does not give himself to us, but comes so cloaked that we must doubt whether we have seen his glory at all.

Further, Jensen points out that what we really have in *Reflections in Glass*, rather than anything truly ancient and orthodox, is actually a religious epistemology which has its roots in Kant (1724–1804), whose "agnosticism about knowing ultimate reality" appears in the thought of Mansel (1820–1871), a theologian on whom Carnley heavily relies.

Jensen's observation—that Carnley's religious epistemology owes more to the Enlightenment than to Anglican orthodoxy—may or may not be true, but the reader doesn't have to take sides here, as there are other views to consider, and the whole question of what is or isn't orthodox is a lively one. The question is traditionally framed as a dualism, of what we see as belonging to Jewish revelation and what we see as belonging to Greek reason; however, the question is currently being re-framed in an exciting way by Christian and Jewish academics who study the Second Temple Judaism of the Hellenistic Period.

In fact, it's no longer fashionable to draw a mutually exclusive antithesis between Jewish revelation and Greek reason. According to Benedict XVI, who appears to side more with Knox and Jensen than with Carnley, Christianity is the religion of the Logos—a term that means both "word" and "reason". In his widely misrepresented and misunderstood Regensburg Lecture of September 2006, Benedict reminds us that, even before Christ, biblical faith had achieved a rapprochement between revelation and reason; whereupon the heart of Jewish revelation and the heart of Greek reason were joined in faith; whereupon Logos, as both "word" and "reason", became part of God's nature, and our nature too, insofar as we've been made in God's image.

According to Benedict, this rapprochement remained intact until the late Middle Ages, when trends in theology sundered its synthesis. At that time, in contrast with the so-called intellectualism of Augustine and Aquinas, there arose with Duns Scotus a voluntarism which—in its later developments—led to the claim that God's freedom allows him to do anything he chooses, even to act without reason. Benedict finds this claim problematic, as it suggests God "could have done the opposite of everything he has actually done"; the claim could even lead to the image of a capricious God who isn't bound to truth and goodness; an image of God contrary to biblical faith. According to Benedict:

> the faith of the Church has always insisted that between God and us, between his eternal Creator Spirit and our created reason there exists a real analogy [in which] unlikeness remains infinitely greater than likeness, yet not to the point of abolishing analogy and its language. God does not become more divine when we push him away from us in a sheer, impenetrable voluntarism; rather, the truly divine God is the God who has revealed himself as logos and, as logos, has acted and continues to act lovingly on our behalf.

The final chapter in Part One, on the Romance of Preaching and the Sydney Sermon, is about Sydney's preference for something called Expository Preaching; a method based on the conviction that the Bible is the inspired word of God; that to hear the Bible is to hear the voice of God himself. According to Jensen: "The expository sermon thus has the grand, even heroic, task of mediating the divine voice to the present-day hearer." This task is fine in theory, but it depends on many variables, including the knowledge and ability of the person preaching.

Several years ago I heard a Sydney layperson preach, at an Evangelical parish, on Trinity Sunday. I've got nothing against laypeople preaching, whether male or female, as there's a good chance they'll be as qualified as the clergy, and their sermons are liable to be no worse than the clergy's. The theme of his sermon was hard to grasp, though, and seemed counterintuitive, as he didn't expound on anything biblical, or even religious; he simply questioned the relevance of this feast day. Trinity Sunday, he said, is fairly recent, and therefore questionable, since it began in the medieval period.

I suspect he was trying to make the perfectly valid point that, unlike other feast days, Trinity Sunday focuses on a theological idea about God's nature rather than salvation history, but it didn't come out that way. Instead we were reminded of how much more we know now than they knew then, and he seemed more of a stand-up comic than a preacher when mocking scholasticism's debate over how many angels can dance on the head of a pin. This is one example where the Sydney preference for expository preaching clearly doesn't apply; no doubt there are other examples throughout the Diocese.

Clergy trained outside Sydney are encouraged to use a different method, which ideally includes the principle of expository preaching but doesn't regard expository preaching as a "romantic" end in itself. For example, I was taught that the attention of listeners starts to drift after three minutes and even good preachers begin to lose their listeners after six. I was also taught that, within my Sacramental tradition, the liturgy has a particular shape and the purpose of the sermon is to complement that shape rather than create a hiatus which detracts from it. The service of Holy Communion—otherwise known as the Lord's Supper or the Mass—is in two parts: the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. The sermon occurs between these two parts and it's meant to link them, not compete with them. The layperson I heard preaching that Trinity Sunday clearly didn't preach an expository sermon and I wouldn't describe the experience of listening to him in romantic terms. It was more like a blind date with someone I never want to see again.

The liturgy has a particular shape, and the purpose of the sermon is to complement that shape rather than create a hiatus which detracts from it.

Part Two: The Church

It's difficult for those outside Sydney—and for the tiny minority of non-Evangelicals in Sydney—to comment on Jensen's treatment of the subjects covered in Part Two. This is because his treatment is highly nuanced—to a degree that some readers will find self-contradictory—and because it's aimed at Evangelical readers within Sydney rather than the broader Anglican communion. Bruce Kaye has written a perceptive review of the book (which can be found at www.anglicanstogether.org). Jensen's book and Kaye's review should be read together, as the issues both raise are significant.

In particular, Kaye questions Jensen's unconvincing and cavalier treatment of Sydney's history, as he skips from Richard Johnson—Chaplain on the First Fleet—to what Kaye calls "the current hegemonic views" of the Diocese. It's unfortunate that Jensen, who teaches Church History at Moore College, has chosen to be silent on several generations of diocesan history, in order to give the impression of "a continuing evangelical stream flowing continually in Sydney". Also, Kaye asks, "Where are the Memorialists in this story?" referring to the fifty clergy—representing one-third of the diocesan parishes at the time—who in 1938 presented Archbishop Mowll with a memorial appealing for an acceptance of diversity within the Diocese, "and how have successive dissenters been treated, and is there any pattern to that side of the story of Sydney? These are questions worth addressing in a book that wishes to commend and challenge."

My favourite observation of Jensen's is pregnant with unintended meaning:

> The reality is that the archbishop of Sydney sits at the hub of an enormous and relatively well-resourced see; and so it is not surprising that archbishops of Sydney tend to develop their own views on things.

He is speaking here of the role an archbishop plays in diocesan politics, dominated as it is by leading clergy, who have an innate mistrust of bishops, even the ones they have helped elect. But Jensen's observation surely applies to many other issues, on which the future of the Diocese depends, where the role of the archbishop remains decisive. How Catholic is that!

Dr Michael Giffin is a priest in the Anglican Diocese of Sydney. He wrote on "The Limitation of Reason" in the June issue.

John Ruddick

The Australian Case for Direct Democracy

"Devolve power back to the people!" That is the clarion call of this important book. Professor David Flint and Jai Martinkovits argue that Australia urgently needs a radical reform of its system of government. Too much power rests in the hands of the factional powerbrokers of the parties. We need to empower people and thus make the politicians truly accountable. This will improve not only the quality of government but also the quality of our politicians. The people should be empowered with the tools of direct democracy. The concrete proposals Flint and Martinkovits put forward to bring these changes about are Citizen Initiated Referenda, Recall Elections, Citizens' Veto over existing laws, and the reintroduction of Grand Juries.

Australians would overwhelmingly approve of the introduction of the tools of "direct democracy" proposed by Flint and Martinkovits if they knew about them. Unfortunately barely anyone (including political professionals) is even aware of what "direct democracy" means. The factional bosses who still control our political parties fear an empowered electorate and so give these principles the "silent treatment". You will never hear a politician explaining what is wrong with "direct democracy"—they just hope the ideas don't catch on.

Whenever people begin to object to the failings of the Australian system, the perpetrators of the problem propose false solutions. For example, four-year terms were introduced in some states, supposedly to ensure improved government, but they were followed by increased incompetence and, in New South Wales, record levels of corruption. An extraordinary amount of time and resources were poured into a failed attempt to turn our crowned republic into a politicians' republic where, rather than empowering the people, the power of the political classes would have been greatly increased. This regression was not only supported by over two-thirds of the sitting politicians but also aided by a vigorous campaign by most in the media.

Flint and Martinkovits lay out the case for introducing the tools of "direct democracy", boldly, lucidly and comprehensively, drawing on history and the invaluable experience of other nations—most notably the United States and Switzerland. At some point these democratic reforms will, I believe, inevitably become law. This book is both the manifesto and the how-to manual for bringing about a positive seismic shift in Australian politics.

Micro and *macro* are often applied to economics but these prefixes could just as usefully be conjoined with the word *politics*. *Micro-politics* would describe the day-to-day political matters which make our newspapers and nightly news. *Macro-politics* would deal with the larger political infrastructure which sets the boundaries of our political rules and conventions within which our micro-politics operates. While micro-politics is important, it is of course subject to the macro-politics within which our daily political affairs operate. Macro-politics deals, not with the next headline or election, but with the next generation.

Give Us Back Our Country addresses Australia's macro-politics. The book rises above our daily political affairs to envisage the optimal political environment for a better Australia. Australia has fallen well short of world's-best-practice democracy and we need to shift power back to the people. Flint and Martinkovits argue that the Liberal and Labor parties effectively operate as a state-sanctioned cartel which increasingly hampers good government. Australia is almost alone in the world in compelling, under threat of fine, all citizens over the age of eighteen to vote in elections—and then the parties are rewarded with around two dollars per vote of taxpayers' money. This makes our political parties largely welfare dependants, which

---

Give Us Back Our Country
by David Flint and Jai Martinkovits
Connor Court, 2013, 402 pages, $34.95

is of course not only bad for the budget but, like most welfare measures, also harms the recipients. In the case of political parties it frees them from the need to attract motivated members who are willing to donate their own money and efforts to a political cause. It's no surprise that membership levels of Australia's political parties are at crisis levels. They are stagnant swamps using the law to protect them from effective competition beyond the fringes.

Political parties are exempt from privacy laws, which allows them to keep files on citizens to which those citizens have no right of access. This is just one example in the book which illustrates how our political parties are above the law. Our politicians are among the highest paid of any in the world, our prime minister receiving more than the president of the United States.

The original intent of Australia's Founding Fathers who drafted the Constitution was for the nation to be composed of six strong states with a sense of fraternal competition, each striving for best practice and thereby setting an example for the other states. Today more than half of the revenue of the states is doled out by the federal government. State governments are focused almost entirely on how to get more money out of Canberra. If the states had the power to levy income tax (as they originally had) then state elections would be fought largely on finding the right balance between taxes and services.

In 1901, Australia was arguably the world leader in democratic principles. Generations of Australians have grown up so assured of our democratic virtue that we have failed to notice that we have let things slip.

Flint and Martinkovits argue that Australians are rightly proud of their democratic heritage. There is an unbroken "Golden Thread" of fundamental constitutional principles that reaches back to the Magna Carta, through the Glorious Revolution, the American Revolution, the settlement in 1788, the gift of self-government and, of course, Federation. When the six colonies federated in our crowned republic in 1901, Australia was arguably the world leader in democratic principles. Generations of Australians have grown up so assured of our democratic virtue that we have failed to notice that we have let things slip.

The "Golden Thread" didn't end with Federation. We need to learn from tradition and the experience of other democratic nations to continue to refine our macro-politics. The "direct democracy" solutions Flint and Martinkovits put forward include Recall Elections, which would allow citizens to petition for an elected official to be dismissed and to face the voters afresh. Recall elections are a feature of around a dozen states in the USA, and while there have been only two successful recall elections the awareness of having them in place keeps the politicians in check, as they know the people can punish bad government. Had we had a "recall" provision then it is likely Gough Whitlam would not have needed to be dismissed by the governor-general—the people would have done it themselves. The last New South Wales Labor government might have faced a similar fate well before the 2011 election.

The authors also propose Citizen Initiated Referenda (CIR) which would give the citizens the power to introduce a referendum that if passed by a majority of voters would become law regardless of what the politicians say. There are various forms of CIR around the world today, all based on the idea that if a certain percentage of the citizens (anywhere from two to fifteen per cent) sign a petition requesting that a certain law be put to the people, a referendum must be held. If the proposed law is approved by a majority then it becomes law.

If the citizens know they have this power they will engage more in the political process and be more attuned to what makes good or bad policy. They won't feel powerless and remain disengaged from politics, thinking their one form of political power is an election for someone else to be a lawmaker every few years. Switzerland has a strong tradition of CIR, resulting sometimes in several proposed laws being put to the people in a year. It's no coincidence that the Swiss have among the most popular political leaders in the world. Twenty-five of the American states also have some form of CIR. The only argument against CIR is that the politicians know best. In Australia, we effectively have a "master-servant" relationship with our political leaders. That is not best-practice democracy.

Similar to CIR is the power of the Citizens' Veto, which gives the people the power to say to the politicians, "Stop! We don't want this law you've passed. We want it repealed." The veto would commence via a petition among the people; again this keeps the politicians on their toes. It is unlikely Labor would have introduced a carbon dioxide tax had the Australian people been endowed with such a veto.

The authors argue the first step towards "direct

democracy" would involve democratising the internal workings of our political parties. The good news is that that process is under way, albeit haphazardly across the various state divisions of Liberal and Labor. The factional control of political parties is ugly. It drives away good people and rewards those who excel at intrigue and rule manipulation. It results in our parliaments being occupied by people with little experience outside politics. Increasingly the trajectory of our politicians begins with student politics, then Young Liberal/Labor activism, then work as a political staffer, and finally a seat in parliament. But the emerging consensus is that our parties should give all ordinary members a direct vote in choosing their local, state and federal candidates, their Senate candidates and their party executive. These simple reforms would cripple the factional bosses.

This process is inevitable and once the genie is out of the bottle these democratic reforms will spill over into our macro-politics. For as long as our political parties remain controlled by a few factional bosses these gatekeepers will prevent "direct democracy" from even being discussed. Fortunately the days of the factional bosses are coming to an end. Perhaps the one positive to come out of Kevin Rudd's return to the prime ministership this year was his championing of democratic party reform, which has made the media take an interest.

Flint and Martinkovits have laid the foundation for a national debate about "direct democracy". They don't prescribe precise formulas for proceeding, but they outline the history, the experiences of other nations and the principles involved. They conclude by calling for a constitutional convention that would debate these principles and then put forward specific proposals to the people.

At some point a political leader in this country will take up this challenge and argue for empowering the Australian people, and the Australian people will say *yes*. We can and we will have better politics in Australia, and David Flint and Jai Martinkovits have substantially aided that process.

John Ruddick was a candidate for the presidency of the New South Wales Liberal Party in 2011 and 2012.

Hal G.P. Colebatch

The New Zealand Case for Direct Democracy

This book, by a well-known New Zealand writer and public activist, is a collection of essays on the present discontents affecting New Zealand and much of the society and culture of the developed world. Amy Brooke over several years brought some of Australia's and New Zealand's best political thinkers together for the "Summersounds" symposia.

The title essay tackles a political problem that is coming to pose a real threat to democratic society: the emergence of, and monopolising of power by, a professional political class who have effectively made politics a closed shop, drastically reduced the influence of the electorate on policy-making, enforced a gap between elite and popular opinion, and indeed made matters of political choice minimal. Further, while members of the political class, virtually above the law, luxuriate in their monstrous superannuation and other perks, other, purely destructive agendas are under way in educational and other institutions.

With a few exceptions like John Howard (and, dare we hope, Tony Abbott?) the typical right-of-centre political leaders today, the John McCains and David Camerons, and in New Zealand the John Keys, appear to be CINOs (conservatives in name only) driven by focus groups and political correctness. All this has been said many times before, but Amy Brooke actually sets out a program

The 100 Days: Claiming Back New Zealand
by Amy Brooke
Howling at the Moon, 2013, 374 pages, $33.50

to do something about it—a program which, she suggests, could apply to every Western polity.

Her prescription for "claiming back democracy" has three principal requirements:

First, any new legislation should be subjected to 100 days of public scrutiny for the country to determine its implications. Unsatisfactory legislation could, as in Switzerland, be subject to a referendum if a certain proportion of the population demanded it. The electorate would, in effect, act as a house of review. This is very similar to provisions in Switzerland, where, as Amy Brooke points out, they actually work. When it is taken seriously by someone of the calibre of Professor David Flint, who contributes to the introduction, it cannot easily be dismissed.

Second, the publicly-funded media should be obliged to present both sides of an issue fairly. How this is to be achieved seems a difficult matter when we see the ABC, the BBC and American public broadcasting treating any obligation of fairness with utter contempt.

Third, there must be provision for government to act in times of emergency.

There is a need to reinvigorate the idea of individuals taking part in the decision-making process. Recent New Zealand legislation, supported by the conservative party, forbade parents to smack their children. No less than 85 per cent of the population were opposed to this government intrusion into private family matters, but their wishes were ignored by the political class—an illustration of the decay of democracy. Amy Brooke says:

> Politicians have never been held in less respect. The country is living well beyond its means, with estimates of our weekly borrowing ranging from 250 to 400 million dollars. So much for Labour's fiscal competence, managing to turn a 2007 billion dollar surplus into a considerable deficit by the time John Key's much-beloved Helen Clark was voted out of office. Moreover, her government's long-established excessive welfare payments not only contributed to our debt blowout, but [also to] that damaging mindset of expectations among sectors of New Zealand society that others should pay their way. The burden of taxation, largely avoided by the very wealthy, has disproportionately fallen so severely on a hard-working middle-class that families can no longer manage with one partner as provider. Mothers with infant and young children are being forced to put them into day-care systems increasingly shown to be damaging to the interests of the very young.

Much of the book details assaults on the spirit of freedom which have taken place in New Zealand in recent years, not least, under the far-leftist Prime Minister Helen Clark, the scrapping of the combat element of the New Zealand Air Force, and the increasing distortion of cultural norms under the pressure of political correctness.

Political correctness Amy Brooke sees as a soft form of terrorism, "the policing and ever-increasing encroachment on individual's rights to free speech and to hold (and to act in accordance with) one's own beliefs about what is right and wrong".

Amy Brooke has set out to describe how, without some efficient controlling mechanism, the destructive work of the Left has gone on, in New Zealand and in the Western world in general. Children, for obvious reasons, have been particular targets, with the traditional family as the number one enemy. There has been an explosive growth of city violence, which foreign news media do not seem to have noticed. As is the case elsewhere, radicalised teachers' unions have been a major force in pushing society violently to the left and breaking down traditional structures.

Amy Brooke concludes with some specific strategies to put the 100-days program into action. These include thoroughly scrutinising the voting record of MPs, letting individual MPs know that votes will be given or withheld depending on their trustworthiness, and finding out what individual MPs really believe in.

For anybody frustrated with the present state of politics and society, this book is worth reading.

Philip Ayres

Gerald Ford at Rancho Mirage

The motel was close to Los Angeles Airport and under an inbound flight path. Every thirty seconds a big jet came across, its scream transformed seconds later into the roar of reverse thrust followed by the howl of the next one coming in, *ad infinitum* it seemed. The room was overheated, its thermostat stuck on seventy-four degrees Fahrenheit, and the windows were fixed shut. There was no bar-fridge or service. It wasn't late but the diner was closed despite its neon light flashing "open". I had no ear-plugs and the noise kept me awake, but by 1 a.m., when the planes finally stopped, I was no longer sleepy. Rain was hitting at the window. With nothing worth watching on television I turned on a radio station playing old songs—one I recall was Nat King Cole's "I'd Rather Have the Blues".

After breakfast I walked the cold street till I found a newsagency where I bought the January 15, 1986, *Times* and an issue of *Cycle* for an article about the fastest production bike to that time, the Kawasaki GPz1000RX (159 mph it said). I preferred Ducatis for their engines and their looks, and I had one at home, a 1975 750 Super Sport, but I was considering a companion piece. Back in the room I took the address book from the inside pocket of my jacket and called a number in Rancho Mirage. The appointment for tomorrow was still on—"Drive into the compound," she said, "the guards will let you on through." Then I found a specialist rental agency and selected a suitable vehicle.

Later I read the paper. Donna Reed had just died at sixty-four. I liked her in *It's a Wonderful Life* and I liked the James Stewart character with the guts to stand on the bridge and contemplate the divide. In Alabama, George Wallace was contemplating a record fifth term as governor. Nuclear tests were down by half. California's wild condors were practically extinct. Some local legislators had failed to ban "all you can drink" contests with liquor prizes for winners, offered by bars to attract patrons. I still recall a small headline deep inside, "Organic Grass Fed Meat", and wondering, only half awake, why they were feeding meat to organic grass. Some police officer in Colorado had just shot his wife's divorce lawyer twice at close range. He probably had it coming.

From Los Angeles east to Palm Springs is 107 miles on Interstate 10. From East Los Angeles Interchange it's known as the San Bernardino Freeway as far as that city, running through Monterey Park, San Gabriel, Pomona and Claremont before entering Riverside County, where it crosses the San Gorgonio Pass between the San Bernardino Mountains to the north and the San Jacinto Mountains to the south. Some distance further on it passes by Palm Springs, Rancho Mirage and Palm Desert and keeps going all the way to Jacksonville in Florida.

Just east of White Water I noticed the wind turbines coming into view up on the left side as I drove through the long and windy pass. You couldn't miss them, there seemed to be thousands, installed over the previous few years, with thousands more to come. I'd never seen anything like it before, though I understood their scientific function. Their principal function, the President later explained to me, was to make money in the form of subsidies for the people who'd bought ownership in them. The net result was that the state made a substantial loss. To left and right the mountains rise to 10,000 feet.

I stopped off the highway at a drive-in joint for a drink. No Australian, to the best of my knowledge, had conducted a face-to-face, one-on-one interview with an American President or ex-President in his own home. Gerald Ford had agreed to it as a friend of Malcolm Fraser, the subject about whom I was carrying out far-flung inquiries. I admired much of what I'd gleaned about Ford, thirty-eighth President of the United States (1974–77), a moderate Republican whose political roots lay deep in the American isolationist tradition, though the Second World War converted him to a constructive form of internationalism. He never created or exacerbated

an international conflict. I admired his pardoning of Richard Nixon because the alternative would have been too reminiscent of countries like Pakistan where they put their ex-Presidents on trial and even hang them.

When Ford was House Minority Leader Lyndon Johnson said of him, "Jerry Ford's so dumb he can't fart and chew gum at the same time" (the press changed it to "walk and chew gum"), and on another occasion quipped that Ford had spent too much time playing football without a helmet. These comments were prompted by Ford's opposition to Johnson's policies in Vietnam where, as he liked to point out, there was no clearly conceived end-game. Big problem, that. Although he slipped and stumbled once or twice during his presidency, Ford had been a star football player in his college days so he couldn't have been inherently clumsy. He had a reputation for honesty and kindliness.

Ford's parents split up two weeks after his birth (July 14, 1913) when his father walked out. This trumps Sir Ninian Stephen, whose father didn't walk out until three weeks after his birth. In both cases, to this apparently cruel blow of fate all that followed was fortunately owed, for change one major thing and everything changes. With his mother Ford moved to Michigan, growing up in Grand Rapids. Through the early 1930s he was at the University of Michigan, working nights to put himself through. In 1938 he was accepted into the Yale University Law School from which he graduated LLB in 1941. Meanwhile he had been working as part of Wendell Willkie's 1940 Republican presidential campaign.

A kind of moral animus against the Soviet Union was something Fraser could afford to indulge, within his responsibility-light geopolitical thinking. To Ford that kind of animus was counter-productive, just a hindrance to realistic agreements.

On September 4, 1940, Gerald Ford was one of the four foundation signatories to a petition designed to enforce the Roosevelt Administration's 1939 Neutrality Act. Along with fellow Yale law students Sargent Shriver (who later married John F. Kennedy's sister Eunice, served in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, and ran for Vice-President in the 1972 campaign of George McGovern), Potter Stewart (later on the Supreme Court), and R. Douglas Stuart Jr (Quaker Oats heir), Gerald Ford founded the America First Committee which at its peak had close to a million paid-up members. This was the pre-eminent anti-interventionist, anti-war movement in America, and it enjoyed wide support far beyond its impressive membership size. Charles Lindbergh was their chief spokesman; other prominent supporters, who came from both right and left, included the novelist Sinclair Lewis, the poet E.E. Cummings, Gore Vidal and Walt Disney.

When the bombing of Pearl Harbor forced FDR's declaration of war on Japan, followed by Germany's declaration of war on the United States, Ford enlisted in the Navy and saw active service in the Western Pacific on board the light aircraft carrier USS *Monterey* (CVL-26). On December 18–19, 1944, this ship along with others in the Third Fleet under Admiral Halsey was hit by a typhoon that sank three destroyers and caused a fire on board the *Monterey* when aircraft tore free from their cables and collided with one another. As the carrier tossed in the storm Ford lost his footing, slid towards the edge of the deck and was saved only by a two-inch-high perimeter ridge, enough to stop his slide.

He entered Congress in 1949 and sat in the House of Representatives for twenty-five years, becoming its Minority Leader at the beginning of 1965. When Spiro Agnew resigned as Vice-President in 1973, Nixon chose Ford to replace him, and when Nixon resigned on August 9, 1974, Ford succeeded him, the only man ever to have become President without having been elected to either that office or the Vice-Presidency. A month later he granted the Nixon pardon, and in the view of most observers time has vindicated that action. Ford also opened the way to pardons for draft dodgers who had fled abroad during the Vietnam War, and he granted a full pardon to Tokyo Rose (Iva Toguri D'Aquino), whose postwar conviction for treason had been shown to be based on false evidence. Though over two-thirds of the House was Democratic and opposed to some of his key foreign policy measures, he successfully pushed ahead with a balanced Middle East policy that produced the Sinai Interim Agreement.

Ford married Elizabeth Bloomer Warren, divorcée, former model and professional dancer, in 1948 during his first run for the House, and they remained very close until his death. She told a reporter that the one question no newspaperman had ever asked her was, "How often do you have sex?" and that the answer would have been, "As often as possible". One of the impressive things about her was how she turned her problems around, in the process helping others face the same issues—

she enormously increased awareness of breast cancer in the United States following her mastectomy, and part of her way of dealing with her alcoholism and drug dependency was to establish the Betty Ford Clinic in Rancho Mirage to treat people for substance abuse. She campaigned for the Equal Rights Amendment and publicly backed a range of women's issues from within the Republican White House, her liberal attitudes (which her husband shared) upsetting many of the Party's social conservatives. At the time of my visit she was working on an account of her own treatment, which was published in 1987.

From the pass it's a long downhill run into the Coachella Valley, past Palm Springs, and then you take an exit right to Rancho Mirage. Strange name. All this area was desert and sand up to the 1930s. What would later become a desirable resort grew out of the Annenberg or Sunnylands Estate after the Second World War when the place was known as "the eleven-mile spot" and attracted the kind of names that drew ever-increasing numbers: Bob Hope, Frank Sinatra, Fred Astaire, Ginger Rogers. These and other prominent personalities made their homes out here, or rather one of their homes, partly to escape the smog of Los Angeles, at least on weekends. For some reason Clark Gable and Jean Harlow liked the place before it had become so much as a village. Summers are hot, up to 120 degrees, but this was winter so it was mildly warm. There were around 8000 inhabitants when I was there in 1986. The Cahuilla Indians had lived out here in the open desert for hundreds of years, and one of the attractions for them was the hot springs. The Spanish called it Agua Caliente.

After turning off I-10 I made for the Thunderbird Country Club, the first eighteen-hole golf course in the Coachella Valley (1951), where the thirteenth hole is overlooked by the 1970s single-storey, ranch-style Ford house at 40471 Sand Dune Road, modest by Presidential standards (just sixty-three squares) and in that respect reflecting the Fords themselves. They had moved here following his defeat in the 1976 election, but he had played golf in Rancho Mirage since the 1960s. I turned off the street and into the compound, got out and was shown into his office, where we shook hands and he invited me to sit down beside his desk. He wore an open-necked shirt under his jacket, and cord trousers if I rightly recall. Resuming his seat behind the desk, he leaned back and in the process swung his feet up and onto it. "Excuse me having my feet up here, but I have arthritic knees," he explained, "and if I don't give them a rest they don't operate." He said he'd been playing golf with Bob Hope, and that a few days later he'd be playing in the pro-am section of the Bob Hope Classic, so he had to go easy on his knees—too many swings had almost done for them.

I had envisaged that my conversation with Ford would revolve around his impressions of Fraser's foreign policy, but it quickly developed into an exposition of Ford's own policies on China and the Soviet Union combined with polite criticism of Fraser's attitudes. In the process I learned something about the difference between global and merely regional responsibility. A kind of moral animus against the Soviet Union was something Fraser could afford to indulge, within his responsibility-light geopolitical thinking (he was free of any moral animus against China on the other hand). To Ford that kind of animus was counter-productive, just a hindrance to realistic agreements. *Realpolitik* was the only credible approach to great-power relations in a world packed with the obscenity of nuclear weapons—*realpolitik à la* Henry Kissinger, whom Nixon had had the genius to choose as his chief foreign-policy adviser, and whom Ford had the sense to keep on. Since 1983 Fraser has himself become increasingly cold-blooded on international issues (aside from "refugees").

We didn't spend much time on the Dismissal and its consequences. Ford told me:

> My recollection is that we were favourably inclined, not that we had *bad* relations with the Whitlam government, but our feeling was that the economic policies, the defence policies, the foreign policy of the new government would be more compatible with my administration in Washington.

I mentioned Fraser's view that the Soviets had never been serious about *détente*, and his strong belief, particularly during the Carter years, that the West should have been building up its force levels in the face of increasing Soviet levels.

It was more complicated than that, Ford told me, though he agreed with the criticism of Carter's policy. The USSR *had* been serious about *détente* during Nixon's and Ford's administrations and real progress could have been achieved had he been given a second term.

"Let me go back a bit," he said.

> When Nixon was President that was sort of a *peak* of *détente*. We signed a number of agreements with the Soviet Union that included SALT I [Strategic Arms Limitation Talks I] and an anti-satellite program. Then of course

> the problem expanded with the deterioration of the situation in Vietnam and allegations that the Soviet Union was in violation of SALT I, etc, and there was growing unrest in the United States as to our relations with the Soviet Union—the more conservative element in the United States in particular. In my administration I finally stopped using the word "*détente*". I thought it was misunderstood. As a word it didn't *mean* anything to the vast majority of the American people.
>
> So I stopped using it even though I personally believed that the United States and the Soviet Union ought to have a continuous dialogue with the full recognition that there are issues which are more or less unsolvable but there are other issues on a global or regional level where there can be progress made, and that you ought to seek, through dialogue, to exploit any breakthroughs that might take place. And I happen to believe that my Administration could have achieved a SALT II agreement with the Soviet Union following my Vladivostok negotiations with Brezhnev if I had been elected.

This was in reference to their talks of November 1974, detailed in Ford's book *A Time to Heal* (1979). The first Strategic Arms Limitation Agreement, reached in May 1972, was due to expire in 1977, and the Vladivostok talks were intended to secure a more permanent and wide-ranging accord—"to put a cap on the arms race and further the chances for a lasting peace", as Ford put it. Ford and Brezhnev struck up a particularly warm relationship and an agreement on the most substantial issue was indeed reached: 2400 ballistic missiles for each country, with no more than 1320 on each side MIRVed; this meant the USSR would reduce its missiles by around 300. Some issues remained unresolved, including the B1 bomber then in development and production of the Trident submarine.

"We had achieved about a 95 per cent agreement at Vladivostok," Ford told me,

> and if I had been elected, through negotiations with the Soviet Union and through dialogue we could have accomplished a SALT II agreement that Congress would have ratified in 1977. Now, when Mr Carter came in he abandoned the negotiating posture that I had taken on the SALT II and threw a new proposal to the Soviet Union which was totally different, and when you shift gears on the Soviets 180 degrees it upsets them, they don't understand it. That really created a roadblock in Soviet–United States relations.

So in Ford's view the Soviet Union was not responsible here, it was the Carter administration that had derailed the train. Ford's perspective, informed by his own negotiating experience and subsequent close observation of things, was diametrically opposed to Fraser's anti-Soviet, Cold-War reflex on the matter:

> Well, then the Carter administration, after seeing the mistake they'd made, went back to almost the proposal that I had suggested, but unfortunately in the meantime they had cut back on certain strategic weapons, cancelled the B1 bomber, and so they were negotiating more or less the same deal I tried to promote but had cut back our military capabilities.
>
> Now Malcolm, I guess, was upset with, or certainly non-supportive of *détente* as he understood it. I never really knew whether he objected to it on the surface or really objected to the process. The process of negotiation I think is sound, and if I were president today I would still pursue the process of trying to resolve regional or global problems with the Soviet Union. The difference is, I would insist on having a fully adequate military capability in case we weren't able to make progress. That's the distinction between Carter and Ford. We insisted that our military capability be sufficient to meet any contingency while at the same time you're proceeding with diplomatic initiatives.

I raised another point of geopolitical interest, again one where Ford's views turned out to be very different from Fraser's, that emerged out of the first overseas trip Fraser made as Prime Minister, to China in mid-1976, shortly before he visited the United States for discussions with Ford's administration. In China, Fraser had been regaled in a manner Whitlam never had been, because Fraser made no secret of his animosity towards the Soviet Union (Whitlam, by contrast, had gone so far in his positive approach to the USSR as to formally recognise its 1940 annexation of the Baltic states). In China, Fraser was outspokenly supportive of the Chinese in their arguments with Moscow, was shown around strategic military installations, and witnessed a demonstration of firepower put on by the Peking military garrison's division outside the capital. He was reported to be toying with the idea of a four-power agreement ("pact" the newspapers called it), including some military element, which would tie together the United States, Japan, China and Australia.

I asked Ford whether Fraser had ever discussed this idea with him, and what he thought of it. Did

he think it originated as a Chinese idea they wanted Fraser to raise in Washington, or was it just Fraser's idea?

"I do not feel that the Chinese were using Malcolm," Ford replied.

> I say that because we—my administration—had developed very good relations with the Deng Xiaoping regime in China. When I visited Deng Xiaoping in 1975 I was greatly impressed with him. Almost immediately thereafter he was dumped, put out to pasture so to speak, but he came back, and I was and still am a great admirer of Deng Xiaoping. I think he's done a fantastic job with China. And our relations *vis-à-vis* China at that time were excellent. We agreed that we didn't *have* to have a military alliance, it was better just to have excellent relations without becoming too closely tied in a military sense. If China and the United States had become that closely tied it might, in a strange way, have been counter-productive in both countries' dealings with the Soviet Union. It's better for us both to have similar views *vis-à-vis* the Soviet Union but not necessarily to be tied together in the *expression* of those views or the execution of those views.
>
> So we understood what Malcolm was trying to promote, but from our point of view a four-power arrangement, number one, would have been most difficult to achieve bearing in mind the Chinese attitudes, bearing in mind the military problems that exist in Japan, with their limitation of one per cent of GNP on what they can expend on the army, navy and air force etc, I don't think that would ever have been practical to achieve; but secondly, I'm not sure it would have been in the best interests in carrying out what we believed was a good relationship with China on the one hand and a good relationship with the Soviet Union on the other.

We discussed a wide range of other issues including trade negotiations, but the discussion on strategic issues was the most revealing, and what it revealed was the problems inherent in the attitudes being articulated by Fraser.

Ford liked Fraser and knew him well through the meetings of the American Enterprise Institute World Forum that Ford established in 1982 that brought together, at Vail in Colorado, a range of former and current world leaders and prominent business figures for discussions on political and economic issues. Ford hosted these meetings and Fraser attended a number of them, each one lasting a week or so.

> We enjoy [Fraser's] company. We have a lot of things in common. I've heard some people say at the World Forum that he talks a little too long. He gets started on something and he'll take ten minutes for what he could say in five. I think that's unfortunately a habit that too many politicians have. But he's knowledgeable, he's articulate, he'll fight hard on a point. He's very concerned about the world monetary system, the free market in currencies etc. He has a sound view on world trade, strong views on GATT. Good broad perspectives.

At the time, Fraser was a member of an Eminent Persons' Group trying to bring the African National Congress and other outlawed opposition forces in South Africa into a dialogue with the government. Ford disagreed with Fraser's hard-line support of international sanctions.

> Yes, he told me he was going to be spending some time on that project. My only comment on South Africa would be, and I say it sadly, you have an immovable object faced with a train that's coming down the track. Immovable object, irresistible force. No solution. It's sad. I think we're all opposed to apartheid, I am, but I honestly don't see how total divestiture of American interests in South Africa is going to help one black person get a better education, a better house and a better job. We've got to find some way to convince the government there to find a better solution than the existing circumstances. I'm not an expert, but I don't see how sanctions are producing affirmative results.

In this instance Ford's perspective proved flawed, as it turned out to be external pressure more than anything else that forced the immovable object to move.

That night on a midnight flight to Jacksonville I played the hour-long recording back through my earphones, thinking how Ford kept things in perspective, and how important that has to be in such an office. He had remained true to the best within the early heritage of his political journey, and back in 1986 it would not have surprised me to know that eighteen years into the future he would criticise George W. Bush's invasion of Iraq, an action heavily influenced by ideologues, some with theoretical roots in Trotsky of all people, who thought the world could be remade in America's image. "Well, I can understand the theory of wanting to free people," Ford would say in 2004 in reference to a statement by Bush that the United States had a "duty to free

people". But it was another matter entirely, in Ford's view, "whether you can detach that from obligation number one, of what's in our national interest. And I just don't think we should go hellfire damnation around the globe 'freeing people' unless it is directly related to our national security." (*Washington Post*, December 28, 2006, embargoed interview of 2004 reported by Bob Woodward following Ford's death.)

Today Ford's long-held anti-interventionist views find their counterparts not only within the Obama administration but also among the Republican Party's grass-roots "Tea Party" section, where Bush-era ideologues and their latter-day holdouts like John McCain have little persuasive force. There are still predictable pressures in an interventionist direction from elements within two or three of the big think-tanks, but the priority to "rebuild America first" has such wide support now on both sides of the party divide that it's hard to see it changing, especially when the economy is taken into account.

Philip Ayres is the author of the just-published biography ***Fortunate Voyager: The Worlds of Ninian Stephen*** *(Miegunyah/Melbourne University Press), as well as of other biographies including Malcolm Fraser and Owen Dixon.*

The drowned brickworks

Waterbirds swim glossy spirals
into duckweed and pondscum
in the drowned brickworks,
the rootless ancient weeds greener
than any grass could grow on this
our wide brown southern land.

If dead could see again,
the coal-flecked miners shipped down here
from colder northern towns
would drop their jaws to find
that their old bones had dug
a perfect clay-lined swimming pool
for purple swamphens' bolshie chicks
and snake-necked cormorants in black and white,
shiny-small coots, moorfowl
and fifty sorts of duck.

The weed's thick-layered onto the water,
slathered by the sky's bright knife.
The birds don't care.
An aerial wood-duck makes a splashlanding;
clockwork crested pigeons whirr musical
to perch on half-drowned walls.

The played-out coal seam
sandwiched by thick slabs
of creamy ochre clay
in fossil layer-cake of cliff
stares down grey-grim inscrutable.
Can it miss the honks and dives
of plesiosaurs at play
in shallow ancient seas?

The Aluminium Apples of the Moon

My skin's the tarnished
silver filigree of ferns
under a waning sky,
reflecting light pale
from its long trip
from sun to moon to earth.

Luna's my long-lost mother;
I hunger for her milk
that lies thick as metal cream
over the brackish cold tea
of the creek. It's slathered
on the ti-tree trunks as well,
profligate and white as death.

One levitating night,
I'll rise into the air
and through the void.
My crescent fangs will pierce
the aluminium apples of the moon
and I will suck their juice.

Jenny Blackford

Alan Oxley

A Contender for the Worst Law in Australia

The Illegal Logging Prohibition Act

Some bad legislation has been adopted in the last five years. The right of tobacco companies to brand their products has been banned. Pay for transport drivers has been increased on the spurious grounds that it is a safety measure. The Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act has been amended to enable two ministers to rule against previous government advice that the "Super Trawler" should seek bigger quotas for fishing in the Southern Ocean. These are bad laws because they implement bad policies. But a little-known Act adopted this year to ban imports of illegal timber may be the worst new law in Australia.

This law purports to contribute to global efforts to end illegal logging. As the Centre for International Economics (CIE) pointed out to the Department of Agriculture, Forests and Fisheries (DAFF) which commissioned advice on the Act, it will not. Trying to block the entry of the very small amount of illegal timber that comes into Australia will make little economic difference to illegal loggers in foreign countries. Eighty-five per cent of illegal timber produced in other countries is consumed domestically.

The Act instead will adversely impact 10,000 Australian businesses, raise costs to consumers, increase building costs and make small Australian timber producers even less competitive. This is shown by ABARES, DAFF's own in-house research arm, in a report released late in 2012. It showed that in 2010, there were 20,000 imports valued at $4.9 billion of timber products (an increase of 50 per cent in three years). They were principally building materials, furniture and paper. Ten thousand small businesses were regular importers.

The Act places the onus on those importers as well as Australian timber producers to secure and provide authenticated evidence that the timber was produced in compliance with all national laws and to affirm that before imports are approved. (That includes payment of licence fees to governments of exporting countries and even establishing if the product originates from war zones.) The cost of compliance on importers and small Australian producers will be high. They will have to pass the cost onto consumers—that is, if it is still economic to remain in business. This Act will raise building, construction and housing costs in Australia and increase the cost of Australian timber. Procedures require preparation of a regulatory impact statement. The Act and the regulations need to be assessed together. This has not occurred.

The Act furthermore contradicts Australia's trade policy of reducing the cost of imports and increasing the competitiveness of Australian producers so they can export. It makes Australia an aggressive trading partner using a threat to block access to the Australian market to pressure trading partners to enforce their own laws and apply standards set by Australia. This is directly contrary to the aim and spirit of Australia's commitments as a member of the World Trade Organisation and its bilateral and regional commitments with twenty trading partners in the Asia-Pacific region. This position invites others to treat Australian exports in the same way.

Rescinding this Act will be one of the easiest measures available to a new government committed to lower the cost of regulation and improve productivity in Australia. It is a bad law.

What is the measure of a good law? Here are some standard yardsticks. Does it achieve its stated purpose? Is it based on technically sound data? Is it competently drafted? Are the procedures mandated to implement it effective for the declared purpose of the Act? Is its impact on the national interest positive? Is administration of it cost-effective? Does it add to regulatory overload? Is it constitutional? Is there a cheaper and more efficient way to advance the objectives sought?

The Illegal Logging Prohibition Act fails on all these scores. Before testing it against these criteria, a short review of the genesis of the Act will help

explain why it is so bad.

It has been a campaign ambition by anti-forestry Greens for over a decade to have Australia ban imports of illegal timber.

Any significant restriction on timber imports which increases the price of timber warrants close examination. Australian domestic timber production is not high enough to meet Australian demand.

Activist anti-forestry groups like Greenpeace and the Wilderness Society have made it a litany for a decade that Australia was receiving large amounts of illegal timber. Actually the amount is small. The real purpose of the Green groups was to have Australia join a global campaign by those NGOs to build the case for a global convention to regulate forestry. This has been an ambition since 1992 when they failed to win support for such a convention at the first UN "Earth Summit". There is still no global support for such a treaty.

During the 2004 election campaign environmentalists secured a promise from John Howard to "examine" the idea of a ban. In 2007, Forestry Minister Eric Abetz released a report by DAFF setting out strategies to help countries in the Asia-Pacific region to tackle illegal logging; but it ruled out trade bans, noting this would harm their economic development. In the lead-up to the 2007 election campaign, Greens secured a commitment from Labor to ban imports of illegal timber.

On the eve of the 2010 election, the Coalition announced that it supported a ban on imports of illegal timber products. Presumably the hope was that the announcement might swing some votes in a tight election.

Under the Rudd–Gillard government progress on the Bill was slow. The federal Department of Agriculture Forests and Fisheries led by Tony Burke finally produced an exposure draft of a Bill and commissioned the CIE in Canberra to prepare a regulatory impact statement. CIE did a cost-benefit analysis and found that the incidence of imports of illegal timber was so low that regulating imports would cost the Australian economy more than the possibility that cheaper "illegal" imports were harming Australian industry. The case for the ban was advanced by the Greens, unions, some Australian producers and two multinational paper manufacturers, who had their own reasons to support a ban. They had already tried to get anti-dumping duties imposed on Asian paper imports and failed. The clear interest of the labour and business interests was protectionist. They wanted to keep lower-priced product out of Australia.

DAFF then commissioned a report by another consultant which argued that the social harm in third countries being caused by illegal logging was serious and an Australian ban would have a positive effect. This was a political endorsement, not an economic assessment. The Bill was passed to a Senate committee which recommended its adoption.

At this point, timber and paper product exporters to Australia began to complain that they had not been consulted. The Indonesian Trade Minister observed that even the EU had been more solicitous with Indonesia, which had a legality standard under development, and that Indonesia considered the measures in the Bill put Australia in breach of its WTO obligations. This further soured Indonesia's view about the reliability of Australia as a trading partner, coming hard on the heels of Australia's ban of live cattle exports to Indonesia.

Legal opinion by Australian WTO legal experts concurred with the Indonesian Trade Minister. Officials in four other timber-exporting countries—New Zealand, Canada, Malaysia and Papua New Guinea—held the same opinion. Australia also had regional or bilateral free trade agreements with all those countries which prohibited such wilful trade restrictions. The Bill was then passed to a Lower House committee, which invited submissions from foreign governments and then recommended adoption of the Bill.

When the final version of the Bill was presented to the House, there was a Coalition backbench outcry (lead by Dan Tehan, first-term member for Wannon and a former DFAT trade official) against the protectionist and anti-forestry flavour of the Bill and the damage it did to Australia's relations in the region as well as to Australian timber producers. The Coalition invited the government to address their differences.

The government stuck to its text. At this point the key regulations had still not been produced. Given the Bill posited criminal offences for any business that imported illegal timber, they were very important. It was not known at that point that the government planned to impose on business a costly and onerous requirement to demonstrate the exports were "legal". ABARES had observed in the report DAFF commissioned from it that it was impractical to expect business to secure the sort of evidence of legality in foreign markets that the government was considering.

