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COLIN TATZ on the recent rise of anti-semitism

DIMITRI BURSHEIN takes a look at Australia's flagging competitiveness

IDA LICHTER goes behind the Islamic veil

ROSS FITZGERALD reviews Spies, Daniel Mannix and Ann Moyal's *Life*

ANNE HENDERSON on the Menzies war years

ALAN GREGORY and CAMERON HAZLEHURST on the August 1940 air disaster

GERARD HENDERSON'S MEDIA WATCH tackles Rai Gaita, sludge and the Sandalistas of the Moorlort Plains

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with Gerard Henderson's

MEDIA WATCH

CONTENTS

Editorial	2
The Islamic Veil: Unmasking the Stakeholders - Ida Lichter	3
The Lion and the Gazelle – the Race for Economic Prosperity - Dimitri Burshtein	8
The Canberra Air Tragedy in World War II - Alan Gregory	11
A Phoenix Rising – Robert Menzies 1939-49 - Anne Henderson	14
Present and Absent: Antisemitism Without Jews - Colin Tatz	18
Book Reviews - Ross Fitzgerald	21
Letter to the Editor	26
Gerard Henderson's Media Watch	27

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NO ACTION ON THE ABC'S CONSERVATIVE-FREE-ZONE FRONT

ABC managing director and editor-in-chief Mark Scott has declined to give interviews to *The Bolt Report* and *The Australian's* media editor Sharri Markson. This despite the fact that Scott frequently makes public comments regarding Rupert Murdoch and News Corp. Instead, the ABC managing director gives interviews about the ABC on the public broadcaster – that is, his preference is to be interviewed by his own staff.

This was the route taken by the ABC managing director in late November 2014 when discussing the Coalition's announcement that the public broadcasters (ABC and SBS) will be subjected to an efficiency audit. The ABC was spared an efficiency audit which applied to government departments under the Howard, Rudd and Gillard governments. In other words, the ABC has escaped an efficiency audit for close to two decades.

There are two sets of critics of the ABC in Canberra. One group – identified with Senate leader Eric Abetz – is concerned about the lack of balance within the public broadcaster. The second group – identified with Communications Minister Malcolm Turnbull – believes that the ABC is inefficient when compared with both the commercial media and the SBS (which is substantially funded by government grants). Others still believe that the ABC is both biased and inefficient.

There is support for the Turnbull position from the findings of the recent report into ABC by the Lewis Efficiency Review – conducted by one-time commercial media operative Peter Lewis. According to a report in *The Australian* on 26 November 2014, the ABC spent 46 per cent of costs on wages last year. The comparable figure for the free-to-air commercial networks is 10.7 per cent. This suggests that there is more than enough fat in the ABC to survive a 4.6 per cent cut over five years.

Mark Scott has used the Coalition's decision to justify his decision to cut a number of ABC programs and offices – particularly those which pertain to rural and regional Australia. He has not used the occasion to cut salaries paid to ABC senior executives and presenters by, say, 10 per cent. Such savings could have been directed to the ABC's obligation to provide services outside the Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane area. Moreover, Scott wants to drive the ABC away from many of its traditional areas and into on-line and phone devices.

The controversy over cuts to the ABC has temporarily directed attention away from the evident lack of balance within the public broadcaster. When Mark Scott became ABC managing director in 2006 he promised to ensure that there would be greater political diversity within the ABC and that he would act as the public broadcaster's editor-in-chief. Both promises have been broken.

The ABC is just as much a Conservative-Free-Zone today as it was eight years ago. The ABC does not have one conservative presenter, producer or editor for any of its prominent television, radio or on-line outlets. The ABC does not compare favourably with either Fox News in the United States or Sky News in Australia in this regard. Both stations engage some left-of-centre promoters and/or regular paid commentators on prominent programs to compliment the right-of-centre presenters.

In fact, the lack of political balance on the ABC has become more evident on Mr Scott's watch. In recent years, the ABC has appointed a number of leftists to important positions. Namely Waleed Aly (*RN Drive*), Jonathan Green (*RN Sunday Extra*), Chip Rolley (*The Drum* online) and, most recently, Charlie Pickering. Meanwhile the taxpayer funded public broadcaster remains a Conservative-Free-Zone.

THE ISLAMIC VEIL: UNMASKING THE STAKEHOLDERS

Ida Lichter

BACKGROUND

Islamic dress codes for women are a contentious issue, particularly the *niqab* or face veil. Recent controversial moves attempted to force women wearing the face veil to sit behind a glass enclosure in Parliament House. Islamists such as Islamic State and Boko Haram enforce the veil wherever they gain a foothold, and it is obligatory according to the Muslim Brotherhood. Why is veiling such an important issue?

According to the holy texts, Islamic dress is not mandatory, yet it is heavily defended. Verse 53 of Chapter 33 reads as follows: “And when you ask them [the Prophet's wives] for something, ask them from behind a veil (*hijab*); that makes for greater purity for your hearts and for theirs.”

Human rights arguments tend to focus on the right to wear it but ignore the right not to wear it. Most Western states have opted not to ban the *niqab*, or *burka* (total cover with mesh screen for eyes) in the public space, however, Muslim majority countries like Syria and Tunisia, prior to the “Arab Spring” uprisings, had no such scruples. Interestingly, women who go on the Haj pilgrimage to Mecca are instructed not to cover the face, although they may do so if they wish.

The discourse on Islam is perplexing for many Westerners because politicians, journalists, educators and faith leaders have not given clear guidance or addressed all facets of the controversy. One of the issues is the definition of Islamists. The term usually refers to religious fundamentalists or extremists who aim to shift Islam away from concepts of private theological belief and worship to an ideology and political movement that aims for a state-sponsored social, political, judicial and economic system. Islamic dress is iconic for the movement, which is also reactionary, supremacist, anti-western, and sexist. Many advocate restoration of the caliphate, a transnational Islamic state ruled by a supreme religious and political leader.

Various Islamist thinkers and leaders have endorsed political expression of Islam, including Wahhabis and Salafis who promote its global mission to restore the

religion to its seventh century purity. Most significant were the Muslim Brotherhood members, Hasan al-Banna, founder of the Brotherhood in Egypt in 1928, and Sayyid Qutb, leading theorist of the movement, as well as the Pakistani founder of Jamaat-e-Islami, Abul Ala Maududi. In modern times, the Sunni Brotherhood, Wahhabi movement of Saudi Arabia, and the Shia theocracy of Iran promoted Islamism. Although Sunni and Shia rivalry for domination is profound and enduring, their versions of the ideology concur in a vision of the restoration of Islam's imperial power, global Muslim solidarity and opposition to Western influence.

The Islamic Awakening or al-Sahwah has been associated with Islamism since the 1970s. This revival movement is characterised by increased identification with Islam through piety, sharia law and culture. Another feature is the rejection of Westernisation in areas such as politics, law, economics and philosophy. As practised by the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in particular, the Islamic Awakening has been associated with *da'wa*, the preaching of an Islamist message to ordinary Muslims, carrying out charitable service in schools and hospitals, and promoting Islamic dress for women. In the United States, Islamist outreach includes educational summer schools and prisons.

CONCERNS FOR WESTERNERS

Regarding the face veil, a major difficulty in the West stems from human dependence on facial expression for information regarding emotions, honesty and trust. Face to face communication is expected in the workplace, courts and other public institutions. Researchers estimate that 50 to 90 per cent of human communication is non-verbal, and 85 per cent of the message gathered by an audience is derived from mannerisms and facial expressions.

Many people are also troubled about the concept of covering up in submission to divine authority or tribal patriarchy. Such ideas are distant from mainstream Western culture, based on secular Enlightenment values.

Some of the statements issued by clerics in relation to veiling seem ridiculous to Westerners. Iranian Ayatollah Kazim Sadighi warned that women who did not dress modestly could promote adultery, which in turn increased earthquakes. Reducing sin, he claimed, was necessary for preventing natural disasters. Commenting on the reasons for a crackdown on women's clothing in 2010, the chairman of the Guardian Council of Iran declared: “The corruption that an improperly dressed woman can spread in society is worse than poison.” In another example, an influential Saudi cleric requested women who wear a *niqab* to cover one of the eye slits because eye make-up was too seductive.

A new Saudi law supported by the Committee for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice (the religious police) would reportedly force women with “tempting eyes” to cover both of them, presumably with a burka style net for vision.

In some parts of the West, legal and philosophical restrictions limit discussion. Criticism of veiling or other aspects of Islam might be interpreted as politically incorrect, leading to accusations of racism, Islamophobia, or even litigation. Elisabeth Sabaditsch-Wolff, an Austrian activist, presented three lectures deemed critical of Islam and was convicted of “denigrating religious beliefs”. Fear of censuring any aspect of Islam also ran deep after violence claimed many lives at the time of the Jyllands-Posten Mohammed cartoons controversy.

Such reactions have led to a fear that full Islamic dress (covering the entire face except for the eyes) might not integrate easily into Western society, an issue exemplified by cases regarding face veils in Australia. In one example, a woman, who was a witness in a court in Western Australia in 2010, resisted lifting her face veil when giving evidence. Eventually, she was allowed to testify from a different room, where she removed her *niqab*. Another woman, who was stopped for speeding, falsely claimed the police officer had attempted to remove her face covering.

In an example from the UK, a British Muslim student sued her school. Shabina Begum was 14-years-old when she challenged her Muslim majority school because they refused her demand to wear the *jilbab* (full length Islamic dress) instead of the regulation uniform (Pakistani *shalwar kameez* with optional headscarf). She argued for her rights in the name of modesty and entitlement to education but refused to go to a neighbouring school where the *jilbab* was permitted. In their defense, the school claimed the long gown would interfere with everyday activities and disadvantage other Muslim students by implying they were less pious. Shabina lost her case in the High Court but won in the Court of Appeal under the UK's Human Rights Act. After the school appealed, she lost in a ruling by the House of Lords.

Concerns and confusion in the West have continued to preoccupy the ordinary person. Are Muslim women coerced to adopt Islamic dress, and if so, what is the position of the feminist movement? A study of “honour killings” in 29 countries worldwide showed that 58 per cent of victims were murdered for being “too Western”, which included refusal to wear Islamic dress. However, the human rights movement focuses on support for those who wish to be veiled without upholding, to the same degree, the rights of those who do not wish to be veiled and might be penalized for it. Moreover, contrary to their ideals, the mainstream Western feminist movement has not campaigned against honour

crimes, and victims receive support from few non-governmental organisations.

Is education the solution? Conventional wisdom in the West would imply that improved education for second-generation immigrant women would stimulate acceptance of Western customs, including freedom of dress. However, many educated, activist Muslim women, particularly in the United States, have championed veiling rather than free choice to veil and, in keeping with principles of modern-day identity politics, tend to oppose removal of the face veil in order to accommodate Western customs. Instead, they demand recognition and acceptance of the veil.

UNMASKING ISLAMISTS

Isam Al-Aryan, a leader of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, affirmed the veil's importance and centrality to Islamism when, in 1980, he prophetically declared that an increasing number of women wearing the veil would herald the Islamic Awakening and future Islamic states. It would be a “sign of resistance to Western civilisation” and the start of political adherence to Islam.” Women, he said, were an important resource in transforming society. In Al-Aryan's vision of the Islamic Awakening, “ten million” students and workers would become the “cadres of the future Islamic states”. Another Islamist strategy to revitalise religious commitment and increase visibility of the veil entailed the organisation of massive prayer gatherings on university campuses and public arenas.

Resistance to Western civilisation is an important part of Islamist ideology. In the 1970s, Saudi society started becoming Westernised, with American cars, makeup and movies but the country's religious authorities issued rulings against this trend on the basis it was not simply a pernicious influence but a deliberate attempt by the degenerate, Islamophobic West to pollute Islam and lure Muslim youth away from religion.

Fundamentalists are also challenged by women's sexual liberation, as it constitutes a dangerous aspect of Western influence and a serious threat to male domination, allowing women the choice of sexual partners and control of contraception. They might also beautify themselves to attract men, thereby increasing opportunities for men's temptation and seduction.

Some clerics believe women are not innocent victims of violence if they are insufficiently covered. Senior Australian mufti Sheik Taj Din al-Hilali, once declared that all non-veiled women, Muslim and non-Muslim, could encourage sexual attacks: “If you take out uncovered meat and place it outside on the street . . . and the cats come and eat it, whose fault is it, the cats or the uncovered meat? The uncovered meat is the problem,” he said. Similarly, an Islamic Mufti in Copenhagen stated that women who refused to wear headscarves were “asking for rape”.

Veiling was always crucial to the theocracy of Iran. Following the revolution, the Iranian government took the step of legislating women's covering when they criminalised "mal-veiling" and appointed morality police to issue warnings and fines. "By law, women in the Islamic republic must be covered from head to foot, with their hair completely veiled." Police have also confiscated cars that carried incorrectly veiled women. Recently, a number of acid attacks on women in Isfahan prompted thousands to take to the streets, however riot police blocked the demonstrators. The acid attacks took place amid parliamentary debates on a new law that would allow vigilantes to enforce their own interpretation of Islamic dress. Some protesters reportedly blamed the attacks on extremists emboldened by an influential cleric who condoned violent action against "bad hijab".