The Opposition recommended the Bill be deferred. Coalition Deputy Leader and shadow Foreign Affairs and Trade Minister, Julie Bishop, warned the Bill put Australia's trade interests in the region at stake. The shadow Environment Minister, Greg Hunt, said the Opposition would amend the Bill. With the support of Greens and independents, the Bill was adopted.

Several months later, the government released the bulk of the regulations detailing how the Act would be implemented. (They are still not complete.) The release was just after the relevant Senate Estimates Committee finished considering forest policy, further denying parliamentary scrutiny of the measures developed by the government.

So much for the history. How does the Act measure up against the good/bad legislation criteria?

Will it achieve its stated purpose? The Act will not. It will make almost no contribution to the campaign to halt illegal logging in other countries. It advances other objectives.

The first objective was to consolidate Green support for the minority government.

The second is to build a global hue and cry about illegal logging to pressure governments to negotiate a global convention to restrict forestry. Environmentalists are now writing approvingly how the EU, the USA and Australia are acting to halt illegal logging. There is no global support for such a convention. The communiqué of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro in December 2013 to commemorate two decades since the 1992 "Earth Summit" does not even refer to illegal logging as a global problem.

Importers are required to implement an incredibly complex system of "due diligence" to demonstrate that in the exporting nation, timber producers have complied with their own laws.

The third objective is further regulation of forestry in Australia. The Act also obliges Australian forestry producers to comply with additional regulations to demonstrate Australian forestry is legal before timber is released on the market. This absurd, costly and unnecessary regulation (all Australian forestry is legal) follows the same approach of the EU officials. They have taken erroneous advice that if the importers and domestic producers face the same regulations, the trade controls are allowable under WTO rules. This is wrong. This regulatory obligation will increase the cost of production by smallholder foresters and feed into the continuing campaign of anti-forestry NGOs to end timber-harvesting in natural forests in Australia.

The fourth objective is to commit Australia to regulate trade in forestry according to environmental, not economic principles. When presenting the Bill to parliament, the minister and the parliamentary secretary said the Bill paved the way for controlling global trade in forest products if forestry in producer countries was not sustainable. This ambition had never been stated before as Australian policy. This turns trade policy into a tool of coercion to advance environmental objectives, not trade objectives.

Is it based on technically sound data? The Act is not. CIE's cost-benefit analysis was set aside. There is also no dependable empirical assessment of the global extent of illegal logging. All assessments depend on an analysis by the US consultants Seneca Creek, who were commissioned by the US industry in 2004 to assess illegal logging. They posited that maybe 9 per cent of US timber imports were illegal, but they warned that most assessments were by anti-forestry NGOs. Chatham House in the UK produced a model to assess illegal logging but it was not underpinned by empirical analysis. Green activists regularly point to illegal logging as a major driver of deforestation and label it international crime, like the smuggling of weapons and people. In citing deforestation rates, activists routinely fail to mention that most forested developing countries have set aside between 20 and 50 per cent of land mass for forest. Nor do they mention the efforts taken in the last few years by the governments of Brazil and Indonesia, two countries where illegal logging was significant, to curtail the incidence.

Is the drafting competent for its purpose? No. The Act is dependent entirely on the content of the regulations and was adopted before the details of the regulations were made available.

A Regulatory Impact Statement assessing the Act and the Regulations should have been undertaken together. This has not occurred.

The regulations presented to date leave importers very unclear about what is acceptable and what is not.

One of the dismal features of this legislation is that Australian officials have justified its content on the grounds that it follows the procedures of similar legislation adopted by the European Parliament, which is now internationally notorious for over-regulation.

Is its administration cost-effective? No. Officials may think it is, because the bulk of the cost of compliance falls on business.

Major trading partners (Indonesia, Malaysia and Papua New Guinea) have systems which demonstrate legality. Their requests for automatic recognition have been ignored.

The regulations make it an obligation of Australian businesses to assess compliance by foreign officials with their own laws. Importers

are required to implement an incredibly complex system of "due diligence" to demonstrate that in the exporting nation, timber producers have complied with their own laws. They are also to ascertain if timber comes from war zones. They are to acquire certified documentary evidence and prepare and hold a copy of the report for five years. The Secretary of the DAFF can at any time ask to see the report. It is an offence not to have a report.

This is a very business-unfriendly approach. Assessing performance of foreign governments is normally the responsibility of officials.

Discretion to decide if reports from importers are acceptable is left in the hands of officials. This is incompetent and inefficient regulation. Efficient regulation has fixed criteria for approval and minimises the exercise of discretion. The regulations stipulate what importers should try to achieve. The acceptability of the report depends on assessment of an official that the importer "tried hard enough". Some importers trialled their compliance procedures and could not envisage a process that did not demand an excessive amount of time and resources.

The regulations also mandate creation of a new system for policing compliance. This would effectively be a federal forest police force. This will entail another federal intrusion into state jurisdiction.

This system will increase the cost of importing and imported product. Domestic timber producers are also to apply similar processes when putting product on the Australian market. This will increase the cost of domestic timber production.

Is its impact on the national interest positive? No. This Act undermines the core of Australia's international trade interests.

First, it mandates diplomatic coercion. It creates the precedent of using controls on imports to leverage other countries to apply policies preferred by the Australian government. This is a high-risk strategy for a middle-sized global trading economy like Australia. If we apply such tools, we set a precedent for bigger trading partners like the USA, China, the EU and Japan to do the same against Australian imports. US greens and labour groups are already pressing the USA to achieve such rights in the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement which is under negotiation. Reportedly, Australian trade officials in the negotiations are resisting this measure.

Second, it harms Australia's economic interests. Some of the backers of this Bill are doing so because they want to halt entry into the Australian market of lower-priced products. The Act is protectionist.

Third, it puts Australia in breach of its obligations under the WTO and bilateral and regional free-trade agreements. This has been attested to by leading international trade lawyers.

Indonesia's Trade Minister has already indicated that Indonesia will consider challenging the measures in the WTO unless the terms of the Act are altered so that it is Indonesian authorities, not Australian officials, who will attest to the legality of product produced in Indonesia.

Is it constitutional? Apparently not. An opinion submitted to the parliamentary inquiries on the Bill by Gavan Griffith QC and Arnold Block Leibler pointed out that legislation which required Australian authorities to hold Australian citizens accountable for the failure of entities in foreign jurisdictions to ensure their nationals had complied with their laws was unconstitutional.

Is there a cheaper and more efficient way to advance the objectives sought? Yes. It was identified by the 2007 review of the issue for the Howard government. Providing development assistance to developing countries where there was an incidence of illegal logging to improve laws and compliance and raise standards of living was far more cost-effective.

Is it the worst law? Yes. This Act (and its regulations) cannot achieve its stated purpose. The content of both instruments shows it manifestly meets the interests of specific minority interest groups and serves their narrow purposes at significant cost, not just to one industry but also to consumers at large. It creates a regulatory jungle of which any reputable civil servant should be ashamed and makes a mockery of proper processes for making laws and regulations. To cap it off, it appears to be unconstitutional.

Worse, this Act sets an abominable precedent for Australian trade policy. It overturns a bipartisan approach to trade policy that has underpinned Australia's prosperity for nearly thirty years. That was to reduce trade barriers to increase economic growth, to promote increased productivity to make Australian enterprises competitive in global markets, and to promote policies of open markets with trading partners.

This Act moves contrarily to that fundamental consensus. It erects trade barriers and increases costs. It is deliberately protectionist. It will not serve the environmental objective adduced as justification. And it creates a justification for others to treat Australia in the same way in which this Act disregards the economic interests of trading partners. It undermines the national interest.

Alan Oxley is principal of ITS Global, consultants on trade, competitiveness and sustainability. He is a former Australian Ambassador to, and Chairman of, the GATT, the predecessor of the WTO. ITS Global has worked for forest industries in Australia, Asia and the Pacific.

Harry Gelber

No Closure in Afghanistan

The withdrawal of Western combat forces from Afghanistan in 2014, far from being the end of political and strategic conflict in that region, is likely to herald the resumption of tensions with deep historical roots both within Afghanistan and among its neighbours. The security of Central Asia has always been driven by regional tensions and the internal stability of its states. Sectarian, ethnic and tribal tensions compound the problems of unemployment and radical inequalities. Add the tensions between Sunni and Shi'ite Islam. On top of all that, almost all the major powers of continental Asia—Iran, Russia, China, India, Pakistan—border on Afghanistan; and most or all of them have strong economic and political interests in the country's future.

Most citizens of the Western world have been hoping that the Afghanistan intervention would bring "closure" in at least three different senses. First, an end to costly and not hugely effective military effort in faraway places. Second, and by the same token, "victory": not just in the obvious meaning of an end to the threat of radical Islamism based in Afghanistan, but an end to the generalised threat of "terror" in our era. In other words, the military effort should also bring an end to the nagging feeling that the safety of oneself and one's family can never be assumed at any airport or station or on any ship. It has become clear that such an outcome will not occur. Third, that the governments of Afghanistan, the USA, and of the major powers of Asia should arrange Afghanistan's affairs so as to let it live in prosperous peace.

The reality is likely to be that Afghanistan's role in its region will be a function of three disparate but related developments. One, surely the most obvious, is the uncertain political balance in Afghanistan itself. As the allied presence there runs down, a number of critical questions remain open. The first has to do with the Afghan presidency, since President Karzai's second term is set to end in 2014 and at the time of writing it is unclear who might succeed him. It is similarly unclear how the regional and ethnic balance of Afghanistan itself might be managed by, and within, the government that follows. To put it crudely, will the government see itself as a united group administering its own country, or will it tend to divide between religious and ethnic groups such as the Hazaras, Tajiks and Pashtuns? Not to mention the Taliban, who seem certain to continue dominating some parts of the country.

Questions about cohesion and loyalties will also arise about the Afghan armed forces and police. Afghanistan's neighbours and invaders have never before encountered a conventional army, or a single force with a recognised leader, government and capital. Instead, they have found tribal and other groupings willing to stage local ambushes and sometimes willing to form ad hoc alliances for particular and temporary purposes. It remains to be seen whether the apparent cohesion of the Afghan army following American tutelage survives the withdrawal of Western forces and Western aid. No less important for the long run will be the ability of the central government to deal with problems of education, religion and, not least, corruption in Kabul. The current portents are not encouraging. According to Indian intelligence, China thinks anarchy is likely to follow the 2014 elections and has told the Afghans and Pakistanis that Beijing would be keen to be involved in the reconciliation process with the Taliban.

Overhanging these domestic issues are critical questions about the relationship between any successor Afghan government and the USA. President Obama has long made it clear that he "will not keep Americans in harm's way for a single day longer than is absolutely required", but has also promised to keep 20,000-odd men in Afghanistan after the withdrawal of the combat troops, although he will not build bases in Afghanistan or "patrol … cities and mountains". In any case, there remain unknown details of any future American status-of-

forces agreements with Kabul, or the general future shape of the US-Afghan relationship.

More broadly, American political opinion is increasingly unhappy about distant campaigns in—for the USA—non-essential regions, with uncertain outcomes, substantial costs and few visible benefits. There have been recent indications, following Afghan intransigence on several issues, that Obama might even contemplate an abrupt withdrawal of all US military aid and support in 2014. There are also the detailed surveillance and intelligence capacities now available to the USA, with the use of satellites and surveillance drones, not to mention the simple and obvious fact that much of the world's internet traffic is routed through the United States and most online data is held there. That may well make it less useful to maintain a terrestrial presence to establish not only the movements but also the plans and intentions of ground-based groups and to prepare responses. No doubt US policies might change; but major strategic changes such as a major US-Iranian clash, or the establishment of a major US base in Afghanistan from which Iran might be attacked, seem quite unlikely.

What does seem certain is that Afghanistan will continue to rely on foreign economic and financial aid, not least from the United States. The mid-2012 Tokyo conference promised that Afghanistan would receive another $16 billion in aid over the next four years, more or less what the World Bank thinks is required to bridge the gap between public revenue and expenditure. That is in addition to existing promises to finance the Afghan army and police. The World Bank argues that in the year to the end of September 2011 foreign aid was equivalent to the entire Afghan GDP; though billions of that aid has gone to pay the salaries of foreign staff and debts to foreign contractors. So what Afghanistan really needs is the security that might attract foreign investors who could help to foster economic growth.

Indissolubly linked to the fate of Afghanistan are the longer-term relations between Kabul and its neighbours; and the willingness of all of them to use Afghan religious and ethnic groupings to further their own aims, as they have always done. In the north, there are the Central Asian states, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, whose political, economic and ethnic fates, together with those of with Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, have long been linked with those of Afghanistan. In the south, there is Pakistan. Beyond these, there are not so much "family" relations as the emerging power relationships of the major states around Afghanistan's borders. These are likely to help shape not just Afghan politics but also the basic patterns of Asian relations for the rest of the century. They may even decide whether these major Asian powers, with often divergent interests, can achieve an agreed settlement.

Indissolubly linked to the fate of Afghanistan are the longer-term relations between Kabul and its neighbours; and the willingness of all of them to use Afghan religious and ethnic groupings to further their own aims, as they have always done.

Perhaps the most difficult of Afghanistan's foreign relations is that with Pakistan, since the Pakistan-Afghan border (the "Durand line", created in the 1890s) is largely just another of those lines on the map drawn by well-meaning but anxious and harried British and other colonial officials in Africa, the Middle East and Asia during the century after 1850. Many of them have proved to be almost entirely diplomatic fictions, with no relevance to ethnic, social, religious and therefore basic political realities.

Relationships on both sides of the Pakistan-Afghan border, especially those of Pashtuns in the "tribal areas" in Pakistan's north and north-west, and those in eastern and southern Afghanistan, have been that of "kissing cousins". Inevitably, they have constrained any coherent recent campaign planning by the Americans. They have also for a long time allowed the higher command of the Pakistan army, and especially the Inter-Services Intelligence Agency (ISI), to play a deviously commanding role in promoting radical Islamist aims throughout Central Asia. For example, Mirza Aslam Beg, the Pakistan army's chief of staff from 1988 to 1991, together with the director-general of the ISI, Hamid Gul, pursued a clearly anti-American foreign policy. They deceived a series of American administrations and apparently even thought they might create a radical Islamic bloc to include Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran and possibly the Islamic republics of the Soviet Union. There are many signs that these ambitions continued to shape Pakistan's policies long after Beg and Gul left office and long into the ascendancy of General—and later President—Musharraf.

Though all this flatly contradicted United States policies aimed at Afghan reconciliation and unity

under the aegis of the United Nations, Pakistan's intelligence and military role in Afghanistan continued through the 1990s and beyond into the era of General Ashfaq Kayani as head of the Pakistan military. Once the Taliban took over in Kabul in the 1990s, Pakistani ISI officers were stationed in every Afghan ministry, while the interest of the Taliban leader, Mullah Omar, according to Peter Tomsen in *The Wars of Afghanistan*, "was limited to the imposition of medieval Koranic prescriptions" and the proclamation of Afghanistan as an Islamic emirate "ruled by religious fatwas".

In 1996 the Taliban welcomed the return of Osama bin Laden (from the Sudan) and allowed him and the ISI to establish a series of Al Qaeda training camps for Pakistani volunteers, Arab militants, Chechens, Muslim Uighurs, Burmese and Filipino Muslims, jihadists from Africa and the West. From these large and disparate groups Al Qaeda operatives selected candidates for more advanced (and often suicide-mission) training.

It seems unlikely that these kinds of interleaved cross-border relationships between the two countries will end soon. Recent reports suggest that the Taliban has effectively taken charge again in parts of Afghanistan, especially in the southern Pashtun regions. It seems inevitable that the Taliban will indeed, in spite of allied military efforts, have a role in post-NATO Afghanistan politics; especially in a period when radical Islamism is making impressive advances in regions from Libya through Egypt and Sudan to Yemen and Central Asia.

Two other and larger factors seem likely to be significant. One is the evident fragmentation within the ranks of radical Islamism, especially but not only over the details of religious belief. That applies not just to the past and present disputes of Shia and Sunni Islam. It also applies to fierce disputes within each of these groupings, for instance in the Taliban attempt to dominate eastern Afghanistan by Wahabi interpretations of sharia law imported from Saudi Arabia. The point is not that such fragmentation is directly exploitable by apostates, unbelievers or other outsiders. On the contrary. History offers too many examples of how such fragments can combine and offer fierce resistance to would-be managerial outsiders. It is rather that fragmentation may seriously hamper the creation or maintenance of any coherent and united action against other states.

The other factor is the logical and political incompatibility of intolerant religious factionalism with the nationalist principles of most modern states. Over time, it can hardly fail to dawn on the rulers of Pakistan that using radical religious beliefs as the basis of national policy can only weaken the very nation they are leading and lessen its influence in the outside world. Successful imperial rulers, from Alexander the Great to the Moguls in India, the Mongols in Central and East Asia, to the Ottomans or Napoleon Bonaparte, flourished when they allowed their subjects to worship their own various gods. By contrast, empires fell apart in ages dedicated to social or religious uniformity, from Philip II of Spain to the Soviet Union.

As for Afghanistan's major (and mutually competitive) neighbours, the most important and the one whose future policies are likely to be critical for Central Asia and for the configuration and stability of the maritime areas of the whole Indo-Pacific region, is China. China and Afghanistan have had cultural and economic links for some two thousand years, at least since General Ban Chao consolidated Chinese rule in and around the Tarim Basin and into what is now Kazakhstan, while also sending expeditions further west towards the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf. The famous Silk Road not only carried goods, silk and jewels as far as the Levant and the coast of the Mediterranean, but also helped the spread of Buddhism and later Islam.

There are now at least five reasons for China's stake in Afghanistan, which has been developing steadily. One is China's *de facto* strategic alliance with Pakistan. This serves several purposes. First, it can keep India in check. Another is, either directly or through the SCO (of which more below) to check and help reverse the major US involvement in Afghanistan and, by extension, in shaping the emerging patterns of Central Asian politics and diplomacy. American and Indian hopes that the Taliban might be defeated in the Pashtun regions of Pakistan and Afghanistan are clearly impossible to fulfil, as are Taliban—and by extension Pakistani—hopes of having the Taliban sweep to power over the whole of Afghanistan.

A third Chinese aim is to maintain leverage in Islamabad in order to avoid having radical Islamism extend its tentacles into the Uighur regions of China's huge westernmost province, Xinjiang, not to mention any encouragement to Uighur separatism. China is acutely conscious of the danger, in this large region, of Uzbek Islamic extremism and the need to keep Central Asia stabilised. In the words of Hu Jintao, "China will continue actively participating in international and regional co-operation concerning Afghanistan." At the same time, China's main goal, economic integration in Central Asia, is strongly opposed not just by Russia but also by the Central Asian states themselves. To be sure,

there remains Pakistan's long-standing and deep-seated support for extremism as a chief feature of any future Islamic empire in Central and Western Asia. Nevertheless, there have been reports that Pakistan not only eliminated Uzbek radicals from its own ranks but did so with the help of Chinese intelligence officers. Beijing has given verbal support for Pakistan in the wake of Bin Laden's death. Pakistani prime ministers have visited China and there have been reports from Kabul that Pakistan has encouraged the Karzai administration to look to Beijing, not Washington, as a future prop. After all, China will not go away and its policy time-horizons clearly go far beyond 2014.

A fourth reason for China's interest in Afghanistan is a common interest with Iran and Russia in stopping Afghan's massive drug trafficking to the outside world. The fifth and most obvious motive is economic, with the promotion of investment and expectation of supplies for Chinese industries.

On this last front, considerable progress has been made. China is already the main commercial, financial and investment power in Central Asia. When Central Asian states want to raise money on the international markets, they go to Shanghai, not Frankfurt or Paris or even London. This thrust began in 2007 when China (the Metallurgical Corporation of China and Jiangxi Copper) won the contract for the exploitation of Afghanistan's Aynak copper deposits about thirty miles from Kabul, widely regarded as the world's second-largest copper deposit. China has already invested an estimated $4 billion in its development, together with associated infrastructure projects like roads and railways and probably some facilities for the miners and staff. The Afghans have suggested that this investment might yield to Afghanistan some $2 billion annually in taxes and other benefits. Moreover, this is only one, albeit by far the largest, of China's investment projects in Afghanistan. The China National Petroleum Company has drilling operations in Afghanistan's Sar-e-Pul province and Chinese state-owned enterprises are the largest investors in Afghanistan's extraction sector. Chinese firms are also planning to explore sites in Amu Darya, in northern Pakistan, while Huawei has invested in Afghan telephone systems, and other groups have taken stakes in various irrigation projects or the reconstruction of hospitals in Kandahar and Kabul. The EU has hired Chinese firms for a number of its own Afghan construction projects. Afghan minerals and potentially energy could hardly be closer to China's borders or more conveniently placed. China is building energy routes, by rail or pipeline, from the Gulf and the Indian Ocean via Pakistan to insure China against future disruptions, including any future naval blockade by the Americans or India.

China has also been busy in recent years in other, though usually low-key, moves for "border rectification", and more emphatic Chinese moves for economic dominance throughout Central Asia. One example is renting 7000 hectares of agricultural land from the governor of a Kazakh border district; another is an agreement to use some 1100 square kilometres in Tajikistan for the benefit of Chinese farmers. Such territorial control can translate into political clout. It can be used to put pressure on Kyrgyzstan and others to remove the activities of US intelligence agencies and their highly sensitive reconnaissance and surveillance activities from Central Asian soil—including their monitoring of Chinese military movements in Xinjiang.

China is already the main commercial, financial and investment power in Central Asia. When Central Asian states want to raise money on the international markets, they go to Shanghai, not Frankfurt or Paris or even London.

These trends are strongly confirmed by China's emphasis on extending its railway network throughout Central Asia, with obvious economic implications as well as potential military ones. China has already used the network to transport troops into Xinjiang. China is also co-operating with Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan on energy supply matters and expects to receive substantial gas supplies from there by 2020. In the process, it is also undercutting Russian influence in the region. The point seems even stronger in the light of recent discoveries of large quantities of shale gas in China itself, even if some of these deposits prove difficult to develop. In addition, China is the largest foreign investor in Tajikistan and especially in infrastructure such as roads and tunnels. That contributes to the growing integration of Xinjiang province with the small Central Asian states and growing control in those states of their Uighur minorities which might otherwise contribute to unrest in Xinjiang itself.

All of this gives China a potentially commanding position in the developing economic patterns of the Central Asian region, just as its growing naval and air power allow it to enforce large claims in the East and South China Seas. In addition, China is

increasing the availability of trade and communication routes that do not rely on the sea and especially on the Straits of Malacca. Such Chinese efforts are further stimulated by the suspicion in Beijing that several of the political disturbances in Central Asia in the early years of the new century were instigated from outside.

Probably China's main competitor in Central Asia, including Afghanistan, is Russia, whose interest in the region goes back at least to the nineteenth century, if not to the days of the Mongol empire. It certainly continues through its strategic as well as economic interests. The chief Russian aims in the region are not obscure. Russia has for long sought a dominant influence in Central Asia for several reasons. One has always been the need to stop foreign powers and influence, including Islam and especially jihadists, from penetrating not just Russia's Central and East Asian provinces, but even the Russian heartland.

Russia wants to preserve authoritarian regimes in the region and its own right to establish military bases there. It also wants further intelligence penetration by the Foreign Intelligence Service and the Federal Security Service. Beyond that, Russia wants to promote itself as a bridge between Europe and Asia through Russia and Central Asian territory. At the same time it wants to promote north–south trade corridors between Russia, Central Asia, Iran and India and to be a major participant in transport and pipeline plans for the region.

Russian claims go further. Moscow claims the right to intervene on behalf of Russians, including people who are "Russian" by virtue of their ethnic origin, and who are being oppressed in Central Asian regions. There are precedents for such intervention and even unilateral Russian recognition of the independence of some parts of existing states([16]). Nor can Russia avoid its long-standing worries about China, whose great population reserves have for a century or more seemed a potential threat to Russia's sparsely populated Far East.

On several of these matters, Russian and Chinese interests and plans clearly conflict. So Russian military and intelligence aims are being pursued in old-fashioned ways, while in commercial areas Russia is becoming less competitive with China. At the same time, and for the moment, it seems that Russia and China see one another as allies in other matters, such as countering US influence in Asia or in dealing with the dangers of Afghan narcotic supplies. (Afghanistan produces around 90 per cent of the world's opium.)

For the time being, Russia's attention seems focused in the main on three issues. One is less on Afghanistan than on its links with Iran and, via Iran, with Syria and attempts to constrain Sunni expansionism. There is also the creation of the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation (SCO), which Younkyoo Kim and Stephen Blank have aptly described as "an institution born with Chinese characteristics". Though it is not yet an organisation capable of collective action and it has no unified military command or combined force, it may already be the most important security forum for the region, and signs of military co-operation are visible. The first-ever meeting of the Chiefs of General Staffs of SCO members took place in China in April 2011, at which the then-Vice President Xi Jinping of China spoke of new threats and the need for greater co-operation among SCO members. Nor is co-operation only military. It was Moscow that put forward a regional action plan to deal with issues like terrorism, organised crime and drug trafficking. The forum may have other roles. Yet the inclusion of India, Pakistan and Iran as observers may also suggest attempts by China and Russia to balance against each other. In any event, the SCO seems to be overshadowing its less effective Russian-led competitor, the Collective Security Treaty Organisation. There is also the formation, in 2010, of a customs union in the Commonwealth of Independent States. The proposed integration of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, and probably Tajikistan, is clearly an attempt by Russia to weaken, or counterbalance, Chinese economic penetration of the region.

These various patterns may also suggest what some commentators have called a "creeping satellisation" for Central Asia. In addition, one would expect Moscow's status at the SCO to be used to guard against strategic or commercial pressures on its own strategically vulnerable Central Asian provinces. These areas have, after all, caused problems ever since the days of the "Great Game" played by Russia and the British in the nineteenth century. At the same time, that membership can help to strengthen Russia's friendly strategic and commercial relations with China and perhaps lessen concerns about those great Chinese population reserves and their potential threat to the Russian Far East. President Putin asserted in June 2012, "China is Russia's strategic partner. We enjoy mutually beneficial, mutually trusting, open cooperation in all fields." He might usefully remember the old saw: "If you want to make God laugh, tell him your plans."

The co-operative approach naturally has its own difficulties. It rests on the assumption that there are no political earthquakes or military adventures in any of the participating states. That will certainly

include an expectation that Chinese plans for a variety of far-reaching reform in domestic political and economic arrangements even within the Communist Party itself, run smoothly. Not only that but they can also safely be married with the popular nationalist fervour that is displayed not just in public rhetoric but in such matters as China's far-reaching claims in the East China Sea or the Diaoyu/Senkaku islands dispute with Japan.

The second power with major and immediate interests in Afghanistan is Iran, whose historical links with the Afghan region go back well over 2000 years to the Persian empire of Darius and Xerxes, not to mention Alexander the Great, who found the lovely Roxane in the Afghan hills and made her his wife. As the major Shia power in the region, and one with long-term and extensive cultural as well as political influence in Afghanistan, Iran has an interest in supporting the minority groups in Afghanistan, notably the Tajiks and the Shia Hazara groups, not only with aid but also with operations by elements of the Iranian Al Quds special force. Meanwhile the fall of the Taliban in Kabul has provided Teheran with a welcome opportunity to build ties with the Karzai government and financial links to some Afghan politicians. None of which has prevented Teheran, which has often called for a regional solution to the Afghan crisis, from inviting a delegation of senior Taliban members to meet Iranians as if it were a meeting of two governments. Teheran has also engaged Pakistan to develop energy and economic ties further.

President Putin asserted in June 2012, "China is Russia's strategic partner. We enjoy mutually beneficial, mutually trusting, open co-operation in all fields." He might usefully remember the old saw: "If you want to make God laugh, tell him your plans."

There remain problems between Teheran and Kabul, such as water disputes, the inflow into Iran of Afghan refugees, and Afghan drug trafficking. The 900-kilometre border between the two countries may well have become the main conduit for smuggling Afghan narcotics not only to Iran but also through Iran to Europe.

All this comes together with the long-standing Iranian hostility to the United States. It has been sustained by a number of factors. One is the unwavering US support for Israel, which offends an equally unwavering Iranian hostility to the Jewish state. All of which is fuelled by religious reasons dear to the ayatollahs who have governed Iran since the end of the last imperial dynasty, which fell in 1979. But it also rests on Israel's role as the "occupier" of Palestinian land and as a strategic and political obstacle to Iranian control of larger areas of the Middle East, the Gulf and the Eastern Mediterranean coast.

Hostility to the USA has also been shaped by America's strong hostility to, and cyber-war against, the Iranian nuclear program. In the USA there have even been suggestions that there might be military action, by the Americans or the Israelis, against those Iranian nuclear facilities. These are, however, accompanied by worries about how effective or durable any such attack might be, or its political effect around the world, or the nature of possible Iranian retaliation, ranging from missile attacks on Israel to arms supplies to jihadi groups in and around the Middle East. The issue has acquired sharply increased importance with the announcement by the British Intelligence Service in July 2012 that Iran will have deployable nuclear weapons by 2014.

A solution to the problem is difficult to foresee. Perhaps the most obvious way forward might be for Iran to close the expected time gap between its achievement of the capability to produce nuclear weapons and associated delivery capabilities, and actual production and deployment. Once Iran has a recognised ability to move towards deployment in a very short time, the immediate issue can effectively be resolved, in the sense that Iran would have achieved an effective deterrent against outside attack. The fact that other powers, including Arab ones, might be motivated to develop their own such weapons would be an important but perhaps separate problem. In any case, even that is only part of a yet larger question: whether the spread of nuclear knowhow, and the capacity to build nuclear devices in various parts of the globe, is still possible at all.

Other issues that matter to Iran have to do with American dominance in the Gulf, its influence on the world oil market—on which so much of Iran's income depends— and its real or apparent support for Baluchi insurgents against Teheran. That complex of issues has promoted, especially from the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps, "measured support" for the Taliban insurgents fighting the USA in Afghanistan; while, at the same time, maintaining "close and constructive relations" with the Afghan government fighting the Taliban. This

behaviour is further shaped by Iran's "complex and, at times, contradictory set of cultural, religious, political and security interests"—which encourage Iran's policy of supporting proxy groups to pursue its interests in other regional states, such as Lebanon and Iraq. Yet Iran's national interests in Afghanistan also largely coincide with the US wish to defeat the Taliban and establish a viable Afghan government.

The influence and power of Iran seem destined to grow. So Iran's general policies towards Afghanistan seem unlikely to change, except in two obvious senses. One is that Iran will surely try to prevent or, at worst, limit the ascendancy of any other major power in the affairs and especially the territory of Afghanistan. The other is that Iran seems certain to continue its strong support for the security and promotion of Shia Islam.

The other major, albeit less effective, player in Central Asian affairs is India. India seems handicapped by several factors. One is the permanent mutual hostility with Pakistan in general and most especially over the disputed province of Kashmir. Another is the importance of India's strategic interests in the South rather than the North: in the trading routes of, and the emerging naval competition in, the Indian Ocean. A third is the fragmented state of India's domestic politics. At the same time, India feels surrounded and hemmed in by China on one side and by China's quasi-ally, Pakistan, on the other. For the Indians, any clear-cut Pakistani ascendancy in Afghanistan would be unacceptable. Yet the Afghan situation may also make the American approaches to India in recent times more acceptable, even welcome. Indian financial, trading and other support for an independent Afghan government is therefore likely to continue. As Professor Ramesh Thakur has pointed out, India has historical but also contemporary interests in Afghanistan and "Along with educational, energy and development assistance, India will help to train Afghanistan's security services." Indian cultural influence is also substantial.

It seems unlikely that it could prove possible to create an agreed multi-national body, the SCO or any other, that would contain all these widely varying national interests and ambitions in one economic, let alone strategic network that could ensure stability in and around Central Asia. The alternative might be for these states to confine themselves to possibly more volatile patterns of bilateral relations. Examples are easy to find. One is the relationship between India and China, still bedevilled by issues including China's links to Pakistan and its claim to some of India's northernmost regions, for instance in Arunachal Pradesh. Another is Pakistan's (and especially the ISI's) continued support for an Islamic radicalism that can threaten both India and the Uighur region in China's West (as it is already unsettling larger parts of northern and western Africa). A third might be Iran's ambitions in the Central Asian regions of the Russian Federation.

For all of these powers the prospects in Afghanistan are both enticing and daunting. Enticing not just because of the political opportunities that may arise in the change-over period, but because of the large and continuing economic opportunities in Afghanistan's major recent mineral discoveries and their exploitation. But also daunting in that Afghanistan's relations with its neighbours, and the relations of those neighbours with one another, have never been easy, at least not for long; and everyone can read the lessons left behind by the invaders, whether by the British in the nineteenth century, or the Russians and later Americans in the past thirty years. What with one thing and another, it seems extraordinarily unlikely that Central Asia, and Afghanistan in particular, will cease to be a source of ethnic, religious and political unrest, even turmoil, for a long time to come.

Harry Gelber is Emeritus Professor of Political Science and honorary research associate in the School of Government, University of Tasmania. His most recent book is ***The Dragon and the Foreign Devils*** *(Bloomsbury). A footnoted version of this article appears on* ***Quadrant Online****.*

Tony Thomas

Hal Colebatch

Inside an Outsider

The first impression of Hal Colebatch, sixty-seven, is his bean-pole physique—six feet six inches (1.98 metres). Next, his elegant attire: as a solicitor he dresses up to meet clients at his home office in a quiet Nedlands street. He's lived at this small and cluttered house since 1957, apparently without any maintenance input.

He revels in tradition. His business card has his 400-year-old coat of arms and motto, "Post Multus Difficultates" ("After numerous difficulties"). He still enjoys exercises with toy soldiers and is teaching his grandchild chess—Hal's father was state chess (and bowls) champion.

His new book *Australia's Secret War* was published by Quadrant Books last month. It covers the extraordinary incidence of strike activity by Australia's trade union movement during the Second World War. Wharfies disrupted the loading of vital supplies to the troops in the islands, and pilfered mercilessly from ships' cargoes and troops' personal effects. Other strikes by rail workers, iron workers, coal miners, and even munitions workers and life-raft builders, badly impeded Australia's war effort. The strikers were protected by Labor's hard-Left Minister for Labour Eddie Ward but, Hal argues, they took their toll on Labor Prime Minister John Curtin and probably contributed to his early death. Hal says the topic is so hot that virtually no academic historian has dared or wanted to touch it. He took twelve years to find a publisher. He told me:

> Even after Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union, waterfront and other strikes increased. My idea is that these strikes were not communist-directed but rogue efforts by lumpen-proletarian scum, who have never been called to account.
>
> At the most the wharfies got a fright when US troops fired warning shots into the air and dropped stun grenades into the hold to halt their wrecking and looting of vital war supplies for PNG. Eddie Ward would have seen the strikes as part of the larger attack on capitalism. Even the Menzies government of 1939–41 had been scared to take action, lest it cause a general strike.
>
> My main sources were ex-servicemen replying to my ads in the press for information. Every time I put the ad in, I'd get a little batch of replies to follow up, I ended up with seventy accounts. I believe quite a bit of the same disruption went on in New Zealand and I also got a couple of stories from Britain.

Hal has written about twenty-five books. They include poetry (seven volumes), biography (three volumes with a fourth under way), fiction and science fiction (a dozen, some co-written), several institutional histories and even a legal tome of West Australian traffic laws. In June, Acashic Publishing in Perth launched his 600-page historical and philosophic work *Fragile Flame*, on the uniqueness and vulnerability of scientific and technological civilisation, and its Christian underpinning. This work masterfully brings together his life's preoccupations.

Hal's first novel in 1975 was *Souvenir*, about a somewhat farcical writers' workshop on a small West Australian island. As a topic, this was not an astute pick career-wise.

In an era when government funding showers onto artists for activity such as playing with their own poo, Hal's public recognitions are few: a $50,000 Australia Council grant for two years in 2000: a Centenary Medal in 2003 of no monetary value; and a $7500 West Australian Premier's Prize in 2008 for his poetry volume *The Light River*. He has never been invited to a literary festival or university summer school, and mainstream publishers don't want to know him (Fremantle Arts Centre Press is an exception).

Les Murray blames the dominant Left literary establishment, which has made Colebatch one of the most suppressed major writers in Australia. "I am not writing about East Germany in the 1970s, but Australia in the 1980s, 1990s and in 2007," Murray wrote in his preface to *The Light River*, noting Hal's

high reputation in the USA, the UK and New Zealand: "The One Faction [Australia's literary Left] expresses its hatred and fear of him in ways natural to it."

The only academic interest in Hal has been a single BA honours thesis. He says:

> There's a clique of poets in Sydney and Melbourne which devotes its energies to keeping outsiders out of the grant money and publication of any kind. If it were not for Les Murray, I'd have very little poetry published. Murray edited several of my books with Heinemann and Angus & Robertson.

Hal says he is a Christian but finds no church very agreeable: "I got too much compulsory church at boarding school. But I have loved the style and content of Christian writers such as G.K. Chesterton and C.S. Lewis."

In chatting, I mentioned passports and that passports used to look like hand-written diplomas. Hal replied, quoting from Henry V:

> He which hath no stomach to this fight,
> Let him depart; his passport shall be made,
> And crowns for convoy put into his purse.

I was startled then at his recall. Now, after burying myself in his numerous books, I'd just accept that Hal is across a stupendous variety of cogent information and can synthesise it at will. In erudition (but not popularity) I'd place Hal with Clive James, and in wit with Mark Steyn (though Hal's wit is even more acidic). Hal's original career in journalism has made all his writing easy to read, and like Geoffrey Blainey, he makes his best points with a telling fact or anecdote.

In 2010 Hal wrote a history of the West Australian Victoria League for Commonwealth Friendship, a once-thriving royalist and troops-support group during the wars, which he chaired from 2003 to 2006. Its membership is now down from 400 two decades ago to forty mostly elderly members. While outsiders mock it, Colebatch records the league as part of the upsurge of volunteer community groups a century ago, and a body capable of shipping 50,000 warm shirts to diggers transferred from Gallipoli to the Western Front.

He edited the 1991-92 fifth and sixth editions of *Debrett's Handbook of Australia*, 800 pages of biographical entries with topics like "Pleasant and correct dining" as a bonus. Hal says he got Debrett's into the black but it then collapsed through intercompany debts.

Asked about being "very right-wing", Hal says, "Such a reputation is a surprise to me; I think of myself as mainstream. I just do what I do. Some have attacked me after first distorting what I wrote."

An instance was a poem in 1969 satirising Perth festivities for visiting astronauts—certainly not satirising the astronauts themselves, for whom Hal's writing over decades shows immense respect. His literary enemies misused the poem so much that he forbade its reproduction.

He has twice stood unsuccessfully as a Liberal for Perth, in 1977 and 1996, and no longer aspires to be a politician.

Just to list his recent output is a shock. Only last year he produced a biography of the Liberal Party's low-tariff advocate and "Modest Member" Bert Kelly MHR (published by Connor Court). Hal brought to bear not just his historian's skill but also insights into the workings of government—he has worked for two federal Liberal ministers.

Acashic, based in Subiaco, published two of his novels in 2011—on the same day, in fact. They're ripping yarns on his pet themes of global politics and science fiction. He has had three more of his science fiction novels accepted by Baen Books in the USA, the doyen of science fiction publishing houses. This will take his output in the Man-Kzin Wars series (including collaborative efforts) to seventeen novellas and 750,000 words.

Hal's sci-fi stories are character-driven with moral twists. He will test scenarios of appeasement or resistance in domains where culture and technology have got out of step. He's too clever a writer to go for pat solutions and one of his stories is even written from a cat-like alien's point of view.

The background knowledge has to be good. As he says, authors have to know things like how a Bussard ramjet operates, what Delta-V is (space-ship momentum), and the difference between a muon and a neutrino.

Hal is saddened at literary disdain for science fiction, which like any other genre has its rubbish and its masterpieces. He notes that writers as diverse as Kipling, Robert Conquest (historian of *The Great Terror*) and C.S. Lewis wrote science fiction. He claims that without science fiction to inspire young readers, real space-flight would never have got under way. Space pioneers like Werner von Braun, Robert Goddard and Arthur C. Clarke were all sci-fi aficionados, and the Russian Konstantin Tsiolkovsky actually wrote science fiction, he says.

Colebatch can write about possible aliens on remote planets, arguing that our Newtonian and Einsteinian science, along with our space probes, are very recent. "To assume we know it all is taking a lot for granted," he says. He uses an analogy of

pre-Columbian Americans in 1491 arguing that they were safe from overseas raiders because war canoes couldn't cross the ocean or carry enough food.

"I write sci-fi because in the real world I don't find enough that I enjoy writing about. My sci-fi story 'Telepath's Dance', for example, has an eccentric female scientist with a chip on her shoulder, and an eight-foot-tall telepathic cat with a chip on his."

Even in his poems he enjoys the shock ending. In "English Scene", for example, a bearded bloke with patches at elbows and knees is digging in a field in the rain. Colebatch compares him with the slaves, serfs and farm labourers there before the man's time, then discloses that the man's actually an academic on field work, and desperate for tenure in archaeology.

Meanwhile Hal cranks out a stream of political/history columns and press features. Over the years his output in the *American Spectator OnLine* would total 100 columns.

His 1999 book *Blair's Britain* was immediately listed by the *Spectator*'s Taki as a book of the year. It predated Nick Cater (*The Lucky Culture*, 2013), in arguing that cultural hegemonies have overtaken party politics.

He is uninterested in literary fashions. He likes life-affirming writers such as Kipling and Chesterton, and civilisation's torch-bearers such as Alfred the Great.

Hal has been a politics, poetry and fiction contributor to *Quadrant* for fifty years. He had two pieces in the September 2013 issue: "What If Sir John Kerr Had Been a Layman?" and a short story, "Writer's Block".

He spent fourteen years researching his biography of controversial pre-war West Australian mining magnate Claude de Bernales (also creator of Perth's ersatz "London Court"). De Bernales's affairs were so convoluted that some British government files on him are still closed, till 2025.

Hal in 2004 published the biography of his father Sir Hal Colebatch, a long-time West Australian politician and small-government advocate who was, for a month, the state's Premier. When Sir Hal went to deal with militant wharfies in 1919, large rocks and scrap iron were dropped from Fremantle bridge onto the launch taking him to the scene of conflict. One wharfie, Tom Edwards, was killed later that day. The cause, whether police rifle butt or missile from his own side, was never established. The day has become festooned in Left–Right myths, including that Sir Hal led a bloody bayonet charge. In fact, the dispute was rooted in Commonwealth politics and Sir Hal was a reluctant participant. Shots were fired, more likely towards Sir Hal.

Some weeks ago Hal was commissioned to do a biography of Sir Stanley Argyle, Victorian Premier from 1932 to 1935. Argyle was also a pioneer in Australian medical x-ray technology.

Hal says. "I write mostly at night, but I'm not doing much law practice. I can earn reasonable money from science fiction publishers in the USA and I do a lot of casual journalism."

He is uninterested in literary fashions. He likes life-affirming writers such as Kipling and Chesterton, and civilisation's torch-bearers such as Alfred the Great. Of Alfred's victory over the Vikings at Ethandune 1200 years ago, he says it saved English-speaking civilisation from being murdered in its cradle, and saved us, as Chesterton put it earlier, "from being savages forever". Hal's writings often refer to Chesterton's 170-page epic poem about that battle, "The Ballad of the White Horse". Hal notes sadly that Alfred's Winchester has largely dropped the king from its promotional material.

Noting that there's a warship HMS *Kipling* but no warship HMAS *Peter Carey*, Hal says that if Kipling had been immortal he would have given us "the great poem about the moon landing which we have never had, and would have loved the technical details involved".

Hal's poetry is often cited as his best work. It ranges from human vignettes and celebrations of the Swan River and Rottnest Island to love and political satire. He says he'd rather build things up than tear things down.

I was intrigued by one poem, "That Werewolf Again", in which, just for fun, Hal took on the challenge of a German poem about grammatical cases, alleged to be untranslatable into rhyming English verse. The result is funny and excellent.

His shortest poem is "Astronomer Royal" (thirteen words: "Two words arranged / To cover so much / Of the breadth of a civilization"). The longest is a true epic of the Atlantic sea war, "The *San Demetrio*" (twenty-three pages), in which sixteen civilian crewmen re-boarded their stricken and blazing tanker and took it to port with its 11,000 tonnes of aviation fuel. Colebatch as a toddler first heard the story from his father. "The poem was about what ordinary well-motivated men can achieve," Hal says.

His father, with two sons, was widowed in 1940 and in 1944 re-married, to Marion Gibson, a nursing sister with health problems dating from a wartime tank accident in Nungarin, Western Australia. They first met at Rottnest Island's chapel. (She had just missed joining the draft of nurses who went to Singapore and in 1942 were machine-

gunned by the Japanese at Bangka beach.) Sir Hal was seventy-two, Marion thirty-three. Young Hal was a honeymoon present ten months later.

Sir Hal poured his love and learning into the small boy, until Sir Hal's death at eighty when Hal was seven. Hal on his father's lap or shoulder imbibed the great writers and current affairs, collecting autographs of notables such as Tokyo raider General Jimmy Doolittle and Fleet Admiral "Bull" Halsey.

His mother also versed Hal in the best of literature, and read to him from *The Cruel Sea*, "without the rude bits", Hal recalls. Typical of the milieu in their flat on the fifth floor of riverfront Lawson Flats in Perth was a visit by then-Captain John Collins, who had been on HMAS *Australia* when a kamikaze Zero hit the bridge. Collins complained to Marion about headaches and she set to work picking metal splinters out of his head with tweezers.

Among Hal's happiest memories is getting a bit part as a horsed picador in the grand parades of Bullen's Circus, twenty nights per season. At primary school, when other kids thought poetry was about cats and mats, Hal would recall:

> The graceful folding of a seagull's wings,
> The mystic beauty of a moon-kissed sea ...

He has written wonderfully of the look and smell of the 1940s Perth museum and art gallery. He was also entranced by the State Library of the day, "where, by some architectural perfection of light, sound and atmosphere, it was impossible not to study and absorb knowledge". Impossible for Hal, that is.

No mere spectator to nature, the young Hal mixed with leading West Australian naturalists such as Harry Butler and the Serventys, collecting spiders and lizards. Another interest was caving, on which he has published a small book. "There are half a dozen caves in the south-west open to tourists, and 200 not," he says.

Keith Gibson, a relative, was a Lieutenant-Commander in the Navy Reserve, and gave Hal, still in short pants, a corvette of his own, HMAS *Parkes*, to command and play on at the moth-balled fleet at postwar Garden Island base, south of Fremantle. Navy themes, sea trade and navigation have endured in Hal's literary output over half a century—including much recent lamenting of the deliberate run-down of British naval strength.

Colebatch became a petty officer in the naval cadets and later co-owner of a forty-four-foot ketch, *Freya*. In his backyard today is an upturned Mirror dinghy, which seems, like Colebatch, to be mourning its long absence from the water.

> And it is impossible to sail without knowing
> Of breaking-strains, and that just so much wind
> Will capsize a dinghy, and that nowhere ...
> Is there any smallest estuary you can blind
> With non-science ...

One imagines titled Perth people to be wealthy—Hal's grandfather Sir Frank Gibson was the Fremantle mayor for twenty-nine years. But Sir Hal had shifted assets to his first family, possibly bailed out the family newspaper the *Northam Advertiser* during the depression, owned no house or car, had no parliamentary pension, and left an estate of only 2000 pounds.

A wealthy friend from the goldfields pledged to amend his own will for Hal and his mother, but died on the morning of his appointment with his solicitor. Marion was forced back into nursing, and lived in a one-room cottage on the grounds of Perth's repatriation hospital until she got a TPI pension. Hal boarded at Christ Church Grammar, helped by his mother's war-service subsidy and support from Sir Frank (who was also far from wealthy). Hal says:

> I had lived at home with doting parents who treated me like a little prince. Christ Church was mainly for farmers' children, with whom I had nothing in common. I got bad advice that if anyone bullied me, ignore them. That got me bullied worse. Finally I threw a boy out of a second-storey window and the bullying stopped.

Apart from a perspicacious English master, Peter Naish, who is still his friend, the school did little for Hal, and he had to repeat matriculation at Leederville Tech. There he met another fine English teacher, Gerry Brennan.

He went on to fifteen years part-time university study, earning five degrees including a PhD in political science with his thesis on the Australian reception of Vietnamese migrants fleeing communist re-education camps and execution. He sees no analogies with the current flotillas of economic migrants from Muslim countries.

His MA was on Australian peace movements during the Cold War—its orientation easy to guess. His other degrees are BA (Hons), BJuris and LLB.

Hal in 1964 landed a job for a decade as reporter on the *West Australian*. High points included watching the Ord River Dam fill and a specialty as science writer; lowlights included reporting prosecutions of kids riding bikes without the then-obligatory number plates. He told me:

> Eventually as a lawyer I failed at defending a murderer who had come out of prison, lodged with a fellow ex-prisoner, and strangled him, leaving the body in the flat with the murderer's DNA everywhere.

He's done a funny poem on a barrister discussing his social life with a crony while advising his client that the sentence could be fourteen years, "but I'd emphasise that is a maximum so try not to worry too much". Hal's originality extends to a verse in praise of newspaper sub-editors, normally seen as the bunch that goes out on Friday nights to paint the town grey.

His biggest mistake, he says, was accepting a Canberra cadetship in the Department of Foreign Affairs in 1973. "I hated the life. I got out and did law while working as an electoral assistant to Vic Garland." (Garland, Liberal member for Curtin, held various ministries to 1980, and was knighted.)

Hal was mentored by UWA's associate professor of politics and one-time ditch-digger Paddy O'Brien, who supervised Hal's MA and PhD. (Ken Minogue at the London School of Economics recommended Hal's PhD for Special Congratulations.) Hal says Paddy was not just brilliant academically but also a *bon vivant* whose house was a magnet for globally-big names in transit, and for Perth oddbods outstaying their welcome, including at one stage Hal, who stayed several weeks during a bad patch psychologically.

Typical of O'Brien's style was distributing a fake menu when Soviet gymnasts were dining at the opening of Perth's Edgley Entertainment Centre in 1974. The menu comprised food and activity at a gulag camp. O'Brien, Colebatch and others successfully took on Perth's Left establishment including Brian Burke and WA Inc.

Colebatch takes no prisoners: he likens the wishy-washy British Conservatives to orang-utans watching on as their forest burns. Reviewing a fellow-cynic's book on Britain, Colebatch wrote, "Alastair Campbell [Blair's spin-meister] is perhaps let off too lightly as a 'steaming pile of partisan malevolence'."

Closer to home he has no mercy for Manning Clark. Hal's asides make one shudder:

> Lenin had described fellow-travellers as "useful idiots", but it is doubtful how useful Clark was ...
>
> Like the coward and pro-totalitarian rat he was, he scuttled out of England the moment the war started getting dangerous and failed to join even in civilian war work in either Britain or Australia, spending the war instead playing cricket with small boys at Geelong Grammar School and seeking academic positions while rivals were absent on war service.

Menzies, in contrast to Clark, stayed in London during the Blitz.

Always the contrarian, Hal argues for example that Franco's team were the better guys in the Spanish Civil War. Why? Because if the Stalin-controlled Republicans had won, they would have allowed the Nazis through to Gibraltar during the Hitler-Stalin pact, sealing the Mediterranean against Britain. Franco not only defied the Nazis but also protected Jews.

Hal says even juvenile literature these days is stuffed with sexuality, drugs, boredom, family dysfunction, Aids, ozone layer holes, death during cosmetic surgery, and suicide. He describes the authors as "the authentic voice of Caliban, a yawp that can't be counterfeited". Kids in pre-war fiction sailed yachts, sewed tents and were happy with a pocket torch for Christmas. Real physical danger was eagerly written about by Kipling, as in his Jungle Books. "I recently saw a quite nauseating fairy story in which the Fairy King leads his people *in hiding* from a passing dragon, itself quite wussy-looking as dragons go," Hal says.

He had ambitions of being a satirical writer but says it's too hard now to distinguish between satire and reality. A UK criminal could not be deported because he would be separated from his cat and that would violate his human rights. Britain's new-look Community Police Support Officers stand in for real police. When three girls attacked and robbed a fifty-five-year-old man, a couple of the Support Officers hid behind a tree until a fifty-nine-year-old woman came to the victim's aid.

In the mid-1980s Colebatch was in Britain as a tourist and then as a computer company rep. He met his wife Alexandra there in 1985. Their two children are from her first marriage.

He invariably dedicates his work to Alexandra. A moving poem is his "Driving to Meet My Wife in Canberra":

> How I must love you if the first sight,
> Knowing you are there, of the lights
> Of this city
> Appearing at last over the crest of a ridge
> Can lift my heart.

Tony Thomas, a frequent contributor to ***Quadrant****, was a fellow reporter with Hal Colebatch on the* ***West Australian*** *in the late 1960s. He blogs at tthomas061.wordpress.com.*

Hal G.P. Colebatch

The War the Unions Fought Against Australia

In October 1945, following the Japanese surrender, the small British aircraft-carrier HMS *Speaker* carried some of the surviving Australian soldiers released from Japanese prison camps back to Sydney.

They had had no mail or news from their families for more than three and a half years. Most were in desperate physical straits and it was a medical rule of thumb at the time that their suffering had taken ten years off their life expectancies. Already, all but the strong had perished and many of them said later that in another month they would all have been dead: their ordeal had simply gone on too long.

When *Speaker* arrived at Sydney, watersiders went on strike for thirty-six hours, preventing them being disembarked. It was perhaps an appropriate ending to the saga of Australia's wharves in the Second World War.

When No. 317 Radar Station was being set up at Green Island east of New Britain during the war it was found that all the valves for the radar sets had been stolen by wharf labourers at Townsville. Without the valves the station was unable to go on air as scheduled, and a violent electrical tropical storm caught a force of two-seater American Vultee Vengeance dive-bombers flying back from a raid on the Japanese base at Rabaul.

The storm upset the aircraft's compasses and even though they were in radio contact they became lost. Without radar the station could not guide them home and they flew on till they ran out of fuel and crashed, as those listening on the ground heard. Two of the aircraft were found. Sixteen others were lost and all the thirty-two men in them perished. James Ahearn, an RAAF serviceman at Green Island, wrote:

> Had No. 317 been on air it was possible the doomed aircraft could have been guided back to base. The grief was compounded by the fact that had it not been for the greed and corruption on the Australian waterfront such lives would not have been needlessly lost.

RAAF Sergeant H.T. Tolhurst, who had opened the box marked "RADIO VALVES HANDLE WITH CARE" and found it empty, commented:

> We believed that had we been on air it was possible that we could have guided those doomed aircraft back ... All of the personnel keenly felt the loss of those ... young lives. Our feelings were not helped by the scorn of the US Air Force personnel who became aware of the reasons ... and who tainted us with the contempt they held.

As Japanese forces attacked Milne Bay in 1942, and Australia and America tried to rush reinforcements to the aid of the troops holding on there, Townsville watersiders went on strike to prevent munitions being loaded. They refused to load heavy guns unless paid treble or, later, quadruple time. A small group of US Army personnel, under a US Army colonel who had trained Australia's first modern heavy artillery battery, eventually threw the watersiders off the wharf and loaded the guns themselves. By that time the rest of the convoy had sailed. The guns reached Milne Bay too late.

When advance elements of the 7th Infantry Brigade in the ship SS *Tasman* reached Milne Bay in 1942, proceeding straight into battle, they found that watersiders at Townsville had broken into the radio vans and taken all the accumulators from the radio sets. Other waterside strikes caused Milne Bay to be supplied for the battle with anti-aircraft gun-barrels without mountings. *Tasman* was the target, during these months as it ferried troops to New Guinea, of not exceptional but repeated strikes with each voyage.

In Adelaide in the same year, 1942, watersiders unloading a ship deliberately wrecked American aircraft engines by dropping them from cargo-nets

until American soldiers fired sub-machine-guns and dropped stun-grenades on the watersiders. On the Brisbane wharves Australian watersiders also deliberately wrecked US P-38 fighter planes. One soldier later wrote:

> They simply hooked the lifting crane onto the planes, and, without unbolting the planes from the decks, would signal the hoisting engineer to lift, which effectively tore the planes to pieces.

On the same wharves, in August 1942, after soldiers with drawn bayonets had stopped them stealing food from the stores they were loading, watersiders smashed vehicles of an army battalion being rushed to New Guinea by dropping them from winches.

During the course of the war virtually every major Australian warship, including at different times its entire force of cruisers, was targeted by strikes, go-slows or sabotage.

Australian Naval men in ships operating in the islands were reduced to near-starvation because of strikes in Australia and tried to feed themselves by depth-charging fish, and soldiers went without food and ammunition. Australian warships sailed to and from combat zones without ammunition for the same reason.

A former infantry sergeant wrote of fighting in New Guinea:

> On our way back we were ambushed by the Japs and one of our NCOs was killed. We returned to the hill and had to stay that night. The Japs attacked several times. My brother was shot in the mouth but was able to walk back with us next day.
>
> The lads were using hundreds of rounds of small arms ammo and stores were running low. We had orders next day to go easy with the ammo that we had as the wharfies at Sydney were refusing to load any on the ships. You can imagine what we would have done to the wharfies had we been given the chance—the Japs would have been second priority.

By 1944 waterfront strikes and obstruction on the wharves had reached such a pitch that the admiral in command of the British Pacific Fleet, Sir Bruce Fraser, threatened to transfer the fleet base from Australia to New Zealand.

Late in the war, the 20th AIF Brigade at Morotai were apparently unable to carry out planned landings at Labuan and Brunei to rescue Australian prisoners-of-war in Borneo (scene of the Sandakan Death March, which only six of several thousand Australian and British prisoners survived) because owing to a wharf strike in Brisbane there were no heavy weapons. All concerned with planning the operation believed there was great urgency in rescuing the prisoners, and the infantry commanders indicated they were prepared to land without heavy weapons, but the idea was shelved. By way of contrast, a US mission to rescue prisoners at the Cabanatuan camp in the north Philippines was carried out successfully at about the same time.

Australian troops returning from the islands in 1945 had machine-guns trained on their ship in Sydney Harbour and were disarmed and kept at the Sydney Showground for several days until, following negotiations with the authorities by their commanding general, they were allowed a victory parade without arms. The authorities had taken them at their word that they had sworn to kill Australian watersiders. Previously, Army and Air Force units had apparently planned to fly from the islands in transport aircraft to "clean up the wharves".

At least as late as October 1945, after the end of the war, strikes meant troops in New Guinea and the islands were on starvation rations.

Though they have since been largely suppressed or glossed over by pro-Labor historians and writers, these episodes were not apparently considered shameful by all watersiders and other strikers but on the contrary have been recounted by some as matters of pride.

There were, according to official records, 4123 strikes in Australia during the war, 3662 of them in New South Wales, with 5,824,439 working days lost *directly* through strikes. The number lost indirectly is impossible to calculate but may be several times greater. There are reasons to believe, including the evidence of some of those very close to him, that they were a major factor in the premature death of Prime Minister John Curtin.

Aided by the accounts of numerous ex-servicemen and others, I have set out to document in my new book, *Australia's Secret War*, part of the untold story of a war some Australians waged against their own country between 1939 and 1945 in its time of greatest peril.

This is the introduction to ***Australia's Secret War: How Unionists Sabotaged Our Troops in World War II****, by Hal Colebatch, published by Quadrant Books, $44.95.*

Mervyn F. Bendle

Erich Fromm and the Age of Anxiety

Erich Fromm was out. Max Horkheimer, the director of the neo-Marxist Institute of Social Research, had finally wilted under the pressure of Theodor Adorno's relentless campaign of denigration, and had sacked his star theorist. Sensing trouble, Fromm had been to see Friedrich Pollock, the Marxist economist who served as the Institute's financial director, who told him that they couldn't pay his salary past October 1, 1939. When Fromm remarked that that sounded like a dismissal, Pollock replied simply, "Yes, if you choose to call it that!" And so, as Rolf Wiggershaus recounts in *The Frankfurt School* (1994), the Institute "parted with a member of staff who had for a considerable time been the most significant one for its theoretical work", and who had been hired in 1930 to provide much-needed expertise in psychoanalysis and sociological research.

The Institute, known simply as "The Frankfurt School", would go on to be the most important institutional source of "critical theory" of the twentieth century, but it would do so without Fromm, who pursued an often parallel intellectual path, developing an enervated form of Freudo-Marxism derived from the ultra-radical position pioneered by Wilhelm Reich in *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* (1933) and *The Sexual Revolution* (1936). Fromm achieved considerable fame and political influence with over thirty books, including *Escape from Freedom* (1941; published outside America as *The Fear of Freedom*), which was his most important book and one that played an influential role in the self-understanding of the Age of Anxiety during the early years of the Cold War.

The parting with the Institute had been a long time coming, as there were fundamental personal and theoretical differences involved. Although Fromm had been pivotal in the Institute's early success, Horkheimer had made his dislike of Fromm clear to Pollock as early as 1934. Fromm, he complained, tried to stay on good terms with too many people. Adorno concurred, but he also coveted Fromm's position, and wanted to take over Fromm's massive social research project on the authoritarian nature of the working class, an area in which he later made his name with *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950). He ridiculed Fromm as a "professional Jew".

Fromm was also a womaniser who left emotional debris behind him, attracting further Institute disapproval. He had left his first wife, the pioneering psychoanalyst Frieda Fromm-Reichmann, in scandalous circumstances, and had had a long-term affair with feminist psychoanalyst Karen Horney, author of *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time* (1937). Fromm was particularly self-absorbed and in both cases he was explicitly looking for someone to "mother" him (Frieda was eleven years his senior, and Karen sixteen years), while he had made his refusal to start a family clear to Frieda, dismissing her pleas to have a child by remarking that there was nothing special about it and "even cows have children".

In her candid autobiographical *Self-Analysis* (1942) Horney described her own insecurities, compulsions and promiscuity. Fromm, it seems, made affectionate gestures but also made it clear that he resented demands upon his time and fiercely defended his freedom to pursue his many projects. He also exhibited "a self-righteous messianic or prophetic quality that limited the degree of emotional sharing" he could manage, as Lawrence Friedman recounts in his new biography, *The Lives of Erich Fromm: Love's Prophet* (2013), and it seems this reflected his early Rabbinical education and his close association with leading Jewish mystics of the twentieth century, including Franz Rosenzweig, Martin Buber and Gershom Scholem.

Fromm's refusal to marry Horney "rekindled her sense of inadequacy", Friedman explains, and when the relationship finally collapsed in 1940 she responded "by sleeping with Paul Tillich, Erich Maria Remarque and others", a pattern of behaviour that contributed to her exclusion from the New York Psychoanalytic Society in 1941. She responded by establishing the Association for the Advancement

of Psychoanalysis, from which she duly expelled Fromm. For his part, Fromm gained much from Horney's theory of anxiety, which fundamentally informed *Escape from Freedom*. Like her, he went on to further affairs and marriages, finding inspiration for *The Art of Loving* (1956), which has sold some 25 million copies and remains a popular gift for intimate occasions.

It was in the realm of theory, however, that Fromm's principal problems lay. Adorno took a hard-line Marxist-Leninist view of psychoanalysis, viewing it as an ideological tool of the bourgeoisie designed to promote conformism and alleviate psycho-sociological tensions that might otherwise lead to revolutionary consciousness. He therefore ridiculed Fromm's suggestion that the therapist should offer kindness and consideration to the patient, insisting instead that the therapeutic posture should be confrontational, forcing the patient to face what Freudians called "the reality principle", and the bleak hopelessness of their situation under capitalism—propelling them deeper into psychological despair where they would recognise that their only hope for salvation was revolutionary action.

As a strict philosophical materialist, Adorno also denounced Fromm's idealist abandonment of the core Freudian emphasis on the instincts and the determinative role they play in mental life and behaviour. Fromm preferred the idea that psychology is culturally determined, and that people develop different character structures in different historical contexts and that different societies produce different types of personality, cultivating some at certain times and suppressing others. He even came to view the unconscious itself as a product of modernity, culturally created to manage the "fear of freedom" that characterises modern industrial society.

Fromm shared this cultural determinism with Horney, Harry Stack Sullivan, Erik Erikson and a growing circle of psychoanalytical revisionists who became known as the neo-Freudians. They were close allies of the Culture and Personality school of anthropology, which included Ruth Benedict and Margaret Mead, whose notorious book *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1928) served as the school's manifesto, pointedly distinguishing between permissive traditional and restrictive modern cultures, contrasting the allegedly relaxed sexual customs and the smooth transition to adulthood of young Samoan women, with the purported anxiety, psychological distress, emotional confusion and identity crises of American girls.

The advantage of this culturalist theory, especially in an American context, was that it removed any theoretical limits to the pursuit of psychological perfection imposed by Freud's insistence on the intractability of the instincts. It provided instead that this goal could be pursued by modifying and regulating social relationships, especially within the family and between mother and child. While this fundamental theoretical shift appalled Adorno, who saw it as the worst sort of bourgeois utopianism, it entranced the meliorists, and endeared the neo-Freudians to the powerful statist forces on the American Left born out of the New Deal. These were energised by the experience of total social mobilisation achieved in the Second World War, and they sought to further transform society through wide-ranging mental health and social welfare programs and other forms of state interventionism, spearheaded by psychoanalysis, which became a regulated medical specialty, as Eli Zaretsky explains in *Secrets of the Soul: A Social and Cultural History of Psychoanalysis* (2004).

The postwar period thus proved very receptive for Fromm. As Erich Heller observed in *Literature and Psychoanalysis* (1983), it was a time when psychoanalysis came close "to being the systematic consciousness that [an] epoch has of the nature and character of its soul". And central to that soul was a profound sense of anxiety. As Arthur Schlesinger Jr. observed in *The Vital Centre: The Politics of Freedom* (1949), "anxiety is the official emotion of our time", arising from the corrosive impact of modernisation on the traditional structures and values of society, an analysis that echoed Fromm's assessment in *Escape from Freedom*.

It was however, a multifaceted anxiety, operating at several levels. Most obviously, there was the general, rationally-based anxiety that arose from the Soviet threat and the real possibility of nuclear annihilation. However, there was also a widespread but ill-defined form of anxiety associated with the culture of modernity and the rapid and vertiginous transformation of postwar society, a psycho-sociological phenomenon with which Fromm and the neo-Freudians were particularly interested.

At the former level the threat was an unimaginably stark existential menace. Less than a year after the end of the bloodiest conflict in human history, the Cold War broke out, with the United States and the Soviet Union quickly slipping into ever-deepening confrontation. A pivotal moment occurred in February 1946, when the "Long Telegram", prepared by George F. Kennan at the US embassy in Moscow, arrived in Washington. This described the full scale of the Soviet threat and the need to meet it with force, and it later appeared in *Foreign Affairs* in July 1947 as "The Sources of Soviet Conduct". In March, Winston Churchill pointed out that an Iron Curtain of communist oppression

had been drawn across Europe, and a year later the Cominform (Communist Information Bureau) was established to allow Moscow to co-ordinate further communist expansion, as the Truman administration announced its policy of containment. In June 1948 Stalin blockaded West Berlin and Truman responded with the Berlin Airlift. NATO was established in April 1949 to provide a unitary military leadership for Western forces in Europe should war erupt. Elsewhere, the People's Republic of China was proclaimed in October 1949, adding a quarter of the world's population to the multitudes already under communist rule, while tensions continued to escalate towards war on the Korean peninsula.

Then, in August 1949, the threat of a nuclear holocaust became a reality when the Soviets detonated their own atomic bomb, "Joe I", after which the nuclear stockpiles grew until there were literally tens of thousands of warheads ready to be deployed, with bombers and missiles targeting hundreds of cities across the northern hemisphere. Once begun, development of nuclear weapons continued until it culminated in 1961 when the USSR tested the largest feasible hydrogen bomb, the "Tsar Bomb", designed to produce an explosive yield of 100 megatons of TNT, 5000 times more powerful than the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This single bomb released twice the energy produced by the earthquake that caused the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami.

The malaise found expression in forms of anxiety, alienation, dissociation, marginalisation and other psychological phenomena that often proved to have significant political implications.

In the permanent presence of this apocalyptic threat there began four decades of intense political rivalry, military tension and universal anxiety. This followed a wave-like rhythm, which fuelled and re-fuelled the general social trepidation, periodically building towards a cataclysmic climax only to recede, constrained always by the certainty of "mutually assured destruction" for the superpowers and their allies if they ever crossed the threshold into full-scale hostility. This seemingly endless, psychologically debilitating confrontation was played out in many arenas, involving massive defence spending, a relentless conventional and nuclear arms race, intense scientific research and development, proxy wars across the globe, diplomacy, espionage and subversion.

It also involved intense ideological conflict and endless struggle in the realm of culture. In the immediate postwar years this was centred on combating what George Orwell in 1946 called "the poisonous effect of the Russian *mythos*" on intellectual and cultural life, which suppressed and distorted facts about the Soviet Union to such an extent that it was "doubtful whether a true history of our times can ever be written", as Peter Coleman recalls in *The Liberal Conspiracy* (1989). So powerful was this *mythos* that a regular series of Soviet-backed "peace conferences" were held in the face of only token resistance from a few courageous anti-communist intellectuals, while delirious crowds in their tens of thousands were delighted to applaud denunciations, not only of Western "imperialism" and military policy, but also of every aspect of allegedly decadent modern culture.

"If hyenas could type and jackals use a pen", Cominform apparatchiks declared, then they would produce bourgeois rubbish like that of T.S. Eliot or André Malraux. Ilya Ehrenburg even declared there was no longer any such thing as "Western culture", while George Lukacs lamented that the cultural richness of the Soviet Union was beyond the comprehension of mere bourgeois intelligence. The besieged Dmitri Shostakovich (who lived for years with his bags packed waiting to be taken away to the Gulag or worse) was required to denounce fellow contemporary composers like Stravinsky, Schoenberg and Hindemith as modernist "lackeys of imperialism".

Initially, some dissenting voices were tolerated at these propaganda fests, but the organisers quickly learned that these could be suppressed as they lacked political or institutional support and often couldn't get their work published at a time when anti-communist views were very unfashionable. "An anti-communist is a rat," declared Jean-Paul Sartre, while Thomas Mann, as Coleman recounts, condemned anti-communism as "the basic stupidity of the twentieth century". In 1946, after Melvin Lasky rose at a writers' conference in Berlin to denounce the persecution of writers and artists in the Soviet Union, the American authorities considered expelling him to appease the communists and their sympathisers. Meanwhile, classics like George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia* and *Animal Farm*, Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* and Hannah Arendt's *Origins of Totalitarianism* struggled initially to find publishers, receptive audiences, or fair reviewers.

Even the term "totalitarianism" was deemed suspect, as it was regarded by the Left as an ideological device designed to smear the Soviet Union

by associating its form of tyrannical state power with Nazism and fascism. A revealing exception to this was the pro-totalitarianism of E.H. Carr, the British diplomat, historian and assistant editor and leader-writer at the *Times*, where he advocated socialism and an Anglo-Soviet alliance. Spellbound by the purported superiority of statist and collectivist regimes, Carr gave a series of lectures, published as *The Soviet Impact on the Western World* (1946), in which he applauded the "trend away from individualism and towards totalitarianism [which] is everywhere unmistakable", and insisted that industrial growth in the Soviet Union and its lead role in defeating Nazism demonstrated that Marxism-Leninism was the superior form of totalitarianism. Following Stalin, he denounced capitalism as the cause of the Second World War, declared liberal democracy a sham, and insisted that the future belonged to totalitarianism and that only the incurably blind could fail to see this.

Eventually, however, there was a partial shift away from the communist *mythos*, signalled not only by the testimony of the works mentioned above and Schlesinger's *The Vital Centre*, but also by Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), and Richard Crossman's *The God That Failed* (1949). Friedrich Hayek's classical liberal polemic on *The Road to Serfdom* (1944) and Richard Weaver's conservative insistence that *Ideas Have Consequences* (1948) also affected elite opinion. Moreover, Kennan's "Long Telegram" had had a profound effect, and the State Department recognised that the totalitarian threat he described demanded the ideological and cultural mobilisation of the non-communist Left that had previously been disregarded.

Consequently, in 1950 a conference was held to establish the Congress for Cultural Freedom, "a permanent organization of the democratic anti-communist Left [which] lasted for seventeen years and at its height had offices or representatives in thirty-five countries, employing a total of 280 staff members", as Coleman relates, supporting a network of non-communist intellectuals and activists, and sponsoring many conferences and journals, including *Quadrant*, which stands, after fifty-seven years and 500 issues, as one of its most successful ventures.

Such robust responses effectively challenged Comintern propaganda. As detailed in Coleman's *The Liberal Conspiracy*, the work of the Congress and its network of affiliates passed through three stages, successfully forming an "Atlanticist intellectual community" during the vital period 1950 to 1958; expanding its operations globally with mixed results between 1958 and 1964; before being successfully targeted by the Left during the Sixties over the "scandal" of its CIA funding. As Coleman recalls in *The Last Intellectuals* (2010), the work of the Congress was "an epic drama in dangerous times", when vital issues of literature, art and other forms of culture were embedded in a bitter, hard-fought propaganda war. Nevertheless, the network provided vital support for "intellectuals from New York to New Delhi, from Madrid to Melbourne [who were] determined to save civilisation or go down fighting".

That civilisation, however, had a crisis at its core, and it was this deep but obscure realm of anxiety that Fromm sought to identify and combat. Although he never fully comprehended the scale of Soviet mendacity, he nevertheless illuminated the debilitating cultural malaise that set in during the postwar years, and went onto metastasise, fertilise and nurture the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s.

The malaise found expression in forms of anxiety, alienation, dissociation, marginalisation and other psychological phenomena that often proved to have significant political implications. This was noted by many leading intellectuals at the time. W.H. Auden provided the name for the period with his book-length poem *The Age of Anxiety*, published in 1947, while Jacques Barzun confirmed in a review that the work's "very title roots it in our generation". It quickly became famous, won the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry in 1948, and inspired a symphony, a ballet and a play.

Auden had adopted a concept of anxiety that saw its origins in man's unease with his existential freedom, a view popularised by the American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr in *The Nature and Destiny of Man* (1943): "Anxiety is the inevitable concomitant of the paradox of freedom and finiteness in which man is involved. Anxiety is the internal precondition of sin. It is the inevitable spiritual state of man." Behind Niebuhr, and even more important for Auden (and Fromm), was Søren Kierkegaard, the nineteenth-century Danish philosopher and founder of Christian existentialism, whose works had been published in English translations in the 1930s. Kierkegaard's bleak diagnosis of the human predicament in *The Concept of Dread* and other works influenced a very diverse group of prominent figures apart from Fromm, including the anti-communist activist Whittaker Chambers, the management theorist Peter Drucker, the abstract expressionist Mark Rothko, the novelist John Updike, and the theologian Paul Tillich, who also confirmed that "today it has become almost a truism to call our time an Age of Anxiety".

In Europe, Kierkegaard's radically decisionistic approach to religious faith had profoundly influenced the Nazi philosopher Martin Heidegger,

who, along with the French atheist existentialists Albert Camus and Jean-Paul Sartre, recast it in secular form. Sartre proclaimed that, in a godless universe, man is a useless passion, thrown into the world, condemned to be free, and solely responsible for achieving (or not achieving) an "authentic" existence. Freedom is therefore simultaneously the greatest gift and the heaviest burden for the individual, promising an utterly undetermined future while revealing the void that underlies a contingent world. Indeed, in Sartre's existential novel *La Nausée* (1938; published in English as *The Diary of Antoine Roquentin*, 1949), the protagonist is often so appalled by the contingency of the world that it assumes a hallucinatory appearance with everyday objects unable to retain any fixed form but morphing instead into monstrous shapes and creatures.

Another fundamental theme of this influential school of thought was alienation and disengagement. In his play *No Exit* (1944), Sartre famously proclaimed that "Hell is other people", while the theme of Camus's nihilistic novel *L'Etranger* (1942; *The Outsider*, 1946), is signalled by its anti-hero's casual musing: "Mother died today. Or maybe yesterday. I can't be sure." Such themes were further explored in Richard Wright's *The Outsider* in 1953, Colin Wilson's *The Outsider* in 1956, and Howard Becker's *Outsiders* (1963).

The posture promoted in such works is that of the marginalised onlooker who is profoundly introspective and disengaged from society, represented by the pathetic autodidact of Sartre's *La Nausée*, or the "hole-in-the-wall man", as Wilson depicted him in *The Outsider*. This voyeur appears in the novel *L'Enfer* (1908; *Hell*, 1918) by Henri Barbusse, who later became the Comintern agent who sent Egon Kisch to Australia in 1934 on a propaganda mission, provoking a political crisis. His anti-hero spends his days spying on the lives of others, silently witnessing various forms of sexual deviation, blasphemy, birth and death. A study in solipsism, he is obsessed with his self, from which he cannot escape: "I think about myself, about myself who can neither know myself well nor get rid of myself." He experiences his self as "a heavy shadow between my heart and the sun". "Nothing can prevail against the absolute statement that I exist and cannot emerge from myself," he laments.

In *The Outsider* Wilson described his own "inner compulsion" that drove him to an isolated existence, "totally cut off from the rest of society", identifying with Dostoevsky's Raskolnikov, and sleeping rough in Hampstead Heath while researching "The Outsider in Literature" in the Reading Room of the British Museum, inadvertently coming across the epoch-defining theme that would make him an overnight literary sensation and elevate him to the company of Britain's "Angry Young Men", the duffle-coated brigade who defined the anti-establishment cultural mood of the time.

This intense introspection and self-marginalisation was accompanied by the conceit that the outsider occupied a privileged position, judging society, and that a fully authentic existence demanded a rebellion against the alleged complacency of "bourgeois", middle-class existence. Accordingly, Camus published *L'Homme révolté* in 1951 (*The Rebel*, 1953), in which he presented an archetypal image of "the rebel" as a Nietzschean *Übermensch*, executing the revaluation of values through sheer force of will, seceding from the mundane tedium of everyday life with its contemptible conventions, norms and values, which he inhabits not as a participant but as a prisoner or a slave. Camus asked: "What is a rebel? A man who says no … A slave who has taken orders all his life, [and who] suddenly decides that he cannot obey some new command." The rebel's refusal, Camus insisted, implies a decisionist affirmation of purely subjective values—"a complete and spontaneous loyalty to certain aspects of himself … that he is willing to preserve … at all costs".

They asked what it was that made totalitarianism so tempting, not only to vast masses of people in Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and the Soviet Union, but also to intellectuals, politicians and others in democracies like America, Britain, France and Australia.

Rebellion appeared as a higher state of being-in-the-world that should be pursued for its own sake, and *The Rebel* became one of the most influential books of the mid-twentieth century. In popular culture it found an echo in such iconic films as *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955), and *The Wild One* (1953), which featured an epoch-defining exchange: "What are you rebelling against, Johnny?" asks the girl, both frightened and attracted to the muscular bikie terrorising her town. "Whaddaya got?" Johnny replies.

Similarly, Holden Caulfield, in J.D. Salinger's immensely influential novel *Catcher in the Rye* (1951), came to symbolise alienation and rebellion amongst affluent teenagers, fashionably struggling against "the conformity and spiritual numbness that modern life generates in the world imagined

in the novel", as Grace Hale observes in *A Nation of Outsiders: How the White Middle Class Fell in Love with Rebellion in Postwar America* (2011). In a "revolution of rising expectations", affluence and privilege generated disaffection amongst those who most enjoyed their benefits, rather than loyalty to the system that produced them. Only a decade later, the New Left combined this concept of the outsider with the radical sociology of C. Wright Mills and the neo-Marxism of Marcuse "to offer a compelling vision of white middle-class college students as outsiders", whose alleged powerlessness paralleled that of the blacks in the South, giving rise to the fatuous notion that the "white negro" could form the revolutionary vanguard in the 1960s—an idea that inspired the Weathermen terrorist group and especially its leader, Bill Ayers, who grew up as an affluent teenager in the Age of Anxiety and later became an early mentor of Barack Obama and the alleged ghost-writer of Obama's autobiography.

Such developments lay in the future, but in the early postwar years there was already an emerging awareness that the need to combat communist propaganda had to be accompanied by an inquiry into the psycho-sociological dynamics that produced this pervasive anxiety, alienation, disengagement and cultural nihilism. Most significantly, there were also some, like Fromm, who sought also to explore its association with the totalitarian phenomenon that the Congress for Cultural Freedom and other liberal intellectuals were separately seeking to confront. In particular, they asked what it was that made totalitarianism so tempting, not only to vast masses of people in Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and the Soviet Union, but also to intellectuals, politicians and others in democracies like America, Britain, France and Australia.

It was in this fashion that Fromm came to real prominence, as *Escape from Freedom* became one of the most influential analyses of the totalitarian temptation. In accordance with Fromm's characteristic eclecticism, the book was an ambitious synthesis of theory and philosophy derived from Freud, Marx and Kierkegaard, combined with historical analysis derived from classic texts by Max Weber (*The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 1905), R.H. Tawney (*Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, 1926) and Jacob Burckhardt (*The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, 1860). These books provided insights into the emergence of individualism in the Renaissance, and how particular types of character structure facilitated the emergence of capitalism and industrial society. Within this historical context, Fromm sought to explain Nazism as a pathological aspect of monopoly capitalism, as an attempted mass escape from an often intolerable burden imposed on people by the radical processes of individuation that Fromm saw as central to modernity in its capitalist form.

Fromm stated the argument of his book (which was originally to be titled "The Individual in the Authoritarian State") quite explicitly:

> It is the thesis of this book that modern man, freed from the bonds of pre-individualistic society … has not gained freedom in the positive sense of the realization of his individual self … Freedom, though it has brought him independence and rationality, has [also] made him isolated, and, thereby, anxious and powerless. This isolation is unbearable and the alternatives he is confronted with are either to escape from the burden of his freedom into new dependencies and submission, or to advance to the full realization of positive freedom which is based upon the uniqueness and individuality of man.

Fromm was especially concerned with the impact on societies of the shift from long-standing traditional to modern forms of social structure, given that "the structure of modern society affects man in two ways simultaneously: he becomes more independent, self-reliant, and critical [but he also] becomes more isolated, alone, and afraid". Totalitarianism triumphs where this tension becomes intolerable and the second tendency overwhelms the first on a mass scale, with the individual surrendering to the collective.

Central to this argument is Fromm's adoption of the distinction between negative and positive freedom that goes back to Kant and was famously analysed by Isaiah Berlin in "Two Concepts of Liberty" (1958). Negative freedom is the absence of barriers or constraints on individual liberty; while positive freedom involves the individual or a defined collectivity being "empowered" by the state or some other external agency so that they realise their potentialities, however these are defined. Classical liberalism focuses on negative freedom, while statists embrace positive freedom, as it provides a rationale for large-scale state intervention, which also appeals to intellectuals.

Fromm argued that it is the negative freedom associated with the rise of capitalism and the onset of modernity that creates masses of atomised individuals who live in a state of anxiety, and who seek to escape this by submerging themselves in collectivist identities. As Schlesinger had pointed out in a 1967 article about the origins of the Cold War, the individual achieves "total assimilation" in

the communist movement in an act of "consecration". This sacralised collective identity is administered by an all-powerful state, a process promoted by the emergence of demagogues and intellectuals who provide an collectivist ideological rationale (for example, race-based as with Nazism or class-based as with communism), along with the necessary leadership, which is invariably authoritarianism or a dictatorship, as democracy only accentuates the sense of atomisation and lack of direction.

Totalitarianism is therefore revealed to be a previously unidentified tendency of capitalism and, in accordance with Fromm's analysis, the solution is to not allow social progress to linger in the capitalist phase, which offers only negative freedom and can collapse into totalitarianism, but to facilitate its further development towards socialism, which offers positive freedom. In this fashion, Fromm augmented the traditional Marxist theory of history with a psycho-sociological argument for the necessary triumph of socialism.

He reiterated this socialist evangel in many best-selling books, including *Man for Himself* (1947), *The Sane Society* (1955), *May Man Prevail?* (1961), *Beyond the Chains of Illusion* (1962), *Socialist Humanism* (1965) and *The Revolution of Hope* (1968). For over two decades he was a highly prominent public intellectual who had the ear of prominent Democrats, including Adlai Stevenson, William Fulbright, John F. Kennedy and Eugene McCarthy, and he was able to influence a range of policies on the left of the Democratic Party, while also playing a major role in the anti-war movement, preaching unilateral disarmament.

Ironically, for all his socialist zeal, Fromm was swept aside by the rise of Left fascism. He was outflanked during the 1960s cultural revolution by the New Left, which demonstrated its own fear of freedom by adopting an authoritarian neo-Marxism and seeking to submerge itself in a suitable collectivity. Initially this was the Western working class, but this class was quickly judged too bourgeois and counter-revolutionary and so the focus shifted to identification with the "national liberation" movements of the Third World and various "subaltern" victim groups within Western society. This ideological capitulation to the totalitarian temptation ultimately wrecked liberal culture by institutionalising far-Left ideologies and enforcing radical intolerance throughout the cultural and educational institutions of the West. (I discuss the concerted attack on liberal intellectual culture in "The Tenacity of the Liberal Intellectuals", *Quadrant*, September 2010.)

The New Left rejected Fromm's reformist humanism in favour of the revolutionary anti-humanism of Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida, and the bleak *Kulturpessimismus* of the Frankfurt School. The last derived more from Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886) and Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of the West* (1918, 1922) than from Marx, and was exemplified by Horkheimer's and Adorno's *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947), a paean to irrationalism and the Marquis de Sade, which resurfaced in the 1960s. Meanwhile, Marcuse, in *Eros and Civilization* (1955) and *One Dimensional Man* (1964), and Norman O. Brown, in *Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History* (1959), promoted a sexual libertarianism that far surpassed anything Fromm envisaged. This was supplemented by Reich's resurrected ultra-radicalism, and by the valorisation of madness as a higher state of being in the anti-psychiatry of R.D. Laing (*The Politics of Experience*, 1967), Thomas Szasz (*The Myth of Mental Illness*, 1961), and Foucault (*Madness and Civilization*, 1964). Second-wave feminists also took exception to Fromm's treatment of Fromm-Reichmann and Horney. Consequently, he found himself condemned by the New Left as reformist, obsolete and sexist, and his star faded so quickly that by 1998 he was the subject of a sociological case-study in "how one becomes a forgotten intellectual".

Fromm believed he had a prophetic role to play in history and that the rise of totalitarianism posed an intellectual challenge he was uniquely equipped to meet. As the Age of Anxiety unfolded in the early years of the Cold War, he believed he had diagnosed the origins of its cultural malaise, and had shown how it could be overcome through socialist reformism.

Although his legacy was submerged by the ideological tsunami of the 1960s, Fromm's pioneering synthesis of contemporary insights from psychoanalysis, history and sociology still retains some relevance, especially for understanding the cultural and ideological response of those societies undergoing a shift from traditional to modern social structures, with all the psychological and social stress this entails. Consequently, *Escape from Freedom* remains in print, has been translated into twenty-eight languages, and has sold over five million copies, with sales accelerating during the Arab Spring of 2011, as reflective Muslims confronted the allure of Islamism, the latest incarnation of the totalitarian temptation that has disfigured modern history.

Mervyn F. Bendle wrote on "Heidegger and the Nazi Philosophers" in the July–August issue.

I Can Call Spirits

I can call spirits from the vasty deep.
I can call virgins from the arms of Jesus.
I can change piss to wine and goats to sheep.
I can make dinosaurs from pekineses.
I can send guardian angels off to sleep.
I can create spectacular diseases.
I can cause sticks to dance and stones to weep.
I can turn turds to teeth and farts to cheeses.
I am the King. I am the Superman,
But sharper suited. Ms and Miss and Mrs
Are lining up, and every one a fan
Closing her dreamy eyes to taste my kisses,
For has there ever been, since time began,
An offer that you can't refuse like this is?

Down and Out

My Dad was born dirt poor and he was poor when he was dead.
He lived in cardboard city in a corrugated shed.
You say your life is tough but, hell, our lives were so much tougher.
You draw your weekly benefit. We had to sit and suffer.

We hadn't got the wit to steal nor yet the brass to beg,
But Dad would dance the Highland Fling and shake his wooden leg.
You haven't got a bean but, cripes, we hadn't got a prayer.
It's not enough to bugger off, you have to be a stayer.

A rainy day it was when Dad was put into the ground.
He left his empty sea chest and just thirty-seven pound.
You say you're penniless but, Jeeze, we were much pennilesser.
We lived on crusts and fag-ends that we found behind the dresser.

Dad sold Mum to the slavers in a dive in Buenos Aires.
That was unkind. He lost his mind. It vanished with the fairies.
Mum danced on bar-room tables in her knickers and a hat.
You may think the world's your oyster but it's fishier than that.

Yes, he sold her to the slavers for his thirty-seven quid.
A man does what he has to do and that was what he did.
It's the poor that play their hearts out but the rich that run the game.
If things had turned out different then they wouldn't be the same.

It's the rich that get the pleasure and the poor that get the curse.
The truth is sad. The truth is bad. The truth is worse and worse.
You say you're down and out but, shitehawks, we were down and outer.
Dad sold Mum to the slavers so we had to do without her.

John Whitworth

David Askew

The Pragmatic Realism of Niccolò Machiavelli

Politics has become a dirty word for many. While some on the Right tend to want to limit democracy and replace politics with the market through initiatives such as deregulation and privatisation, many left-wing ideologues demand that politics give way to a commitment to human rights law or to an "impartial" bureaucratic control, and therefore claim that the politician should be overruled by the judge or the mandarin. Here, active political participation is no longer seen as a means to pursue greater human perfection. Thus the rejection of politics, the privatisation, legalisation or bureaucratisation of the public sphere, extends to the cultivation through political engagement of character and morality.

In reply, of those who are in favour of politics, many believe that an active participation in deliberative democracy is a process that promotes virtues such as tolerance and moderation, and thus builds moral character. Among those who have been inspired by Niccolò Machiavelli, these themes are associated with J.G.A. Pocock's classical republicanism and Hans Baron's civic humanism (*Bürgerhumanismus*).

Machiavelli is best known as the author of *The Prince*, which is responsible for his unsavoury reputation as a political philosopher. The main focus of this notorious work is on the steps a "new" prince needs to take in order to secure and maintain power. In writing what I believe was obviously a job application, Machiavelli made a number of observations about the universal nature of mankind and politics. Rather than talking about men as they should be, he insisted on the necessity of talking about men as they are. As a political scientist, he strove to be realistic and empirical, while rejecting the abstract and the ideal. He attempted to create an autonomous space, an independent arena, for political theory, and did so by excluding the non-political from the political. This he did explicitly. Writing about the ecclesiastical principalities of Italy, he sarcastically says, "since they are controlled by a higher power [God], which the human mind cannot comprehend, I shall refrain from discussing them". He also excludes morality, religion and theology from his discussion of *Realpolitik*, and was arguably the first to break with medieval modes of thought in doing so, which is what makes him the father of modern political theory.

In addition to *The Prince*, he also wrote *Discourses on Livy*, a work that advocates the cause of republicanism. Thus he is both a famous republican thinker and an even more infamous political theorist. Two contrasting works on this fascinating thinker have been published this year: Corrado Vivanti's *Niccolò Machiavelli: An Intellectual Biography* and Philip Bobbitt's *The Garments of Court and Palace: Machiavelli and the World That He Made*.