Islamists have found unlikely bedfellows with third-wave feminists and the far Left in their similar opposition to colonialism, neo-colonialism, capitalism and westernisation. Sympathy with Iranian revolutionary ideals was another source of common ground. In the formulation by Ali Shariati, major ideologue of the revolution, the Islamic awakening presented a vision of Islam as the one true liberator of the Third World from Western oppression. However, the alliance between Islamists and the far Left is incongruous, since Islamists, unlike most of the Left, discriminate against women, homosexuals, minorities and religions other than Islam.

UNMASKING THE WEARER

The pious woman feels secure in the conviction that her prayers will not be accepted unless she is wearing a head covering. Pressure to wear it comes from Islamist preachers, families, peers and the confrontation with modernity. The veil also signifies her loyalty to the umma, the community of Muslims.

As a figure of virtue and piety, the veiled wife is regarded as an asset to men in traditional societies, where the cover defines inaccessibility to other men and the threat of punishment for would-be sexual predators. An underlying fear is the power of the female as temptress, capable of causing *fitna*, or social, even political, strife. A woman therefore needs to be controlled in order to protect a man's honour and save the "peace of Islam".

For many women, giving up the veil could mean social ostracism, and in some very traditional and conservative societies, showing a woman's face is considered a sin. Some women have been known to conceal their faces, even from family members.

Many defenders of the veil assert that full Islamic dress shields a woman from male gaze and molestation, even though sexual harassment of completely covered women is endemic in Egypt. And while testosterone driven young men are denied women in a strict Islamic society, such harassment is unlikely to subside.

A number of Muslim reformers have shone their light under the veil. Yemen born academic, Elham Manea, has raised awareness of the widespread propagation of Saudi Wahhabism, and placed responsibility on its extremist and puritanical form of Sunni Islam for the massive expansion of propaganda in favour of veiling. She also points to the Islamic theocracy of Iran as a source of admiration, inspiration and emulation for many Muslims. Veiling, which is central to the regime, is therefore copied. Like the governments of Saudi Arabia and Iran, the Muslim Brotherhood uses religious concepts such as Islamic dress to try and attain political power, she says.

Before Muslim women decide to cover themselves, Manea entreats them to become aware of the religious and political campaigns that promote the veil, and to avoid being persuaded by three common, false arguments in favour of veiling. The first assumes that Arab men cannot control their sexual urges and women are only sex objects. The second claims that veiling produces moral probity, when, in reality, sexual segregation has led to more homosexual relations and has not prevented sex outside marriage and hymen reconstruction operations. Finally, the claim of a religious edict for veiling is the weakest argument, as it wasn't advanced until the late 1970s when extremist ideology was becoming established.

Tunisian reformer, Samia Labidi, has observed that radical Islam empowers women by endowing the veil with symbolic meaning. It implies an identity independent of family and modernity, alienation from the West, a weapon in the frontline of political protests, and a banner for the wave of worldwide Islamic fervour. During the overthrow of the Shah of Iran, the symbolic meaning of the veil was evident when the black chador (woman's cloak) became the image of the Islamic Revolution.

The late Tunisian journalist, Lafif Lakhdar, believed that women continued the practice of veiling because they internalised long-term subjugation, and in the process, accepted the views of their oppressors. Moreover, uncovered hair might have stimulated men to focus on other locations of women's hair: "The subconscious meaning of this is that every woman with her hair uncovered is a whore whom any Muslim is entitled to violate. This is why the Islamic jurists forbade Muslim slave girls to wear the *hijab* [headscarf], and likewise non-Muslim women - i.e., Muslims have the right to violate them whenever they want."

On the subject of head covering, Iran's Nobel Peace laureate Shirin Ebadi, declared: "It is not the state's business to tell women whether to cover their heads or not." On the other hand, Laleh Eftekhari, a female member of the Iranian parliament, expressed the views of the regime when she avowed "the question

of the black chador is more important for us than the nuclear issue”.

American/Pakistani Asra Nomani cautioned that the veil became associated with Wahhabi and Salafi extremism, as well as fundamentalist interpretation of questionable Koranic verses used by militant Islamists to justify intolerance and violence. These are “symbolic of a highly puritanical and dangerous interpretation of Islam”.

Nomani has focused on the veil as a security risk, used by militants as a disguise to gain entry, strike without being intercepted and avoid arrest. In Philadelphia, a man killed a barber after he entered the barber’s shop in full Islamic dress and demanded money. In the same city, criminals in similar garments held up a real estate office.

Most of the educated Muslim women in the West have not engaged with the arguments of reformers. Many choose to wear the veil, mostly in the form of the *hijab*, but they also defend wearers of full cover including the *niqab* and *abaya*, the cloak that covers the whole body apart from face, hands and feet. Being covered indicates freedom and success at being judged on personality and intellect rather than appearance and also provides an antidote to past colonial attempts to abolish the practice. Veiling and sexual segregation are flaunted as better options than ungodly Western consumerism, capitalist exploitation of the female body, and enslavement to sexist standards and social conformity. However, Islamic dress is another type of conformity.

Veiling also signifies affiliation with the early period of Islam, and female equality epitomised by verse (49:12) in the Koran: “O mankind! We created you from a single pair of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes that you might get to know one another.” This egalitarian verse establishes the authority to demand rights allegedly given to women in authentic, early Islam, when Muslim wives could retain their own property well before European women were able to keep assets in their own name. Nevertheless, the custom probably had less to do with women’s rights than preventing family and tribal property from falling into the hands of other wives and children.

Many educated activist wearers of Islamic dress in the West identify as Islamic feminists, who stand for women’s rights within Islam, reinterpretation of holy texts in favour of women, and social justice based on Islam. Many have challenged the male-oriented interpretation of the holy texts, and a small number of activists, including Nomani have also campaigned for women to lead mixed-gender prayers.

In terms of social justice, concepts about a return to Islamic ideals and their fulfillment through outreach were established by the Brotherhood, and were closely

allied to the ideology of Qutb. A Sisterhood was formed in the 1930s, and the movement gained force in the 1970s to 1990s in Egypt with the return of radicalised mujahedeen from Afghanistan, and the intensive, growing missionary activity of the Brotherhood. Islamic dress for women was vital to the project, and new recruits were often given the veil as a gift.