One of my university professors used to contrast traditional Japanese scholarship, influenced by German methodology, which emphasised both a close reading of primary materials and an empirical form of argument, to a more modern approach which stressed theory (often French) and theoretical elegance. The two books under discussion reflect this contrast. On the one hand, Vivanti, an eminent and thoroughly well-versed scholar, makes a close, empirical and cautious reading of Machiavelli's entire *oeuvre*, including the correspondence. Vivanti's biography is a contextualised analysis that makes use of the primary materials and the secondary literature to depict Machiavelli

---

Niccolò Machiavelli: An Intellectual Biography
by Corrado Vivanti
Princeton University Press, 2013, 280 pages, US$27.95

The Garments of Court and Palace: Machiavelli and the World That He Made
by Philip Bobbitt
Atlantic Monthly Press, 2013, 240 pages, US$24

and his thought while avoiding the urge to grind any modern axes. On the other hand, Bobbitt develops bold theoretical interpretations, drawing not on Foucault as it happens but Bobbitt himself. Focusing on only several of the works, notably *The Prince* and the *Discourses*, his book argues for Machiavelli's contemporary relevance. Machiavelli is often used by modern writers to fight modern battles, and Bobbitt is no exception. "It is tempting to enlist Machiavelli in the debates of political philosophers today," he says, succumbing happily to temptation without so much as a sigh of regret. He presents Machiavelli as a neo-con warrior. It is not doing either author much injustice to say that one presents the historical, the other a de-historicised, Machiavelli.

Machiavelli was born in Renaissance Florence in 1469 and died in 1527. In his lifetime, the Protestant Reformation, the schism within Western Christianity, had begun (the starting point was Luther's Ninety-Five Theses in 1517). He knew individuals such as Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo. His Italy was not a unified nation-state, but consisted of city-states, namely Florence, Milan, Naples, Rome and Venice. Although cultured and wealthy, the Italian states were no longer militarily competitive.

Even more than other city-states, Florence was culturally rich, materially wealthy and militarily weak. It was ruled ably from 1469, the year of Machiavelli's birth, until 1492, by Lorenzo the Magnificent, a member of the de' Medici family and patron of the arts. The House of Medici were bankers, and the Medici Bank was the largest in Europe in the fifteenth century.

Lorenzo's grandfather, Cosimo, had created a peace on the Italian peninsula based on balance of power. This peace lasted until 1494, when Ludovico Sforza, Duke of Milan, invited the French to enter the peninsula, promising to support French aspirations to the crown of Naples. The French King, Charles VIII, demonstrated with a brutal finality the enormous military gap that had widened between one of the powers and Italy, and in doing so opened a new and tragic chapter in Italian history. The small, pre-modern, and militarily weak city-states of Italy were increasingly exposed to the predatory desires of powerful European powers such as France and Spain.

An amnesty was announced in Florence, and he was released and exiled to the countryside. He commenced work on The Prince and finished it by December 1513. Thus the political experiences of his chancery career were utilised in a second career as a theorist.

The French army marched southwards from Milan to Naples, passing Florence on the way. Piero de' Medici, son of Lorenzo, abandoned the city, and a change of government was effected in the shadow of French military superiority. Naturally, the new regime, the Republic, was anti-Medici and pro-French. At first, Florence was run by a religious firebrand, the Dominican priest Girolamo Savonarola, the "unarmed prophet" also known for his Bonfire of the Vanities. He was executed in 1498 and replaced by Piero Soderini. Immediately after Savonarola fell the twenty-nine-year-old Machiavelli was appointed to a leading position in the Florentine bureaucracy, becoming secretary of the second Florentine chancery. This symbolised a transition, in Vivanti's words, from "the age of faith", the religious Middle Ages, to "the age of science", secularism, and the Renaissance.

The Florentine Republic was led by an aristocratic elite, members of which held political office for only a short time before being replaced. Continuity was supplied by a less prestigious bureaucracy, of which Machiavelli was now a leading figure. Although often described as an ambassador, Machiavelli did not in fact ever have the social status that would enable him to be sent abroad as an official ambassador. However, he was sent on diplomatic missions to papal, royal and imperial courts, meeting the King of France and the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. In Italy, Cesare Borgia impressed (and frightened) him the most, but he also met Pope Julius II, the "warrior pope".

From 1498 to 1512 Machiavelli worked as an elite government bureaucrat, intimately involved in domestic political affairs and foreign relations. Moreover, since Florence was involved in a military struggle with Pisa, he became an expert in military matters. Machiavelli abhorred the practice of using mercenaries, and agitated for and finally won permission for the creation of a militia. These years were a time of uneasy peace, crisis and war. Apart from the European powers, the greatest threats the republic faced were posed by the de' Medici family in exile, and (initially) the Borgias and (later) Julius II in Rome. Since the republic was created as a consequence of French influence, it was dependent on France remaining a power in the peninsula.

As French power waned, so did the republic's fortunes. Its balancing act came to an end when Julius II enlisted Spain to help him drive France out of Italy. In 1512, Spanish troops, with the de' Medici family in tow, marched on Florence, which surrendered. Soderini was deposed, the de' Medici reinstated, and the republic ended.

Machiavelli was removed from office in late 1512. This was the pivotal moment in his life. *Post res perditas*—after all was lost—was how he described life out of office. In early 1513 a plot to assassinate the de' Medici rulers was uncovered, and he was arrested and tortured. Just a week later, Giovanni de' Medici was elected Pope Leo X. An amnesty was announced in Florence, and he was released and exiled to the countryside. He commenced work on *The Prince* and finished it by December 1513. Thus the political experiences of his chancery career were utilised in a second career as a theorist.

Machiavelli embarked on a long and slow campaign to seek rehabilitation, to woo the de' Medici rulers of Florence. When he realised that his hopes of quickly regaining high office were unrealistic, he sought new outlets for his talents. By the summer of 1517 he had joined the literary and philosophical circle of humanistic writers—a salon—in the Rucellai family garden, the Orti Oricellari. According to Vivanti, in 1518 he wrote the louche play and satirical comedy *Mandragola* (this date has been contested). *Mandragola* is generally regarded as the greatest play written during the Italian Renaissance. In 1521, he published *The Art of War.*

By 1520, Machiavelli's efforts to ingratiate himself to the de' Medici had started to pay off, and he was commissioned to write a history of Florence. This he completed in 1525, and he travelled to Rome to present his history to Giulio de' Medici, now Pope Clement VII. Ironically, the church and Rome now provided the patronage he so desperately wanted. In 1526 he discussed the fortifications of Florence with Clement VII and was subsequently appointed Secretary and Quartermaster of the Curators of the Walls. In 1527 Rome was sacked by the army of Charles V. At the same time, in Florence, the de' Medici regime, which was of course closely associated with the papacy, was overthrown again, and the republic restored.

Machiavelli was initially viewed with suspicion by the de' Medici because he had been so close to Soderini. Just as he succeeded in ingratiating himself to the de' Medicis, the family was ousted from power, and Machiavelli's friends and colleagues, who now viewed him with suspicion as a turncoat, seized the reins of government once more. He was not reappointed to his old chancery position, and he died broken-hearted in June 1527.

Thus the first quarter of a century of Machiavelli's life was characterised by stable government and a flourishing of the Renaissance. The post-1494 period was one of instability and the chaos of war, during which the European powers, France, Spain and the Holy Roman Empire, marched up and down the peninsula, leaving in their wake carnage and destruction.

The life and times are ably discussed in Vivanti's biography. As is the case with Bobbitt, Vivanti is interested in Machiavelli's political philosophy. Those who write about Machiavelli often return to a number of central questions. His two most important political works, *The Prince* and the *Discourses*, discuss two very different political systems. Here as elsewhere, he draws on ideas from the classical world in which three main types of political system are distinguished—monarchy (rule by one), oligarchy or aristocracy (rule by the few), and democracy (rule by all). *The Prince* is a textbook for a system in which one rules; the *Discourses* advocates the cause of republicanism or rule by all. Which did he believe in? We will return to this question later.

Another central issue revolves around the relationship between two concepts—*virtù* and *fortuna*—that Machiavelli emphasised in an attempt to distinguish between those conditions which could and those which could not be mastered. These concepts correspond to ability and luck. Machiavelli compared fortune to a goddess who can be swayed by bold and resolute risk-taking, and to a river which can be tamed by dams and dykes. Sometimes of course dams collapse, but that is not a reason to abandon the attempt to build them. Neither fortune nor rivers in other words can be mastered, but they can be nudged this way or that by determined action (*virtù*).

Fortune or luck plays a significant role in Machiavelli's writing—and fortune favours the brave, not the good. He provides case studies from history and from his own experiences—Cesare Borgia for instance for what to do, the French in Italy for what not to do. The advice he gives has led to the term *Machiavellian*. When a prince conquers new territory, he needs to ensure that he avoids causing small harms: "men should either be caressed or crushed; because they can avenge slight injuries, but not those that are very severe". And he does mean "crushed". One step he recommends is to "wipe out" the previous prince's family.

Fortune or conditions change. These changes open up opportunities for action. A successful state needs to be able to change and adapt in ever-changing conditions, while an ambitious would-

be prince needs to be able to exploit the current prince's failure to adapt. The post-1494 crisis was created because circumstances had changed but Italian city-states had not.

Machiavelli's writings can be understood as a despairing call on political leaders to face the need to adapt and so to become true statesmen. As Vivanti says, "The sole principle governing his judgment … was the necessity to adapt to the times."

Machiavelli's role model is Cesare Borgia. Cesare made the most of his abilities, making his own luck and changing his fortune as he did so, until a series of unforeseen and unlucky circumstances brought him down. He committed acts of brutal cruelty, but Machiavelli emphasises that these acts were neither sadistic nor gratuitous, but rather were tactical and even strategic. Here, he is thinking of ends and means. After conquering the Romagna, Cesare despatched a henchman, Remirro de Orco, to restore order. This was energetically accomplished with great severity. In order to ensure that the hatred people had come to feel for Remirro was not transferred to himself, Cesare had Remirro cut into two, and displayed the body in a "terrible spectacle" that left the inhabitants of Romagna "both satisfied and amazed". In relating this, Machiavelli hardly bothers to hide his admiration of Cesare's version of a shock-and-awe campaign.

Violence for him was a means to an end, or as he once argued, when the means accuse, the end must excuse. And the end was political stability, or in other words less violence.

Corrado Vivanti, who died in 2012, edited one of the standard Italian editions of the complete works, *Opere di Niccolò Machiavelli*. His *Niccolò Machiavelli* is characterised by a thorough acquaintance with Italian scholarship, much of it little known in the English-speaking world. It is a biography that privileges the works and thought over the life, and so concentrates on the mature man, while largely ignoring the birth, family background, and early years (a mere handful of pages cover the early life).

Machiavelli's life is often divided into three parts: the early years, from his birth until his ascent to the office of Secretary in 1498; the chancery years until 1512; and finally the years out of office. While Vivanti's biography also consists of three parts, he starts with the Florentine secretary. The first part examines the early letters and official communications, together with diplomatic and political activities. The second part looks at the immediate years after 1512, and analyses the trilogy of political writings—*The Prince*, the *Discourses* and *The Art of War*—which were written by 1520. And the final part follows Machiavelli's slow path back towards rehabilitation, looking at the literary writings such as *The History of Florence.*

Philip Bobbitt's *The Garments of Court and Palace: Machiavelli and the World That He Made* appears to be one of a series entitled "Books That Changed the World" in the USA ("Books That Shook the World" in the UK). While ostensibly a book about *The Prince*, it also devotes much space to other works, and in particular the *Discourses*. This is not a criticism: since the other works are so often ignored, it is a relief to see them accorded due respect. The problem is that *The Prince* was the first work completed after the pivotal period of 1512, and many if not all of the other works were written after Machiavelli began moving in the humanist circles of the Orti Oricellari. One needs to be aware that, arguably, a realist and political period was followed by a more idealistic and humanistic period, and that therefore using the *Discourses* as a prism through which to interpret *The Prince* will tend to lead to a softer view of the harsher aspects of that work.

Bobbitt is a constitutional theorist and the author of a number of well-received works, including *The Shield of Achilles: War, Peace, and the Course of History* (2002) and *Terror and Consent: The Wars for the Twenty-First Century* (2008). In *The Shield of Achilles*, Bobbitt traced the historical evolution of the state or constitutional order in five steps—"princely state" (named after *The Prince*), "kingly state", "territorial state", "state-nation", and "nation-state"—and identified the "market state" as the next step. The princely state emerged as a consequence of changes in military technology and strategy: gunpowder and artillery made walls obsolete, Bobbitt says, and military evolution made necessary a change in constitutional order.

While *The Shield of Achilles* is a sweeping philosophy of history, the same broad brush-strokes do not work as well when analysing a single life. In *The Garments of Court and Palace*, Machiavelli, "the poet-philosopher of the princely state", is cited as "the pre-eminent political philosopher" and "the most prescient observer and the most skilled analyst" of the princely state, the first modern or "neoclassical" state. Since we are now also experiencing the beginning of a transition,

Bobbitt believes, from nation-state to market state, Machiavelli remains relevant: "we can be alerted by him". Bobbitt identifies with Machiavelli, as can be seen in claims such as:

> like most visionaries, his insights seemed unrealistic because they challenged the assumptions of the era. Then, as now, the emergence of a new constitutional order loomed over men whose eyes were firmly fixed on the ground, even as it was shifting beneath them.

The ruling classes of the major city-states of Machiavelli's Italy were, Bobbitt claims, troubled by a lack of legitimacy. Machiavelli had an answer: "the creation of the neoclassical state itself". This was a process in "which the princely state was objectified and separated from the body of the prince". This argument has a number of flaws. If Machiavelli was arguing for the princely state, why did he never write a book stating that that was what he was doing? Why keep his intentions hidden—and hidden so well that it has taken five centuries to reveal them?

The argument does however allow Bobbitt to develop the position that Machiavelli's advice to the prince was advice about what was required to protect and maintain the state, or institutional morality, and therefore that the cruelties he advocated must be judged by a different set of criteria from those aimed to promote the self-interest of the prince, or personal morality. This allows Bobbitt to claim that Machiavelli "was interested in the ethical consequences of the newly emerging neoclassical state—principally, the requirements of a new ethos of individual action when a person acts on behalf of the state". Evil somehow becomes less than evil if the evil-doer is acting in the interests of all, "the good of the state", rather than self, "the good of the prince". Bobbitt's argument that Machiavelli clearly distinguished the two is unpersuasive. But even if we grant him this point, does it justify what even Bobbitt would agree is otherwise an evil act?

The answer would appear to be affirmative. Bobbitt claims as an "insight" a position he attributes to Machiavelli, which is "that officials must disregard their personal moral codes in carrying out the duties of the state". Here a distinction similar to that made by legal positivism is made between a private moral code which does not justify otherwise illegitimate action and the public interest which does. Bobbitt's Machiavelli is a consequentialist, a realist. Usually those who stress this aspect of his thought also argue that he rejected idealism and morality. However, Bobbitt says that he was also an "intense moralist" and "a profoundly ethical writer".

After mentioning modern issues such as torture, Bobbitt continues:

> Machiavelli is not *advising* a prince to disregard the conventional, Christian and classical virtues when this is necessary to protect the state; he *requires* this of a prince who has been given responsibility for the protection of the state, because it is sometimes a necessity.

An official who does what is necessary need not feel troubled by conscience: "Machiavelli's distinction between a personal and a governing ethos … redirects the official and leaves his personal morality uncompromised."

Much of this is deeply unpersuasive. It is true that Machiavelli noticed that Cesare's cruelty led to peace and stability in the Romagna, whereas Florence's efforts to avoid cruelty led to the destruction of Pistoia. In a number of works such as *Mandragola*, *The Prince* and the *Discourses*, he does in effect say that the ends justify the means, and is often believed to have advocated a calculating and immoral policy of doing "whatever it takes". As both Vivanti and Bobbitt emphasise, however, he did not recommend violence for its own sake. Violence for him was a means to an end, or as he once argued, when the means accuse, the end must excuse. And the end was political stability, or in other words less violence. In Sheldon S. Wolin's elegant phrasing, political crimes must be judged not by morality but by history. He was arguing for an "economy of violence". This is a position based on pragmatic realism, not moral philosophy.

In *The Prince* Machiavelli often writes of what immoral acts are required to maintain the state. Can the needs of the state legitimise the acts? Machiavelli had no trouble in answering in the affirmative. If, as Bobbitt argues, he is a moralist, and if one accepts that a governing ethos exists, then his morality is that of the state. Others including Vivanti have outlined similar positions. Vivanti for instance writes: "the distinction between politics and morality … should be seen not as a recourse to amoral practices but as an affirmation of a new, more coherent, and higher social morality".

But a distinction between a private and a public ethos? Did Machiavelli believe that Cesare was disregarding his own personal moral codes in acting the way he did? Almost certainly not. Was Cesare's cruelty a duty of state? No—or at least not unless we redefine the meaning of the state and have Cesare

echo what it is sometimes claimed Louis XIV said, "L'État, c'est moi".

Machiavelli is often seen as an advocate of a cynical and cruel position. To be Machiavellian is to be calculating and diabolical, to practise guile, to lie. Bobbitt and Vivanti help us realise that this view is one-sided, and that there is more to Machiavelli than the popular caricature. Nevertheless, I remain uncomfortable with the use of terms such as "moral". Bobbitt obviously has the War on Terror in mind. If a public official has a suspected terrorist in custody, and believes that torture will help to provide information, and that this information could help to avert a terrorist attack, then of course the question as to whether or not torture can be justified will be asked. We know what Machiavelli's reply would have been. After all, Francesco Guicciardini, who was a close friend, once said that Machiavelli "always finds great delight in extraordinary and violent remedies". However, even if we agree that torture can be justified, nothing is gained by calling the decision to use torture "moral". It might be expedient, or pragmatic, or realistic. But it is an answer to a question which has but two answers: the bad or the worse. Ultimately, the problem perhaps is not so much that Machiavelli argued that the new prince needed to lie and deceive and kill, but that he gave the impression of enjoying the thought.

Bobbitt is skating on thin ice when he argues that Machiavelli was a moralist, and he does little to help his cause when he claims that Machiavelli's "ethical code" was not "antithetical to Christianity".

Five assumptions or theories, Bobbitt writes, have shaped our understanding of *The Prince*—the claim that it is a mirror book, that it was written to serve the new prince and thus is anti-republican, that it solves the problem of fate (*fortuna*) and action (*virtù*), that it was written as an application for work, and finally that it separates morality from politics. Bobbitt's work attempts to refute all five assumptions and instead to postulate the notion that Machiavelli was a constitutional writer, and that understanding his constitutionalism helps to shed new light on them.

Of the five points, the first is a furphy. Bobbitt agrees with much of the secondary literature that *The Prince* is not a mirror book as much as an anti-mirror, anti-Ciceronian work—in many cases, it advises the prince to do the opposite of what mirror books argue he should do. Bobbitt also sees it as a constitutional treatise, but to do so has to read it as a chapter of the *Discourses*. This leads to the second point, and the claim that there is no contradiction between *The Prince* and the *Discourses*. "I think Machiavelli is best understood as having written one great constitutional treatise … with chapters on republics and chapters on principalities." Reading *The Prince* through the *Discourses* allows for an interpretation characterised by the strong republicanism of the latter. (*Mandragola*, on the other hand, with its cynical and robust anti-clericalism and its sensual enjoyment of guile and cunning, would provide a very different interpretation.)

Bobbitt is insightful on the tension between *fortuna* and *virtù*. And the notion that the synthesis of the two can be compared to the outcome of a democratic solution to internal conflict and debate is thought-provoking. One interesting claim is that Machiavelli believed that individual *virtù* is limited when it comes to combating destiny but that what Bobbitt calls a "collective *virtù*" promises more effective outcomes. Again, Bobbitt is relying on the *Discourses*, but here he is more persuasive. Much of *The Prince* consists of dry analysis. The final chapter, however, is an emotional plea to the new de' Medici ruler of Florence to unite Italy in order to repulse the European powers running amok across the peninsula. This is often seen as a rhetorical flourish and an unsubtle hint that Machiavelli wanted to work in government again. Bobbitt however sees it not as a "departure" from the rest of the book but as a "culmination". Again, *The Prince* is a constitutional work which argued for a new constitutional order, the princely state. A precondition for this order was unity and independence—exactly what the last chapter calls for.

On the final point, the issue of the separation of morality and politics, Bobbitt is unpersuasive. He is skating on thin ice when he argues that Machiavelli was a moralist, and he does little to help his cause when he claims that Machiavelli's "ethical code" was not "antithetical to Christianity". Machiavelli's arguments were "misread", he says, "as brutal and uncivilized advice … Machiavelli's separation of a prince's personal morality from his duty to protect the state baffled and horrified critics with its separation of Christian ethics from political action". This is, he insists, a misreading. "Despite many claims to the contrary, Machiavelli

did not separate ethics from political action, nor did he deride Christian virtues." In fact, Machiavelli was clearly anti-clerical and irreligious. He may also have been anti-Christian, even atheist.

Bobbitt's conclusions are that Machiavelli's long constitutional work

> proposes an ethics of service to the state … measures the success of [political] leaders by their contribution to the *common* good (as opposed to the personal gain of the prince) … favours republicanism and the rule of law because these have the best chance of furthering that good … [and argues for a new united state because] such a state is the way of bringing about a political governance in service of the common good.

This brings us back to *The Prince* and the *Discourses* and the relationship between the principality of the former and the republic of the latter. Many would agree that the two works seem to contradict one another. Both Vivanti and Bobbitt tackle this question. In discussing Machiavelli, some focus on *The Prince*. Leo Strauss argued that he was "a teacher of evil", and asks an obvious question: "What other description would fit a man who teaches [that] princes ought to exterminate the families of rulers whose territory they wish to possess securely?" For thinkers such as Strauss, the Machiavellian position was that of unscrupulous calculation, and he was a cynical and amoral thinker. On the other hand, others concentrate on the *Discourses*. As we have already seen, J.G.A. Pocock viewed Machiavelli as a founding father of classical republicanism. For thinkers such as Pocock, he was an egalitarian who championed the cause of democracy.

Rather than focusing on one or the other, Vivanti considers both. He views Machiavelli as a thorough-going pragmatist. "*The Prince* appears strictly applicable to a particular situation," he says. At the time Machiavelli was writing it, conditions "seemed to favor a quick and decisive solution to Italy's problems". By the time of the *Discourses*, however, conditions had changed. "It was necessary to think about a long-term operation, the formative process of a people becoming a state." In other words, *The Prince* offered short-term solutions to Italy's problems at a time when such solutions might have worked; under different circumstances, when Machiavelli believed these solutions would no longer work, the *Discourses* discussed a long-term solution.

Bobbitt also considers both. As we have already seen, he sees the two as a single text. However, he comes close to echoing Vivanti on short- and long-term solutions: Machiavelli believed that the principality and the republic were "better at different roles": the former at "establishing", the latter at "maintaining" the state. Here, the two works might be seen as reflecting a belief that the fundamental state-creating reforms to establish stable government required one strong man, who is discussed in *The Prince*, while the long-term management of government once it has been created is best left to a republic, which is discussed in the *Discourses*.

Vivanti notices that Machiavelli contrasted and opposed civilisation to corruption. Once civilisation has been achieved, a republic offers the best chance for a long-running and stable government. However, in order to realise the transition from corruption to civilisation, a prince may be necessary, or at least more efficient. According to this reading of Machiavelli, *The Prince* functions to create the circumstances under which the lessons of the *Discourses* can be implemented.

Although *The Garments of Court and Palace* is a book to be quarrelled with, it is lively, current, and at times stimulating. While more modest in his aims, Vivanti provides the greater contribution to Machiavelli scholarship; those who wish to read about the life and times will prefer to start with his book.

Politics will not be privatised, legalised or bureaucratised away. We need to consider the realities of political activity, and Machiavelli in Renaissance Florence still remains one of the best places to start.

Associate Professor David Askew teaches law at a university in Kyushu, Japan. He wrote on Edmund Burke in the September issue.

David Pollard

Simone Weil and the Pursuit of Authenticity

This year marks the seventieth anniversary of Simone Weil's death. In 1943, still in her thirties, she succumbed to a range of conditions and died in England, not quite alone, but certainly unregarded. Her formidable reputation was to follow.

In many ways this frail, passionate and candid writer was the epitome of the mid-century thinker. In viewing her life, we see almost every contradiction that could possibly characterise the life and times of an intellectual trying to live authentically in a world adrift.

Simone Weil was a philosopher. But she would probably have rejected that description as a single-word summation of her life. She was embroiled in all the major movements of the twentieth century. She was in continuous struggle to think and to act—to feed the hungry, indeed to be one of them, but also to find meaning sufficient to explain human struggle. She was a woman of great intellectual powers, a prodigious capacity for work and an intense need to be involved, to be shaping, to be *effectual*. In the course of her short life she drifted from atheism to belief and arguably to sainthood; and all of this in thirty-four years.

The end of her life and her most prolific and profound writing coincide with the turning point of the war. She represents all that was at stake in that struggle in that she understood the profound *moral* questions that the war threw up. These questions included the nature of the evil of which it was a symptom and the radical human freedom which was constitutive of the nature of man and which therefore made this possible. If anyone had insight into the moral origins and conundrums of war, and this war in particular, it was Simone Weil.

Simone Weil was born to an assimilated Jewish bourgeois family on February 3, 1909, the child of a physician and the sibling of Andre Weil, a world-renowned mathematician. Details of her upbringing are sketchy and anecdotal but she did go to the best schools and graduated at twenty-two from the Ecole Normale Superieure with the degree *agrégée de philosophie*, from which she went to be a schoolteacher in provincial France.

Like many French intellectuals, she became an active Marxist, though she never joined the Communist Party. She tried to involve herself deeply in a variety of movements supporting workers' rights and participated in union activities. Despite her teaching duties at Le Puy she participated at the age of twenty-four in the General Strike that was called to protest against general wage cuts and then took a year's leave of absence from teaching to work in a Renault factory. She described herself at this stage of her life as a pacifist. She resumed her teaching and in 1936, doubtless to the horror of her parents, she went to Spain to fight on the side of the Republic and in so doing shed her pacifist sympathies.

Her life was following the familiar trajectory of the bourgeois intellectual anxious to identify with the working class in their rejection and suffering and to live her life in a totally authentic manner. Millions of her contemporaries in the world at the time followed much the same path. As in the case of most of those who went to Spain to defend democracy against the Right, the understanding of the nature of the struggle changed as she experienced first-hand the brutality of the Left and was affected by the idea that she was becoming complicit in it.

Her maturing and change was a familiar story. George Orwell had a similar experience. The mix of idealism, concern for the working class, a rejection of capitalism, suspicion of the Right, the yearning for the collective—all these were part of a mix of ideas circulating among young European and American intellectuals. It largely explains the profile of the members of the International Brigade which was drawn to Spain to join in the struggle against the Nationalists.

One can understand how this war drew Simone Weil to join in and shed her pacifist commitments, as it had drawn many others. At its base was

a profound ignorance among the International Brigade of the cynicism and coercive brutality of the Left and particularly of the communist parties which led this struggle. Communism was still relatively new in 1936 and the mass killings of the 1920s and 1930s in the Ukraine and Russia were either not known about or not believed. It was only their first-hand experience of the cynicism and violence of the Left in situations of shared struggle which succeeded in educating this cohort of outsiders. Simone Weil crossed to the other side early in the piece and returned to France with injuries unrelated to the war.

Her political philosophy and her humanism began to mature and be transformed into something entirely new. Philosophically, she had been an inheritor of the nineteenth-century tradition. She had studied Plato. She had an excellent grasp of Ancient Greek and a number of modern European languages. She had come first in the entrance examination for the Ecole (Simone de Beauvoir had finished second). Clearly philosophy was her *oeuvre* and writing was to be her vehicle. It is hardly surprising that the years following her graduation had been years of attempting to integrate herself into the struggles of the Left in France.

The dominant moral challenges that moved her seemed to lie especially in the region of rights, mostly economic rights and within that mainly those of the working class. Working-class struggle seemed to carry a kind of intrinsic authenticity. She always retained her commitment to the poor, the deprived and the oppressed. This commitment, however, rose above Marxist or socialist ideology and became personal. Her commitment to political reform was slowly transformed into a concern for what we might call moral reform, or at least the moral base that should be the foundation for all politics. Her earlier concern for the working class evolved into a view on suffering, what it meant and what it could mean. Her atheism also began to shift.

Simone Weil's central preoccupation was not unique to her. It was what has generally been called in modern Western philosophy, "the struggle for authenticity". She was by no means the first philosopher to attempt to join together the traditional preoccupations of Western philosophy (the person, the cosmos, ethics, consciousness, the soul, logic and so on), with the need to live an authentic life in the flesh. This need arose in the mind of latter-day philosophers from, among other things, the fact of Death. Given that Life was lived in the face of Death, how could one live with passion, meaning and redemptively for others? How could we make our lives count?

The notion that philosophy had been asking the wrong questions—or at least an insufficient question—is traceable back to the Danish theologian Soren Kierkegaard (1813–55), whose writings became accessible to European intellectual life in the early part of the twentieth century. Kierkegaard held that the prime question faced by theology (and by extension, philosophy), was that of *existence*—the fact of existence rather than non-existence. This realisation that we exist is the first datum of philosophy. Our one life has to be lived by us and no one else. Any contemplation of this life generates *angst*. This *angst* colours everything about us and raises especially the relationship we have with a God whose existence and demands can never be proved. Living under the strain of the silence of God makes authentic action difficult but necessary since we are by nature free. There follows the next question, the individual's subjective relationship with the truth. The fact that our existence is delimited by Death gives a definitive shape to our life in the face of Death. Existence is temporal and the individual has one chance to live out the ethical.

Kierkegaard's model for the full, authentic life (ethical life) is Abraham, who is prepared to abandon the thing he values in life (his son Isaac) in fulfilment of an unethical command of God—to sacrifice that son. In rising to the test, his life is altered forever, shattered by faith in fact, and in this he becomes the Type of faith.

Authenticity and the *angst* that accompanies its reception and living out, is the basis of the existentialist approach to philosophy. Human consciousness and the self-regarding self necessarily encounter in the world and its worldly forces something which is radically other. Man must act authentically, respond authentically to be authentic. He must be grounded in critical self-reflection. Hence Kierkegaard's dictum "subjectivity is truth", by which he means that the individual's subjective response to the objective determines his ethical stance. Doubt, for example, is part of faith: there is no objective certainty in religious belief: weak faith must engender passionate commitment. Faith, to be authentic, must be a subjective relationship of complete commitment, a leap in the dark in the face of uncertainty. Of this, Abraham is the model.

One might argue that Kierkegaard's view is a logical extension of Luther's *sola fide*—we are maintained in authentic religious belief by faith alone. Certainty is error. But faith, though it may be weak and always accompanied by the *angst* of uncertainty, is enough—enough to enable us to discern authentic action in any situation where ethical choice is at stake.

If the modern European mind is predominantly concerned with the question of how one can live in a manner which has meaning through authentic choices—and this helps to explain Simone Weil—this central notion is Kierkegaard's. Being both a theologian and a Lutheran, he was focused on the issue of faith. Faith, and its constructive–destructive potential in the individual life, threw up a central question for the individual: my existence and its possibilities as the central urgent question I must resolve. Existence, that is, must be the focus of any philosophy—Why existence? Why *my* existence? How am I supposed to exist in the world? Are there differing modes of existence mediated through choices I make? A new theme was injected into European philosophy, that the fact of existence itself was the prime datum of philosophical endeavour—hence *existentialism*. This became the dominant theme of modern philosophy in the years leading up to the Second World War and afterwards. It is an approach to philosophy thoroughly suited to an age cast adrift in doubt, violence and the threat of death.

Central to Kierkegaard's theology, and ultimately basic to existentialist philosophy in its non-religious form, is the notion of the leap of faith. Faith is like falling in love: one does not embark on it for reasons of objective judgment and it involves an admixture of doubt. Despite doubt, one leaps into faith in any event and takes the consequences. One has no proof of God, for example, but one takes the journey of faith anyway, carrying one's doubts with one. To do otherwise is not faith but mere credulity. Christian faith rides on a bedrock of doubt. As far as Christian beliefs and doctrines are concerned, one cannot know the extent to which any of them is true, but the believer commits himself to them anyway because it is the relationship of absolute commitment which defines authentic faith. The exemplar is Abraham, who is asked to sacrifice his only son and who embarks on the journey to fulfil this command in obedience accompanied by *angst* at the lingering doubt that this unethical command can even come from God. In any event he attempts to follow the command and in the end is spared from carrying it through, this being vindicated through his faith in the face of *angst*.

Kierkegaard had many followers in the twentieth century, even among post-Christian philosophers. There was resonance in his idea of the individual having to make a choice in sympathy with his realisation of his own existence and the potential for action in accord with the fundamental meaning of life, with the notion that proper action might be accompanied by feelings of *angst* and the idea that the individual faces a choice between authentic and inauthentic existence framed by choice and characterised by a leap into darkness.

Kierkegaard's approach to theology, therefore, was picked up by a number of philosophers who followed him in the twentieth century. There is hardly a theologian or a philosopher in modern European history who has not had some debt to Kierkegaard. And so it was with Simone Weil.

It was the complete absence of Catholic theology in her intellectual upbringing which gives her subsequent writings their disconcerting edge.

She inherited this insight from her philosophical studies, especially under the esteemed "Alain" (Emile Chartier). He encouraged her in the view that philosophy needs to be embedded in actual lived experience. Her work in the Renault factories in 1934–35 was accompanied, typically, by an important essay, "Reflections on the Causes of Liberty and Social Oppression", where she gave a gentle correction to Marx on his notion of technology as the formative driver in culture and the resultant oppression of the worker. Weil agreed that labour grew out of necessity but that this fate, if that is the word, could be countered by a greater degree of ownership by the worker of the process in which he is engaged and the product which results from it. This view later entered her political discourses of 1942 when she worked under de Gaulle on a series of illustrative papers for postwar France. In the meantime, however, her thinking was drifting to an altogether different plane.

Between August 1935 and November 1938, Simone Weil, secular philosopher, religious agnostic and sometime Marxist, experienced a number of religious encounters for which she had no rational explanation and which entirely changed the course of her life. In this period, she evolved from philosopher to mystical theologian, somewhat in the vein of Pascal and certainly to the amazement of all who knew her and were familiar with her writings to that point.

The notion of unmerited and unsought religious consolation is a well-developed theme in Catholic mysticism. It is recorded in a number of celebrated instances, for example in the lives of St Theresa, St John of the Cross and St Ignatius Loyola. Ignatius, the ex-soldier turned traveller-searcher, was journeying in 1522 when, while staying at the village

of Manresa on the banks of the River Cardoner, he recorded a sudden, immediate and overwhelming revelation of the nature of God. The revelation was entirely experiential and he could never explain it except in a series of metaphors. Whatever happened, his life after was radically different from that which went before. He says that he learned the interior life of faith by an experience of revelation wholly from outside himself.

The experiences of Simone Weil, improbable as they sound in the twentieth century, were like this. The first happened in Portugal once she had finished working at the factory. As she relates it in *Waiting for God*:

> It was evening and there was a full moon over the sea. The wives of the fishermen were making a tour in procession, carrying candles and singing ancient hymns of heartrending sadness. There the conviction was suddenly borne in upon me that Christianity is pre-eminently the religion of slaves, that slaves cannot help belonging to it, and I among others.

The second happened in Assisi, where she was spending two days and where, alone in the chapel of Santa Maria degli Angeli, she described how she was compelled to sink to her knees and, for the first time in her life, to pray.

The third consolation occurred at Solesmes in France where she and her mother were attending Holy Week services, apparently for reasons of art rather than religious content. Here she encountered and was completely taken by the metaphysical poet George Herbert's famous poem "Love" (Love bade me welcome ...): "It was during one of these recitations that ... Christ himself came down and took possession of me."

The sudden movement from the intellectual and the rational to the affective and the intuitive is a universal characteristic of religious mysticism. It appears in the writings of the mystics mentioned above and may be said to be emblematic of the phenomenon of total religious conversion. This is really the mystery at the heart of the life of Simone Weil, and its objective unlikelihood in her life, of all lives, is precisely the authenticating hallmark which distinguishes her life as one of the most intriguing and illuminating of the twentieth century. It is the turning point in her writings.

If one were designing a person to be the model for Christian theology in the most tortured years of the twentieth century, and most especially in the worst years of all, 1939 to 1942, one could hardly come up with a more thoroughly ambiguous candidate than Simone Weil. The times were thoroughly fraught and contending ideologies were waging wars of unprecedented barbarity. But with bewildering suddenness, a widely published culturally Jewish woman whose interests to date had been predominantly the social agenda of the Left, makes a transition to Catholic mysticism while retaining her life's commitment to the fusion of thought and action. Her sudden grasp of the core of New Testament spirituality is breathtaking. Doubtless, she was assisted in this by her close friendship with a number of French Catholic theologians. And it was the complete absence of Catholic theology in her intellectual upbringing, given that she was not educated a Catholic, which gives her subsequent writings their disconcerting edge.

In a few short years, Simone Weil visited and dealt with in her writing all the classic realms of Catholic theology. These included the nature of the love of God, grace, sin and forgiveness, prayer as attentiveness, atheism as a stage of faith, the absence and silence of God, good and evil, redemptive suffering and many others. Her Protestant contemporary, Karl Barth, dealt with these same areas in about these same years, but Weil's Pascal-like lightning summations deal with these weighty issues by way of assertion supported occasionally by argument, but the methodology is more attuned to revealing to the reader something he really intuitively already knows. Take the following (from *Gravity and Grace*) for example:

> By redemptive suffering, God is present in extreme evil. For the absence of God is his mode of divine presence—an absence which is *felt*. He who has not God within him cannot feel his absence ...
>
> As God is present through the consecration of the Eucharist in what the senses perceive as a morsel of bread, so he is present in extreme evil through redemptive suffering through the cross. God gives himself to men either as powerful or as perfect—it is for them to choose.

When we compare the trajectory of the life of St Ignatius of Loyola with that of Simone Weil, it is hard to conceive a more jumbled counter-type. Ignatius, after the Cardoner experience, went on to Paris to study, founded the Jesuits, which were an instant success, published his theological insights in his *Spiritual Exercises* and lived a long life of struggle crowned with success. Our other mystic was a creature of the deracinated twentieth century. She was university-educated, a cultural Jew, a farm worker, a factory hand. She taught

those on the margins, attempted to be active in the trade union movement, tried anarchistic socialism and Marxism, and in all this sought inclusion in collectives of workers or social groups. It was precisely her *exclusion* that formed her diamond-hard character. She wrote as the outsider—which perhaps explains why her reception into the church happened only at the end of her life. She was in her own way as much the mystic type of the twentieth century, and especially of the climactic years from 1939 to 1942, as Ignatius was of the sixteenth.

Simone Weil accompanied her parents to Marseilles in 1940. Working briefly on a local farm, she immersed herself in her theological writings, leaving the manuscripts to be kept safe by Gustave Thibon, the farm's owner. These were edited and published after the war as *Gravity and Grace*. They are the core of her theological writings.

She left Marseilles with her parents for New York, where she continued to write while remaining in contact with the Free French in London. From July to November 1942 she wrote extensively, both theology and tracts for the Free French. By now her health was failing as the effects of tuberculosis gradually gained the upper hand inside her always frail body. Nevertheless, her literary output continued and in this last *annus mirabilis* of 1942–43, she produced *The Need for Roots*, a text on the nature of man designed to inform the political economy of postwar France. She went to London late in 1942 and within six months was hospitalised with tuberculosis complicated by malnutrition. She died on August 24, 1943, completely unlamented by de Gaulle or any of the others of the Free French who clearly resented this female intellectual, formerly of the Left, and her opinions on the moral state of France now and in their planned future.

Her works are replete with quotable quotes, much like Pascal. They are challenging and succinct. For example:

> Every relationship with God begins with an act of mutual forgiveness.

But here is one which captures something of the essence of this highly solitary but socially engaged woman:

> Do not allow yourself to be imprisoned by any affection. Keep your solitude. The day, if it ever comes, when you are given true affection there will be no opposition between interior solitude and friendship, quite the reverse. It is even by this infallible sign that you will recognise it.

Dr David Pollard is a Senior Fellow at Melbourne Business School. He is the author of a number of books on public policy and is currently co-authoring a book on the Second World War.

Red velvet cabbages

Red velvet cabbages flop heavy-scented
on prickly sticks in the sea air. She who
pruned and planted them walks now
almost as slim and proud as twenty years ago,
before her body turned against her.
No one could forget those perfumed breasts.

My tongue tastes tender scarlet crumbs exploding
from red velvet cake, three years ago and
half the world away; and, distant as the dinosaurs,
the man across the table, his clever mouth on mine.

Jenny Blackford

School pick-up, winter

The young mothers stand around
talking of eBay
while their boys play ball in the mud,
and ranks of parked cars
wait at the station
for the office crowd to head home.

Rain clouds move in,
and the old trees stand
like sentries of long-buried times.

David Lumsden

Iain Bamforth

Anthropogenic Global Din

But I was glad I had recorded for him
The melancholy.
—Patrick Kavanagh, "Wet Evening in April"

"Interior and exterior silence are necessary in order to hear the Word," Pope Benedict told the massed pilgrims in St Peter's Square on March 7, 2012, on the last of his catacheses on the personal prayer of Jesus, specifically on Christ's silence on the cross. He hardly had to point the lesson—"our age does not, in fact, favour reflection and contemplation". In a civilisation attended by constant noise, the Pope had to tell his audience not be afraid of silence, for when they feel "a sense of abandonment" in the stillness of a prayer, they should be confident that "this silence, as happened to Jesus, does not signify absence".

Of course, it isn't just the divine Word which you can't make out in such Golgotha moments. It can be difficult enough to hear somebody talking right next to you. Ambient noise may leave you on edge, if not on the edge. Sometimes you can't even hear yourself thinking, as the phrase goes.

Having spent quite a bit of time recently in some of the globe's larger cities, which can be exceedingly noisy (and most of the noise comes from the reverb of thousands of Honda, Suzuki and Yamaha scooters stealing in between the hundreds of pick-ups and minibuses), I've had occasion even behind the double-glazing of air-conditioned rooms (which I don't like, even though they're vital if you want to sleep at all) to meditate on noise. But how do you meditate on something that is out to obliterate you? When I think back on it, most of my nightmare moments as a traveller have been associated with sound: I recall a particularly tense night when after travelling all day to reach Madras (as Chennai was still called) I opted to bunk down in the nearest hotel room: what I didn't realise was that it was directly above the regional bus station for Tamil Nadu. I hadn't anticipated what might be happening underneath at 4 a.m. It is reported that the night-time noise level in Mumbai, a city of over 20 million, is 63 decibels, climbing to 78 during the day (and the decibel scale is a base-ten logarithm, so the difference in sound intensity is far greater than it might seem).

I also recall moments of deep pleasure in those travels, when I stepped into a sonic bubble and it was possible to experience the world turning: a year in the Australian outback with my wife and our young son in 1990–91 provided not only nightly displays of the Milky Way in high definition, free of the urban light smog that makes it impossible to see it in our northern cities, but also the ripples of quietness of inner Australia. All those Australians who crowd along the littoral simply don't know what they're missing.

Noise seems so much a product of modernity—the unwanted sound generated by our seemingly insatiable need for mobility and communications—that it's hard to believe ancient civilisations could suffer from noise intolerance. The story of the Flood as told in Genesis is well known, and God's reason for wanting to put an end to humankind. The P version: "The earth was exceedingly corrupt and filled with violence." The J version: "Now when the Lord saw how great the evil of humans was … he was sorry that he had made humans on the earth, and he was pained in his heart." He vows to wipe them out, and it is in one of those odd and inexplicable moments of divine tender-heartedness that Noah gets a reprieve in order to start building and caulking his zoo-raft. Tablet III of the Atrahasis Epic, a 4000-year-old Akkadian flood story taken up in the much better-known Gilgamesh epic, offers another explanation for the flood. Enlil, the god of breath, tells the council of the other great gods: "The noise of humans has become too loud, their constant uproar is keeping me awake."

There was no distance between Enlil and the plenum: the ambient noise level was all presence. He was suffering from a kind of hyperacusis—the modern discovery that noise and thought are incompatible.

Perhaps the noise that disturbed Enlil was the

cellular noise of burgeoning life itself. Everything in the universe gives off noise: it is the random background conversation of atoms. There is even a phenomenon called thermal noise, which is generated by electronic devices. Infrasound is registered by barometric instruments when a volcano explodes, well before we hear the audible explosion. Many other natural phenomena can generate infrasound, such as calving icebergs, lightning and avalanches; and it is thought that animals were able to detect the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami through their susceptibility to infrasound long before the event became apparent to humans. At the other end of the scale, ultrasound—which we associate with diagnostic techniques and echo-locating bats—is also generated by the winds of ionised plasma that rise up in the atmosphere with the northern lights.

Everything, as the poet Edwin Morgan testified, is giving off messages. A man he admired, the composer John Cage, wrote scores that recruited universal sounds, and made listeners acutely—and sometimes uncomfortably—aware of their origins in silence. Noise is the "parasite" that limits the minimum signal level to which a radio receiver can respond: that is why radio telescopes, which scour the expanding universe for the whisper of the stars, have to use low-noise amplifiers cooled by liquid nitrogen. Or perhaps it was the disquieting fact (for the Mesopotamian gods) that humans, if the ancient tablets are anything to go by, had discovered self-consciousness: where their minds had been quiet, now they were filled with an unceasing inner gossip, or what Meister Eckhart would call "the storm of inward thought". Silence is only ever a seeming.

And really, Enlil hadn't heard anything yet in terms of anthropogenic noise. John Ruskin interrupts his Letter 20 in *Fors Clavigera* at several points to bemoan the shrieking and din of the ships docking close to his hotel. "My friends," he opens his letter, "you probably thought I had lost my temper and written inconsiderately, when I called the whistling of the Lido steamer 'accursed'." He abandons his letter to go and see whether a large new steamer is coming in from the Adriatic, but it turns out to be "a little screw steamer … not yet twelve yards long, yet the beating of her screw has been so loud across the lagoon for the last five minutes". He rhapsodises to a passage in Isaiah, and breaks off with a parenthesis: "Steam-whistle interrupts me from the Capo d'Istria, which is lying in front of my window with her black nose pointed at the red nose of another steamer at the next pier." The roaring and whistling of various ships goes on for some time (and Ruskin too) and is so deafening he thinks it would be impossible to "make any one hear me speak in this room without an effort". The high-pressure blasts continue—four, five, six, seven—and he stops counting, but not before observing that all these noises go through his head "like a knife". Henry David Thoreau had a similar reaction to the locomotive whistle he heard at Walden Pond in 1853.

Noise had yet to be recognised as part of that modern syndrome we call *stress*, and it is only recently that governments have recognised noise as an environmental health problem and not just as a nuisance. Occupational health experts have published many studies which show increased levels of morbidity and mortality in high-noise settings. Noise and pain have one thing in common: they shut you solipsistically into your self, like bad dentistry, and the body becomes their sounding board.

Noise and pain have one thing in common: they shut you solipsistically into your self, like bad dentistry, and the body becomes their sounding board.

Ruskin would have known that the Great War was evil simply by the fearsome whistling shrieking thundering noise it made, day and night, without a pause. Robert Musil, writing his long novel *The Man without Qualities* during that war, elected to describe the Vienna of 1913, then one of the great metropolises of the world, in terms of the juggernaut sounds that were transforming it into the support line of the trenches being dug all over Europe:

> Hundreds of noises wove themselves into a wiry texture of sound with barbs protruding here and there, smart edges running along it and subsiding again, with clear notes splintering off and dissipating.

In that same 1913, Luigi Russolo, one of the Futurists, wrote a famous manifesto—*L'Arte dei Rumori*—advocating a new kind of industrialised music in which the actual tones and timbres of the performance would be the rhythms and configurations of urban-industrial life: he believed, apparently in all sincerity, that modern humans had evolved a greater capacity for more complex sounds. The first concert of Futurist music took place in April 1914, and incorporated his "Convegno d'aeroplani e d'automobili" (Meetings of aeroplanes and automobiles); it caused a riot. Though Russolo couldn't record anything in those days, noise would

go on to find its place in the repertoire. He had discovered that individuals could display their sense of being modern by converting the pain of impersonal aural torture into the fiction of personal power. The electroacoustics of *musique concrète* would follow. And modern rock music would go on to discover psychoacoustics. It turned out to be a less cerebral kind of Futurism with lots of feedback. By combining noise with rhythm it is possible to empty bodies out into a communal celebration where participants quite happily surrender their individuality to the audio gods of integrism.

Robert Musil hadn't heard anything yet either, come to think of it. I was rudely reminded of Enlil's conjuration and Musil's frighteningly spiky soundshape in a supposedly soundproofed hotel in one of the great Asiatic cities of our contemporary Babel. There was no refuge even with a pillow over my head. The very substance of the hotel seemed to be reverberating, as though I were bunked on a cargo ship. I could recognise the subterranean echoes of one of the six categories of sounds as classified by Russolo: "roars, thunderings, explosions, hissing roars, bangs, booms". I had let myself in for it though: my head was still ringing from the blare of the basement bar, with its galactic lighting and voluptuous shamhats. Karaoke's decibel heroes, it seemed, had been let loose there and were still torturing me, four storeys above.

Noise, I decided, must be the real god of global exchange: it forces us into a state of total material sympathy, where the thinking self has no choice but to follow the body. And some people even celebrate it by dancing.

Silence is a more mysterious quality. It speaks only if you know how to enter it in the right way. Michel Foucault suggested that the Romans cultivated silence as a cultural ethos. John Cage's celebrated pieces took away the formal structures of music, its emotional contrasts and developments and atmosphere, and asked listeners not to absorb whatever they thought the exterior might be saying but to create their own wide spaces and connections. Wittgenstein once said that he liked the idea of a silent religion. I wonder what he (and John Cage for that matter) would make of the doings of the American musician and biophonist Bernie Krause, who has spent forty years archiving sounds from the natural world. More than half of the 4000 hours of his field recordings are all that remains of those original habitats, whose silence grows even as our din expands.

Iain Bamforth lives in Strasbourg.

Mulberries

I first tasted mulberries in my cousins' tree
a bright green cave with hanging gems
we picked and sucked, each face smeared
purple. No rebuke from watching adults,

who bowed to us then raised containers,
libations offered to grubby cherubim
on mulberry laden clouds, since each tin
returned childhood in a teeming vessel.

They were food too luscious to be fruit,
reminding us of sugared jubes and juice
inside a globe filled by midday sun
and toys, a mulberry compendium

almost camouflaged by emerald leaves;
a dome of pleasure in a children's tree.

Ross Donlon

Driving in the Nineties

My mother in her nineties is barely
able to move her swollen legs, and yet
when it suits her she breaks a solemn promise
never to drive a car again, as life
is too busy for being constrained humbly
by her own children's rules. As a housewife,
once, and five-time mother, something like this
is a habit she is unable to forget,

having driven to the markets and tennis
parties and meetings of the Red Cross
over half a century. Yet there was a time,
long before her wedding (in a bombed church hall
in London), when she was happy to climb
into an open boat to be rowed to school
by an able seaman, as a new bridge across
Sydney Harbour took shape. Then, in Paris,

she drove an Air Force jeep to liberate
the city, and driving afterwards would
perhaps recall those roads at the end
of the war, for she always steered as if
the suburban streets were mined. Now, this late
in her life, and despite limbs that are stiff
with age, there are few nights she does not spend
at concerts, the theatre, the latest Hollywood

products, with dinners in restaurants and drinks
in the clubs where grandchildren are employed;
and she reads new books, to offer critical views
across the table.
"So many of us,"
she says of the rest of her age-group, at the news
of yet another funeral. These days, she thinks,
are like being left on the roadside, annoyed
to have somehow missed the expected bus.

My Father is Not Dead

My father is not dead. Just yesterday,
at the shopping centre, he walked
along an arcade in my direction,
with his round body and white hair
and the usual quizzical expression
behind his spectacles; I baulked
and hesitated before finding there,
straight ahead, leading away,

no arcade but a floor-to-ceiling
mirror. That old man before me
was my reflection; and yet my father
is not dead. His voice, with its edge
of subtle irony, comes back whether
or not an effort of memory
summons it. With the force of knowledge
comes the feeling

that my father is not dead. In my head
I hear each favourite phrase,
"That's not very sensible", or "How right
I always am"; say them aloud,
And the known words emerge into the light,
"Very nourishing", when the food
on the table is somewhat wanting in taste—
my father is not dead,

his character may have long since parted
ways with his cremated body,
but it lives on in mine. The dead survive
inside each of us, in the form
of genes, and in souvenirs that the live
preserve; one only has to see
the grimace in that mirror to confirm
my father is not dead.

Jamie Grant

Alan Moran

The Looming Disaster from Deficit Spending

As a chronicler of economic history and a policy advocate, David Stockman combines economics training with an inside operator's knowledge gained at the highest levels of government and finance. Back in the 1980s he was plucked from relative obscurity as a junior Congressman to become President Reagan's Budget Director. In *The Triumph of Politics* (1986) he lifted the lid on the Reagan revolution with its successes and its failures. The failures were associated with the "supply side" budgetary policy involving tax cuts without associated spending cuts. He vigorously opposed that at the time and considers it sowed the seeds for an acceptance of the excessive deficits now in place.

In *The Great Deformation*, Stockman extends and enlarges that historical analysis. He sees near-unresolvable economic problems, the cause of which he lays squarely at the door of successive governments with their extravagances, bad spending decisions, budget deficits, and artificially low interest-rate settings that have brought excessive investment in housing, savings disincentives and potential inflation. These are aggravated by what he sees as an undermining of the capitalist structure caused by owners' agents, management, looting of company profits through financial engineering and by recent government bailouts of poorly managed firms.

Stockman blames the present endemic US current economic crisis on politicians' spending programs and loose monetary policy. The adverse effects of these have been growing like a cancer for almost eighty years, reaching a crescendo with the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) of 2008 and an aftermath that continues to plague the world economy.

Economists' views about the causes and resolutions of the Great Depression tend to condition their preferred approach to modern economic management. Keynesian economists attribute the 1929 Crash to general exuberance and have seen the Great Depression as partly due to policy measures like price controls and tariffs. Their antidote is increased government expenditure, if necessary using deficits—pump priming—to reignite growth.

Pump priming, however, failed to restore growth in the 1930s, which saw deficits of 5 per cent of GDP between 1931 and 1937. Indeed, once debt creation was slowed in 1937, the economy again tanked. Stockman attributes the eventual recovery not to war spending but to the effects of the war in considerably reducing overall US debt (owed by businesses and consumers, though not, of course, the government debt component).

Stockman dismisses the Keynesian analysis but also takes down Milton Friedman, among the leading conservative economists of the twentieth century. Friedman's prescription for economic stability is founded on a steady 3 per cent a year growth in the money supply. Stockman derides this as impossible even in the event that the US monetary authority, the Fed, was genuinely independent of political interference—and over the past half-century the Paul Volcker chairmanship (1979 to 1987) was a rare example of this. Stockman demonstrates that, political interference aside, holding money supply growth to a single level, 3 per cent, is impossible because the notion of money changes markedly.

Friedman considered the fall in the supply of money after 1929 was the prime cause of the continuing slump. He did not see the credit creation of the 1920s as excessive and argued that the policy should have been continued. Stockman maintains that this was impossible—credit growth was leading to inadequate investment and simply fuelling the Wall Street frenzy and unrepayable debt from European demand for US agricultural products:

> Friedman thoroughly misunderstood the Great Depression ... there was no liquidity

---

The Great Deformation: The Corruption of Capitalism in America
by David Stockman
Public Affairs, 2013, 768 pages, US$35

> shortage and no failure by the Fed to do its job as a banker's bank. Indeed, the six thousand member banks of the Federal Reserve System did not make heavy use of the discount window during this period and none who presented good collateral were denied access to borrowed reserves.
>
> And the documented lack of member bank demand for discount window borrowings was not because the Fed had charged a punishingly high interest rate. In fact, the Fed's discount rate had been progressively lowered from 6 per cent before the crash to 2.5 per cent by early 1933.

Stockman notes that the Wall Street crash wiped out margin players but banks had ample liquidity. Only the agricultural banks closed down due to plummeting commodity prices. The money supply contraction was due to bad debt liquidation, "not an avoidable cause of the depression".

He points out that the slump had bottomed in 1931 and was recovering in 1932 with fewer bank failures, Wall Street rising, textile output reaching full capacity. This was knocked off course by the election of Roosevelt and his subsequent devaluation, bank holiday, tariff increases, wage freezes and the New Deal.

Stockman acidly concludes that the Friedman monetary injections are pretty much the same as Keynesian government spending injections and carry the same doomed hopes of reigniting an economy in the doldrums.

The current recession has different antecedents to the Great Depression but the same policy fixes are again being trotted out. Stockman's analysis of the current ills goes back to the Vietnam War under Johnson and Nixon when the USA chose both guns and butter. The policy extravaganzas were financed with debt and from increased overseas holdings of US dollars which assumed an increasingly important role as the world's reserve currency.

He notes that Reagan vastly expanded the size of the federal government to over 21 per cent of GDP in 1989 but, the "peace dividend" notwithstanding, expenditure continued to grow and reached 25 per cent under George W. Bush. This is an oversimplification, since the share of federal spending in Reagan's last budget was actually smaller than Carter's 1981 legacy of 22.2 per cent and even a tad below Nixon's last budget. Moreover, the high point of George W. Bush was fuelled by the "temporary" measures designed to counter the GFC and even the grossly profligate Obama administration has wound this share of GDP back a percentage point or so. Nonetheless the US government does seem to have permanently raised its part in the economy from the Cold War-inflated 17 to 18 per cent under Eisenhower to 24 per cent today.

But the deficit story, rather than excessive spending, is the starter motor to Stockman's main narrative. It initiates and aggravates the impact of what Stockman sees as progressively looser monetary policies over the past 100 years. These monetary excesses are the outcome of political pressures to force lower interest rates. Such pressures generally prevailed, a solitary exception being Paul Volcker's courageous chairmanship of the Fed during the 1980s.

Serious budget deficits commenced under Reagan and, after disappearing under Clinton by the turn of the millennium, now following a wind-back of much "temporary" support to counter the GFC, absorb the equivalent of 9 per cent of US GDP. This is money borrowed from the future for current consumption. Exacerbating the repayment difficulties, the borrowings divert resources from investment, thereby impairing the economy's future productive capacity. Stockman sees this and the Fed's loose monetary policy threatening the fabric of the economic system or at best condemning the US to indefinite recession.

Prosperity in the 1990s was, for the most part, fuelled by money-printing and a cumulative $2 trillion trade deficit. But this created financial crises, each one more serious than the one before.

With the dotcom bubble bursting in 2001, even more liquidity was added, with near-zero interest rates leading to the housing boom and a supercharged Wall Street from then to 2008. However, liquidity injected into the system must eventually be spent on goods and services, the supply of which is impaired by the money supply boost misallocating spending away from new productive investment.

Loose money reached its apogee, marked by near-zero interest rates which pretty well exhausted its further potential to fuel demand. In spite of this documented failure of pump priming, this Keynesian policy was turned to in 2008 by Friedman's pupil, the Fed chairman Ben Bernanke, and the former Goldman Sachs "bond salesman", Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson. The USA launched its $800 billion stimulus and $700 billion Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP).

The inevitable frittering away of these funds on faddish and heavily lobbied expenditures was seen in the exotic energy-spending failures like Solyndra and Tesla. And the USA had its equivalent of our own pink batts and superfluous school hall expenditures. The TARP included among its loans a $200 million facility to a business that planned to make auto loans set up by two totally inexperienced housewives whose husbands were executives of the already bailed-out Morgan Stanley Bank.

Deficit spending as in the 1930s has failed and left enormous debts. And there is no end in sight:

> The much ballyhooed budget of [Vice Presidential candidate Paul] Ryan for fiscal 2012 added $7 trillion to the national debt, for instance, before it would achieve a balanced budget twenty-five years later; that is, in 2037. Eisenhower would have thought such a fiscal plan the scribbling of a madman.

Massive deficits cumulating year on year were added to policies like the creation of a highly unstable housing market. Low interest rates and political pressures on banks to lend to high-risk borrowers compounded this. The government-controlled reinsurer, Fannie Mae, fuelled the frenzy by facilitating debt. Home loan assets grew from $1.7 trillion in 1994 to $6 trillion in 2008, by which time the prices were falling. The securitisation "innovation" of the 82 per cent of sub-prime loans is now recognised as badly mistaken and hiding rather than smoothing risk. Similarly, the merger and acquisition frenzy of the past thirty years has been shown to have destroyed rather than created value.

Such activities have undermined previous standards of prudence on the part of businesses. One outcome has been a hollowing-out of listed companies as Wall Street brokers combined with management to create value by buying stock on the basis of which executives were rewarded.

> The largest twenty-five companies on the Fortune 500 list [had] net income aggregated to $242 billion during 2007, but only 15 per cent ($35 billion) of that hefty total was reinvested in their own businesses; that is, allocated to additional capital expenditures and other working capital after funding depreciation and amortization of existing assets. By contrast, these same twenty-five companies ... invested nearly $345 billion in financial engineering and shareholder distributions. This stupendous total represented 140 per cent of the aggregate net income of these leading companies.

Stockman's focus on monetary policy and the harm from very low interest rates is well placed. However, it does lead him into some doubtful judgments. Among these is his dismissal of the shale oil and gas revolution that is now under way in the USA. He considers this has been artificially stimulated by low interest rates undervaluing the cost of capital. It is much more plausibly a function of genuine innovation in the location and tapping of hydrocarbon reserves previously uneconomic. As in the dotcom boom, there are doubtless overexuberant investments in shale oil, but gains from the new technology are real.

Spending increases, the TARP and company bail-outs were justified as a counter to prevent meltdown. But the decline in inventories that signalled the downturn (15 per cent) was little different from earlier downturns and only one quarter that of the Great Depression. Stockman considers therefore that panic was uncalled for. The Fed and Treasury's deficits meant a massive increase in government bonds and the attempts by the authorities to restore growth by pushing liquidity onto the market meant money from these bond sales was not on-lent as there was no demand. Stockman says of those deficits, "Specifically, the excess consumption enabled by subnormal household savings resulted in year after year of recorded GDP growth that amounted to little more than theft from future generations." There was no payoff in terms of growth, which remains at its lowest since the Great Depression. But government debt grew from 67 per cent of GDP in 2006 to 103 per cent in 2011. The liquidity was used to fuel the stock exchange, and with every move to end it the market panics. This process continues.

In 2008 the main beneficiaries of the government bail-outs and the TARP were the major banks, which had invested in the housing market, and such businesses as GM which had developed excessive costs based on poor labour market management. Among financial institutions only the majors, very highly leveraged on mortgage and other toxic debt, were in trouble. By contrast, regular banks with under-performing mortgages on their books would not collapse but would instead incur losses that would be taken over many years.

But the GFC and governments' responses is now history. The present Armageddon is the result of the frantic efforts to stave off a financial crisis set up by government measures designed to rectify spates of excessive credit creation over the past sixty years. Stockman offers a route back to stability involving measures that include:

- allowing interest rates to be set by the market and not determined by the Fed
- allowing only deposit-taking banks not engaged in trading and derivatives to have access to Fed funding support
- requiring balanced budgets, eliminating subsidies, abolishing the minimum wage, Obamacare and a clutch of government departments and agencies
- instituting a 30 per cent wealth tax payable over a decade to eliminate government debt

Little of this is going to happen. Stockman gloomily says:

In November 2012 the people voted for the only real choice they were presented; that is, for paralysis and stalemate. Now it is only a matter of time before the state finally fails as a fiscal entity. It is ... so overloaded with mandates and missions that it cannot move forward and it cannot move back. Instead, it will become ever more paralyzed and dysfunctional. The cruel corollary is that free market capitalism cannot help, either. It has been abused, burdened, demoralized, and impaired by decades of central bank money printing and the speculative raids and rent-seeking deformations which it fosters.

Alan Moran is the Director of the Deregulation Unit at the Institute of Public Affairs.

The Ballad of Tommy and the Sow

For Nancy McAuliffe

Everybody knew him,
"Tom, the village fool"
Who long ago when just a kid
Was the butt of jokes at school;

And all his life they laughed at him
For his simple ways,
How he barely could express himself
His mind was such a maze.

One Sunday night he rambled
To a neighbour's house
Where the village gathered;
Tom sat there, anonymous,

Hidden in a corner
While the others held court
Until one young smart alec
Decided, just for sport,

To play a trick on Tommy—
The sow had farrowed, and
He sent Tom to count the bonhams
(The fingers of his hands
Were as much as Tom could calculate)
The litter was thirteen,
All knew that he could count to ten
And nothing more. He beamed

At those who laughed at him
As he set out to go
To count the bonhams in the shed,
But Tom was not as slow

As the village deemed him—
When asked for the amount
He proudly said, "There's ten of them
And the three I couldn't count."

Oh yes! They deemed him village fool
(That's what they're remembered for)
But, remembered for his answer,
He's avenged in local lore,
He is.

He's avenged in local lore.

Gabriel Fitzmaurice

bonhams: piglets

Peter Smith

The Free Market—Efficient, Amoral, and Ready to Go

Adam Smith and John Maynard Keynes featured in articles by Ray Evans and Geoffrey Luck in the June issue of *Quadrant*. Evans and Luck directed some personal barbs at Smith and Keynes respectively, seemingly influenced by the skewed perspective of the Austrian school economist Murray Rothbard. This rankles but is not central to my theme. Central is the juxtaposition of two giants of the past who effectively sit at opposite ends of the political economy spectrum and whose economic legacies shed light on the regress of economics from its positive beginnings to its dismal modernity.

The economics of Smith and Keynes is a stark contrast of supply-side economics with demand-side. This has morphed, as it was bound to do, as I will explain, into a contrast of promise with despondency. Fortunately, commercial life goes on whether economics and economists are right or wrong. While it is true to say that wrong economics wielded by public-sector economists can do significant damage, any despondency about the economic future is greatly exaggerated. It stems from a lack of understanding of the way free-market economies work, what drives them, and how resilient they are.

Adam Smith's positive economics, which set the agenda for economic thinking for 160 years, has been drowned out by the intrinsic negativism of Keynesianism. Keynesianism has done a much better job than Malthus ever did in transforming economics into the dismal science. And yet the facts confound the science. The evidence is overwhelming: in spite of profligate governments, discriminatory and burdensome taxation, ever-increasing regulation, and arbitrarily-imposed "redistributive justice", efficient and amoral free-market economic forces have always found ways through to make us all richer.

Au contraire Geoffrey Luck, the efficiency of the free market and its morality are not open to debate. The economic progress of mankind in the face of bouts of despotism, wars, natural disasters, population explosions, uncontrolled people movements on a vast scale, and government meddling, is testimony to its enduring and ruthless efficiency. And it will be resilient enough to get the Western world out of the economic mess governments have created. As to its morality, that is a non-issue. To question the morality of the free market is akin to questioning the morality of the tides or the orbits of the planets. Morality simply doesn't come into it. Outside of the strictures of the law of the land, the free market is unencumbered by requirements to produce outcomes satisfying some moral order. If it were not, it wouldn't be free.

Of course, to say something is not open to debate doesn't mean it won't be debated. An invitation to debate whether bodies of different weight fall at the same rate in a vacuum would probably draw some willing to put the nay case. What it means in this context is that debating the efficiency or morality of the free market would be an empty exercise. To have meaning, the debate would need to be couched in different terms. The pertinent terms are clear enough. They are as follows. Could the performance of the free market (however efficient it is) be bettered through a different set of arrangements orchestrated by government? And should distributive outcomes (the moral order in this context) be evened out by government?

A first thing to say is that economics is not like physics or chemistry. Controlled experiments can't be undertaken. Nothing can be proved. Everything remains frustratingly up in the air; ripe for exploitation by any itinerant crank who has read an expurgated *Reader's Digest* version of an economics book. If we are led to the truth it's through the deliberations of people of learning, with great minds, who have diligently examined historical experience and arrived at consistent and logical conclusions. Unfortunately, great minds have reached quite different conclusions. The result is that we have the left and right sides of politics. Singlehandedly, economics has wrought the divide

which dominates political affairs.

Nicholas Wapshott (*Keynes Hayek: The Clash That Defined Modern Economics*, 2011) has popularised a comparison between the theories and conclusions of Keynes and Hayek. While this throws some light on the economic divide and the resulting political divide, it is more showbiz than substance. Hayek, justifiably acclaimed as he is for exposing the flaws, futility and dangers of economic planning, is a bit player in the development of the divide. Austrian economists, of whom he is a leading light, remain bit players to this day. Effectively, they added nothing of substance to the insights of classical economics.

The key to the divide can be traced back from Keynes, who is the economics standard-bearer for the Left (Karl Marx having long departed the scene) to John Stuart Mill, who actually grappled with Keynesianism in prescient fashion before it was invented and, ultimately, to the father of classical economics, and economics itself, Adam Smith. While Mill is a splendid and almost peerless standard-bearer for free-market economics, he doesn't quite have the credentials that come with being the first among the giants.

There is no doubt that withdrawing wasteful government expenditure is disruptive. The process can be likened to withdrawing drugs from an addict.

There is always contention about attributing originality. Ray Evans seems to be unequivocal about it: "Adam Smith was not the founder of economics". Many years ago a left-wing colleague at the University of Adelaide repeatedly told me that the Polish economist Michal Kalecki had independently developed Keynes' General Theory. Of course I had not read Kalecki. Few people had. Justifiably or not, Keynes retained his exclusive authorship. Irving Fisher (*The Theory of Interest*, 1930) put it well: "In economics it is difficult to prove originality; for the germ of every new idea will surely be found over and over again in earlier writers." I dare say other disciplines suffer from the same ambiguity. Seldom does something of substance come out of a vacuum. Galileo, Newton, Einstein, Adam Smith; all surely leant on their predecessors and contemporaries. That hardly takes away from their achievements and their impact.

It is a sterile endeavour to try to attribute invention or originality to those who lacked the finesse or energy or communication skills or sheer luck to publish their results in a way that could be understood and gain currency. To quote Terence Hutchinson (*Before Adam Smith: The Emergence of Political Economy 1662–1776*): "political economy, in any intellectually serious form, hardly existed before the appearance of *The Wealth of Nations*". W.B. Todd in his introduction to an edition of *The Wealth of Nations* (Clarendon Press, 1976) approvingly quotes Dugal Stewart, whose life intersected Smith's:

> perhaps the merit of such a work as Mr Smith's is to be estimated less from the novelty of the principles it contains, than from the reasonings employed to support these principles, and from the scientific manner in which they are unfolded in their proper order and connexion.

Adam Smith is undoubtedly a giant on whose shoulders others stood and continue to stand. He elegantly set out the enriching effects of free markets just as he emphasised their amorality: "It is not from the benevolence of the butcher [etc] that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest."

It is not Keynes versus Hayek, but Keynesianism versus Smith that holds the key to the economic and political divide. It also holds the key to understanding the state of the economic world in which we live. An important distinction between Keynes's economics and Keynesianism is an essential part of the story. Explaining this involves grappling with the relationship between investment and saving: one of the most slippery concepts in all of macroeconomics. Is this fit material for a Sunday afternoon reading *Quadrant*? Slippery though it is, it can be easily grasped if approached in the right way. The right way is to distinguish between stocks and flows.

Adam Smith's perspective was retrospective. He explained how things worked out as they did. He dealt in stocks by observing that capital accumulation requires the availability of savings. In other words, the only way you can take time out to build a boat on a desert island is if you've saved some coconuts and berries to tide you over. You can't do the investment unless you have the stock of savings. This analysis is perfectly sound.

Keynes's perspective was prospective. His objective was to explain how things would or might work out. He dealt in flows by observing that the flow of capital accumulation (investment) and savings are always, by definition, equal. Keynes was right. Hard thinking to understand this equality is best not undertaken and, fortunately, is not required. An accounting exercise suffices. Income equals investment plus consumption. Income minus consumption equals savings. Ergo investment equals savings.

This analysis is perfectly sound. On its face it also seems innocuous. But it is the "singularity" from which the Keynesian revolution sprang and upended economics.

Like Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers performing the tango, the flow of investment and savings move as one. But as we know, all unseen, Fred is doing the leading. Keynes had investment doing the leading. All of his revolution then fell into place once investment, as he thought, was hostage to entrepreneurial "animal spirits". He observed that such spirits can wax and wane, and go into lengthy periods of funk when entrepreneurs become pessimistic about their ability to produce things that people will want to buy at profitable prices.

As George Gilder (*Wealth and Poverty,* 2012 edition) perceptively notes, "the actual works of Keynes ... are far more favourable to supply side economic policy than current Keynesians comprehend". Keynes, he suggests, got right the role of entrepreneurial "animal spirits" in driving growth. He "restored to a position of appropriate centrality in economic thought the vital role and activity of the individual capitalist". Unfortunately Keynes then took the eccentric path of suggesting that the "socialisation" of investment was the way to ensure sufficient investment and full employment. I don't want to go into this in any detail because nobody else did; and certainly not his acolytes. They jumped ship at this point to save themselves—I assume from potential ridicule—and separately developed Keynesian economics.

Joan Robinson, one of Keynes's acolytes at Cambridge, reportedly said that Keynesian economics had to be explained to Keynes. Conjecture the scene with all around him singing his praises for developing this new economics. "But—but that's not what I meant", was probably stillborn on his lips as he savoured the accuracy of his prediction to George Bernard Shaw that he was about to revolutionise economics.

Enough of conjecture; in jumping ship his acolytes and subsequent followers developed an economics (Keynesianism) which said, well, if entrepreneurs are worried about their products not being bought we'll supplement demand through dollops of government expenditure. How did this catch on and become entrenched in the language and policy of economics? Perhaps the allure of its surface simplicity effectively veils its simplistic core. Who can say? I have to admit to succumbing to its allure for some years in the distant past. But, simplistic or not, make no mistake; Keynesian economics has shown itself to be strong enough to repel all challenges. The bulk of the economics professions, including many economists of renown, have kept the faith over six decades and more. It is a powerful explanation of the way the world works. It is not easily taken apart. If it were, it would have been. And, as tilting at windmills is a wearying task, it is fortunate that my objective is not to rail against Keynesianism *per se*—at least not right now. My objective is to uncover its implications for the way the economic world is viewed and to contrast this with what I believe to be a more accurate vision courtesy of Adam Smith, albeit with some help, perversely enough, from Keynes's entrepreneurial man.

Smith concentrated his economics on production (based on the scope for exchange, the potential extent of the market, and the benefits of the division of labour). So unconcerned was he about demand that he was insistent that "what is annually saved is as readily consumed as what is annually spent". This perceptively pointed the way to Say's Law before J.-B. Say, as it did to Mill's later spirited rejection of the possibility of any endemic shortage of demand. Gilder charges that Smith puts the mechanism of the market at the centre of capitalist growth rather than entrepreneurial man. "Man, however, not mechanism is the heart of capitalist growth." This, I think, does too little justice to both Smith and to the role of market mechanisms.

Who does Gilder think Smith had in mind in deciding what and how much to produce? Smith also identified saving ("parsimony" or "frugality") as the essential ingredient of capital accumulation by which nations grow "opulent". Again it was implicit that particular men of vision put savings to work. However, it must be conceded that this wasn't made explicit; as Keynes rightly made it explicit. To that more limited extent Gilder's charge sticks. As to market mechanisms; successful entrepreneurs operate in sync with the market and with market prices even while hoping to mould them. It is a two-way street. Producing something for ten dollars which can only be sold for nine doesn't work, however apparently inspired the venture. Prices move instructively to guide entrepreneurs in individual product markets. And when it is all put together hesitantly and with many hiccups, supply overall (near enough) matches demand. As Mr Micawber might have said, result happiness. Keynes simply ignored market prices, and this is fatal to economic analysis. His economics was all macro and no micro. Smith specifically had prices shifting resources from one endeavour to another as market prices differed from what he called "natural prices" (costs of production). That his costs were expressed as labour costs is incidental and probably reflects, in large part, the times in which he lived.

Economics can say very little about the world

without explicitly considering the role of markets and prices. Gilder understates the case; Smith did not; Keynes ignored the whole matter. On the other hand, Keynes trumped Smith in explicitly giving entrepreneurial expectations primacy in driving economic growth in an uncertain world. Maybe if Smith's economics doesn't quite do it alone, bringing along Keynes's entrepreneurial man completes the picture. The combination of the two provides an insightful perspective on the current economic malaise and also an instructive set of tools. In contrast, the current economic malaise has left Keynesianism bereft of insight and answers.

Imagine a world of unemployment, where industry is producing less than its capacity, where consumers are cautious and uncertain and saving more of their income than they formerly did, and where government has built up onerous debt and is running large deficits. Not too much imagination is required. It is real life in the United States, in most of Europe and, to a lesser extent, in Australia.

Now imagine, along with most economists, most governments, and the IMF, you are locked into thinking like a Keynesian. In this mindset, demand drives growth. How in the world do you put things right; reduce unemployment and increase economic growth? More government spending is difficult. With so much outstanding debt to service, financial markets react badly to new debt. If only those pesky consumers still in jobs would lift their spending—*presumably on existing products produced by existing industries and businesses*—which they clearly don't want to do. In the wings, the IMF wrings its hands about too much government austerity reducing demand; but less austerity putting the system at risk.

It is no wonder that the situation looks conflicted and hopeless and that despondency hovers. Focusing on demand is focusing on the cart when the focus should be on the horse. The horse in this case is production and those who drive production to new heights and how they do it. A particular variant of this intellectual myopia is treating business investment and consumer spending as similar parts of a congealed aggregate called domestic demand.

Business investment and consumer spending are chalk and cheese. They are quite different. One is the wellspring of producing more goods and services; the other eats them up. Buying and drinking wine (consumption) is not the same as, and comes after, planting vines (investment) and then picking, pressing, maturing and bottling (production). There are two essential sides to an economy: the producing side and the buying side. Both are necessary. However, boundless wants go unrequited without production. Business investment and production have primacy, not willy-nilly spending. Consumer spending and most government spending eat up production; they don't add to it.

Christine Lagarde and her IMF economists recently claimed that the United States government's "deficit reduction in 2013 has been excessively rapid and ill-designed". The IMF also issued a mea culpa for underestimating the effect of austerity measures on economic growth in Europe. Where does this lead except to despondency? Excessive government expenditure results in untenable deficits and debt which can't continue. But, apparently, cutting government expenditure results in untenable reductions in economic growth. What a dilemma. Just maybe the economics is wrong. There is no doubt that withdrawing wasteful government expenditure is disruptive. The process can be likened to withdrawing drugs from an addict. The initial effect is not pretty. But, given time, private sector investment and production will more than take up the slack.

Let's not fall into the trap of becoming despondent because economic policy-making is inept. Free markets are resilient and survive maladministration.

It is silly to think that the IMF or anybody in the economics profession does not understand the role of business investment and production in contributing to economic growth. Of course they do; that isn't the point. It's the emphasis they give to the demand side of the economy in driving growth, courtesy of Keynesianism, that creates a policy dilemma and which, in turn, generates an air of despondency. Economic salvation lies on the supply side; on the Adam Smith side. The key is to give business the scope and freedom to invest by cutting the government's claim on resources and by reducing regulatory obstacles to hiring labour, developing and using resources, and to exploiting opportunities. But let's not fall into the trap of becoming despondent because economic policy-making is inept. Free markets are resilient and survive maladministration.

One important measure of this resilience, in keeping with Smith's focus on the supply side and with Keynes's focus on entrepreneurial man, is the continued development of new businesses throughout the course of economic cycles. As is generally the case, US data are more readily available than most. The Bureau of Labor Statistics

publishes a quarterly series that it calls "births of business establishments". I have converted this to an annual series of "new business start-ups" below.

New business start-ups (x 1000)

2002	812
2003	777
2004	829
2005	867
2006	872
2007	844
2008	796
2009	701
2010	742
2011	781
2012	769

There was a fall-off in new business start-ups in 2009 during the height of the recent recession (and of course a rise in business failures). But the impressive aspect of this data is how well start-ups held up and how quickly they began to recover.

It is often forgotten that the economy is a large venture. Booms and recessions represent the excess or paucity of icing on the cake. Free-market economies remain largely intact throughout business cycles and are continually providing price signals and throwing up business opportunities. Savings also tend to rise during recessions, providing the wherewithal to fuel investment in new opportunities.

As long as your focus is an Adam Smith one of looking at the supply side, the increased propensity to save is a promising development. If you are a Keynesian and preoccupied with demand you will find only cause for despondency in increased saving.

The sterling performance of free-market economies in increasing living standards decade after decade is a fair indication that, on the whole, optimistic predictions of economic outcomes consistently turn out to be closer to the mark than pessimistic ones. Which is not to say, of course, that the application of better economics would not improve outcomes.

---

*Peter Smith's book **Bad Economics** was published recently by Connor Court.*

On Hearing "Sail Along Silvery Moon"

"Sail Along Silvery Moon",
The sound of summer when
We fell in love with teenage queens
Before we grew to men;

"Sail Along Silvery Moon",
You broke my heart and I
Descended to the underworld
To sing myself or die;

"Sail Along Silvery Moon",
The sound of summer when
We fell in love with teenage queens
And now I hear again

"Sail Along Silvery Moon"
But, alas, I am too old
To follow you across the sky—
My heart's grown cold;

"Sail Along Silvery Moon"
Rolling back the years,
Melting my heart of ice,
Turning it to tears;

"Sail Along Silvery Moon",
The sound of summer when
We fell in love with teenage queens.
I'm back in love again!

"Sail Along Silvery Moon".

Gabriel Fitzmaurice

Michael Connor

Rupert Bombs in Melbourne

Hay fever season is here and the election campaign is finally ending. Rows of flags at Melbourne airport carry dismal green-tinged and unflattering images of Rupert Murdoch's face. His features contort as the flags snap in the breeze. It's not very cheerful advertising for *Rupert*, a new play by David Williamson for the Melbourne Theatre Company. The coincidence of opening during the election must have seemed a good omen for a play about the media mogul whose papers and television interests had been annoying the Prime Minister and the authoritarian commentariat. And even before it premiered, showing there is always an opening for another Leftie play, it was selected for theatre festival performances in Washington in March 2014.

MTC ticket buyers were assured the new Williamson play was to be a "maverick theatrical presentation" of "what promises to be one of the most discussed plays of the decade". Posters and publicity material reproduced the stern green portrait and carried a question-and-answer: "Think you know this man? Think again."

The matinee audience queue cheerfully for snacks and drinks, politely ignoring vendors of overpriced programs. Bells ring and an amplified port wine voice tells us *Ruuuuupert* is about to begin. Glasses emptied, ice-cream sticks disposed of, crumbs brushed away, we hurry past the big green grim Murdoch portrait on the wall and descend into the Playhouse. Two ladies sitting beside me perfectly capture the excitement. As we wait, and wait for the play to start, they consult a smartphone which brings unexpected news about race 8, number 9. Ten minutes late *Rupert* begins.

Enter a sprightly media mogul, Sean O'Shea, texting. The novelty delights the audience. He talks directly to us and, unlike the poster, seems happy and extroverted, though his evil nature is soon revealed. He reads us a Tweet about Tony Abbott: "Conviction politicians hard to find anywhere. Australia's Tony Abbott rare exception." A groan is heard from those parts of the audience who enjoy theatre-going in order to groan audibly to show they have correct thoughts. A lone anti-groan protestor applauds so loudly that my palms hurt. Williamson doesn't include the concluding sentence of the offending Tweet: "Opponent Rudd all over the place convincing nobody."

Older Rupert, who is to act as the narrator, prepares to introduce a younger Rupert, Guy Edmonds, who will act out his life. A curtain at the back opens, the *Superman* theme plays, it's a touching moment, and the actor enters.

This isn't the advertised play about Murdoch. We have gone back in time to the Phillip Street Revues, La Mama and Nimrod in the 1960s and early 1970s. It's funny, yet *Rupert* is the biggest theatrical disappointment so far this season. Williamson hasn't come up with a drama, he's produced a smooth, amusing, fast-paced revue; while he talked in publicity material of his great affection for Shakespeare's *Richard III* there is no Plantagenet/Murdoch tragedy here. If the blurb and marketing represent what Williamson was aiming for, then *Rupert* is a failure of nerve on the part of the playwright.

There is nothing new here, and nothing at all about the man that couldn't be picked up in a quick scan of negative internet essays. The performance doesn't even seem aware of what's happening around us, for Murdoch and his newspapers are today's political news as Kevin Rudd storms about complaining that the media master and his servants don't love him like they did in the days of "Kevin 07". We do get some old history but not the recent bits about Murdoch minion Andrew Bolt and the Racial Discrimination Act or the attempt by the

Rupert played at the Arts Centre Melbourne Playhouse from August 24 to September 28.
Savages played at fortyfivedownstairs from August 16 to September 8.

Labor government to introduce press censorship—both cases where Murdoch and News Ltd supported free speech and the Left intelligentsia supported illiberalism. Though we are reminded of old and classic tabloid headlines including the London *Sun*'s "Gotcha!" and the *New York Post*'s "Headless Body in Topless Bar"—the latter available on T-shirts from the *Post*—there is no mention of the exciting tabloid covers that have been appearing during the present election. *Rupert* is a PowerPoint presentation with actors; a biography in search of a playwright. The MTC marketing and promotion seem to have been put together without anyone actually reading the script to see what they were selling.

The revue format works best in an intimate setting and it loses much by being played in a large auditorium where establishing the necessary close bond between performers and audience becomes more difficult. O'Shea does try, and much of his banter is directed towards us, or to individuals in the audience. Director Lee Lewis enters completely into the bouncy revue tradition, only at one point seeming to lose direction. An account of the famous "Gotcha!" headline and the sinking of the *Belgrano* is accompanied by a large black-and-white projection of a young fearful black soldier. The image stopped the funniness in its tracks and it stayed on the screen as the performance moved on. While there it was impossible to take in or take seriously whatever was being said on the stage.

The team of actors pick up and effortlessly drop different characters: Rohan Rivett, Dame Elisabeth Murdoch, wives and children, Reagan, Thatcher, even Billy McMahon and Gorton get a mention or appear on stage. Gough Whitlam is a cartoon Whitlam face. The younger actors may not even know anything about the historical ghosts they are playing. The Packer family are *Tribune*-era cartoon plutocrats as the actors slap on large bellies and transform themselves into buffoons. It isn't a way of playing that allows for any subtlety. Though it might work in prancing through the life of a comic figure like Bob Ellis. Williamson's *Ellis*, that could be fun.

The script, oddly for a political play, could please both Murdoch enemies and admirers, as the very same words evoke different responses. For Murdoch haters the story illustrated everything bad they knew about the man and his evil ways. Every time he opened his mouth they happily shuddered at the horror and awfulness of his thoughts and deeds. But start your day with News Ltd news and opinion and the same words give pleasure, as common sense is recognised. A political play produced with all the resources of a big brassy subsidised theatre production is aimed at a political enemy but when the Williamson text is fired it makes a funny big noise and suddenly dies. Playing safe, it collapses.

When David Williamson tries to say something serious at the end of the play it looks like a contrived ending to bring the piece to a close. Rupert, standing centre stage, makes remarks about free enterprise and individualism which various righteous characters standing on the sidelines strike down with flaming Left integrity putdowns. As they speak the set around them is stripped by stagehands and then the characters slowly leave until only Rupert is on the bare stage. It's all rather embarrassing and we even get what seems to be Occupy Wall Street and 1 per cent platitudes from the author's cut-outs. Solitary Rupert looks at us and says, "I'm not finished yet," and the blackout closes the performance.

Williamson hopes *Rupert* will get audiences talking and it does. As we leave the theatre some people—it is Melbourne—are discussing the intimate details of the Murdoch family tree.

Stopping at the ATM

Melbourne theatre and gallery fortyfive-downstairs promote themselves as being "unfunded". When they staged *Do Not Go Gently* by Patricia Cornelius in 2010 they did so using an Australia Council Theatre Board grant for $52,663. The money came only after the director did some "research" and found that Theatre Board members had only read the first pages. He resubmitted the text and, surprise, was successful. Cornelius's new play *Savages* received $45,810 from the same source. The play was commissioned by the Melbourne Theatre Company and this is its first performance. It is a one-act play which runs for seventy-five minutes in an auditorium which seats no more than 150 people. Patricia Cornelius is on the Literature Board, and though it is not uncommon for members appointed to one board to pick up a grant from another board it does make the Australia Council look like an elitist club for insiders.

Cruising to barbarism

In the central playing space a wide wooden platform slopes sharply upwards towards a railing: it represents the deck and rail of a cruise ship. The entrance to the auditorium is decorated with colourful streamers. There are two blocks of seats and the audience can choose to sit either facing straight on or at one side. Greeting her audience, producer Mary Lou Jelbart explains to them that they about to see "a morality tale".

With the opening blackout four bare-chested

men approach the playing area. The sound effects scream, the room vibrates. In semi-darkness the actors move and gyrate like dangerous, threatening, wild animals. Prologue ended they shirt-up, grab bags and meet up for the cruise of their life. This is Patricia Cornelius's *Savages*, and they are her savages. It seems blokey and matey like a XXXX advertisement but, as the program states, this is "the dark side of mateship". It's going to get nasty and in the background, though it is never mentioned, is the cruel death of Dianne Brimble. In the prologue moments the four men as savage beasts in this gender wars essay have been treated by writer and director with the same disdain they themselves will later turn towards the female passengers on the ship.

Under Susie Dee's direction the four actors work together, blending words and movement. Cornelius's writing uses banal and obscene vocabulary to construct the troubled bonding between the actors. Lyall Brooks, Luke Elliot, James O'Connell and Mark Tregonning are the foursome of late-thirty-somethings who destroy every personal relationship they touch. Mateship, marriage, families are broken and betrayed. The cruise ship offers the possibility of sex, and produces violent, damaging anger when this is frustrated.

At the beginning, as they enter and encounter each other to cries of "mate" and make repetitive noises of recognition, it's a familiar beer advertisement world of comic Australian male behaviour. The Australian male lexicon Cornelius uses comes from an ocker-for-beginners textbook. Choosing crudities, blokey slang, repetitions and rhymes, the author's words bounce from actor to actor in lively sharp-mouthed exchanges. Bound in by obscenities and a poverty of anything but the most ordinary of perceptions, their language fixes them in violent and broken lives. Dance and physical movements pad out the text as the four getting-older actors give muscular exhibitions of male display and pride which always point towards the underlying violence on the cusp of taking them over.

A door opens in the floor and the four enter a confined space which is their tiny suffocating cruise ship cabin. Their fantasy of romantic luxury is reduced to a cramped, windowless box. They are born losers in a world of dying and desperate masculinity which has turned bitter and dangerous. The language of hate and loathing they heap on women is brutal and degrading and yet perhaps even more moderate than real language that emerged in the investigation into Dianne Brimble's death.

This agitprop play of Susan Faludi-influenced platitudes and feminist prejudice is intended to be an incisive seventy-five-minute indictment of male behaviour during a salt-water sexual odyssey: "there have been so many dire incidents in the news about groups of men in teams and clubs on tours and trips that I wanted to take them on". But not all cruises end in violence. If Cornelius had opened another cabin door in her imaginary liner she would have found women who mirror her broken working-class men.

The barbarism of our society is not confined to a gender or a class. It is equally shared by working-class men and women and even the foul-mouthed intellectual women who opinionate bitterness and hatred and yet are welcomed to left-wing writers' festivals and the ABC.

The barbarism of our society is not confined to a gender or a class. It is equally shared by working-class men and women and even the foul-mouthed intellectual women who opinionate and Tweet bitterness and hatred and yet are welcomed to left-wing writers' festivals and the ABC. The play itself, while examining barbarism, uses barbarism to entertain. While repulsed by the vileness of these men towards women, the play has depicted these male characters, and expects its analysis to be applied to other male groups, as subhuman "savages" in its title, prologue and during the performance. What her fictional men do to women, the playwright does to them. It's two sides of the same prejudice.