In her book, *A Quiet Revolution* (Yale University Press, 2011), Leila Ahmed observes US activists, who are mostly *hijab* wearers and members of organisations such as the powerful Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) and the Muslim Students Association (MSA), founded by international Islamist groups, including the Brotherhood. Although unrepresentative minorities, such organisations often act as a mouthpiece for the majority of American Muslims.

Many activists follow the dictates of ISNA that stress Islamic concepts of social justice, and declare the dress code to be mandatory. Paradoxically, activists also believe that wearing the veil is not coerced, noting the Koranic injunction “Let there be no compulsion in religion.”

Veiling has developed new meaning outside traditional personal piety, including identification with Islamic social justice such as “justice” for the poor. Activists have also fought against prejudice and abuse of Muslims by the wider community.

The new purpose and identity has conferred a sense of independence and mission. Activists join with non-Muslims, and aim for Western, particularly American, ideals of social justice such as diversity and equality, rights for minorities, women, workers and gays, which appear seamlessly congruent with those found in Islam.

They wish to “awaken America’s collective conscience”, and restore Islam’s status. They also find common ground in the ideology of Qutb and the far Left, which advocates the redistribution of wealth based on equal rights and individual needs as a remedy for capitalism and individualism.

Their claim to stand for the sort of social justice in which Islam and the West converge might be relevant for services such as helping the poor and disadvantaged. However, if upholding social justice includes women’s rights, then their claim ignores gender discriminatory law and its extremist expression in Islamism. They are also overlooking centuries of oppressive cultural practice underwritten by religion in Muslim societies.

Activists in the US and other parts of the world are supporting the Islamist view on the centrality of veiling. At the same time, they are ignoring women in the West and in Muslim-majority countries, who are intimidated for not wearing the veil or demanding free choice of

clothing. They are also disregarding human rights defenders lobbying to reverse stoning sentences for adultery, capital punishment for homosexuality and the release of women political prisoners in Iran. They are failing to assist the Iranian women's One Million Signatures campaign, a social justice movement that collects signatures on the ground and online, in an effort to raise awareness of discriminatory family laws and fight gender apartheid.

Veiled activists are showing little interest in campaigning against forced marriage, child marriage, polygyny, unilateral divorce for men, unequal rights to custody or compensation, opposition to women's entitlement to only half the inheritance of a male, or a woman's testimony in court being half the value of a man's. Nor do they join NGOs that challenge illiteracy amongst the women in Arab countries, female genital mutilation that affects over ninety per cent of females in Egypt and Somalia, leniency for perpetrators of "honour killings", the requirement of four male witnesses to prove rape, segregation in the public space, and a husband's permission to leave the house.

They are not assisting Saudi reformers who are battling for full voting rights and political participation for women, reduction in the powers of the religious police, the right to drive a car, and guardian laws that enforce a male relative's control over a woman's daily life. Nor do they clamour for freedom to criticise or humanise any aspect of the religious canon. Such glaring omissions of human and women's rights belie claims of support for more comprehensive social justice in line with Western standards. They also draw attention to the narrow challenge for women's rights put forward by Islamic feminists, who are searching for feminist exegesis without demanding repudiation of sexist interpretations.

Conventional wisdom might suggest the veil represents female disempowerment, but among many Muslim women today, particularly the well educated, the veil has come to symbolise a new purpose that serves the Islamist movement. As enlisted cadres, many women have adopted a new political identity empowered as a vanguard of activists, formidable flag bearers, and proselytising advertisements.

Yet history has shown that Islamist ideology poses a danger to women, as seen in the bloody civil war in Algeria, the revolution in Iran, the hijacking of the Arab Spring and, more recently, the Islamic State. The threat of this ideology also underlies Western concerns and confusion about the veil, which has developed as a banner to promote cause and recruitment in the Islamist struggle to become mainstream.

Ida Lichter, is a psychiatrist and writer in the U.S. and Australia. She is the author of Muslim Women Reformers: Inspiring Voices Against Oppression, published by Prometheus Books.

OUR TROUBLED YOUTH - SOME ANSWERS

One in five young Australians are likely to be experiencing mental illness, and less than 40% are comfortable seeking professional help, according to our new report released in partnership with the Black Dog Institute.

What can be done? Hear some of the answers ...

SPEAKERS:

WENDY McCARTHY AO Chair, Headspace

MATT NOFFS Founder of the Street University

LANE HINCHCLIFFE Managing Director & Program Co-ordinator of Project 15

DAVID COLE Founder, The Balanu Foundation

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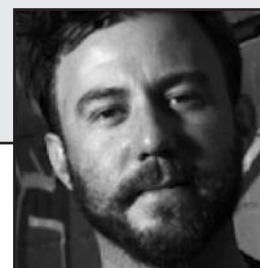
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THE LION AND THE GAZELLE -THE RACE FOR ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Dimitri Burshtein

Every morning in Africa, a gazelle awakens. He has only one thought on his mind: To be able to run faster than the fastest lion. If he cannot, then he will be eaten.

Every morning in Africa a lion awakens. He has only one thought on his mind: To be able to run faster than the slowest gazelle. If he cannot, he will die of hunger.

Whether you choose to be a gazelle or a lion is of no consequence. It is enough to know that with the rising of the sun, you must run. And you must run faster than you did yesterday or you will die.

This is the race of life.

- African Proverb

This too is the race for economic prosperity in an interconnected and globalised world. And the winners of this race, the most competitive and productive nations, will also be the most prosperous. At question is whether Australia, having a head start in this race, wishes to strive to keep near the front of the pack or to revert to a Southern European race strategy of declining productivity coupled with a growing welfare state managed by a larger government funded by an increasing and fragile debt burden.

National competitiveness and productivity improvement are key leading indicators of economic growth. Productivity, competitiveness and economic growth are directly related.

There are essentially only two ways to increase real (inflation adjusted) GDP; more inputs (land, labour, capital) or using those inputs more efficiently (increasing productivity including through new technology). Developed countries, such as Australia, seldom have pockets of unused inputs. Thus the principle available source of economic growth is productivity improvement.

The ability of a country to improve its productivity, relative to its trading peers, increases that nation's competitiveness. Improving productivity allows businesses to produce the same amount with fewer inputs freeing up those inputs to be used to produce other goods or services.

This process of increasing productivity and reallocation of resources to other areas is the heart of our economic system. Improving productivity also helps create the conditions for poverty reduction, although a better distribution of wealth is not guaranteed by productivity alone.