Cornelius's "savages" are defined by their language. The audience, a typically sophisticated and well-educated group, laugh at the obscenities. The first laugh comes with the first expletive—one young woman gives an extra loud and unmissable performance. Then comes expletive and echoing laugh; then expletive and then laugh. The obscenities are there to entertain. The director, Susie Dee, offers a program note which includes this observation: "Recently in Australia there has been a rush to dig up the 'classics' in order to adapt or reinvent (we might even say fuck with) them." This is the language of our intelligentsia, and it is part of the same barbarism the play is holding up for criticism.

George Thomas

Cricket: Corinthian Spirit to Greek Tragedy

In England, where cricket has since the nineteenth century been played full-time during the warmer months, cricketers were traditionally divided into amateurs ("gentlemen") and professionals ("players"). Most of the amateurs were educated at independent schools and at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, each of which had a cricket team that played first-class cricket against the counties. The counties, and the national Test team, were almost always captained by amateurs. An annual match at Lord's, Gentlemen v Players, had been played since 1806, and was not only a virtual trial match for the Test team, but also a social occasion, like the annual Eton v Harrow and Oxford v Cambridge matches, which were also held at Lord's in the same few weeks in July.

Most importantly, the amateurs were supposed to be above money concerns and therefore able to uphold the spirit of the game; they could play to win without fear of defeat. More implicit was that they were from the leadership class, the class that had always provided the officers in the armed services, the higher imperial administrators and the nation's politicians, and had therefore been brought up to lead. The reality, of course, did not always live up to the ideal, or anywhere near it. There has been no more ruthless, unsportsmanlike captain in Test history than the English amateur Douglas Jardine.

Captaincy in cricket is a demanding role. Apart from making the on-field decisions, the captain is also the public spokesman for the team, and to a large extent (though less so now in the higher forms of the game) he has to manage and organise the team. In cricket, which is both a team and an individual game, the players often require a great deal of management, and the public pressure on a captain can be enormous. The ideal cricket captain would resemble Ernest Shackleton.

But in the 1950s, British society was changing, and had been changing since at least the First World War, when the leadership class had made so many poor decisions with such appalling consequences. The debacle of the Suez crisis in 1956, Charles Williams believes, was the point at which general public opinion finally abandoned its respect for aristocracy.

Amateurism itself was changing. True, it had just had some notable successes, with Edmund Hillary, the beekeeper, conquering Everest, and Roger Bannister, the medical student whose training consisted largely of running from his digs to the hospital and back every day, conquering the four-minute mile. But the young gentleman of leisure had disappeared, and few of the officially amateur cricketers could afford to play for nothing. It was reasonable to expect the counties to compensate the amateurs for travel and accommodation expenses, but many amateurs demanded more.

Some amateurs were employed by their counties in administrative positions. But playing cricket full-time leaves little time for other work, so some of these positions were sinecures, at least in summer. Other amateurs were employed by companies or individuals associated with the county clubs, in a variety of positions. The Sussex captain was employed by the cricket-loving Duke of Norfolk, ostensibly as his archivist at Arundel Castle.

When the professionals began to realise that some of the amateurs were making more from the game than they were themselves, their discontent grew. Before the tour of Australia and New Zealand in 1958-59, Jim Laker, the England professional off-spin bowler, worked out that if he toured as an amateur, with the various allowances he would

---

Gentlemen & Players: The Death of Amateurism in Cricket
by Charles Williams
Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2012, 202 pages, $39.99

The Last Everyday Hero: The Bert Sutcliffe Story
by Richard Boock
Longacre, 2010, 279 pages, $45

receive, some of them tax-free, he would be better off than if he toured as a professional on a wage. The alarmed authorities rejected his request to do so.

The MCC, the club of amateurs that ran English cricket until the late 1960s, established a committee to look into the anomalies. Chaired by the Duke of Norfolk, the committee met in various shapes under various titles over five years, and despite its heavy pro-amateur bias, it came to recognise that the difficulties of sustaining the distinction between amateur and professional were becoming more obvious and more burdensome. Eventually in exasperation in 1962 they decided to abandon the distinction altogether and allow every cricketer to make whatever he could from the game.

Many observers felt that the game had lost something. Norman Preston, the editor of *Wisden Cricketers' Almanack*, lamented:

> We live in a changing world. Conditions are vastly different from the days of our grandparents; but is it wise to throw everything overboard? ... By doing away with the amateur, cricket is in danger of losing the spirit of freedom and gaiety which the best amateur players brought to the game.

Looking back in his memoirs in 1985, the old amateur and Cambridge, Glamorgan and England captain Tony Lewis wrote:

> I would not have argued for [amateurism's] retention, but 20 years later I can see that its best qualities of independence and unselfishness have not been replaced by anything half as good. When amateurism went, cricket then became, in the minds of all eleven men in the team, a cash business. It is the worse for it.

Yet on the face of things, little changed. Of the forty-nine amateurs who were playing county cricket in 1962 (each county's amateurs were always listed in *Wisden*), thirty-five continued playing. Of the next nine England Test captains, six had played as amateurs in 1962.

The last of these old amateurs, Mike Brearley, embodied the best of the amateur spirit till the end. A captain of Cambridge and Middlesex, who interrupted his cricket career with an academic career (or vice versa), he was never quite up the standard of Test batsmanship, but his captaincy ability is unarguable. In 1981, at the age of thirty-nine, he was recalled to captain an England side that was one-nil down in the series and demoralised after the Second Test against Australia. With the same players, he led England to famous victories in the next three Tests, and the triumphant regaining of the Ashes.

Charles Williams was himself an amateur cricketer, playing as a batsman for Oxford (captain in 1955) and Essex in the 1950s. He provides vivid portraits of some of his prominent contemporaries and recalls his playing days fondly. After each county match, the amateurs in the Essex team would tell the captain (an amateur) what their expenses had been and he would pay them cash out of a bag he carried around for the purpose, no receipts required, no questions asked. They were gentlemen, after all.

Williams seems to have had an idyllic upper-class upbringing. Living in Oxford, he used to walk past the colleges and parks on his way to school. Later, studying at the university, he played cricket in the same parks. Life wasn't always easy, however:

> Sorting the cigarette cards between "gentlemen" and "players" revealed the dreaded secret that some of the amateurs could not possibly be regarded as "gentlemen" as we knew it ... The Australian international players were amateurs ... but they did not sound or act like "gentlemen". It was, as any boy would have said at the time, most perplexing.

He later became a Labour politician. He is now Lord Williams of Elvel, and a noted biographer (of Adenauer, de Gaulle, Macmillan, Pétain—and Bradman). While arguing that "amateurism in the highest levels of cricket became so ludicrous in its presentation and practice that it had to go" ("it had to go" sounds very Labour-ish) he nevertheless is also nostalgic for something lost (in a rather un-Labour-ish way, except for the crack about dinosaurs):

> there were features of amateurism—the Corinthian spirit, if you like, as it used to be called, where the only object was to play a game with honour and verve—that we may regret having thrown overboard. Perhaps—who knows?—the dinosaurs may have had a point.

There is another book waiting to be written on that same spirit as it was manifest in cricket around the world. Of the seven principal Test-playing countries, only Australia has never had an Oxbridge captain. The only Oxbridge man to play Tests for Australia was Sammy Woods (in 1888, while studying at Cambridge, he played three Tests for the touring Australians) although in 1963 Ian McLachlan (Cambridge XI, 1956 to 1958) was twelfth man in one Test. The West Indies, in the days when all its captains were white, had at least three Oxbridge captains; the first black captain,

Frank Worrell, was a graduate of the University of Manchester. Imran Khan (Oxford XI, 1973 to 1975) captained Pakistan with great distinction and success for several years, which is an achievement not to be underestimated.

South Africa had two captains—Jack Cheetham in the 1950s and Peter van der Merwe in the 1960s—whose batting achievements in Tests were modest but whose leadership brought unexpected success. Both were educated at South Africa's leading private schools and universities. Between Cheetham and van der Merwe came Clive van Ryneveld (Oxford XI, 1948 to 1950). New Zealand's captains seem to have been mostly graduates or at least professionals, with a high proportion of schoolteachers. India and Pakistan have drawn most of their cricketers from the higher levels of society; India's captains have included the two Nawabs of Pataudi, father and son, both of them Oxford men.

Few Australian captains have even been graduates. One exception was Ian Craig, unwisely chosen as captain at the age of twenty-two for one series in the 1950s above older and better players such as Neil Harvey and Richie Benaud. The Australian tradition has been to choose the captain from among the best team, and any deviation from this policy has always brought controversy, not least among the other players. The national egalitarian spirit trumps the Corinthian. And, it must be added, Australia has been the most successful country in international cricket history.

He returned to the ground the same afternoon, resumed his innings with his head wrapped in bandages, equalled the Test record for hitting sixes, and was still there not out when his last team-mate was dismissed.

Until the Packer revolution of the late 1970s began to pump enormous amounts of money into the game, all the cricket countries other than England were semi-amateur. Their Test players, while on duty, were paid something to compensate for their time away from their normal employment. Otherwise they played their club and interstate or inter-provincial cricket for the love of it.

In his book *The Summer Game*, Gideon Haigh examined, among other things, the economics of Australian cricket in the 1950s and 1960s as it affected the players. *The Last Everyday Hero*, Richard Boock's biography of Bert Sutcliffe, does something similar, if incidentally, for New Zealand cricket in the same period.

Sutcliffe (1923–2001) was one of the few genuinely great cricketers New Zealand has produced. For ten years or so from the late 1940s he was one of the very best batsmen in the world. At the time there were so few Test-quality players in New Zealand that several batsmen were selected for the Test team before they had made even one century in the Plunket Shield, New Zealand's annual inter-provincial tournament. But Sutcliffe reeled off centuries constantly, and converted many of them into double, and even triple centuries. When he broke his own New Zealand record of 355, he made 385 for Otago out of a team total of 500; there were twenty-nine extras and the other ten batsmen made only eighty-six runs altogether.

But it was not just the quantity of runs he scored, or the ease and speed with which he scored them, or even the attractiveness of his batting—words such as *beauty*, *elegance* and *grace* appear constantly in the assessments by his contemporaries—that made him admired. He appears to have been a man it was impossible to dislike. In the many photographs in *The Last Everyday Hero* he looks cheerful, usually beaming an open, unaffected smile. Throughout the interviews that form the basis of the book, there is not the slightest hint of ill-feeling towards him. One of his team-mates remembered, "He was quite a magical fellow."

Sutcliffe's courage and team spirit were at times heroic. On a damp pitch in Johannesburg in 1953-54, South Africa's fastest bowler was getting the ball to rise sharply and dangerously. Several New Zealand batsmen were struck severe blows. Two were taken straight to hospital, including Sutcliffe, who had been knocked unconscious by a blow to the head. At the hospital, when some idiotic doctor gave the swelling a rough prod, Sutcliffe fainted from the pain. But he returned to the ground the same afternoon, resumed his innings with his head wrapped in bandages, equalled the Test record for hitting sixes, and was still there not out when his last team-mate was dismissed.

Two years later New Zealand toured Pakistan and India, which in those days were hazardous places for visiting sportsmen even before they got onto the ground. Illness and the living conditions wore the players down. For most matches the team was selected on the basis of whoever showed up at breakfast on the first day. Sutcliffe played in every Test and as usual led the batting, but the effort told: when he returned home he had lost two stone from his already trim build and was suffering insomnia and the after-effects of dysentery.

In the Test series against the West Indies that followed the team's return, Sutcliffe struggled through the first two matches then had to drop out on medical advice. After losing the first three of the four Tests, New Zealand won the fourth in Auckland. It was the country's first-ever Test victory, after twenty-six years and forty-five matches. The convalescent Sutcliffe could only listen to the radio commentary at his sporting goods shop in Dunedin; but typically, when interviewed by the local paper, he described New Zealand's victory as the biggest moment of his cricketing career.

In 1959, at the age of thirty-five, he retired from Test cricket. He was still one of the two best batsmen in the country, but he could simply no longer afford to play. His business had struggled in his frequent absences, and his debts had mounted. A couple of years later he was advised to declare himself bankrupt, but he refused, determined to pay off his creditors. He accepted an offer to work as a salesman for an ice-cream company in the North Island, and sold his house in Dunedin to settle his debts. On the eve of his departure the Dunedin cricket fraternity staged a one-day benefit match in his honour, and most of the New Zealand Test players took part, the sun shone, the crowds came, and Sutcliffe scored a century and received the gate takings of £1300—which was virtually all his family had when they got to their new home.

He continued to play successfully in the Plunket Shield, and in early 1965, when he was forty-one and his prowess had begun to decline, the selectors asked him to join the touring side to India, Pakistan and England that year. They hoped his experience would help the mainly young side. He accepted, and scored a century against India. But in the First Test in England he was struck on the head by a fast lifting ball and had to retire hurt. Still in pain, he returned in the second innings and made 53 in a partnership of 104 with a nineteen-year-old team-mate that averted an innings defeat. But the injury kept him out of the rest of the series, and not surprisingly he retired from Test cricket for good. Many of the young players of the 1965 team went on to form the nucleus of the successful New Zealand sides of the 1970s; Sutcliffe's presence may have had just the influence the selectors had hoped.

One of the drawbacks of an amateur cricketing organisation is that the amateurism can manifest itself in undesirable ways. The selectors, for example, were not always successful with their plans. Lacking the money that might have enabled them to travel around the country and study every potential player, they often resorted to theories. In choosing the 1953-54 side to tour South Africa they decided fitness was paramount, and left several of the best, if a little plump, players at home; for the 1958 tour of England they decided to go for youth ahead of experience, and chose several young batsmen who were simply not ready for Test cricket. New Zealand lost each of those five-Test series four-nil.

Another consequence of amateurism was clear on the tour to Pakistan and India in 1955-56. There was enough money to pay for medical consultations, but not enough for constant medical supervision. One of the team, Matt Poore, failed to take his gastric medications correctly, and one day went to sleep standing up in the field. At another stage of the tour, after being bitten by a stray dog he was trying to remove from the ground, Poore was prescribed a course of precautionary injections; over the next fortnight his team-mates took turns administering the daily injection into his stomach. Many of the players, Sutcliffe among them, took years to recover fully from the tour; some never recovered.

Sutcliffe was a qualified PE teacher, and was able to provide some training and fitness guidance to his team-mates that they would otherwise have had to go without. And having taught himself to play the piano, he also led the regular singalongs that helped to maintain team morale.

For all his efforts, in his forty-two Tests between 1947 and 1965 Sutcliffe never played in a winning team. But he always played the game in a spirit that was beyond reproach—in the finest amateur tradition. In fact the New Zealanders, who played because they loved playing cricket, and then went on with their careers, appear to have had a unique *esprit de corps* at the time. The other countries tended to be either too concerned about winning and losing, or too riven by the social tensions in their countries and teams, to share the New Zealanders' spirit.

When they won their first Test in Auckland in 1956, the New Zealanders invited their opponents to join in their joyful celebrations. Interviewed for this book, one of the West Indians recalled:

> had we not lost that day, we wouldn't have been party to this magnificent celebration. If we'd actually won, it wouldn't have been half as good ... In those days, if you lost a Test match it wasn't the end of the world ... The most important aspect was that you tried to win ... [but] it was just a game. I don't know when it started becoming something else.

George Thomas is deputy editor of ***Quadrant****.*

Neil McDonald

Restoring *The Big Sleep*

For the last thirty years or more, film archives and restorers have been hard at work correcting the vandalism of the film industry in the twentieth century. There has been Ronald Haver's recreation of George Cukor's *A Star is Born* (1954) using the surviving complete soundtrack plus some newly discovered footage and stills. Bob Gitt at the UCLA Film Archive found most of the sequences that had been removed at the insistence of exhibitors during the first screenings of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1943). Some sequences have still not been found. The battered nitrate print I saw in the 1950s included a sequence not in the restoration. "We are still looking," Gitt told me at the 1997 Sydney Film Festival.

Another restoration that dates back to the late 1970s was of Orson Welles's *Macbeth* (1948). The film is famous for having been shot in two weeks at Republic, a studio noted for its B westerns. In these circumstances one would have thought they would have let well alone. But for the American release Republic insisted on the revoicing of sequences where the Scottish accents Welles as Macbeth and his cast had adopted were thought to be too thick. The studio also cut the porter scene and in the process broke up an extraordinary extended take so that it was edited more conventionally. As well, they removed a final sequence where after Macbeth is killed and the rightful king is on the throne, one of the court goes to find the Weird Sisters and we hear "The charms wound up". As we discovered in Australia when a 16mm print from New Zealand became available, these cuts were made only to the American prints, with Welles's director's cut being released in Europe and the British Commonwealth.

Warner Brothers' interventions into *The Big Sleep*, however, were anything but corporate vandalism. Based on a novel by Raymond Chandler published in 1939, and scripted by William Faulkner, Jules Furthman and Leigh Brackett, the film was completed by director Howard Hawks early in 1945. The studio delayed its release until the backlog of Second World War movies had been distributed. Meanwhile the co-star, Lauren Bacall, miscast in *Confidential Agent*, had received appalling reviews. Worried that some of the scenes in *The Big Sleep* didn't do the new star justice, Bacall's agent, Charles K. Feldman, wrote to Jack Warner suggesting a reshoot. Warner agreed, some extra scenes were written and Hawks, the male lead, Humphrey Bogart, Bacall and some of the supporting cast went back into the studio. The film was released in 1946 and proved to be a great success. The first version more or less disappeared—until a nitrate print was discovered by Bob Gitt in the UCLA Film Archive, restored and screened for a brief season in 1997. In 2000 both versions were released on DVD. Although the transfers are immaculate, I recall Warners prints of the 1940s as darker and with greater contrast than they appear here, especially when the cinematographer was Sid Hickox. Nevertheless, having these two versions available illuminates one of the acknowledged masterpieces of American cinema.

From the outset viewers found the film bewildering. Certainly it was in the popular hard-boiled detective style that had begun in the pulp magazines and was by the 1940s regularly appearing in hard cover on the best-seller lists and of course being adapted to film (*The Maltese Falcon*, *Out of the Past*). The basic plot, while not a cliché, was at least familiar to readers and filmgoers. Private eye Philip Marlowe (Bogart) is summoned to the lavish mansion of General Sternwood (Charles Waldron) to investigate the attempted blackmail of his nymphomaniac daughter, Carmen (Martha Vickers). He encounters the General's older daughter Vivian (Bacall) "drinking her lunch out of a bottle", follows various leads to a bookshop and a house in Laverne Terrace, where Marlowe finds Carmen in a sleazy living room, drugged on a chair in front of a concealed camera with the body of the blackmailer at her feet.

At this point the film simply doesn't make sense. Why is Carmen worried about a picture of herself when she is fully clothed? Why is the client we see in the bookstore so nervous? What are the books that are being cleared out of the back of the store? Much of this is solved when you read Chandler's original. The bookshop is a pornographic lending library, "a smut racket". Carmen is naked when Marlowe finds her; and she wants to get back a nude picture of herself. The film-makers did their best—the shooting script has Carmen in a dressing gown that seems as though it had been hastily put over her—but the censorship of the time would not permit even that. Director and performers tried to suggest more but it was beyond even the formidable talents of Hawks, Bogart and Vickers. Of course a number of filmgoers at the time would have read the book and realised what Hawks, his writers and actors were implying, as I did when I first saw the *The Big Sleep* on television. And indeed, 1940s censorship aside, the first half of the film is excellent Raymond Chandler. Most of the characters and incidents come direct from the novel and work splendidly.

Chandler described *The Big Sleep* as a "detective yarn that is more interested in people than in plot". In fact for the book he used the plots of two of his short stories, "Killer in the Rain" and "The Curtain", then added an incident from an early Marlowe, "Finger Man". Chandler deepened the characterisation and toned down the violence of the originals, all of which was faithfully recreated in the film adaptation. Hawks conveys "the smell of fear" the author considered so important:

> [The] characters [live] in a world gone wrong, a world in which long before the atom bomb civilisation had created the machinery for its own destruction and was learning to use it with all the moronic delight of a gangster trying out his first machine gun. The law [is] something we manipulate for profit and power. The streets were dark with something more than night.

This comes from the introduction to *The Simple Art of Murder*, the first collection of Chandler's short stories, published in 1950, but these observations apply equally to the novels he based on the stories that first appeared in the pulp magazines. (These stories were collected and published by Penguin as *Killer in the Rain* in 1964.)

Hawks gets this atmosphere just about right. The low-key lighting and the eye-level camera with an occasional tight pan to emphasise a dramatic point create a visual equivalent of Chandler's prose. His dialogue, unlike that of his great contemporary James M. Cain, could be transposed into the script with only minimal editing. As the late Roger Ebert observed, viewers find themselves smiling at the sheer cleverness of the dialogue as well as the wit.

The real problem for the film-makers was some of the plotting of the original and the novel's resolution. Bogart and Hawks got into an argument about who killed the chauffeur. They couldn't decide, so they telegraphed Raymond Chandler, who told them he didn't know either. This is hardly surprising as Chandler had left it open in both the book and the short story. The killer is revealed in a scene in the District Attorney's office that was included in the first cut but omitted from the revised version. Having this sequence now readily available enriches our understanding of the film-makers' achievement. It enables three of the fine character actors who enriched American cinema of the 1930s and 1940s, Regis Toomey, Thomas E. Jackson and James Flavin, to deliver some well written dialogue that clarifies the plots and sub-plots. We also see Marlowe explaining his motivations to fellow professionals.

The low-key lighting and the eye-level camera with an occasional tight pan to emphasise a dramatic point create a visual equivalent of Chandler's prose.

The great scene that was created to replace the DA sequence was designed to enhance Lauren Bacall's portrayal of Vivian. At this early stage of her career—she was only twenty—Bacall's persona had been crafted by Howard Hawks so that her character seemed to be a knowing sophisticated woman more insolent than the nearly always insolent Bogart. This had worked brilliantly in their first film, *To Have and Have Not*. And as everyone knows, Bacall and Bogart fell in love, and this can be seen in their performances. This rapport is also there in *The Big Sleep*, even though, as we know from the biographies, they were going through a difficult time during the first shoot. The new scene was crafted by Philip Epstein, who with his brother Julius wrote some of the best lines in *Casablanca*, and includes the justly famous jockey dialogue where love-making is compared to horse-racing. It is beautifully played by the stars, who by then had just come back from their honeymoon, and its frank sensuality is far better than the rather awkward sexuality of the novel. "She has a beautiful little body, hasn't she ... you should see mine," Vivian

tells Marlowe in the book.

Vivian is another of the enigmatic women in the hard-boiled genre. In both novel and film there is a missing ex-bootlegger, Sean Regan. Involved somehow is the gangster Eddie Mars (John Ridgely) who owns the pornographic bookstore and runs a crooked gambling casino. "What has Eddie Mars got on you?" Marlowe asks Vivian repeatedly. Is she using her sexuality to "sugar" him off the case? Can Marlowe trust her? Since it is Bacall and Bogart, and not Jane Greer and Robert Mitchum in *Out of the Past* or Bogart and Lizbeth Scott in *Dead Reckoning*, of course he can. But watching her prove it makes for some very satisfying drama that is far more effective in the revised version.

The resolution seems to have been quite a problem for the director and his writers. In the novel Carmen has killed Sean Regan because he rejected her, and tries to do the same to Marlowe. Eddie Mars has covered up the murder and is blackmailing Vivian. Out of respect for General Sternwood, Marlowe doesn't tell the police and urges Vivian to find Carmen proper treatment. A film where a murderess escaped unpunished would never have passed the 1940s production code. So Hawks and Chandler plotted an alternative ending. Marlowe and Carmen are caught in the blackmailer's house by Eddie Mars and his life-takers. Marlowe knows that whoever goes out the door will be killed. He tosses a coin to let God decide whether he'll allow her to go out the door—heads she goes, tails she doesn't. The coin comes up heads. Marlowe lets Carmen go then has second thoughts. Thinking he is trying to hold her there for the police, Carmen starts to open the door, pulls a gun and is about to shoot Marlowe when she is cut to pieces by machine-gun fire.

In the shooting script Carmen still goes out the door but is shot by Eddie Mars, who is then killed by Marlowe. This too was rejected. The film's ending has it both ways. Carmen is replaced by Vivian. Marlowe traps Eddie Mars in the blackmailer's house and forces him to go out the door to be shot down by his own men, then tells the police Mars killed Sean Regan. The final shot is of Vivian and Marlowe's cigarettes side by side in an ashtray.

The first version of *The Big Sleep* should, I believe, never be regarded as some kind of "director's cut". The changes were made by Hawks himself and the scenes he re-shot are definite improvements. In my opinion the only scene that should have been retained is Marlowe's encounter with the DA. If you are screening the DVD I suggest running the 1946 cut but at the appropriate moment pausing to view that sequence. It is rewriting film history, but it does make for enjoyable viewing.

Visits with My Wicked Charmer Dad

My wicked charmer dad
and I are on the beach
seagulls crying above swoosh of waves
I lean over his shoulder
my brown child's arms around his neck
a girl has come to my house
a girl as loud as sky
he takes me by my ear handles
flips me over his shoulder
he could do magic like that
my wicked charmer dad

my wicked charmer dad
had a Scottish girlfriend who
did a snake dance
at the Tivoli in her undies
she called me *wee lass*
I told my mother
all the ladies at the Tivoli
talked about their tits
in the dressing room
tits are alright said my mother
but its better to keep them
where you can't see them
then she gave me a slap
I was becoming too much like
my wicked charmer dad.

Lin van Hek

R.J. Stove

Visions of Ceremony

An Interview with Richard Connolly

Probably all the readers of these lines, whether they are practising Catholics or not, will have encountered the hymns that Richard Connolly—composer, organist, pianist and broadcaster—wrote in collaboration with one of Australia's outstanding poets: James McAuley, who died in 1976. Even if these readers cannot themselves carry the proverbial tune in a bucket, they will have heard congregations sing from the Connolly–McAuley corpus: "Help of Christians, Guard This Land", "O Jesus Crucified", "By Your Kingly Power, O Risen Lord", and "Jesus In Your Heart We Find", to name only four of the most celebrated. And once they have heard congregations perform these things, they will be forever unable to re-read McAuley's lyrics without hearing in their minds Mr Connolly's virile melodies and pungent modal harmonies. There can scarcely be a greater compliment payable to any composer's word-setting, than that this word-setting should appear inseparable from the words themselves.

To mark the fiftieth anniversary of *Hymns for the Year of Grace*, the 1963 collection in which so much of this material appeared, it seemed a courteous and appropriate gesture to sound out the composer himself. Would Mr Connolly—a native of Sydney, born in 1927—consent to being interviewed? Yes, Mr Connolly would. Thus it was that I arrived from rain-drenched Melbourne, dictaphone in hand, to be discussing his career path and compositional achievement (of which achievement *Hymns for the Year of Grace* constitutes but a portion) on a glorious autumn day in the composer's own living room at Balgowlah, near Manly. Inescapable in this living room was a magnificent harbourside view which included the former St Patrick's seminary where back in 1946 he spent six months before going to Rome.

RJS: I understand that you originally went to Rome with a view to becoming a priest. How did that aim come about?

RC: It came about because it was talked about. And in those days a Catholic boy couldn't aspire to anything better. That's the way we saw the priesthood then. Alas, a lot of inroads have been made on that notion.

I was in second form at the Christian Brothers' High School in Lewisham [inner-western Sydney], and Fr John Leonard came around, talking about vocations. Something called a minor seminary, taking boys from the age of twelve upwards, was going to be opened at Springwood [in the Blue Mountains] the following year. I was one of the boys who went and said "yes"; got an interview with Cardinal Gilroy as a result; and was told I could go to Springwood in February 1942. At Springwood I completed the minor seminary course, and first-year philosophy. In the course of that—without being immodest—I came first in New South Wales in Latin at the Leaving Certificate examination. Largely as a result of that, I think, it was decided that I would be one of two Sydney students who would go to Rome the following year.

In 1946, I spent the first half of the year at Manly, which was just a normal progression; and then in July, with eighteen other Australians (two of them were priests; all the others were seminarians from Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia), our destination was the College De Propaganda Fide, which of course means "concerned with propagating the Faith", where I would spend the next four years.

People usually don't realise now what an extraordinary thing foreign travel was for Australians in 1946. It was almost entirely for wealthy people. And yet here I was, sharing a life in common with seminarians from Europe, from Asia, from Africa and America. Twenty-six different nationalities.

RJS: Did you eventually decide that the priesthood wasn't for you? Was it a gradual thing?

RC: Yes, it was gradual. A classmate, the historian John Molony, in his autobiography,

says quite plainly: "Richard Connolly was more interested in music than in theology." He was right. But it wasn't only that. Though I might have seemed quite sophisticated, I was quite immature when I came out of the seminary. Because going into a minor seminary, in my view, and in the present view of the Church generally (as it learned from experience, I think)—taking boys of twelve, just with the onset of puberty—wasn't a good way.

RJS: Was that when you started at the minor seminary?

RC: I was fourteen then. But I hasten to say that I came out of the seminary eight years later, not long before ordination. It got too much for me. I was approaching a crisis point, and I won't go into the details, but there I was.

RJS: So you went to Sydney University?

RC: I came back here, and got a music job. My father was supporting eight children, one of whom was going through medicine at Sydney University—with a bursary—and one of the others was also a seminarian. So I had to go out and get a job. I got a job at [music-publishing firm] Boosey & Hawkes, where I began to realise that I knew nothing about the world. Fortunately I got a job later as proof-reader at the *Catholic Weekly*, where that excellent man Brian Doyle pointed out to me, putting it quite brutally: "Look, you need to, as it were, laicise yourself in some sense, or you'll be a 'spoilt priest'." He used that phrase in inverted commas. "Go to Sydney University." It hadn't occurred to me to go there. If I'd been mature, it would have occurred to me immediately. But this is what growing up in a minor seminary can do.

McAuley was one of those who don't have to have complete proof that they're right; if something needs to be done urgently, and this seems to be the right thing to do, some people can just jump into action.

I'm not complaining about it, because I had the best teachers I could have had. If I'd stayed at Lewisham, a fine school, I might or might not have topped the state in Latin, but I wouldn't have done a lot of the reading I did. The Marist Brothers who taught us at Springwood, because they had been singled out for this new operation, chose some of their best men. Brother Gerard O'Donoghue taught me Latin and English and French. He had been—and would be again, I think—the headmaster of St Joseph's College. As somebody recently said to me, and I agree, Brother Gerard was, apart from the philosopher Father Con Keogh, probably the only true intellectual in the whole place. But anyway, I was a bad student in some ways, because I was no good at maths. I was all right at physics and geography, but no good at maths.

RJS: After you'd graduated from Sydney, you came, I gather, to know Fr Ted Kennedy. How did he introduce you to James McAuley?

RC: Yes, I got married in 1954. We were in Ted's parish—Ted was curate at [the north-western Sydney suburb of] Ryde—and he came to me in, I think it would have been, 1955. He had some verses with him, and he said: "James McAuley wrote this." James McAuley was also a parishioner there, but I'd never met him. The words were "Help of Christians, Guard This Land". I had never composed anything except an Ave Maria, when I was fourteen, which is better forgotten. Fr Muset [Joseph Muset, 1889–1957, Catalan-born priest-composer active in Sydney and Melbourne after the Spanish Civil War], who taught me music at Springwood, changed about 472 notes in it! He was a refugee; the Catalans weren't popular with the Franquistas, of course. It was Fr Muset who introduced musical modality into my mind.

RJS: I ask this as one who never met James McAuley, though my father knew him quite well: What was he like to deal with? In his prose and in his satirical poetry he has always struck me as an absolutely terrifying person.

RC: He was one of the nicest people I have ever known. If you want to know any more, look up the second-last article in the *Quadrant* special issue that Peter Coleman did, the McAuley tribute issue [March 1977]. Peter Coleman asked me to write about James McAuley. James McAuley was terribly easy to deal with. If you take McAuley's book of criticism, *The End of Modernity*, you'll see that it can come across as doctrinaire. But he wasn't. And it's interesting if you're familiar with his sort of anti-Romanticism: three weeks before he died in Hobart, when he knew he was dying, he was on the phone to me, in a very weak voice, asking me to get for him, from a particular shop, a wonderful music shop in [the northern Sydney suburb of] Gordon—

RJS: Tarantella?

RC: Yes, that's right. Wonderful, wonderful people. But Jim, a fine, sensitive pianist, knew exactly what he wanted: particular editions of Chopin. He was trying desperately to do justice to Chopin, and to write a piece on Chopin, because Chopin he understood. One's idea of a writer's thinking can get frozen into what he has written at an earlier stage.

RJS: Perhaps poets more than most people, I don't know.

RC: Nobody had admired more than I had his second book, *A Vision of Ceremony*. I have a copy of his first book, inscribed, and given to me by Ron Blair for my birthday. Ron went to see Jim McAuley, and Jim had written in it: "To Dick, with the most loving regards." I could go on about Jim forever. He could show his love; he wasn't frightened of love.

We buried him on a Tuesday, and on the following Sunday night—this is the ABC we're talking about, I used to run a program called *Radio Helicon*—

RJS: Radio Helicon! Of course. I vividly remember it.

RC: Before Jim died I had made arrangements to go down to Hobart to stay with him and Norma in May 1976 (he died in October). I went down there, and in a studio we recorded a whole lot of poems, and we talked about things (obviously with a posthumous *Helicon* tribute in mind; though this was unspoken, we knew what we were about). We spoke of things like whether you can prove the existence of God, or whether it is any use trying to teach English to half-interested kids whom society has somehow pushed into university. All sorts of things. Including the Vietnam War. He said, "I always said we could be wrong."

RJS: That doesn't sound like the James McAuley familiar to people of my generation!

RC: But he had that quality. I talked to John Pringle [1912–99, former *Sydney Morning Herald* editor] about this a lot. John Pringle was a great friend of Jim's, and wrote very movingly about him. I said to McAuley that I admired his ability to act out of a situation, to make up his mind. He was one of those who don't have to have complete proof that they're right; if something needs to be done urgently, and this seems to be the right thing to do, some people can just jump into action. Others, as Pringle said about himself, can't. People in McAuley's poem "Liberal, Or, Innocent By Definition"—"on the one hand this, on the other hand that"—people of whom I'm far more one than Jim McAuley was—can't.

RJS: I've seen—not least in Peter Coleman's biography—"Help of Christians, Guard This Land" repeatedly described as "the DLP hymn". Was it intended as such? How did this association come into being?

RC: No, it wasn't. All I saw was a set of magnificent words. This is 1955. Goodness me, only a few years earlier there had been the appalling [communist-organised 1949] coal strike in the Hunter Valley. "Should the powers of hell arise" and so on: you can read the text in all sorts of ways. But I simply thought they were wonderful words, like no hymn in English that I'd seen for a long time. Of course, Jim had already—in '55—written about the Labor Party split and the Sydney hierarchy's "Pilatic washing of hands", in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, although when he wrote that I don't think he'd met Bob Santamaria. All of those things would have been in his mind when he wrote the hymn. Poems come out of all sorts of things.

RJS: You went, I gather, on a Churchill Fellowship to Britain and Europe in the early 1970s: what were the main experiences you learned from exposure to the BBC, Radio France, Italy's RAI network, and the [German] Bayerische Rundfunk?

RC: It wasn't primarily a musical thing, although it was in part musical. Mainly it was to study the spoken word in radio. Almost everybody at the ABC went to the BBC; and even now, still, Australia is a mostly monoglot country. I spoke two foreign languages fluently: Italian and French. With German, I thought I was better than I actually was. In any case, I just thought it would be interesting to go and see what they did in Italy and France and Germany. So I went, and I think my report was of value to ABC producers.

RJS: But you'd already been active composing incidental music and other types of music for the ABC, among other places, had you not? I've lately been listening to your music for *Twelfth Night* and *Doctor Faustus*.

RC: I did that by accident, really. Colin Dean—who produced those early ABC television serials about the foundation of Australia and so forth—was producing a play called *The Long Sunset*, by R.C. Sheriff, about the Roman legions leaving Britain. I was simply advising Colin Dean, unofficially, about Roman things. We were having a beer somewhere or other, and he said, "Would you like to write the music for this?" I said, "I'll have a go," but I was a bit dubious. I'd never written any incidental music. But it worked. That was 1963.

RJS: When you were starting out as a musician, who and what were your main musical influences? Any particular composers who had an overwhelming effect on you, creatively and otherwise?

RC: I think that Don Burrows and company used to have some sort of joke about me, because, they said, I wrote Turkish music! "Here he comes, we'll get some Turkish music"—as they used to call it in Mozart's time. That was because of my use of modality. There were a whole lot of composers whom I enjoyed. Particularly Schubert. But I don't think that any of them influenced me as much as,

in a strange way, Gregorian chant and the modes, largely through the music of my teacher, Father Muset.

RJS: Did you find yourself limited by expectations of what you should be composing? As in, "Oh, he writes hymns, he shouldn't be attempting secular works"? Or vice versa?

RC: No, no, no. You see, I have never, ever, written any piece of music that was just coming out of what you might call the heart or soul, as an expression of some feeling. Well, actually, I wrote one piece of music of that sort, for piano, but I won't give it to you because readers won't be able to hear it! Everything else I've written has been program music, responding either to words or to images of film. So I've had to be, as it were, reacting to something in my music. There's no music gushing out of me. Or rather, it gushes out of me all the time, and it's absolute rubbish!

RJS: Hmm. I'll take your word for it, although I find it hard to believe.

RC: Not the stuff I write down; but my way of daydreaming is—I whistle, improvising the most utter, boring, rubbish! Sometimes the rubbish gets quite complicated at times.

RJS: Was Hindemith's output an influence on you, in terms of facility, of utilitarian approaches to writing music?

RC: No, but I was introduced to Hindemith by a wonderful institution in Sydney, run by a lovely, lovely man named Karl Gotsch. You've probably not heard of him.

RJS: I'm afraid not.

RC: Karl ran something called the Collegium Musicum, and he was alive to what was going on in Europe. He was of German extraction, but he spoke a gentle kind of Australian English. This would have been in the mid-1940s, before I went to Rome, and after my return. The first Hindemith I ever heard was through Karl Gotsch at the Collegium Musicum, down at Circular Quay. It was for two violins, and one of the players was the splendid Eva Kelly, who years later would work with me in an ABC studio. People used to go along to recitals and discussions. Karl had a terrible old gramophone, to play things on; but people went there because he was serious, and because you were partaking of things that were going on in Europe. These are the sorts of musical activities that don't get into the history books.

RJS: More recently, how did your *Missa Pax et Bonum* come into being? Was it commissioned?

RC: The music director Bernard Kirkpatrick, before he went to Parramatta, was conducting a choir at St Francis of Assisi in Paddington, and he's a pretty damn good musician. The choir was of a pretty high standard. Well, we started going to Mass there, because we knew some members of the choir, including Noel Debien—who succeeded Bernard as director, and who became a religion producer at the ABC—but in any case, it became, in a way, a haven. We were running away from the guitar-strummers. We found St Francis of Assisi's to be a haven from that point of view, a haven of parochial care as well, in terms of what it was doing for the youth around the place. There was a drop-in centre there. We don't go there all the time now. But we keep in touch.

We were running away from the guitar-strummers. We found St Francis of Assisi's to be a haven from that point of view, a haven of parochial care as well, in terms of what it was doing for the youth around the place.

RJS: Paddington would be a long way from here in Balgowlah, I suppose.

RC: After we'd been going there for a couple of years, I thought, "It's about time I got musically active again. I'll write a Mass for this parish; you never know, they might like it." When Bernard saw it, I think he got a surprise. He said, "This will work." They'd done Mozart Masses at Christmas. Anyway, I wrote this Mass, and there are little bits of it which I would now change, but as Jim McAuley said about his poetry, "You stick with your readers."

RJS: And you've produced at least two congregational Mass settings in the last few years, I see: *Common Things Divinely*, and *Our Lady Help of Christians*. Did they also arise from St Francis of Assisi at Paddington?

RC: No. The man who got me back into writing church music was Fr Bill Aliprandi. When we came back from twelve years in England, we went to Masses in three different places in Sydney. In those days, even at St Mary's Cathedral's six o'clock Mass, we couldn't get away from the guitars! I rang a priest I knew, Fr John De Luca, but he was away; and I asked if there was a Mass where there was no music. The priest whom I spoke to divined what I was on about, and he said, "Look, I think you should try the parish of St John the Apostle at Narraweena [eighteen kilometres north-east of central Sydney]. It's not far from where you live. There is music there, but I think you'll find it good."

So we went to Mass there, and there was somebody in the congregation who knew me, and who told Fr Aliprandi that I was around in Australia

again, and that I was going to this church. That dear man was waiting on the church steps after Mass the following Sunday. Fr Aliprandi published a parish hymnbook, which I was entrusted with preparing, with the stipulation that it contain the McAuley–Connolly hymns. It didn't work at all, although the little choir that I had at the parish loved it.

RJS: Was the bulk of the parish averse to singing at all, or averse to singing these particular things?

RC: They were generally averse to singing, I think. But one year when Australia Day was coming up, Fr Aliprandi said: "Let's all sing—not as part of the liturgy—'Advance Australia Fair'." And it could have brought the roof down, it was so loud!

RJS: So they were prepared to sing on occasion: good. One item in your work list particularly intrigues me as to its origins: the *Play School* theme. How in the world did *Play School* cross your path, or you cross *Play School*'s path?

RC: I was in the ABC in 1965, and it was well known that I could write music. Whenever I produced my own programs, frequently I'd just write a little tune. But I was in the school broadcasts section of the ABC's education department—there's no such thing now—and it was a desk job really: Federal Education Programme Officer (Radio) or something like that. The Education Programme Officer (Television) was next door: a very nice woman named Moira Gambleton. Moira had been sent over to England—she was herself English—to observe how the BBC's original version of *Play School* worked. She came in to me one day, and said: "I've got this pilot program called *Play School*. And the bigwigs, the top brass, are all coming to observe my pilot program. I need a theme." I asked, "When do you need it by?" You know the Hollywood phrase, "We want it Thursday"? Well, she wanted it Wednesday.

She came in to me one day, and said: "I've got this pilot program called Play School. And the top brass are all coming. I need a theme." I asked, "When do you need it by?" You know the Hollywood phrase, "We want it Thursday"? Well, she wanted it Wednesday.

I'd invented a pseudonym—in those days nobody checked that sort of thing—and so I became "Wilfrid Palmer". "Wilfrid" composed a few things for the ABC. Anyway, to answer your question: in those days, for a member of the ABC staff to earn any money outside normal duties, you had to get permission from higher up. There was not time to do this. I went home that night. Moira had the words ready for me. It wasn't hard to write that tune. I wrote it that night, and booked Studio 226 (a former Congregational church in Darlinghurst) and the Don Burrows Quartet for the recording of it. In those days, Don Burrows, Johnny Sangster, George Golla and Ed Gaston constituted the Quartet. Those chaps—this is 1965—were far more available at short notice then than they were to become a few years later. The piece was in only four parts.

RJS: You did your own copying out of the parts?

RC: Oh yes. I did my own copying for much bigger scores than that. The night we recorded the *Play School* theme, it rained on the studio's tin roof for a couple of hours. We had just started, and then we had to stop, because of the noise of the rain on the roof. I would've only had a three-hour studio call. We managed to get the recording squeezed into the three-hour call. But it was touch and go. When people say to me now, "What did you do at the ABC?"—people such as our new neighbours, a South African and his Australian wife, in the house down there that interrupts the view—I say, "Well, I wrote the theme of *Play School*.' The South African told me the next day that his wife had been telling all her friends on Facebook that she'd met the man who'd written the tune for "There's a Bear in There".

R.J. Stove wrote on Max Teichmann in the September issue. He is the author of ***César Franck: His Life and Times*** *(Scarecrow Press, Maryland, 2012).*

Karin Petersen-Schaefer

Long Lunches with Dick Hall

I was standing alone pretending to be interested in a painting of what was either a mutilated seagull or a used tampon when the question came, spoken in a gentleman's club voice.

"Have you got a light, comrade?"

His round, pink-cheeked face was topped with grizzled hair, tufts of which also sprouted liberally from his ears. Then there was the short, squat body, small hands and a beach-ball stomach, at that moment almost touching my waist.

"It's a chat-up line, comrade. But you go ahead and smoke if you like."

This was my first encounter with Sydney's literary world and the start of my friendship with Dick Hall (Richard Victor Hall, 1937–2003). His smile appearing to charmingly tilt at his koala-suit looks, I found myself a little in love.

The request for a light wasn't really a chat-up line, Dick went on to explain after introducing himself. Rather, he had observed my lost air and thought someone should come to my rescue. It was true, though, that Dick didn't mind others smoking. He greatly enjoyed it. Not because he was one of those gasping ex-smokers, but because smoking was the only vice he didn't have—this Dick, with hinted-at fantasies of trussed flesh, punishing nuns, scatology and lesbian sado-masochism, I was wont to shy from, to Dick's sometimes poorly disguised disappointment. As for the "comrade", well, that was to do with his esteem for Frank Hardy's *Power Without Glory*. If there was one book every Australian should read, according to Dick, it was *Power*. Typical of his genius at adapting his lexicon to his listener, however, as told to Les Murray, "comrade" was a salute to a little old lady living in a rented room who, having lost the power to go to the lav, used the bottom drawer of her dresser.

No need to spell it out, though, Dick was old Labor, his politics rooted in the time when Labor represented the workers and keeping the top end of town under control was the main job of its office. When education meant learning and the ideal of the common good had life. When ideals were not on the brink of extinction.

At Dick's suggestion we began meeting for lunch every few weeks in Newtown, close to where I worked and Dick lived. We would meet up at one of the Asian restaurants along King Street, sitting always by the window. A beer at his elbow, Dick would be waiting, one eye on whatever book he was reading and the other watching out for me. When I entered the restaurant he would rise, kiss my cheek, wave at me to sit then push the menu across the table while suggesting dishes I might enjoy. This ritual observed, he would courteously summon the waiter or waitress and just as courteously deliver our order. When we were again alone came the question, "What are you reading, comrade?" Our respective reading discussed and headway made on a bottle of white, like an able dancer Dick would steer the conversation to politics, art, and then, when the bottle was empty and our glasses down to the lees, we would share gossip and a few small intimacies before parting.