Competitiveness is a measure of a country's ability to sell its exports to fund its imports. Competitiveness is particularly important for any economy, like Australia's, that must rely on international trade to balance the export of energy and raw materials against the import consumer, producer and other capital goods.

In his September 2014 monograph for the Minerals Council of Australia, titled *Australia's competitiveness: Reversing the slide*, Professor Tony Makin of Griffith University presented his argument that "Australia will not durably improve its competitiveness without serious fiscal and structural reform, including labour market reform".

Makin also presented an argument that expansionary fiscal policies of both Federal and State governments, particularly following the global financial crisis, had been significant contributors to Australia's declining competitiveness because of the impact on Australia's currency.

That Australia's productivity and competitiveness has been declining since the turn of the millennium does not seem to be a disputed point.

In his April 2014 speech to The Sydney Institute, outgoing Commonwealth Treasury Secretary Dr Martin Parkinson commented that, "Australia's multifactor productivity growth – the best available measure of how efficiently we are using inputs – has seen a *marked deterioration* since around the turn of the century. Indeed, it is now negative."

Both Makin and Parkinson, respectively, observed that Australia's declining productivity and competitiveness has been masked by the mining boom; and this masking has reduced the pressure for structural economic reform at all levels of government. But, with the peak of the mining boom likely behind us, the challenge for Australia is to re-embrace the reform spirit of the Hawke-Keating-Howard governments, which set the stage for over 20 years of continuous growth. It is thus that there is

increasing chatter, from various quarters, for structural reform, in particular industrial relations, taxation and Commonwealth-State-Relations reform. It is a case for reform that Makin presents in his monograph.

Measures of Australia’s declining competitiveness can be seen in the World Economic Forum’s Competitiveness Reports which were referenced by Makin. Between 2013-2014 and 2014-2015, Australia’s relative competitiveness declined by one spot from 21 to 22 (out of 148 nations).

A one spot decline in one year does not sound particularly unfavourable, until it is compared to Australia’s 10 biggest trading partners – who account for 66 per cent of two-way trade with Australia.

As can be seen from the table below, other than South Korea, the competitiveness of Australia’s key trading partners increased or stayed the same, including that for our Antipodean cousins in New Zealand who improved from 18th to 17th place.

	Australia’s top 10 two-way trading partners 2013 ¹	WEF Global Competitiveness Index 2013-2014 ²	WEF Global Competitiveness Index 2014-2015
Australia		21	22 ()
China	23.3%	29	28 ()
Japan	10.9%	9	6 ()
United States	8.4%	5	3 ()
Republic of Korea	5.0%	25	26 ()
Singapore	4.2%	2	2 (-)
New Zealand	3.3%	18	17 ()
United Kingdom	3.1%	10	9 ()
Thailand	3.0%	37	31 ()
Malaysia	2.8%	24	20 ()
Germany	2.0%	4	5 ()
Total	66.0%		

Makin challenged the Abbott Government to grasp the economic reform agenda and move beyond the slogan that the government must “live within its means”. It is not a sufficient condition for the government to live within its means because, for government to live within its means, all that is required is for the government to raise revenues. And whilst revenue measures may “balance” the budget in the short term, in the medium to long term a disproportionately large government sector will

distort the economy through the misallocation of resources.

Makin recommended a number of policies to reverse the (competitiveness and productivity) slide – reduced government spending and an acceleration of structural reform, notably through labour market flexibility and tax and welfare reform.

In the area of government spending and fiscal policy, Makin suggested that “overly expansionary fiscal setting of federal and state governments in Australia in the wake of the (global financial) crisis - settings that have yet to be fully reversed - contributed to the dollar’s strength and have been a major home grown source of the competitiveness problem”. This was because, as Makin argued, increased government expenditures “reinforced the impact of historically high commodity prices”.

Thus, artificially higher exchange rates worsened Australia’s international competitiveness and crowded out international exposed sectors of the economy. These sectors included education services and inbound travel services, which are Australia’s biggest, non commodity/resource exports.

On the point of reduced government spending, Makin observed that the actions of previous Australian governments (State and Federal) to support economic activity in the wake of the global financial crisis had particularly and adversely affected Australia’s competitiveness. Makin’s observations thus directly challenge the claims that the actions of the Rudd Government, in the dark days of 2007 and 2008, saved Australia from the global financial crisis. Worse, it is suggested that the government’s response to the financial crisis actually adversely impacted the situation.

It is an extraordinary claim that the Federal government’s fiscal stimulus, which included the “pink batts”, school halls and \$900 cheque programs, prevented Australia’s economic collapse. And extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence. Whilst the Australian economy did not “collapse” like economies in Europe or North America, that does not mean that these actions taken in Australia prevented such a collapse. This is what is called the “old logical fallacy” in the parlance of *Yes Minister*:

Sir Arnold Robinson – “All cats have four legs. My dog has four legs.”

Sir Humphrey Appleby – “Therefore my dog is a cat”³.

Extrapolating, Australia undertook a significant fiscal stimulus. Australia’s economy did not collapse. Therefore, the fiscal stimulus prevented Australia’s

economic collapse. Unfortunately, short of economic models at 20 paces, there is limited evidence available to support the argument that the Federal government's fiscal stimulus did actually prevent Australia's economic collapse.

During the gloom of 2007 and 2008, the world financial economy was on the edge of a precipice. Credit markets had frozen. Lehmann Brothers had filed for bankruptcy. The Australian economic war cabinet was being bombarded with terrifying news and intelligence. Any reasonable person would accept that a government faced with such news would take its responsibility to its citizens most seriously. It was out of this environment came the stimulus program.

Nevertheless, it can be more reasonably argued that the factors which in hindsight actually saved Australia were a strong Commonwealth balance sheet and robust banking sector, both bequeathed by prior governments. Overriding though was the response of the Chinese Government which undertook a stimulus package of greater than \$4 trillion RMB, or near 6 per cent of GDP. Most of the Chinese stimulus package was focused on infrastructure which produced an ongoing strong demand for Australian iron ore and coal.

Our contemporary political discourse is unfortunately geared to picking sides. We should acknowledge that the Rudd Government tried, with best intentions, to protect the interests of Australia. However, other factors proved more important. Accordingly, we should unwind what was done and move to consolidate the fiscal position of Australia. Rather, we are having "economic history wars" over the effectiveness of the Australian state, a relatively small economy by global proportions, in responding to global economic disruptions.

The Rudd-Gillard-Rudd Governments' philosophical belief in the power of the state to manage all ills was also highlighted in Paul Kelly's recent book, *Triumph and Demise*.