The course of this agreeable hour or so was interrupted by the coming and going of dishes and Dick's insightful or lewd comments about any of the passing street parade that caught his attention. Encouraging my opinion on subjects I often knew little about, Dick would expand my meagre holding from his own great store, sometimes pushing aside all niceties with an outpouring of words that, like the waters of a swift, full river, tumbled with muscular vigour. At such times Dick's voice would become even more gravelly, the pink of his face deepening and his hairy caterpillar eyebrows assuming a life of their own. I would lean back in my chair and follow as best I could.

His hallowing of the Australian worker, however, didn't stop Dick enjoying good wine, the rare kilim, fine cotton shirts. His sporadic income always stretched to a cleaner, even if at times he had to borrow from me to pay her, and his weekly gathering of intellectuals and artists, which occasionally included his old boss, Gough, or his equally beaky son, Nick, took place at one of Glebe's more expensive watering holes. On the occasions I was able to make it to one of these lunches the

riches of the conversation went far beyond anything offered by the menu or the wine list.

Such was the custom of our friendship. As the years passed, small traded intimacies revealed the landscape of the other's heart. Our histories and memories gently became known to each other. I passed thirty, then forty. I was allowed his soft chest, clothed in smelly wool or crisp cotton depending on the season, for the shedding of my bitter tears when I needed. When the pattern of our lunching was disturbed, the disruptions themselves also become part of the weave of our friendship.

Awarded the inaugural Suspended Sentence Award for his 3000 words of Joycean fiction, Dick spent two months in Europe and Ireland, enjoying the Joyce summer school in Dublin and visiting Joyce's haunts in Paris, Zurich and Trieste. On the day America invaded the Gulf, we left the restaurant to take up a table at a nearby pub, the Marlborough, from where we sat glued to the bar television and considered the possibility that these were the last days and hours of civilisation. Then there was the dinner in Glebe, where, against a background of beating rain, Dick revealed that, in case I thought he didn't find me attractive, the reason he had never made a pass at me was the great value he placed on our friendship. Such was the charm of Richard Victor Hall.

Karin Petersen-Schaefer has written novels, scientific papers, and articles about horses. She lives in country New South Wales.

Aimez vous Chekhov?

Leaving a film of *The Duel*,
we link arms and talk about
the Russian author, what
he meant to us years ago.

Back then, we lay by a river
and you put the question:
"Who's your favourite writer?"
Silly question, I thought,

and answered quietly,
sensing a lot was at stake.
"So many favourites," I said.
"But I *love* my Chekhov's *Tales*."

At once I knew I'd scored.
You opened your blue eyes wide,
surprised and very impressed.
I smiled, pleased and smug.

You spoke of Hemingway and Scott.
What you didn't say,
and I only learned, tonight,
was how many hours at school

you spent alone in the library
while other boys were away.
Deep in a leather chair you read
the complete works of A.P. Chekhov.

In Praise of Easy Days

We loved ourselves
when we were young.
You seemed urbane
and so well hung.

You liked the little
scarves I wore
and when we danced
across the floor

you held me tight.
I watched your eyes
for you were hot
and worldly-wise:

you knew some tricks
which I did not
but I was quick
and learned a lot.

Suzanne Edgar

David Daintree

A Bumper to Her Majesty

About twenty years ago I took a phone call from Tony Abbott, who at that time was CEO of Australians for Constitutional Monarchy, a group that had been founded a few years previously by Michael Kirby and Lloyd Waddy. I had never met Tony, but we had a close mutual friend in the journalist Gary Scarrabelotti and I guess we felt we knew each other. Anyway, the reason for his call was to ask me to establish a branch of ACM in Tasmania. I agreed, assembled a committee in the days that followed, and got to work.

The next six years or so were fascinating in ways that I could never have foreseen. I was moved by the courtesy and chivalry of many of our opponents, but also disappointed and hurt by their occasional unfairness. One of the stalwarts of our committee was kindly and gentle Edward O'Farrell, Battle of Britain Spitfire pilot and private secretary to four Tasmanian governors. As the referendum approached, and our prospects looked grim, he used to cheer us up by telling us to "trust the people". Events proved him right.

It was a time, it seems to me, when a kind of *folie*, an obsessive craziness, stalked the land. In saying that I do not mean to be hurtful to those who took a different view, many of whom were, as I said, chivalrous and generous opponents. But politicians particularly were caught up in the fervour, and we were treated to the extraordinary spectacle of men and women who could agree on nothing else uniting in their zeal for the Once and Future Republic that was supposed to herald a new dawn for Australian pride. In my own state of Tasmania I remember a full front-page spread in the *Mercury* featuring a photograph of almost all the state's politicians standing shoulder to shoulder and urging us to vote Yes. No wonder we voted No. I think it was Amanda Vanstone (she may have been quoting someone else—the thought was common enough) urging us to vote Yes, rather than "break a nation's heart" by voting No. For politicians of every ilk these were heady times. I've often wondered why.

Apart from politicians the other group that was head over heels in love with the Republic was the rich and the well-to-do. The Yes vote polled best in high-income electorates, while working-class suburbs showed scant interest, which is one of the reasons, I think, why Labor governments since that time have shown little appetite for revisiting the issue.

Twenty years on I hazard a guess that politicians and the rich have this in common, that they object very strongly to being answerable to anyone else. Every politician aspires to lead, and every leader prefers to exercise as much authority as possible, without the obligation to report to someone else. And rich people expect to be leaders in their communities, and hope that their children can follow in their footsteps—and beyond: the presidency is an attractive and reasonable goal for those who feel that the world is their oyster! There is great irony in the fact that the Republic push failed for these very same reasons: the people wanted to elect their own president, but politicians wouldn't countenance it.

I mentioned the strange mixture of courtesy and unfairness that I observed among our opponents. A single illustration will suffice to demonstrate it. Guy Barnett invited me to take part in a debate at a lunchtime meeting of the Liberal Lawyers group in Hobart. The "debate" took this form: somebody (it might have been Barnett himself, I can't now recall) presented the case for the Republic, next I was called to argue the opposite case, then a third speaker summed up by concluding the case for the Republic. People were kind, sure, but unable to conceive that anybody could not think as they did. We were oddities. I encountered this kind of thing many times.

So here we are two decades down the track enjoying a kind of truce. Nobody repeats the old mantra "It's inevitable" any more (we're all back to believing that death and taxes alone qualify for

that special status), nor do we hear people asserting, "If it ain't broke don't fix it" (although it was "our" slogan I'm sick of hearing it). The Queen is popular, remarkably so given the dire events since the *annus horribilis*. Australians are reasonably content to accept the governor-general as a sort of head of state and de facto president within the overarching and none-too-obtrusive monarchical firmament. But something's missing.

When I was a kid, formal events often began with the Loyal Toast. Everybody drank the Queen's health, quickly and briskly, before moving on to other toasts and other entertainments. Nowadays that's getting harder to do. If you propose the Queen's health (and I've essayed it on a number of occasions) there are always those who refuse to stand, or who cry out complainingly. I think this is rude, and it also ignores the incontrovertible fact that Australia currently has a Queen, whether we like it or not, and will continue to until or unless we change the Constitution. So mostly we take the easy way out and have no toast at all, and in neglecting that something important is lost, some reminder of the things we have in common, the shared culture and inheritance. I was once a guest at a lunch for the Colombian ambassador at Government House in Hobart. The Governor toasted "the President and People of the Republic of Colombia"; the ambassador responded by inviting us to drink to "the Queen and People of the Commonwealth of Australia". I thought that was just right, and a model to follow. It recognised the realities: Australia *has* a Queen, and *commonwealth* is the English translation of a Latin phrase, *res publica*. A crowned republic we are, and so we were conceived to be.

So let's drink a bumper to Her Majesty, while we have her, and to the people of the Commonwealth as well. For my part, if the people one day decide to have a republic, I promise not to head for the hills and take up arms as a rebel royalist. I shall accept the decision of the people and toast the President of Australia, even if it's Eddie Maguire. No, *especially* if it's Eddie Maguire.

Dr David Daintree was President of Campion College from 2008 to 2012.

A House in the Var

Plane-trees and alders and pines lean down at precipitous angle
from the scarp enveloping the village eastwards.
In summer their canopy makes the house as cool as a Roman villa
for dreamers on the balcony, in earshot of the river's
gluttonous way with sucking-stones. Every year we come back
and every year a different light pours out.
Pickles ferment in jars sealed the previous summer,
and summer itself is a lavender smell folded in the sheets.
Children's voices saraband around the corridors;
those younger selves straining to stay awake on the hammock
beneath the sugar-spill of the Milky Way
and the bats' echo-guided drop raids on the river's insect-life.
I could find a line on the phenomenology of the house
and how (according to Gaston Bachelard) dwelling-places dream us.
Here it might just be true, in this house in the Var
dredged up from a Royal Navy assault on Toulon harbour
and demanding occupancy. One more heroic flight
levels out with the wasp's nest under the eaves and a view of tiles,
though this year we're scraping salt from the pipes,
caulking the lime plaster cistern, where Jeremiahs have to swim.

Iain Bamforth

Ron Taft

In the New State of Israel

I made my first visit to Israel in November 1950, only two and half years after the state had been established, and just over a year after the bloody struggle for its existence had been suspended with a series of armistices. One of my purposes here is to relive my heady experiences in that first of several visits that I have made to Israel and to record the shape that the state was in at such an early stage of its existence. The contrast between Israel then and Israel now is striking.

Like most of my generation of Australian Jews (I was born in 1920), I always supported the Zionist aim for a Jewish national home to be established in Palestine in accordance with the Balfour Declaration (1917) and the terms laid down by the League of Nations for the British Mandate (1922). I was among the millions who applauded the resolution of the UN in 1947 that established the Jewish state, together with a parallel Arab state. Here is a summary of what occurred in the three years between the UN resolution and my visit three years later.

The arrangement for two states was rejected by the Arab League, and five Arab armies invaded Israel, openly swearing to strangle it at birth and massacre the Jews. The invaders included the powerful Jordan Legion, which was British-trained and officered. The Jewish inhabitants managed to turn back the attacks at considerable cost and were able to retain a number of disputed centres such as Tiberias, Lod (Lydda), Acco (Acre), Safat, Beer Sheba and Western Jerusalem. A series of armistices and an uneasy peace resulted which left Jordan in control of territory comprising the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Old Walled City, while Egypt retained control of Gaza. During the war all Jews had been expelled from those Arab-controlled areas, including their traditional home in the Jewish section of the Old City, while between 500,000 and 700,000 Arabs fled from Israel, leaving about 150,000 still living there. The armistices enabled Israel to get on with the urgent task of establishing a new state, of integrating the displaced Israeli Jews, and most importantly of receiving the hundreds of thousands of Jews who were hammering on the doors for entry. By the time of my visit the population was well over a million and growing fast. (It is now approaching eight million.)

My assessment of the prevailing attitude of the Israelis at the time of my visit could best be described with two adjectives: stunned and confused. Between 1950 and 1996 I repeatedly visited Israel and observed it developing from the groggy, uncertain state of its early days into the mature, optimistic and significant country that it constitutes today. Each one of my subsequent visits brought its own impressions of the country's evolution towards that maturity, but my first one in 1950 brought me face-to-face with its uncertain infancy. At that time the focus of attention in the nation was overwhelmingly on survival; the survival of the refugees who were clamouring for entry into a land where they would be welcomed, and, of course, the survival of the state itself. Through all my visits, survival has remained a constant focus of attention and it is perhaps as significant for Israelis today as it was at the founding of the state.

My direct contacts in 1950 were overwhelmingly with people who could converse in English—a biased sample, although most educated Israelis did speak English due to their having lived in the former British Mandate. Obviously the impressions that I could gain in such a short visit had to be limited. A most valuable source of information about public attitudes came from psychologist colleagues at the Israel Institute of Applied Social Research, headed by the eminent Louis Guttmann who had come from the USA to support Israel during the War of Liberation. This organisation held the Israel franchise for Gallup polls and studied public attitudes during and after the war. I was also privileged to be invited to visit the psychology branch at military headquarters, where a former South African Air Force psychologist was in charge. These applications

of psychological science, to the study of public attitudes and to the military services, were examples of the use of scientific methods in the critical emergency of the war. My contacts also included fellow Australians who were then residing in Israel, including a journalist on the *Jerusalem Post* (Myer Isaacman), an officer of the Hebrew University, a banana grower in a farming village, and others I had known in Melbourne. I also met the Australian Consul in Tel Aviv and the Australian (non-Jewish) manager of the Haifa Water Company who had stayed on. Conversations with all of these contacts provided me with a fleeting but credible picture of public attitudes and other aspects of Israeli life.

The fellow passengers on my BOAC flight from London appeared to be mostly English Jews and, like me, staunch supporters of Israel curious to see the new state. When we arrived at Lydda airport many of the passengers cheered lustily and some kissed the ground as they alighted. There was a swell of euphoria mixed with curiosity among the passengers as the bus ascended to Jerusalem, "The Holy City", an experience that brought unexpected spiritual stirrings to some of us, including me. Apparently Jerusalem often has that effect.

Near the airport we passed the half-ruined town of Lod, which miraculously had been saved for Israel together with the airport in a desperate and savage battle from which the Arab civilian population eventually fled. As we climbed into the Jerusalem hills we confronted the burnt-out remains of armed vehicles that had been destroyed in the successful fight to break the blockade of Jerusalem. Some of these vehicles still stand, on what is now a byroad, as a permanent monument to that heroic event.

Every day and everywhere during my visit I was faced with reminders of that bitter war which took the lives of such a substantial part of the population, both military and civilian, many of them survivors of the Holocaust. I think time has dimmed the memory of the price that Israel paid to stay alive in its time of birth, a price proportionately greater than that paid in all its subsequent wars. People told me about their recently dead relatives and friends, and former soldiers described the fire fights in which they were engaged to try to save this or that fortified site, a tower or a church, a hotel or perhaps a whole village. I spent one night in central Jerusalem at the Hotel Eden, the defence of which became renowned in the reports of the defence of the city. When I praised Israelis on their amazing courage and doggedness they simply answered with the phrase that became a cliché in Israel's history, "ain brerah" (no alternative).

In Jerusalem I also stayed in the King David Hotel, where one wing was still a wreck from being bombed by the Jewish Irgun Faction during the British Mandate, with the accompanying deaths of dozens of British soldiers. One night I wandered in the laneways at the back of the hotel and saw a Jordan sentry standing on the wall of the Old City silhouetted against the full moon. I learned next day that an Israeli had recently been shot in the street by a trigger-happy sentry firing from the wall, despite the truce. UN officials in well-marked Jeeps were racing around the streets looking busy, but whether they were very useful in carrying out their task of policing the terms of the armistices is debatable. I had personal evidence of that: I was approved to visit the beleaguered campus of the university on Mt Scopus in a UN convoy but, in violation of the armistice terms, the Jordanians simply cancelled the visit. Similarly, entry to the religious sites in the Old City was simply barred to Israelis.

Which brings me to some vignettes of the new arrivals who were now flooding in, limited only by the logistics of transport and the provision of minimal facilities for receiving them. The facilities for the reception and integration of new arrivals were quite primitive at the time. I still can visualise the utter deprivation of the immigrants huddling close to no-man's-land in makeshift hovels assembled from the rubble that littered the battleground areas on the borders of the Old City of Jerusalem. Seemingly endless streams of people were wandering the highway beside the Bay of Haifa from their tent cities, going God knows where. As we drove past I asked my driver, a young American who had come to Israel to fight in the War of Liberation, "Why don't you give these poor people a lift?" His answer was, "If you started that, there would never be an end to it." Although I was shocked at the time, in retrospect I see his point.

On a more positive note, as our bus was ascending into the foothills of Jerusalem, I saw new immigrants (I assume) clearing the rocks from the ground in the bare, stony fields and stacking them to form windbreak walls. Obviously it was back-breaking work. A decade later these pioneers got their reward when the same Jerusalem hills were filled with verdant farms. I think that we have now largely forgotten what a forbidding land Israel was before the Jewish farmers, with the aid of Israeli agricultural scientists, succeeded in making it the fertile land that it is today.

The hordes of immigrants who poured into Israel in the first years came from a wide spectrum of the ancient world. Priority had been given to the European survivors of the Holocaust, particularly the Jews who had been interned in Cyprus by the

British Army when their attempts to enter Israel had been foiled. Others came from Central and Eastern Europe. A considerable number of Jews who were expelled from Muslim countries in Asia started to pour in. (The large inflow from North Africa—Morocco, Egypt, Libya—didn't reach significant numbers until later.)

One of the salutary effects of my exposure to Israel was to offset my European-centred (Ashkenazi) perspective on World Jewry. For the first time in my life I encountered such "exotic" Jews (to me) as Syrians, Kurds, Yemenites and Iraqis. One Shabat I went on a "synagogue crawl" in the Mea Shearim district of Jerusalem, calling in on such congregations as Bukharan, Yemenite and Baghdadi. These communities were already established before the founding of the state but had been considerably reinforced by the new arrivals. I was intrigued by a side-curled Yemenite newspaper boy, about nine years old, who was adept at giving change, together with appropriate chutzpah. I don't remember encountering any traditional Ashkenazi dishes in cafes or hotels and I was reminded of my bias when a recent arrival from the Bronx said to me, in Yiddish, "There is no Jewish life here." How ironic! One afternoon I was driving with an Australian UN soldier in the outskirts of Jerusalem when we were invited to join a Jewish wedding procession that was wending its way through the scrub. The celebrators were dressed in some tribal costume and spoke a strange language. Their origin was a mystery to us.

One of the salutary effects of my exposure to Israel was to offset my European-centred (Ashkenazi) perspective on World Jewry. For the first time in my life I encountered such "exotic" Jews as Syrians, Kurds, Yemenites and Iraqis.

On a more familiar note, I also visited some Australian graduates of the Zionist Youth movement who had moved from Melbourne to a kibbutz in the north of Israel (Kfar Hanasi) as soon as they could after the state was established. This was a forerunner of the relatively high rate of migration from Australia to Israel that continues today. At Kfar Hanasi I was introduced to kibbutz life as it then existed in its traditional form: a farming community in which there was no manufacturing, no outside employees, no wages or private property, everyone ate in a common dining room, babies lived in a common nursery and the children all slept in the children's home. Since then, these strict principles have been modified by Israel's kibbutzim. In Kfar Hanasi I also experienced a rare event for a kibbutz—a strike to protest against the quality of the available working tools. That was a bit of Australian culture that had been transferred to Israel!

What about Arabs? Despite the exodus during the War of Liberation to which I have referred above, there were still substantial numbers living there. In Jerusalem I saw the occasional Arab in traditional dress going about his—those I saw were invariably male—business in a completely normal fashion. One of the biggest communities of urban Arabs was in Haifa where I met an Arab school principal, a Druze, who was very positive about his future in the new Jewish state. I cannot recall any expressions of hostility by the Israeli Jews against the Palestinian Arabs, although one person I met did volunteer that it was good for Israel that so many had left. No one reported to me any experience of Arabs being forced out by the Jews during the war, but it is clear, in the light of subsequent reports, that such incidents had sometimes occurred. In Haifa I was told that during the fighting the city leaders had appealed to the Arab community not to leave, and many did stay. (This information has been validated by subsequent records.) Actually, I cannot remember any reference to Arabs apart from the account in Haifa. It seems that it was a matter of "out of sight, out of mind" as far as most Israelis were concerned.

The picture that I have presented of Israel as an infant state needs some important modification. As I moved around the country, I was constantly reminded of institutions that had been established during the British Mandate or even before that. In Tel Aviv, my hotel was on the picturesque Esplanade (at that time almost deserted). Around the corner was the Bauhaus-inspired "White City", which is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site and includes the famous Moscow-inspired Habima Theatre. On the coast between Tel Aviv and Haifa we passed one of the first of the Club Meds. (It was apparently closed a few years later.) In Haifa, two notable institutions were the inspiring Bahai headquarters and the Technion Hochschule, the foundation college for the Technion University. In Jerusalem I saw such organisations as the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, the Keren Hayesod (Jewish Agency) and other buildings that reminded me that Israel was built on foundations that went back many decades. The Mea Shearim Orthodox

Section had been established long before but, compared with today, not many Haredi (religious extremists dressed in the characteristic black hats and frock coats) were to be seen outside that area.

In Jerusalem I met a friend of my father from his youth in Russia, a lawyer who had emigrated long before. He lived in a modest house in an unmade lane in Rehavia which not many years later became one of the most fashionable districts in the city. In Talbieh, near my hotel, there were some mansions that had been owned by wealthy Arabs but were now unoccupied owing to disputes about their ownership status. As I had no access to the Old City, I could only gaze at the Damascus Gate, which was blocked off by rubble. I did, however, encounter some reminders of Jerusalem's religious past that had remained on the Israel side, such as the Russian Church, the Citadel of David, the supposed site of the Garden of Gethsemane and the Monastery in Ain Kerem.

Transport facilities are worth a mention. A railway line built by the Ottoman and British regimes ran from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv and then north along the coast. I travelled on it between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv in preference to the old rattletrap buses that were the normal means of transport both within and between cities. The other common form of transport was *sharut*, or shared taxis, a new experience for me. While in transit, spirited conversation between the passengers and the driver was the rule and classical music was usually also provided.

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem was of special interest to me as an academic. It was founded on Mt Scopus in 1918 and was in 1950 still the only official university in Israel. Unfortunately its physical connection with the rest of Jewish Jerusalem was cut off by the Jordanian occupation of East Jerusalem. Two years before my visit a convoy of academics and medical staff of the Hadassah Hospital had been massacred as they passed through East Jerusalem on their way to Mt Scopus. At the time of my visit plans were being made to build a new campus near the future Knesset and government departments. In the meantime the university took heroic measures to continue its work by occupying various buildings throughout the city and I spent much of my time in Jerusalem at its main emergency site, the Christian theological college, Terra Sancta. At least these facilities provided the basic requirements of classrooms and offices for restarting normal university activities after the interruption of the war. At the university I made a close and lasting acquaintance with the distinguished team of social scientists who were conducting pioneering studies on the integration of immigrants. This research group headed by Professor Shmuel Eisenstadt led the world at the time and influenced much of my own subsequent research on immigrants in Australia.

I am amazed to recall how many contacts I was able to make in a visit of only ten days. No wonder I was so stimulated by it. I feel privileged to have had the opportunity to visit the new state so early in its formation and to be able to recount my experiences now. But it is a long time ago, and if I have made any mistakes in my facts I would be happy to be corrected.

Dr Ron Taft is Emeritus Professor (Education) at Monash University.

Ash

As it alights,
the western yellow robin,
as it alights
beside yesterday's campfire
I notice how
the grasstree ash wobbles, wafts
and resettles—
ash that's as white and light as
the feathers at the bird's throat.

Andrew Lansdown

STORY

The Ravens Fed the Prophet

GARY FURNELL

On my first day as a volunteer with Meals on Wheels, the supervisor—a fat retired bloke—told me, "You're delivering to Mrs Sampson: good luck with that!"

I searched for some clue to his meaning in his florid face. He smiled but did not elaborate.

My Meals on Wheels partner, Bryan, explained: "Mrs Sampson's house is a mess, and she's a religious nut. She takes a bit of getting used to."

We drove to her house first. It was a simple weatherboard cottage with a corrugated iron roof and wooden-framed windows shaded with fibro awnings. The front gate squeaked as I opened it, the rusty hinges like the starting gun for the start of a dachshund race: three little dogs lined up at a hole in the front screen door and burst through it one at a time. But they didn't bark or snarl; they circled us wagging their tails and escorted us to the door.

I have a rule of thumb with dogs: they reflect their owners. A dog owned by nasty people is likely to bite you; the dog of crazy people is usually uncontrollable; and a dog that belongs to sweet people is reliably affectionate. Mrs Sampson's dogs were so affable and well-behaved that I reached down and tickled their soft, floppy ears.

Bryan knocked on the door. "Meals on Wheels, Mrs Sampson!" he bellowed into the house.

A figure emerged from the shadows of the hallway.

"You don't have to yell: I'm blind, not deaf!" a skinny old woman said, and she opened the screen door.

Her eyes bulged with glaucoma; she had the disfiguring red rash of psoriasis on her neck, scalp and hands; she had jowls of thin, sagging flesh; a white moustache over her downturned mouth, and greasy hair. She wore old pink slacks and a flannelette shirt under a filthy cardigan. She stank of urine.

Bryan glanced at me to see my reaction. He was grim-faced.

I looked around the house as she led us to the kitchen. Her house was a shambles: the front room, bedroom, hallway and kitchen were strewn with toppling piles of newspapers, junk mail, clothes, cardboard boxes, shopping bags, medicine bottles and tablet packaging. Ants feasted on the meaty residue in empty pet food cans. As she walked—her steps a tentative shuffle—she trailed a hand along the wall to navigate and to steady herself.

I paused to look at a framed wedding photograph of a short, stern bride beside her tall, black-suited groom. Even on her wedding day, Mrs Sampson had been a plain girl, and now, old and unkempt, she was ugly.

I pulled a handkerchief from my pocket and held it over my mouth and nose as we

neared the back of the house. Cats appeared—I counted five—and curved their bodies around our legs. On the bathroom floor, three trays of breath-halting kitty litter sat clumped with half-buried faeces, the litter and the faeces overflowing onto the tiled floor. Nuggets of cat droppings were squashed flat, most likely by Mrs Sampson as she made her way to the toilet. Front and back screen doors had holes torn in them; I hoped so the dogs could go outside and empty their bowels.

In the kitchen stood a wire cage the size of a refrigerator; in it a large sulphur-crested cockatoo sidled along its perch towards us. The bird's big curved beak looked like it could crack your finger in two. The bottom of the cage had a mound, as high as my knee, of crap and sunflower seed husks.

"The ravens have come to feed the prophet!" Mrs Sampson announced to the cockatoo.

The cocky bobbed up and down. "Pray Gawh! Pray Gawh!" it squawked.

"Yes, praise God," Mrs Sampson repeated.

"That's Elijah—the parrot," Bryan said, seeing me staring at the bird.

Mrs Sampson stuck a fragile finger, knobby with arthritis, into the cage. The cockatoo leaned its neck against her finger and Mrs Sampson caressed it; the bird closed its eyes and stretched upwards so her finger stroked the length of its flank.

"What prayer needs have you got, young man?"

I was momentarily confused because Mrs Sampson asked it with her bulging blind eyes turned towards the cocky and because she said "young man" and I'm sixty-five.

Bryan smiled at me, waiting for my response.

It was a question I'd never encountered before. Finally I said, "My grandson's going for his P-plates. I'd like him to get them."

She turned her face towards me and spoke to the air above my head.

"I'll pray that he gets 'em when he's good and ready. You don't want him killing himself or someone else in a motor car."

She continued to caress the breast of the ecstatic cockatoo, but gazed in Bryan's direction.

"How's your mother?" she asked him.

"She's good. The hip replacement went well."

"No infections?"

"No, no infections. And she's walking again."

"Thank you Jesus for healing the crippled!" she exulted, and she clasped her hands together and lifted them heavenward.

Elijah's crest unfurled upright like a tongue of yellow flame. He bobbed up and down. "Pray Gawh! Pray Gawh!" he squawked again.

"You're a wise one," Mrs Sampson said to the bird.

I put her meal on the kitchen bench in one of the few spots not covered with food slops or papers.

"Here's your meal, Mrs Sampson," I said, and I patted the plastic container so she could locate the meal from the sound.

"What's your name?"

She edged towards me. I drew back.

"Alan," I said.

"Alan whose grandson is learning to drive," she summarised.

Bryan gestured for me to head for the door; it was time to go.

"We'll see you next week, Mrs Sampson," he said. "Don't forget; your lunch is on the bench."

She directed her sightless eyes towards Bryan.

"I heard him when he told me the first time," she said. She pointed a bent finger at me, but I'd moved and she was indicating the kitchen cupboards.

"Just checking," Bryan said. "I'd hate the food to go to waste."

She laughed a crusty, phlegm-throttled laugh. "You think the food'd be wasted with this lot around?" And she pointed to the floor and in that whirlpool of pets circling her feet it was hard not to point directly at either a cat or a dog.

"What's her story?" I asked Bryan when we were in the car.

"She's a widow; her husband died, oh, twenty years ago. They had a property near Binnaway. When he fell off the perch, she sold the farm and bought the house in town: lived there ever since."

"Did they have kids?" I asked.

"Yeah, two boys. They left home as soon as they could: embarrassed by their parents, I think. Both of them live in Sydney."

"Do they know how their mother lives?"

"I'd say so, yeah. They pay a kid to mow her lawn and a woman to do some cleaning for an hour or two each week."

"That place gets cleaned?"

"Sort of cleaned. She empties the cat trays, vacuums around the piles of junk and scrubs the toilet and bath. She does a load of washing, changes the sheets—stuff like that."

I pitied the cleaner.

"What church did they go to?" I asked. I could imagine the sufferings of their minister under the weight of their relentless enthusiasm.

"They had a home church. Half-a-dozen people'd gather at their farm each Sunday; they'd meet under a big pine tree. They asked me to go once. I said no."

We finished our deliveries and I was relieved to see that none of the other housebound folk lived in conditions as squalid as Mrs Sampson.

A week later, Bryan and I again took a meal to Mrs Sampson. I swung open her squeaking front gate and again the dachshunds burst through the hole in the screen door to escort us to the house where we weren't ready for what we saw. Mrs Sampson was bald; only an uneven stubble of grey hair rose above the angry, red rash that covered her scalp. She looked like an old man who looked like an old woman. Bryan and I stood in her hallway and stared. I thought maybe the mangled haircut was a result of some psychotic episode.

Bryan was first to recover from the shock. "Mrs Sampson, have you joined the army?"

She turned towards him.

"I took a vow—a very solemn vow—to pray every day, morning, noon and night—until I die. I cut my hair as an outward sign and symbol of my commitment. Same thing that Saint Paul did."

"I wouldn't add fasting to your prayers," Bryan said.

"I'm fading quickly enough without fasting," she said as she led us farther into the house. She asked me, "Did your grandson get his licence?"

She had remembered. She certainly wasn't senile.

"He failed the test," I said. I held a folded handkerchief over my mouth and nose: the smell in the house, especially the stink of urine surrounding Mrs Sampson, was like an intimate, poisonous cloud.

"That's because it wasn't right for him to be driving yet," she told me.

"Maybe. He'll try again next week."

"Well, I'll keep interceding for him."

I put her meal down on the kitchen bench.

"Your meal's here, Mrs Sampson," I said, and I patted the plastic container.

She stepped towards me and tilted her alarming head up to me as if I was very tall.

"I hear from your voice, you're holding something over your face," she said. "The Spirit is here but he doesn't displace anything natural. The flesh is corruptible, but my soul is renewed every morning."

I didn't say anything. Bryan saw my discomfort. "Where's Elijah, Mrs Sampson?" he quickly said.

"Yesterday, a flock of cockatoos visited me and I could hear how excited Elijah was so I opened his cage and the back door and he flew away to glory. Just like the prophet."

Bryan shook his head.

"So you let him go?" I said.

"Yes, I let him go. I'll miss the conversation."

"Has the nurse been today?" Bryan asked. I noticed new bandages covering her ankles and feet.

"Yes, she's a lovely girl."

"And the cleaning lady?"

"Can't you tell?" Mrs Sampson laughed. "I'm the one that's blind!"

"Well, the dishes are done and there's washing on the line," Bryan reported.

"And she's vacuumed the floor and cleaned the bathroom," Mrs Sampson said.

That was the other strong smell: bleach. The cleaner must've used bottles of it.

"Then you're all organised," Bryan said. "We'll see you next week."

On a sideboard near the front door I noticed a packet of disposable incontinence underwear. I supposed the community nurse had given them to Mrs Sampson. I hoped she'd start wearing them.

We got in the car.

"Her sons should be horse-whipped for not looking after her! I could hardly breathe in there!" Bryan said.

"There was a packet of incontinence underpants there, but it hadn't been opened," I said.

"Strangers have to care for her! It's pathetic!" Bryan said, and he made the gearbox suffer as he drove away.

When Bryan and I next made our deliveries, I squeaked the front gate open but no dachshunds came to greet us. The front door was closed. I knocked but there was no answer.

"Could she be in hospital?" I asked Bryan.

"Usually they tell us so we know not to deliver."

Bryan banged on the door. There was a scurrying of dogs' feet inside the house and then a chorus of barking from behind the door. Bryan and I looked at each other. It was the first time I'd heard the dogs bark.

Bryan tried the door-knob; it was locked. He walked around the house to the back door.

I looked in the front window. I saw the dogs race down the hall as Bryan tried the back door. The cats hurried after the dogs. Piles of newspapers, cardboard boxes overflowing with empty pet food cans, discarded underpants and dresses, egg cartons and opened but forgotten loaves of bread were scattered around the front room. That was normal. The dogs barking was not.

Bryan returned to the front porch. "I'll call the office and see what they know," he said, and pulled his mobile from his pocket.

I walked around the house, looked through the kitchen window, and saw an unopened Meals on Wheels container on the table. There was no sign of Mrs Sampson.

I moved to the bathroom window. It was small and high. I stood on my toes and peered inside. The smell of faeces slapped my face. I gagged and stepped back from the window. I pulled a handkerchief from my pocket, held it over my mouth and nose, stood tall and looked again through the window. The shower curtain had been torn down and lay crumpled on the floor. In the hallway, near the bathroom door, there was a pile of dog droppings.

A milk crate holding two shrivelled pot plants lay nearby; I tipped them out and stood on the crate to get a better view. I opened the window as wide as it would go and that was when I saw Mrs Sampson below me. She was sitting on the toilet. I didn't speak to her. Her head had fallen forwards; her shoulders, neck and head had turned a peculiar bluish-yellow as if extensively bruised.

Bryan came around the house as I was stepping back from the window.

"Find anything?" he said.

"Yeah. She's on the toilet. I think she's dead."

Bryan stood on the crate and peered in the window. He jumped back from the sight and the smell.

"We'd better call the cops," he said.

I left him to make the call and walked around the house. There was no indication of forced entry. I could hear the dogs barking as they ran from the front door to the back door, to and fro, again and again.

I went to the gate and waited for the police.

Bryan joined me. "I wish the dogs would stop barking," he said.

"The poor things are distressed. She's probably been like that for days."

A paddy wagon soon arrived. A policeman and a policewoman, both young, got out and came towards us.

"You made the call to triple O?" the policeman asked us. He was tall, with the lean frame of a teenager, and a narrow, spotty face.

"Yeah, I did," Bryan said. "We're with Meals on Wheels. The house was shut up so we looked through some windows and found Mrs Sampson in the bathroom. We think she's dead."

We led them to the bathroom window. The policeman stood on the milk crate, scanned the room and quickly stepped back. He gestured to the policewoman to have a look. She was petite and her black tactical belt, crammed with equipment, appeared too big for her narrow hips. She had to elevate herself on her toes to see inside. She leapt back from the window.

"Yeah, she's there, deceased."

The policeman spoke on his radio.

"What's happening?" Bryan asked the policewoman.

"We need to call detectives in case there's been a crime committed. You'll probably need to come to the station and make statements."

She walked over to join her colleague.

The dogs kept barking.

My mobile chirrupped twice. It was a message from Alex, my grandson. I read it: "Hey Pop. I got my P-plates!" I thought for a moment. "Well done, drive safely," I texted back.

The policewoman took our names and contact details. There was nothing left for us to do at Mrs Sampson's house. Bryan and I got in the car.

"Who takes care of the body: the police or the ambos?" I asked Bryan.

"Neither," he said. "They have contractors in Dubbo who come out to do that."

Before we drove away, I saw the policeman once more on the milk crate. Again he fell back from the window and retreated from the house to suck in lungfuls of air untainted by corruptible flesh.

My Father Took a Good Degree

After Robert Burns

My father took a good degree, and high-jumped for his college,
but '30's England lacked the jobs to dignify his knowledge.
He scratched around to earn a pound but little could he score-O,
until he joined the Royal Army Educational Corps-O.

This Oxford grad, now paid and glad, soon learned the army dance,
a cipher-jig with telephones in 1940s France.
As panzers churned and Dunkirk burned and France took to its roads-O
my father's fight was shedding light on mild or fatal codes-O,

gave Fritz the slip by taking ship, he sailed from St Nazaire,
and ended quick in Reykjavik decoding Arctic air.
Then further north he found a berth in pretty Akureyri,
and passed his hours refining powers in Iceland's syllabary.

As time went by my father's eye fell on his landlord's daughter
who brought down to his boiler room his tea and shaving water.
He tried strong verbs and nouns on her to stimulate liaison,
Lovestruck, he told his journal, "*Que le bon Dieu sauve ma raison!*"

Along the beach my dad made speech to Valgy Bjarnisdottir.
He said her lovely nose required the whiskers of an otter.
She told him Englishmen were full of surplus roasted beef-O
and he replied her beauty simply beggared all belief-O.

My father courted properly and went to Valgy's father,
with formal word he there averred he loved his daughter rather.
Old Bjarni smiled and blessed the match … bring on the wedding jelly.
But army plans are army plans, they sent my dad to Delhi,

where he must sit in tropic kit beneath the ceiling fans
school havildars for India's post-independence plans.
Each night he filled an airmail form and pressed it with a blotter,
contrived its rise through wartime skies to Valgy Bjarnisdottir.

Ten million folk with lots of smoke converged upon the Fuhrer,
but text supports my father's thoughts had seized on something purer.
His airmails, hurled across the world, to Valgy Bjarnisdottir
could not attract one ounce of flak or hostile aircraft spotter.

The bunkers burned, the peace returned, belligerence extinguished,
this Iceland bride now smiled beside her groom as she was Englished,
the weird post-war brought kids galore, among them *petit moi*
who could not tell what was the spell of daddy's sheer *voilà*.

My father travelled through the world and never felt an alien,
He rose to brigadier in armies British and Australian,
retired to build grandfather clocks and farm his self-possession,
a fluent mind which when inclined, we said "was now in session".

Dave Judge on Wells

This well is called Adrenalin,
it's deep and bricked and you fall in
to look up at that "O" of seeing
with dark circumference round your being.

You tread a stuff you think is water
aware it keeps your fate for later.
But water here is volatile,
and this perplexes you awhile …

Eels? Down here at this extreme?
Then where the elvers, where the stream?
No light to see the seethe you feel
dismaying nerves that are not steel.

Then in that dark, at once, you know
the truth about that tangling flow,
It's brownsnake, blacksnake, writhing tiger
that nosed for water, were too eager.

A few still live, though most now rot
to recompose as you do not.
Dave Judge at Tilley's made this live
with quiet smile and fine reserve.

Alan Gould

STORY

Milt Jackson's Mallet

Morris Lurie

Irony is unstoppable. A swish. A whack. Chop goes the axe. A needle drops into a vinyl groove, and like a Japanese flower unfolding in water, the simple magic of paper and dye, I am thirty years younger in the New York apartment of a friend. We are four. Finishing our drinks. Donning our coats. About to go out to listen to some jazz. My friend and his lady. Me and my wife. And one of us—me, it has to be—noticing Dizzy Gillespie in that silver-framed photograph on the wall holding a straight trumpet, huh? what's that? what's happened to his singular signature identifying bent-up horn? Newport, says my friend, who was there, who took the picture. Someone stole it. Great souvenir. A fan. Really? I say. What sort of bastard would you need to be to do a thing like that?

And out we went.

A Milt Jackson Quartet was the music.

Teddy Edwards on tenor.

Who was the bass player?

Shadow Wilson on drums.

We had a table right at the front.

Sensational music.

Beyond class or category.

In exquisite distillation.

The very meat and marrow of the blues.

Where, two steps into the street from the door we have just come out, my wife to hand me Milt Jackson's mallet, well, one of them, swiped on her way past where he left them lying on the keys of his vibraharp at the end of the set, here, got it for you, quick, stick it in your coat.

What kind of bastard?

Let's cut it open, see what's inside, a vibes-playing musician acquaintance back home eagerly suggests.

Envy, of course.

Naked and obvious.

No way, I tell him.

Slamming it into a drawer, a lockable cupboard.

Keep your bastard fingers to yourself, you're not touching it.

Thank you very much.

Safe.

And why and how that should open, the flower in further unfolding, the petal beyond petal within, to the immediate memory of the house-bound old mother of a long-known

and loved friend falling in her shower, eighty-two years of age, seven in the morning, alone in her house, a witty woman, well read, fiercely independent, her husband gone now twenty-two years and never missed for a minute, never liked him, she made no secret, men in general, goodbye and good-riddance, or such anyway her proud pose, oh some cruelty in that tongue, watch your step there, not without bite, fallen, fainted, slipped, who knows, unable to rise, to raise, to crawl, to creep, to turn off the water gone from hot to now unstoppable crashing cold, this one morning in a million her habitual checking-up son without his never-without key, and of course no, don't even bother to ask, he didn't smash a window, break down the door, or even, for that matter, hang around, ask a neighbour, loiter, wait, somehow imagined—

What?

Imagined what exactly?

Well, it was a shock.

This was afterwards.

Four hours afterwards.

Four hours of not knowing what to do and phoning and no answer and finally thinking to better go home and get the key and—

Yes, he looked terrible.

Awful.

His face.

I can see it now.

You have no idea.

The beloved son.

And what to do then, of course, the problem, no, she wouldn't allow a stranger in the house, a lodger, a nurse, thank you very much, whatever arrangement suggested her answer always the same.

Now you may say, and let me be the last person to argue, to contradict, to stand in your way, to cut open Milt Jackson's mallet exhibited genuine curiosity, the working of a questing mind, useful understanding, scientific research, as the son's love for his mother was unmistakably evident in his forbidding her, banning from the house, in iron resolution never to be broken, should have done it years ago, little wonder you fell over, God only knows it could have been worse, those damn cigarettes, pure poison, puffing like a chimney, look at you, two, sometimes even three in a single day.

Blues

i

The blues singer—
how did he know *right now is*
the needed time?

ii

John Lee Hooker's dead
and all the bright day it's been
raining here, raining …

iii

Tangled up in blues …
and yet getting from Bob such
shelter from the storm.

iv

Listening to Satchmo—
Nobody knows the trouble …
Oh, sweet Lord, *swing low!*

Andrew Lansdown

STORY

The Magician's Shadow

Ben Sharafski

It is half past ten on Saturday night and I am alone in the living room of the run-down terrace house in Surry Hills that I live in. Belinda is spending the weekend at her boyfriend's flat again and Natalia has gone out. The sickly orange light from the Chinese paper lampshade fills the room with a nervous, aimless energy. My over-stimulated retinas conjure slow-moving, oddly-shaped creatures in the shadows, like black-and-white photos developing in a darkroom. In the background Natalia's red Philips cassette deck plays the Cowboy Junkies, but tonight the plaintive voice fails to stir my numbness.

On the roughly-painted coffee table there's a two-day-old issue of the *Sydney Morning Herald*. I pick it up with little enthusiasm: Sydney's selection as the host city of the 2000 Olympics is still dominating the headlines. I flip through a few pages, then toss it back. I walk to the portable black-and-white television, switch it on and turn the dial, going through all five channels in quick succession: there is nothing worth watching. The only readily-edible food in the fridge is Natalia's tube of condensed milk; she sucks it straight out of the tube. I bring it to my lips and squeeze lightly, careful not to leave traces of my transgression. The sweetness overwhelms my taste buds for a few seconds, alleviating my boredom.

The sound of a key in the front door quickens my heartbeat. I pick up the Stendhal novel I was planning to read and place it on my lap, open at a random page. Natalia walks in. It is not yet eleven—a bit early to be returning home from a promising second date.

"Oh, hi," she says, looking startled. "I didn't realise you were sitting there."

"So how was it?" I ask.

"It was all right," she says, extending the last syllable.

"Did you have another near-sex experience?" I ask.

She looks into my eyes and laughs, her teeth dazzling against her red lips. "You've got such a way with words." She slowly shakes her head.

Natalia is handsome rather than pretty, with strong eyebrows and lively dark eyes which can be somewhat unsettling, like those of a village woman in an old Italian film. Her body is already losing some of its firmness before it has borne a child, like an overripe fruit wasting slowly on the vine.

Once I asked how old she was, and she waved me off with mock coquettishness: "You never ask a lady her age." Then one day, alone in the house, I couldn't help myself. I saw she had left a filled-out form on her desk and sneaked into her bedroom to take a look. Hovering above the mess of books and notes I found her date of birth in the research grant application: she was thirty-five. Like me she was alone, thousands of miles away from her family and doing work she didn't really like. I was only twenty-nine, though—still hoping to grow up.

"I've still got some wine left," says Natalia. "That guy drank only beer."

She pulls out a half-full bottle of Shiraz. We drink it together in non-matching coffee cups.

When the wine is gone Natalia says: "I might go to bed now. I'm going to play tennis tomorrow morning."

I also go to my bedroom. Before sleeping, I pull a two-year-old issue of *Penthouse* from under the mattress. The airbrushed blonde model smiles at me like an old friend.

Natalia's father was a Greek-Australian communist who was sent by the Party to study at the University of Cracow in the early 1950s. He was an idealist, a believer who kept his faith in the possibility of a socialist utopia even when it became evident that the communist governments of the Eastern Bloc were merely despotic bureaucracies ruthlessly clinging to power. In Cracow he married Natalia's mother, a Polish fellow student, and they returned to Perth together.

Natalia was their only child. When she was in her mid-twenties she got engaged, and then the troubles started. Her fiancé's Greek parents took it for granted that the wedding would take place at a Greek Orthodox church. As a staunch atheist, Natalia's father had not had her baptised; seeing her baptised now and getting married in church would have been too much to bear. Not only did the conservative forces with their Orthodox priest allies defeat the Communists in the bitter civil war that had torn Greece apart after the Second World War, but now his only child was going to defect to their side. Natalia soon found herself torn by the conflicting ultimatums of her father and her fiancé's family. Eventually the wedding was called off, and Natalia moved to Sydney.