Parenthetically, a 2004 study by Harold Cole and Lee Ohanian of UCLA concluded that New Deal policies signed into law by Franklin Delano Roosevelt delayed economic recovery for seven years, extending the Great Depression.

Professor Cole commented that "the fact that the Depression dragged on for years convinced generations of economists and policy-makers that capitalism could not be trusted to recover from depressions and that significant government intervention was required to achieve good outcomes.

Ironically, our work shows that the recovery would have been very rapid had the government not intervened."

Australia is heavily exposed to international trade. We have historically imported more than we exported thus generating trade deficits. Our exports tend to be primary in nature - resources and agriculture accounted for 51.6 per cent of exports in 2013. Our major imports tend to be services (international travel accounted for 7.1 per cent of imports in 2013) and transport related (vehicles, petroleum and transportation services account for 24.1 per cent of imports in 2013). Our ability to consume items other than resources and agriculture, and thus maintain and increase our standard of living is directly linked to our international competitiveness.

Noteworthy too is that, as a consequence of the mining boom, Australia has had a number of recent trade surpluses. However, they have never been large enough to cover the interest on our foreign debt. Thus current account deficits have prevailed.

Professor Makin's monograph well describes the impacts of prior fiscal and other policies on the Australian economy. These policies, whilst generally implemented with best intentions, have adversely impacted Australia's productivity.

With our terms of trade reverting to historical levels with the easing of the mining boom, the contribution of productivity to Australia's competitiveness and economic growth needs to be increased.

It is in this light that Makin commends Australian Governments to grasp the economic reform agenda, before economic reform is imposed upon Australia by global markets, as is currently occurring in Southern Europe.

Dimitri Burshtein works in the financial services industry and was formerly employed in the NSW Treasury.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- ² World Economic Forum
- ³ Yes Minister, 1988. Season 2, Episode 5 - Power to the People



THE CANBERRA AIR TRAGEDY IN WORLD WAR II

Alan Gregory

Cameron Hazlehurst's book *Ten Journeys to Cameron's Farm: An Australian Tragedy*, (ANU E Press, 2013), recounts the story of the Canberra aviation disaster of August 1940.

"In the whole history of government in Australia", Robert Menzies would recall, "this was the most devastating tragedy." An RAAF Lockheed Hudson bomber crashed into Duncan Cameron's farm near Canberra on 13 August 1940 killing all ten people on board: three Cabinet Ministers, the Chief of the General Staff, two senior staff members and the RAAF pilot and crew. They were being flown from Melbourne to Canberra for a War Cabinet meeting. The plane was flown by an experienced RAAF officer, Flight Lieutenant Robert Hitchcock.

The Melbourne *Herald* reported:

The plane was seen by watchers at the Canberra Aerodrome and the Air Force station to circle the drome, and then rise and head south. It disappeared behind a low tree-dotted hill. There was an explosion and a sheet of flame, followed by a dense cloud of smoke. The Canberra Fire Brigade and ambulances from Canberra and Queanbeyan, as well as several Air Force tenders, arrived soon afterwards and fire extinguishers were played on the blazing wreckage. After about half-an-hour, when the blaze had died down, it was seen that the entire undercarriage, wings and structural supports of the plane had been torn away and were a smouldering mass in which were the charred bodies of those on board.

On board was Brigadier Geoffrey Austin Street MC Minister for the Army and Repatriation. Born in 1894,

Street was a World War I veteran who entered Federal Parliament in 1934 and became Minister for Defence in 1938. With the onset of World War II, Street's portfolio was split, and he became Minister for the Army. He gained the Repatriation portfolio in 1940.

Street's closest colleague, who died with him, was James Valentine Fairbairn, Minister for Air and Civil Aviation. Fairbairn was a pastoralist and accomplished aviator who served with the Royal Flying Corps during World War I. Elected to Federal Parliament in 1933 (he had previously served in the Victorian Parliament), Fairbairn became Minister for Civil Aviation and Vice-President of the Executive Council in 1939. "The flying MP" often flew to his electorate at Flinders and to Canberra in his own plane from his Victorian property, Mount Elephant station, near Derrinallum. He was appointed Minister for Air while negotiating the Empire Air Training Scheme in Canada late in 1939. His private secretary Richard Elford, who had accompanied him to Canada, also perished in the crash.

JIM FAIRBAIRN MP - FLYER OF THE GREAT WAR

"Having registered the 'baby airliner' in Australia in September 1937, Fairbairn made it known that he intended to use it to fly between Melbourne and Canberra. Like his brother Osborne, Jim was one of the 'old men' of aviation, the flyers of the Great War, the pioneers and record breakers, the founders of airlines. Men who could scarcely imagine life without flying. Of his generation of RFC flyers, a British official had written in July 1916 that 'the Australian temperament is specially suited to the flying service'. For them, accidents were vivid threads in the tapestry of flying life. And, of course the veterans of the 1930s were not old men. Most - like Norman Brearley in Western Australia, Horrie Miller in Victoria, Hudson Fysh of Qantas, Murray Jones of de Havilland Australia, and Jim Fairbairn himself - were in their 40s. They had accepted, some might say embraced or even sought, the danger of the air all their adult lives."

*-Ten journeys to Cameron's Farm:
an Australian tragedy by
Cameron Hazlehurst., p 330*

The other Cabinet Minister was Sir Harry Gullett. A journalist until his enlistment in the AIF in 1916, Gullett became Australia's official war correspondent in Palestine in 1918. He was elected to

A V STEPHENS – SCIENTIST AND PILOT NOT CALLED

“Reviewing the procession of expert witnesses called to the Inquiry, it is striking that opinion was sought only from within the RAAF. Arthur Dean would have been entitled to call for other witnesses. But it might have been put to him that there was no relevant knowledge or experience outside the Service that could be brought to bear. That had certainly been close to the view of the then Air Commodore Williams when the matter of outside advice was raised in relation to the Demon incidents of late 1937. Apart from the Civil Aviation Branch, as it then was, and the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation, William affirmed ‘there are no persons in Australia who can claim to be authorities in aeronautical engineering nor in the operation of service aircraft and the training of service pilots’.

“If this had been true a few years earlier, it was questionable whether the same argument could be sustained in 1940. The Vice Chancellor of Sydney University wrote on August 22 to tell the prime minister that a new professor of Aeronautical Engineering, A. V. Stephens, a scientist and a pilot, had arrived in the country two weeks earlier. Somehow it took six days for a copy of the letter to reach the Department of Air. The services of Professor Stephens, later to be used extensively by the RAAF, were not enlisted. More difficult to defend was the failure to call on the Lockheed personnel still in Australia. It does not seem to have occurred to [Justice] Dean or [Justice] Lowe that many of the questions they were asking of RAAF officers and ground crew might usefully have been addressed to the aircraft's manufacturer's representatives. Equally, some of the questions that were asked of RAAF pilots, who could not answer them, could more productively have been put to men in the commercial aviation industry who had some knowledge of Lockheed 14s.”