I can still discern in her the lingering traces of her father's beliefs: she would turn the television volume down whenever the commercials were on, her only bank account was with a credit union, and she would only buy her clothes at op shops, shunning consumer society. Despite her unconventional upbringing I can also see some residual influence of patriarchal Greek society. She once told me her fantasy about being raped: a dark-haired man with blurred facial features and the muscly body of a labourer has his way with her. The faint odour of his sweat permeates her nostrils. There is no brutality; the threat of violence is only implicit in his determined movements, in the weight of his body. I was puzzled at first, and then I understood: it offered her the possibility of sex without guilt.

If ceding control is what women really want, I thought to myself, no wonder I am alone. Two years earlier my ex-girlfriend had dumped me for another guy. She was breathtakingly beautiful, and self-absorbed to the point of seeming mildly autistic. My life had reached a standstill at the time; I had decided against trying to forge an academic career, but did not know what I should do instead. Her beauty propped my sense of self-worth, and when she left me it collapsed like a house of cards. I felt like a sacrificial victim at the hands of Aztec priests wielding obsidian knives. I then spent two arid years trying to even the score by finding an even more attractive girlfriend. My shattered confidence precluded me from getting closer to those that I desired, and when a less attractive woman approached me I became a Groucho Marx, refusing to join a club that would accept me as a member. That childish obsession with perfect looks, I realised, exasperated with myself, was still inhibiting me, preventing me from moving forward from my constant flirting with Natalia and into a proper relationship.

When I awake the next morning it is almost eleven. I'm alone in the house. The milk bar down the back lane is closed on Sundays, so I can only have black coffee for breakfast.

Luckily I am not very hungry.

When Natalia finally returns from her tennis match I ask if she wants to have an early lunch at Café Casablanca, a little Moroccan restaurant up the road owned by a French-speaking lesbian couple—one of them pretty and outgoing, the other plain and sour. I walk up the street half a step ahead of Natalia. When I lift my right arm slightly our foreshortened shadows on the footpath appear to be holding hands.

"Oh, hi!" says the pretty co-owner when she sees Natalia, kissing her on both cheeks. She smiles pleasantly to me as well, but something tells me I shouldn't try to exchange kisses.

We order a *couscous royal* for two. The restaurant owner keeps flirting with Natalia, and in the warm glow of her attention, Natalia's face, framed by her long dark hair, acquires a stirring beauty, epiphanous and yet oddly familiar. My heartbeat quickens. If she is so beautiful in her way, then what is preventing me from trying to start a relationship with her? Could it be her ticking biological clock and the fact that we are already living in the same house?

The couscous arrives. Maybe these are all just excuses. *Maybe there's something else.* I hesitate. Then I suddenly find myself telling Natalia about my childhood in Israel and about how I first met the Magician.

Memory first brings back the texture and the light. The rasping coarse sand finish of the stucco walls of the block of flats I grew up in, and the harsh Mediterranean light mercilessly exposing its imperfections: hairline cracks, bruises caused by soccer balls and bicycle tyres and—only a few years after the building's construction—dark grey stains caused by leaded petrol fumes. This relentless light retained its intensity day after day from April until October, when clouds bearing the first rain of autumn would finally soften it. Then the smells come alive: cooking gas slowly leaking from the tall cylinders brought to our backyard by AmIsraGas trucks, the pungent smell of street cat urine.

Our street was made up of ten or so similar three-storey blocks of flats, built in the late sixties and early seventies using concrete blocks and cheap Palestinian labour. There were the first touches of modest luxury unknown to our grandparents' generation: the second toilet inside the flats, the single family car parked outside. At the end of the street was a single freestanding house, built in the forties when our suburb was still a little rural settlement with poor road access to Tel Aviv. In its backyard was one remaining greenhouse where gerberas were still grown as a bit of cottage industry, almost a hobby.

School would finish at one o'clock—twelve o'clock for Year One students—and in the early afternoon the neighbourhood children, dressed in striped T-shirts, denim shorts and leather sandals, would converge at our car park, which was almost empty at this time of day. Most of the time we played soccer or a crude form of baseball—using a tennis ball and stick. There was little else to do. The only television channel was the government station, broadcasting in black-and-white without commercials. After allowing for educational programs, news and documentaries with Arabic subtitles about new tomato-growing methods, there was very little time left for any children's programs.

The two best players selected the teams for the soccer and the bat-and-ball games. Each selected one child at a time in an attempt to keep the teams evenly matched. I was a bookworm, a dreamer, spending my afternoons reading encyclopedia articles about the Inca empire and fiddling with my chemistry set. When I joined the neighbourhood children, I was invariably one of the last to be picked, ahead of only one or two seven- or eight-year-olds with dripping noses.

The best player by far was Nissim, a tall overweight boy almost a year older than me who already had the shadow of a moustache on his upper lip. "He looks like an Arab, but we love him," his mother told my mother when he was still a toddler. His family were Turkish Jews, descendants of the Jews expelled from Spain by the Catholic monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella in 1492. At home they mostly spoke Ladino, a medieval Spanish dialect sprinkled with Hebrew words. His father affected the mannerisms of a Levantine *effendi*. His ample stomach preceding him, he always walked two or three steps ahead of his wife, sometimes holding amber prayer beads in his hand. The mother was obese, with a soft, downtrodden look. Nissim's father had forbidden her to take driving lessons. Once my mother helped her fill out a medical insurance form, and she showed up at our flat the following day with a cake and a poem she had written in Turkish. My mother asked a Turkish-speaking acquaintance to translate it: the poem described my mother as an emerald.

One late summer afternoon we were playing our bat-and-ball game. The worst part of the day's heat was behind us, but the asphalt was still warm and little pearls of sweat formed on our foreheads. Nissim belted the ball down the entire length of the car park, across the street and over the neatly trimmed lantana hedge encircling the next building. As the other team frantically searched for the ball in the hedge, our team clocked home runs one after the other. Running around the car park, I was filled with joy at being part of the victory, although I knew it was achieved solely through Nissim's ability. When one of the other team finally retrieved the ball and threw it listlessly towards the home base, we were already leading by an unassailable margin. Disheartened, they sat on the low concrete-and-stone wall flanking the entrance to the car park. We joined them. Nobody uttered a word. I was exhausted all of a sudden. Time stood still, in the way it sometimes does in childhood, when you think that life is a place rather than a road, before you realise that everything—including life itself—will eventually pass.

"Look, here's the Magician!" cried Nissim suddenly. He was looking at a balding, overweight man who was heading down the street towards us.

"Is he a real magician?" I asked. He didn't really look the part.

"Yes, I saw him at my friend's birthday party. He was amazing! He had a child as his assistant and he pulled a rabbit out of that boy's top hat!"

Nissim rose and ran towards the Magician. I followed more slowly, keeping a safe distance. I watched Nissim and the Magician talking to each other, but I could not hear the conversation. I noticed the Magician looking in my direction, then saying something to Nissim.

"Hey, come over!" shouted Nissim, beckoning. He dismissed my hesitation with an impatient look. I gingerly approached them.

Nissim turned to me. "The Magician wants to teach us magic so we can become his assistants and perform with him at birthday parties!"

I couldn't believe my luck. I visualised standing on a stage and letting pigeons fly out of my outstretched palm, greeted by thundering applause and admiring, envious eyes. I looked at the Magician.

He had flimsy, light brown hair pasted on his sunspot-covered pate, his lips drawn together under his limp moustache. His watery blue eyes had a piercing, unsettling look, as if trying to examine me: was I magician material?

Suddenly he smiled, exposing small, even, white teeth. "I think both of you will do well," he said. "How about you come to my place on Wednesday at four o'clock?"

At home my father was lying on the sofa in shorts and a singlet, listening to the radio, his face turned away from me. The announcer said something about Henry Kissinger

and the Sinai Disengagement Agreement. I went to the kitchen to look for my mother. For some reason she didn't seem to like the idea of me taking magic lessons.

"I think I've heard of that guy. He works as a chef for a catering company and also performs as a magician on weekends." A light frown clouded her forehead. Her eyes narrowed. I could see two small images of me reflected in the tinted lenses of her glasses. "Do you know if he's married?"

"No, I don't," I said. What difference does it make, I thought.

"I don't know if you should go there. We don't know him very well."

"Oh, please, Mum! What's the problem? Nissim would be there too!" I couldn't believe the direction the conversation was taking.

"Well," my mother finally said, "I guess if you and Nissim went together it would be fine."

On Wednesday afternoon I met Nissim at the car park and we walked to the Magician's flat, five minutes away. The landing in front of his door was narrow, and as Nissim stood pressing the buzzer, I waited beside him, invisible to the Magician who now opened the door.

"Oh, hello," he said to Nissim. "But where's your friend?" I thought I could detect disappointment in his voice.

"I'm here," I said, stepping into view. The Magician's face lit up. "I'm glad you could both make it."

That day the Magician taught us a simple trick: you tear a piece of newspaper into strips, push them into your fist, and then pull out of your fist a folded piece of newspaper which you unfold to produce an intact sheet. I was deeply disappointed. This wasn't real magic. Anyone could tell that we were using a different page.

The Magician noticed our disappointment. "Practise hard and I will teach you a more complicated trick next time," he said. "But remember: everything we do here is secret. Magic tricks are worthless if people know how they are done."

Nissim wasn't in the car park the following Wednesday at five to four. I went to his flat and knocked but there was no answer. I couldn't believe it. How could he not show up for our magic lesson?

When I arrived on my own the Magician looked pleased to see me.

"I don't know where Nissim is," I said nervously. "I went to his house but no one was there."

"Never mind," said the Magician. "To be honest, I don't think Nissim is real magician material. He's not like you," he added, his blue eyes looking oddly teary, the corners of his eyes bloodshot, as if he were ill.

That afternoon the Magician finally taught me a real magic trick: you hold in your hand a piece of thin red gauze fabric, wave it around, and then you make it disappear into thin air—only to reappear out of your clenched fist a moment later. I practised a few times and was overjoyed to see that I could already perform the trick passably well—even if not as well as the Magician.

After a few more practice runs the Magician said: "And now we'll move on to something a bit different. In my shows I also do short comedy skits. If you're going to become my assistant and perform with me, you will need to practise for that as well."

Comedy skits? Nissim had never mentioned anything about them. But I guessed I had to follow the Magician's instructions.

"Could you please lie down on the carpet?" The Magician pointed to the red Persian-style synthetic runner covering the white terrazzo tiles in front of the wood-cased

television set.

I lay down on the carpet, confused.

"Now don't worry, this is all part of the exercise for the skits," said the Magician. He crouched above me, his two feet placed astride my thighs, and then lowered his palms and placed them on the carpet near my shoulders, so that his body was hovering above mine. I lay there, motionless, the musty smell of the carpet invading my nostrils. I could see the large dark pores on his nose, the thread of saliva between his teeth.

He then placed his hands on my shoulders, using some of his body weight to hold me down, and said: "Let's pretend that I've kidnapped you, and that you now have to beg me to let you go home to your parents."

Natalia gasps, bringing her palms together and raising them to her breasts, her head tilted slightly back. "Wow," she exhales. "Did he really say that?"

"Yes, he did."

"And then what happened?"

"I can't remember exactly. I think I said something like, 'Please, let me go'."

"And then?"

"He just stared at me, motionless. After a few seconds I said, 'Please let me go home'. And then he let me go. That was it."

"Did you tell your parents?"

"No, I never told anyone. And oddly enough, I still returned to the Magician's place the following Wednesday."

"And did he try to do it again?"

"No. I remember him standing at the partly open door and blocking the entrance with his body. He refused to let me in and told me not to come again. He said that he'd heard I was showing my friends how to perform the magic tricks, and that I couldn't be trusted to be his assistant. The most traumatic part of the experience was my humiliation and disappointment at being rejected, and my indignation at being falsely accused of betraying his secrets. I also remember feeling jealous a few months later when I heard that Oren, the brother of my classmate Shira, was performing with the Magician at birthday parties. He was two years younger than me, an angelic-looking boy with soft blond hair and blue eyes."

This is what I tell Natalia, but what if it's not all? What else happened that day?

I've read somewhere that a familiar smell can bring back a suppressed memory. I take a deep breath. The bare concrete floor of the Café Casablanca does not emit the odour of musty synthetic carpet. The air carries just the aroma of freshly-ground coffee beans and a gust of exhaust fumes from Darlinghurst Road. Suddenly my heart starts racing, to the point that I can actually hear its thudding beats with my ears. I struggle for air, like a swimmer resurfacing after staying underwater too long.

Natalia is looking at me silently, but I'm not looking back at her.

I'm seeing the Magician's expressionless eyes looking at me, almost looking through me, opaque and reptilian, as I lie beneath him on that red polyester carpet, my elbows stinging from carpet burn.

"Please let me go," I am saying in an uncertain voice, following his instructions, not understanding what he wants. What does this strange uncomfortable exercise have to do with magic, or even with comedy skits, for that matter?

I blink up at him. I can think of nothing more to say. In my total incomprehension, I don't show any fear, just puzzlement. He looks at me intently for a few seconds and I see the alertness in his face dissipating, fading into resignation. Although I don't

understand what he wants I do understand that he didn't get it, that I have let him down.

When I call my mother in Israel the following evening, I say: "Remember Oren, Shira's younger brother? The one you used to say looked like an angel …"

"What makes you think of him all of a sudden?"

"I was just wondering what he's up to these days."

My mother is a bit of an aficionado of the old Jewish pastime of keeping tabs on acquaintances and their achievements in the three spheres of activity that count: marital, financial and academic. If you didn't, how would you know if you were ahead of the game?

"He does some freelance work somewhere. He has a girlfriend—I think someone has told me that she is twelve years older than him. His hairline is receding, and he's put on a lot of weight."

A week later Natalia and I are at the local Hare Krishna cinema, where for less than ten dollars you can have a vegetarian all-you-can-eat buffet and watch a one-year-old Hollywood movie. We are stretched out on large soft cushions, almost lying down, surrounded in the small, warm, dark room by a dozen smooching couples. The air is thick with pheromones. The movie hasn't started yet and the dimness makes the walls recede, as if the confined space we're in has no boundaries. I reach for Natalia, and find her elbow, its crease under my fingertips, the smooth skin of her arm as I move to her wrist, feeling her softening flesh. I start forming slow figure of eights with my index finger on the back of her hand.

Stravinsky on Original Instruments

Montenegro kicked off the Balkan Wars,
and *la bande à Bonnot* were rounded up at last:
high time to bring some violence to the ballet.

Across the Atlantic, the Armory Show
stirred up Greenwich Village,
and some clown invented the crossword.

There were nudes descending staircases,
and quantum-theory's crazy stomp.
We feigned the primitive, like Piltdown Man.

Three hundred years of Romanovs
could not pass unanswered,
the nose-dive of a stalled regime.

There was trouble in the blood,
and no course clear, Europe
—like RMS *Titanic*—in the dark.

David Lumsden

BOOKS

Jennifer Compton

Taking It Personally

A History of Silence: A Memoir
by Lloyd Jones
Text, 2013, 273 pages, $32.99

The terrible earthquakes in Christchurch in 2010 and 2011 changed the physical and emotional landscape of a city, and of a country. And many people who were geographically distant from the catastrophe (like Lloyd Jones in Wellington, and me in Melbourne) found themselves wrenched askew by a profound and unsettling empathy.

I was mesmerised by the almost slow-motion, blow-by-blow clarity of Jones's description of how he apprehended the full import of what was happening down south. Beginning—"How strange to find it was ourselves, rather than the foreign victims we were more used to, fleeing the smoke and dust of disaster."

He was sitting on the edge of his chair, in front of the television screen, remote in hand, nodding dumbly, as he was importuned over the phone by an expat BBC radio producer to write something about what the country was going through.

"Was it that day, or the day after?"

Time does move strangely when you struggle with the shock of dislocation. It leaps, it creeps, it turns back on itself. It folds into intricate shapes like a work of origami. It spirals like a strand of DNA. The DNA trope is telling, because the main thrust of the book is following the writer as he climbs back up his family tree searching for his true progenitors.

Jones decided that he couldn't write a piece to be read out on radio—"How could one speak for all?" But he had been surprised by a bunch of personal memories surfacing—"as though flushed up from the unsettled sediment within". He had been shaken loose, and thrown off balance, and remembered things that had long been buried under the weight of silence.

Lloyd Jones is an experienced and skilful writer. Most recently I read his novel *Mister Pip*, and I liked it a lot. It had charm, and pathos, it created a world I could believe in. But after reading this book, this memoir, I realised that a novel can be a fortress, which conceals and protects the inelegant, painful, shameful, live quivering nub of a human consciousness. A novel is a construct. But that's all right, we need them. We need these Bastilles of the human spirit, in the same way that we need town halls, and train stations, and cathedrals, and department stores and apartment blocks, and family dwellings on quarter-acre blocks. That's how we get by, day by day. And then, our comfortable world is rocked and tilted and falls down around our ears.

I am not saying that this isn't an elegant book. It is. It moves suavely, and sinuously, between extremes of national emergency and personal epiphany. There is a comforting formality in the tone the writer takes, even as he tells you (almost) everything.

I don't want to tell you the story: it is a very good story. Read the book for the story. I became anxious that the personal journey Lloyd Jones was pursuing would be a *cul de sac* and he would have to resort to a relinquishing trope for the climax of his drama. But I like to become anxious, as I read, I like to be uncertain, and will the hero on in his quest. And what an apotheosis he discovered!

It was much like me finding out my Italian great-grandmother and her Irish husband had been prosecuted for putting arsenic in the soup in an attempt to kill her father and stepmother in Island Bay in 1885. (The case was found not proven. Someone had certainly put arsenic in the soup, but there was no way of proving who had done it.) So I was ready for a court transcript. And I was happy for Lloyd Jones that it was just a "domestic"—though undoubtedly a domestic of the more egregious kind.

I certainly took this book very personally. I knew it would have to be close to home as I picked it up. Lloyd Jones and I were both born and raised in Wellington, we are more or less coevals, and we have both been wrestling with the events in Christchurch and their aftermath. But on page 4 I became quite rigid with intense particularity as I read—"I am writing these notes from the top floor of an old shoe factory in inner-city Wellington."

I was staying with a friend in one of the flats in the old shoe factory in 2011, as my mother took her chance to die while I was in the country trying to launch my book of poetry (*This City*). This was, of course, a crucial and shattering time for me, and the urbane configuration of the flats in the old shoe factory became stamped on my psyche as a place where your world shifts on its axis.

It would be interesting to know how *The History of Silence* might seem to someone who was not an insider. Because the narration is so lucid, and formally organised, I do not think it would be off-putting or difficult. As I write this I realise Jones

adeptly explains what might not be common knowledge:

> As a child I wore shoes manufactured in this same building. Then, it would have been unthinkable that one day a suburban kid like me would end up living in a factory, let alone in the city.

Uh huh, I was thinking as I read that passage. I know how that thing came to pass. I thought of my father's wooden box factory in what is now the DFO area in Rongotai near the airport. It has been pulled down and where it was is now the carpark for Bunnings. As I say, I could not help but take this book very personally. It was a gift to me. I understood myself, as I was reading, and where I came from, and I don't think I have ever felt so inside my own culture and language. It was like reading Denis Glover or Janet Frame or Alan Mulgan or Keri Hulme.

A History of Silence is a wonderful book. It is measured and judicious, it is brave and bravura. It rings, like crystal, with an honest effort to be honest.

Jennifer Compton is a poet and short-story writer who was born in New Zealand and lives in Victoria. More of her poems will be appearing shortly in ***Quadrant****.*

Michael Wilding

Clubmen of Old Melbourne

Athenæum Club Melbourne: A New History of the Early Years 1868–1918
by Paul de Serville
Athenæum Club, 2013, 514 pages

In mid-1868 two new clubs were established in Melbourne, the Athenæum and the Yorick. Plans for the Athenæum were under way by April when the proprietor, the architect J.G. Knight, advertised for staff and for tradesmen to begin renovations of the building he had leased in Collins Street. A prospectus was sent out to the press and on May 2 the *Age* and the *Herald* announced:

> The special aim of the founders of the club is to promote social and kindly intercourse between persons of kindred tastes and dispositions, and to establish a common ground on which gentlemen of intelligence and character may meet together irrespective of class distinctions or personal wealth.

The same day Marcus Clarke wrote about the Yorick in the *Australasian*:

> I heard something about a literary club being established the other day. The subject was mooted a long time ago. I hope that it will come to the birth. May I suggest, however, as a peripatetic and an impartial observer, that it should be confined, not perhaps to absolute *literary* men, but to men of some pretensions to knowledge of literature.

The Yorick is remembered in literary contexts through the membership of Clarke, Adam Lindsay Gordon and Henry Kendall, and from Hugh McCrae's colourful account of it in the *Bulletin*, reprinted in *My Father and My Father's Friends*. It had a distinctively bohemian aura, which Clarke was concerned to highlight. Clarke wrote in the *Australasian* on May 9:

> as Timmins, one of our number, incautiously told his wife that we keep a skull on the mantelshelf, there is much suspicion and terror abroad. I may briefly mention, however, that the story of the newspaper lad being scraped to death with oyster shells at a late supper, and buried in the back kitchen, is not absolutely true in all its details; also, I may, without breaking faith, refute the accusation made by a friend, that the members sit on tubs around the room, smoke green tea, and drink neat kerosene out of pewter pots. More I cannot reveal.

The Athenæum's splendid premises were described at length in the *Argus*, June 29:

> The dining-hall itself, which has a very elegant appearance, is 55 ft. long by 30 ft. broad, and is arranged somewhat in the style of a café, with tables to seat parties of eight, well lighted by an open-framed lantern-roof, the beams of which are decorated with red and gold; and with its lofty walls, coloured green of a particularly delicate shade, the room has a very cheerful aspect, while a further agreeable effect is produced by an ornamental border of mauve and red, carried round the walls at their union with the ceiling.

The Yorick was rather different. Henry Kendall described being taken there by Clarke:

> He popped into a dingy passage leading towards what appeared to be a bill-sticker's back skillion. About half way up this corridor there loomed through the darkness a narrow, suspicious-looking flight of stairs. At the foot of this my little friend paused, and instructed me to follow him, warning me at the same time to be careful of the steps. Careful I certainly was, but a more villainous ladder I never ascended. However, we scrambled to the top, and lo! ... Facing the landing an old door opened into an aromatic room, which, I was informed, did duty as "the reading, talking and smoking-den." The most remarkable items of its furniture were the spittoons—useful utensils in their way no doubt, but distressingly plentiful and palpable ...

Nearly half the foundation members of the Yorick were also members of the Athenæum—including the journalists and newspaper men Marcus Clarke, James Smith, James Neild, Charles Bright, George Walstab, Alfred Telo, Thomas Carrington, F.W. Haddon and G.C. Levey. Initially, Paul de Serville writes of the Athenæum, "the original membership had a strong scientific and literary representation". Journalists and doctors had a significant presence. Gradually it defined itself. Less posh and expensive than the Melbourne Club, less bohemian than the Yorick, it attracted politicians, "which made the club unusual, and marked the start of a long association between the Athenæum and Melbourne's political world". The business world was well represented with "a large group of merchants, warehousemen, agents and brokers of all kinds—stock and station agents, mining brokers, sharebrokers—as well as mining men and auctioneers". There were comparatively few pastoralists, but a substantial number of racing men like Captain Standish, Herbert Power and Thomas Lyttleton.

Its early history was shaky. In 1871 it temporarily closed, reopening under a new proprietor, James Hay. At a later crisis, the committee took over ownership in 1918. Over the years it grew from strength to strength and still survives. The Yorick was absorbed by the Savage Club in 1966.

The early records of the Athenæum are incomplete and sometimes meagre, but de Serville has supplemented them by drawing on contemporary newspaper reports and memoirs to provide an invaluable account of the club's history, which he sets in the larger history of Victoria's development. He has exhaustively identified the members from the few surviving lists, and provided succinct biographical and genealogical details of their professional and commercial interests and their family connections, illuminated with telling anecdotes that bring them alive. Beautifully produced, *Athenæum Club* is generously illustrated with contemporary portraits and photographs of members and of Melbourne street scenes and architecture.

De Serville carefully explores the club's early tribulations in the context of Melbourne's recession of the mid-1860s and the collapse of the land boom and the consequent bank closures of the mid-1890s. As he pointedly remarks, whereas parts of Melbourne society frowned on gambling at the race track, they were deeply involved in gambling with mining shares and property speculations. The fortunes of many of the Athenæum members were intimately involved. Many were ruined. The pastoralist Hugh Glass had debts of half a million pounds in 1869 and "died of an overdose of chloral, administered at his request by his son". In the collapse of the land boom in the early 1890s the solicitor Theodore Fink twice made a secret composition, "a confidential means by which an individual could make arrangements with his creditors which remained unknown to the world"; he survived, in due course becoming chairman of the Herald & Weekly Times Ltd. Henry Gyles Turner, whose recollections of Marcus Clarke usually included a rebuke for Clarke's financial improvidence, was chairman of the Commercial Bank when it collapsed as a result of its extensive loans to building societies and land banks. The journalist James Smith lost his entire savings.

As Geoffrey Blainey writes in his foreword, "Paul de Serville has now written more than anybody in Australia—and maybe in England too—on the themes of clubs and their members." His *Port Phillip Gentlemen* and *Pounds and Pedigrees* brilliantly anatomised the nineteenth-century middle- and upper-class society of Victoria and its membership of the Melbourne, Athenæum, Yorick and other clubs. They are essential reading for any serious student of nineteenth-century Australian history and culture. With his genealogical expertise and his antiquarian care for detail, de Serville has not only provided an always fascinating and readable account of that milieu, but has also provided a uniquely rich source of detailed information for future historians, biographers and cultural commentators concerned to establish spheres of influence, and the possibilities of contact, who was likely to have known or met whom.

The enduring myth of Australia as a democratic and egalitarian society has produced its labour history and social historians. But fully to understand the complexity of Australia's past and development,

its political and economic establishment needs comparable examination. The Athenæum was one of those clubs that catered for that establishment.

Michael Wilding's latest book is a novel, ***Asian Dawn****, published in July by Arcadia.*

John Foley

The Canberra Air Disaster

Air Disaster Canberra: The Plane Crash That Destroyed a Government
by Andrew Tink
NewSouth, 2013, 304 pages, $45

Comptometrist Sheila Palmer walked out of the Temple Court Building down Collins Street for a smoke and a bite of lunch. She was twenty-eight, newly married and was happy processing RAAF pays. It was more of a war-time contribution than behind the counter at Buckleys. Three of her brothers were in the Army, another two were Air Force officers. Her husband Jack was a Hudson bomber air crew member in the RAAF, but she wasn't worried about him. After all, his aircraft was a converted dual-control VIP squadron plane.

That morning he had flown from Essendon to Canberra with some top brass and ministerial bigwigs. Corporal Jack Palmer sat in the small seat directly behind the pilot as the wireless operator, keeping flight communication flowing.

It was bleak in Melbourne that day—not unusual in August. The war wasn't going well. Hitler was planning the invasion of England from occupied France. And Melbourne was windy.

Sheila noticed her brothers Ron and Frank coming down the street. They seemed anxious but she didn't hesitate to accept their invitation to go down the street for lunch. She loved catching up with her brothers, not to mention having her favourite cork-tipped Turf cigarettes and a cup of black tea.

When they were all seated they told her. It had been on the Air Force radio. There had been a plane crash in Canberra and some important government people had died. She knew.

Australia was rocked. The Chief of the General Staff, General Sir Brudenell White, was dead, as were nine others, including Jack. The three Cabinet members killed were Army Minister Geoff Street, Sir Henry Gullett and Air Minister Jim Fairbairn. They were all First World War heroes. As Andrew Tink tells it, without them Robert Menzies would no longer be Prime Minister.

Prime ministers are not always popular on their own side. In Menzies's case, the Deputy Country Party Leader Archie Cameron had just reminded him on behalf of the fools that they couldn't suffer him either. Some suspected, perhaps unfairly, that Menzies had undermined Joseph Lyons. And Billy Hughes did his best to bring Menzies down, saying he "couldn't lead a flock of homing pigeons".

Menzies's main conservative opponents, Sir Earle Page and probably R.G. (Dick) Casey, devastatingly criticised him for not having volunteered in the Great War. Under pressure, he needed defending, and he particularly needed the backing of the three war heroes.

Flying was more dangerous then. People remembered how the war hero and Cabinet minister Charles Hawker, who was seen as a future leader, had been killed on October 25, 1938, when the *Kyeema* crashed in fog into Mount Dandenong.

The country was distressed when the Prime Minister, the popular and affable family man Joseph Lyons, died suddenly on Good Friday 1939. The UAP had prevailed on him to continue despite his heart problems and he had financial pressures to do so with eleven children, some very young. These events exacerbated the nation's shock on August 13, 1940.

In *Air Disaster Canberra*, Tink suggests Arthur Fadden briefly and later John Curtin might not have been Australian leaders during the war but for the Canberra crash. Be that as it may, what is clear is that the investigations were highly unsatisfactory. No photos were taken of the crash site. Police investigators were excluded by RAAF ground crew who secured the site. As a result, findings that the crash was due to simple pilot error are questionable.

An alternative explanation is supported by some evidence. The key question is: Who was flying the plane? Did the pilot, Bobby Hitchcock, let the person sitting in the co-pilot's seat take the controls? And who was sitting in the co-pilot's seat? Was it perhaps not the assigned RAAF co-pilot but Australia's First World War flying ace Jim Fairbairn, who was licensed to fly many types of planes but not the Hudson?

Tink's book documents a speech Fairbairn gave describing the stalling characteristics of Hudsons. A week before the accident, Fairbairn told an Adelaide headmaster:

> Hudson bombers have a rather nasty stalling characteristic … From what I have been told, a pilot coming in to land can find himself, suddenly and without warning, in a machine

> that is no longer airborne, heading straight to the ground … Personally, I think it's only a matter of handling your throttles wisely.

Relatives of Hitchcock, Fairbairn and the others attended a seventy-third anniversary commemoration at the crash site on August 13 this year. What was most moving was the human toll on those left behind. Some widows remarried. The sadness of brothers and sisters has been followed by inquisitive children and grandchildren intent on commemorating this black day in our history.

Andrew Tink's book engagingly tells the story. His legal background as a solicitor enables him to set out the evidence carefully. His political background as New South Wales state Liberal frontbencher gives insight into Menzies's supporters and opponents on his own side. The biographer of Lord Sydney and W.C. Wentworth has given us a formidable story which surely one day will be made into a film. And Cameron Hazlehurst has an ANU ePress book on the same subject, *Ten Journeys to Cameron's Farm*, out soon.

Sheila would be amazed.

John Foley is Sheila Palmer's son.

Witness

After the painting "February", by Wim van den Toorn

As it escapes
snow leaves fingerprints
on the roof,

a crime scene for spring
to investigate that morning
when it pulls up.

Half buried behind the house
trees wait for questioning,
some broken by winter.

Near the front door
a bright shrub
dissolves evidence

but rocks reappear
like memories
that waited through the cold.

Today, south is important
a compass point
for direction, warmth.

Window panes
glow like headlights
as a car drives away.

Then the sun
moves in to X ray
anything left.

Chinese Neighbours—Ashfield c. 1950

They never mowed.
They never did edges.
They never pruned or cut back.

They never gardened at all.
You never saw them
unless they were shades

who sometimes flicked
through the closed gate
like a card trick.

They hid their washing,
our Hills Hoist an empty icon
inside a crown of bindis.

They even ignored our weather.
Closed winter and summer
their windows reflected us back at us.

Ross Donlon

Peter Ryan

Looking Squarely at "Gay Marriage"

In what Margaret Whitlam would have called the "hoo-hah" of our federal election, "gay marriage" as an issue flickered in and out of view. Where does the matter stand, now that the dignity of democracy has, up to a point, spoken? Answer: "Very much where it stood before."

It seemed for a time that a definitive step might follow from the Labor side, and that legislation enacting gay marriage would follow hard upon a Rudd victory. I actually heard him promise that *something* would ensue within his first hundred days in office; what *exactly* that something was remained obscure; and late in August Joe de Bruyn, leader of the numerous union of shop assistants, issued a stern warning that his people were by no means solid for gay marriage, and if the leadership pushed it, a split in the Labor Party could well follow. And all that after poor Kevin Rudd had temporised his hitherto staunch Christian principles, in search of a handful of gay votes.

The Coalition is holding the matter somewhat more at arm's length, for detailed consideration later. During the leaders' debate in Brisbane on August 21, commercial pollster Roy Morgan detected a favourable audience reaction to this cautious approach.

I suppose no more carefully carpentered and precisely cuboidal "square" than I ever walked the Melbourne streets, and I was led into the following amateur (and risky) speculations via a full-page article by Dennis Altman in the *Australian Financial Review* of August 9. I must have been reading Dennis's writings from inside the parallel world of "queer" for forty years now: never less than civilised and clear, as with his current essay, where he ponders where he stands now on gay marriage. Clearly, even he still has points to settle. I'd better have a look for myself.

For example, what is the general magnitude of the problem? Are there at present thousands of suffering and sorrowing homosexual couples, frustrated in the fulfilment of their affections and their hopes, by the provisions of our present laws and current social attitudes? Peter Westmore analysed extensive material lately released from the 2011 Census, and concluded that only a very few couples are directly affected, or would be likely to take advantage of any liberalisation of the present laws. To my mind, his case is highly persuasive, and certainly suggests that we should be wary of such a change being made to accommodate such a small minority. Westmore sets out his conclusions clearly in an article in *News Weekly* of August 17; see what you think of it.

Now widen the perspective by—say—120 years. Oscar Wilde (d. 1900) was convicted of sodomy in 1895, and banged straight into Reading Gaol for two years. He had committed no "public outrage of decency"; his actions which sent him so swiftly to the slammer had all occurred in private. Upon release, he had become a social pariah, forced to live in exile. Perhaps most appalling for him of all, the sanctimonious London publishers, who had welcomed his stories (*The Picture of Dorian Gray*) and plays (*The Importance of Being Earnest*) would not soil their precious hands with his *The Ballad of Reading Gaol.* This long poem, many people think, is the pinnacle of Oscar's poetic achievement, of intense moral commitment. To get it published in England, he had to stoop to the services of the creepy and swindling professional pornographer Leonard Smithers; judge his standards by his habit, whenever trade fell slack, of slipping a notice into his shop window which read: *Smut is Cheap Today.*

Of *Reading Gaol*, Smithers issued a limited and numbered edition, which sold out instantly to a clamorous public demand. Smithers at once issued *another* "first" and numbered edition, swindling Oscar, but allowing a small printing error to creep in which enabled the two imprints to be distinguished. (My old friend, the writer Cyril Pearl, with his vast mental store of literary byways, identified an *authentic* first edition copy among a pile of second-hand books in Melbourne, and

swiftly bought it for me for (I think) two pounds. I cherish it today, a remembrancer as much of Cyril as of Oscar.)

How immeasurably better off are today's homosexual writers than Oscar. Their intimate acts in privacy are their own business; no pimping gumshoe perched on their bedroom window sill can menace them. No puritanical prejudice of publishers hinders the ready appearance of their books. The lists of some publishers even suggest that gays may sometimes command an "inside running", which is no proper concern of ours, who should be evaluating, however critically, the qualities and interest of the writings.

With the death of Queen Victoria in 1901, and the succession of her son "Bertie" as King Edward VII, came a general sense of easing in the rigorous and cruel application of the criminal law to private morals. Bertie was hardly the sort of model whom strict Victorian parents would adopt for their sons, for he was an avid haunter of the fleshpots, and almost certainly a cheat at cards. But his easygoingness stood a good deal closer to the realities of ordinary human imperfection here on earth. His reported comment during the Wilde brouhaha bespoke a worldly sophistication rather than a narrow and prescriptive morality: "I don't care what the people do, so long as they don't do it in the street and frighten the horses."

That earlier poet, painter and moralist, William Blake, would probably have damned this as "good advice for Satan's kingdom". Maybe. But for the vale of tears we actually inhabit, it is probably wisdom.

Right back to my school days, some intuition told me that an invisible and parallel "world of queer" subsisted alongside my own taken-for-granted "world of square". Then later, as a young man, many gays were deeply valued friends. Two whose names will be recalled by at least some present readers are Brian Finemore, the wonderfully sparkling Curator of Australian Art at the National Gallery of Victoria, and Harold Stewart, one half of the hoax poet "Ern Malley" who so alarmed Max Harris and his modernist Angry Penguins. When I was a naive and ignorant young man, such friends culturally covered me, so to speak, from Bach to Braque, and then onwards, to my eternal gain; different "orientations" never created the slightest difference or embarrassment.

Today's quest for recognition of "gay marriage" seems to have an element both contentious and confused, and even at the semantic level it is exorbitantly framed. No person of good will wants to see gays, simply because of their gayness, set at legal or civic disadvantage, and when this appears to occur, the rules should without hesitation be changed. A status called, perhaps, Gay Union, should be created with full state standing, powers and dignity, as a respected official framework and support under which two loving gays can express and fulfil their attachment. But gay *marriage* is illogical and impossible.

For starters, what *is* marriage? The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* is short and clear: "the formal union of a man and a woman by which they become husband and wife". Where does a gay fit in there?

The gays seem careless of the fact that millions of other people, married or considering marriage, have a profound cultural and emotional interest in the nature of this ancient and fundamental form of union. Not only Christians, but also Jews and Muslims share the attachment to this "sacrament", which would be diminished for them by the acceptance of gay practice as "marriage". As I see it, the gays are in the position of someone who hasn't paid his subscription to a club; he's a gatecrasher, so let him stay outside.

Only since starting to write this article have I come to consider gays as a class or a category; till then, I thought of them only as individuals, when I think they all looked much nicer. Their campaign for "gay marriage" is turning them into a "movement on the make", with all the quirks and crotchets such movements acquire: nutty or factional leaders or spokesmen; needlessly provocative aims; cultivation of grudges; a "hunger for imagined martyrdom".

The gays own among them such a wealth and variety of talent and strength that they can well stand on their own feet. They have no need to colonise the marriage of others.

SPECIAL NEW SUBSCRIBER OFFER

Subscribe to *Quadrant* and *Policy* for only $104 for one year!

Quadrant is one of Australia's leading intellectual magazines, and is published ten times a year.

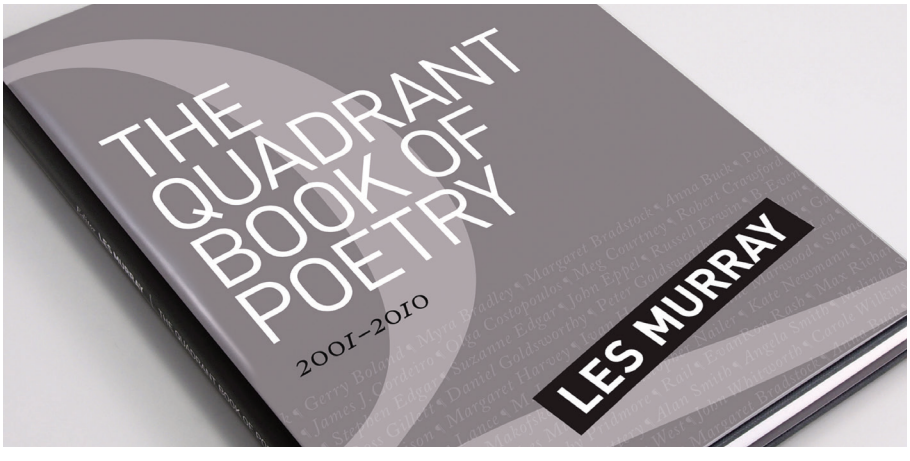
Policy is the only Australian quarterly magazine that explores the world of ideas and policy from a classical liberal perspective.

To take advantage of this offer you can:

- subscribe online at **www.policymagazine.com**
- use the subscription card in the middle of this magazine
- contact The Centre for Independent Studies:
  PO Box 92, St Leonards, NSW 1590
  p: 02 9438 4377 **f:** 02 9439 7310 **e:** policy@cis.org.au

* This offer is in Australian dollars (incl. GST), is only available to new Australian subscribers and is not available to institutions. The renewal rate for a joint subscription is A$114.00 (including GST).

TEN YEARS OF THE BEST VERSE



RENODESIGN.COM.AU R33011

It seems to me the best such occasional collection I have ever read; better, for instance, than 'The Faber Book of Modern Verse'; which is saying quite a bit.
— BOB ELLIS, *TABLE TALK*

487 POEMS by **169 AUTHORS**

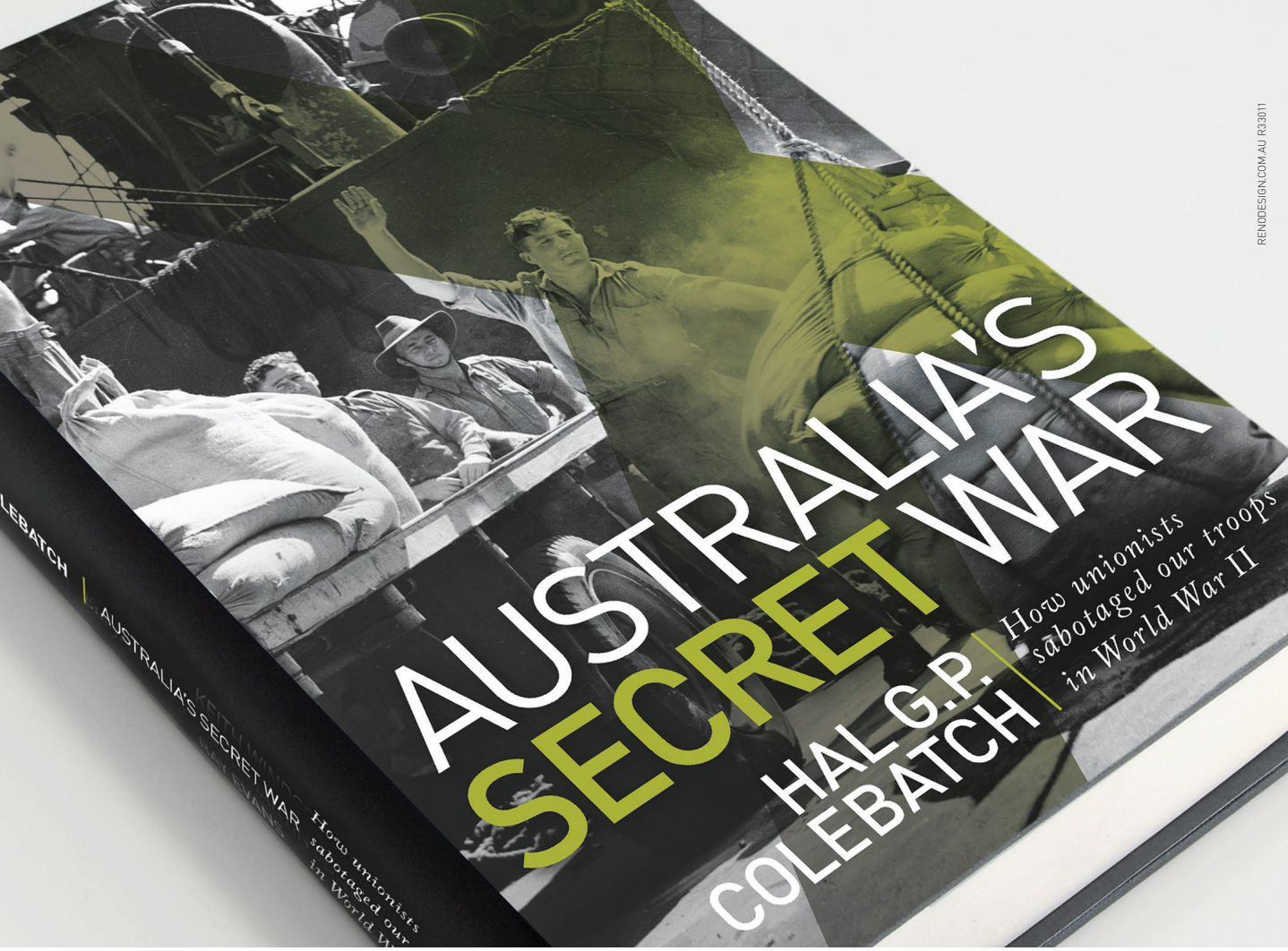
"It has been known for decades", Les Murray writes in his introduction to this collection, "that poets who might fear relegation or professional sabotage from the critical consensus of our culture have a welcome and a refuge in *Quadrant*—but only if they write well."

From the second decade of his 20 years as literary editor of *Quadrant*, Les Murray here presents a selection of the best verse he published between 2001 and 2010.

QUADRANT BOOKS

ORDER THIS LANDMARK BOOK $44.95

ONLINE www.quadrant.org.au/store
POST Quadrant, Locked Bag 1235, North Melbourne VIC 3051, Australia
PHONE (03) 8317 8147 **FAX** (03) 9320 9065



AUSTRALIA'S SECRET WAR
HOW UNIONISTS SABOTAGED OUR TROOPS IN WORLD WAR II

Photographs © Australian War Memorial

HAL COLEBATCH's new book, *Australia's Secret War*, tells the shocking, true, but until now largely suppressed and hidden story of the war waged from 1939 to 1945 by a number of key Australian trade unions — against their own society *and* against the men and women of their own country's fighting forces during the perils of World War II.

Every major Australian warship was targeted by strikes, go-slows and sabotage at home. Australian soldiers fighting in New Guinea and the Pacific went without food, radio equipment and ammunition because of union strikes.

Waterside workers disrupted loading of supplies to the troops and pilfered from ships' cargoes and soldiers' personal effects. Other strikes by rail workers, iron workers, coal miners, and even munitions workers and life-raft builders, badly impeded Australia's war effort.

FOR YOU, OR AS A GIFT $44.95

QUADRANT BOOKS

ONLINE www.quadrant.org.au/store
POST Quadrant, Locked Bag 1235, North Melbourne VIC 3051, Australia
PHONE (03) 8317 8147 **FAX** (03) 9320 9065