- *Ten journeys to Cameron's Farm: an Australian tragedy* by Cameron Hazlehurst, pp 516-17

Parliament in 1925, becoming Deputy Leader of the Opposition from 1929 to 1930, Minister for Trade and Customs from 1928 to 1929 and 1932 to 1933, Minister without portfolio from 1934 to 1937. In 1939, he was brought back to Cabinet by Robert Menzies as Minister for External Affairs and Information; in poor health, he stepped down to Vice-President of the Executive Council and Minister in charge of Scientific and Industrial Research in March 1940.

Compounding the national catastrophe was the death of General Sir Brudenell White, Chief of the General Staff. White had been Chief of Staff to Generals Bridges and Birdwood during World War I. With a very distinguished war record, renowned for the “silent ruse” that allowed the safe evacuation of Australian troops from Gallipoli, he was a highly regarded and popular figure. He became Chief of the General Staff in 1920 and, in 1923, was appointed the first chairman of the Public Service Board. White returned to the Army as Chief of the General Staff in 1940. Menzies was to describe him as “the most scholarly and technically talented soldier in Australian history”.

At White's side was Lieutenant Colonel Frank Thornthwaite, Army Liaison Officer on the General Staff, and the close friend of Geoff Street. An artillery officer in the regular army, Thornthwaite was awarded the DSO and MC (at Gallipoli). He had been Mentioned in Dispatches four times and also was awarded the Croix de Guerre. A post-war period running a pastoral property with his wife, inheritor of vast estates of the pioneer Currie family, was interrupted by his return to war service.

Three decades after the crash Sir Robert Menzies reflected, “I shall never forget that terrible hour. I felt that for me the end of the world had come.” The journey to Canberra was for a meeting of the War Cabinet, at which important decisions needed to be made about how Australia would deploy its men and resources. Travel by air was not uncommon, Fairbairn, Holt, Casey and Menzies often flew (Casey and Fairbairn would fly themselves) but most tended to go by train, which often was opportune allowing politicians to talk through issues and lobby their point of view with Ministers especially, or just catch up on their papers.

Cameron Hazlehurst's history is a detailed analysis of the people, their families, their links, and the politics of the time – the politics of the armed services as well as of the Federal Parliament, with Menzies as Prime Minister just holding on to power. Hazlehurst has followed up every file and source imaginable, and also seems to have mastered the technical details

pertaining to aircraft, the training of pilots and the characteristics of the various types of aircraft. The book is a model of thorough research. In starting this work nearly four decades ago he was able to speak to many witnesses who are no longer with us. They include the widows and children of the men who

THE HON JIM FAIRBAIRN MP AT THE CONTROLS

... as told by Herbert J Storey, Headmaster of the Grenfell Street Trades School, Adelaide (from a letter to the Secretary of the Department of Air, 31/8/40)

“Owing to some misunderstanding, Mr Fairbairn arrived at this school some 15 minutes ahead of Air-force officers who were to accompany him on an inspection of the RAAF activities. The interval was bridged by a quiet chat in my office.

“Mr Fairbairn told me something of his trip around Australia, (He was then on the final stage) and we discussed modern service aircraft. I asked him about the Hudson bombers of which I had been reading with interest. Mr Fairbairn stated, ‘These machines have a rather nasty stalling characteristic. The combined effect of throttling back and dropping the flaps, preparatory to landing, can land you in a whole heap of bother. They are very sensitive, at this stage, to varying air pressures and, 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 air-borne, heading straight for the ground. I don’t know much about them yet but, as I will be handing in my own machine in when I arrive in Melbourne; you know, we are commandeering all private machines and mine cannot be excepted, I will soon know all about them. I will be using a Hudson for my departmental travelling and on every possible occasion I’ll practise landings and find out more about this stalling trick. Personally, I think it is only a matter of handling your throttle wisely.”

- *Ten journeys to Cameron’s Farm:
an Australian tragedy* by
Cameron Hazlehurst, p 526

(Due to delays within the bureaucracy, this letter was not seen by the Inquiry and was not considered as evidence.)

died, their colleagues and friends, journalists, even firemen who attended the crash scene.

Hazlehurst provides a thorough picture of each of the men, their backgrounds, their families and issues relevant to the crash. The lives of the two Roman Catholic airmen, Corporal Jack Palmer and Aircraftman Charlie Crosdale, and the wealthy second pilot Dick Wiesener, are set within the story of RAAF pre-war recruitment and wartime expansion. There is a meticulous survey of the career of the pilot, Flight Lieutenant Bob Hitchcock. Hitchcock’s father, Henry Smith “Bobby” Hitchcock was a mechanic who died with Keith Anderson, stranded in the Tanami Desert while searching for aviators Charles Kingsford-Smith and Charles Ulm Sympathy for Hitchcock by politicians brought all three of his sons into the RAAF.

While it is clear that the cause of the accident was from a stall – as to whether it was pilot error that failed to correct the stall is unclear. It is also unclear who the pilot was. Contemporaries seem divided as to whether it was Fairbairn flying the aircraft or the pilot Hitchcock. Hazlehurst presents evidence of Fairbairn’s stated desire to test the Hudson’s stalling characteristics, but is too careful to conclude that he did. Hazlehurst raises serious questions about the various inquiries held into the crash by the RAAF, the coroner, and the Commonwealth Government by Justice Charles Lowe of the Victorian Supreme Court with Arthur Dean as counsel assisting. He contends none of them were given the full information. Hazlehurst uncovers information that should have been provided, as well as new material he has discovered. The author also cites testimony that the ten on board might have been alive on crash landing but were incinerated when the fuel tanks exploded. Identification of the bodies proved difficult, with post mortem procedures primitive by today’s standards.

Hazlehurst’s treatment of the politics of the people involved is insightful. He also provides a very human story to each of the ten, with the “other ranks” receiving as much attention as the elite. Sad is the mean treatment by the government of the less privileged families of the deceased, as they tried to regroup their lives, which in retrospect seems heartless and cruel.

While some may find the detail of Hazlehurst’s research and the technical aeronautical sections daunting, it is a well written book that I found readable, and for those with an interest in Australian political and social history of that period a fascinating and original account. °



A PHOENIX RISING - ROBERT MENZIES 1939-49

Anne Henderson*

Tonight we are celebrating the 70th anniversary of the formation of the Liberal Party of Australia - and in Albury, the town that saw the second of two momentous gatherings in 1944, as the remnant forces of the United Australia Party took a giant step towards unity, identity and an unfolding of a sustainable political platform for the non-Labor side of Australian politics.

It was a giant step, and led by one who would become a giant in Australian politics – a man by the name of Robert Menzies. Without Menzies' leadership it is unlikely such a step would have been taken. Or succeeded.

But let's go back a step or two tonight and ask what it was that brought Robert Menzies to the point where he was ready to undertake such an adventure. It could be said that the forces were set in motion by another, more physical, adventure a few years before.



On 24 January 1941, Australia's Prime Minister Robert Menzies began a journey on a Qantas Empire Flying Boat that took him to engagements in some 46 towns and cities, through some 21 countries across the globe. In his first four weeks of that journey, he passed through more than two thirds of the countries he would visit.

It was an extraordinary trip – made against the backdrop of a second global war, which Australians had, regretfully, joined in September 1939. A trip he recorded with a new hand held movie camera!

Menzies was on a mission – but not to save the Empire and challenge Winston Churchill's hold on power, as

***This article is the text of a speech given to Liberal Party's 2014 Country Convention Dinner at Albury, 11 October 2014**

historian David Day and the ABC TV documentary *Menzies and Churchill at War* have asserted. His was a mission to save Australia by saving Singapore.

Menzies was away from Australia for four months by the time he landed back in Sydney's Rose Bay on 24 May. The absence would cost him dearly but he was determined to make an all-out effort to bring British attention to the peril its dominions faced in the Pacific.

This was a testament either to his inexperience as a leader or a faith in his powers of persuasion. And he would have recalled, with some assurance, that Joe Lyons had managed a four-month trip away in 1937 and recovered his party fortunes within weeks of his return.

The trip to Britain was made in kangaroo hops – and allowed Menzies to engage with a wide variety of foreign outposts, military headquarters and Empire officials. He stopped over in Singapore and took in its paltry defences and weak leadership there. He stopped in Palestine and addressed Australian troops while being briefed on the North African and Middle East campaign. He spent time in Egypt visited Australian troop positions in Libya and areas around the desert campaigns. His final journey took him south through West and South Africa to approach England via Lisbon - crossing the Mediterranean was too dangerous due to the war. It was a risky and arduous venture.

But, by the time he reached London, Robert Menzies had first hand knowledge of both the war effort on the ground and the situation in foreign posts that many he would meet in London had never been to.

In London over weeks, Menzies confronted a dogmatic Winston Churchill over the poorly defended British base at Singapore – a confrontation that left Menzies with a sour view of Churchill's grip on the war's direction. Included in this, was Menzies' annoyance at the apparent insouciance of the British high command in decisions being made involving Australian troops. He had also made a futile visit to Eamon De Valera, Eire's head of government, in the hope of influencing De Valera to modify his isolationist stance on the war.

Menzies had then gone on to Ottawa to lock horns with Canada's social democrat PM MacKenzie King over lack of Dominion representation in Churchill's War Cabinet. And held talks in Washington with (bedridden) President Franklin D Roosevelt and Secretary of State Cordell Hull over the importance of retaining the United States fleet in the Pacific.

For all that, in May 1941, Menzies returned home empty handed. Leaving Auckland on the last leg of his time away, Menzies diarised his feelings of repugnance and apprehension at arriving back among colleagues, writing, "If only I could creep in quietly into

the bosom of my family, and rest there. ... Clouds & west winds over Tasman. The hour approaches!"

Menzies well knew the acrimony and disloyalty he faced at home. While in Auckland, colleague Percy Spender had communicated to Menzies from Canberra that the plotting to bring him down was well under way in the party room.



It is 75 years, this year, since Robert Menzies was sworn in as Australia's twelfth prime minister on 24 April 1939. Not that you'll hear much talk of this anniversary for the most successful figure in Australia's political history. The reason is that most historians – along with the Liberal Party faithful – have not been interested in the achievements of Bob Menzies Mark 1.

Robert Menzies, as a senior member of the United Australia Party, assumed the prime ministerial office after the sudden death of Prime Minister Joe Lyons. Menzies was a standout figure in the parliament, a prize-winning lawyer from Melbourne's Selborne Chambers, capable of smart rejoinders, with a cutting wit and a broad shouldered approach to politics both at home and abroad. He would also be ahead of his time in being Australia's first truly internationalist government leader and PM.

Robert Menzies came to politics on a dream run, moving quickly through Victorian state politics to win the federal seat of Kooyong in 1934 and immediately had become Australia's Attorney-General - all this by the age of 39.

But the Menzies style of being a little too clever, and well connected in Melbourne business circles, alongside his tendency to quick-wittedly backhand opponents, and even colleagues he disagreed with, left Menzies with a reputation for being aloof and unpopular with ordinary voters.

In fact, more often than not it was his colleagues whom Menzies alienated, rather than ordinary voters from the non-Labor side of politics. He could charm a crowd at any microphone. Many colleagues, however, few of whom had the polish of book learning and the lawyer's way with language were frequently put out by the sharp Menzies quips.

Former Liberal Party foreign minister Percy Spender captures this well in his memoir *Politics and a Man*.

At dinner with colleagues in Canberra, Menzies was in top form. A senator colleague present, who warmed to Menzies on the night, asked him why he was not more like that all the time. Menzies' problem, said the senator, was that he didn't suffer fools gladly. To which Menzies had replied, without drawing

breath, "And pray, what do you think I am doing now?" Spender goes on to write that the senator (possibly Senator Foll) was at the forefront of moves to force Menzies to resign in August 1941.

Robert Menzies' accession as Australia's twelfth prime minister came with a great deal of public drama – Lyons' death as Australia's first PM to die in office (a popular PM) was sudden, and shocked a nation. In the background, rivalries and tensions within the United Australia Party – by then in office since winning the December 1931 election - meant that the election of a new UAP leader was fraught with petty division. Menzies won only narrowly against the aging Billy Hughes.

Added to this was the bitter animosity of acting PM and Country Party leader Earle Page who believed Menzies' resignation from Cabinet in March 1939 had shown disloyalty to Lyons in his last months. It would be some time before the Country Party accepted Menzies' terms to return to a coalition government.

Technically, then, in April 1939 Menzies took the reins of a minority government. Governor-General Lord Gowrie asked the new PM how long he thought his administration would last. Menzies replied – tongue-in-cheek – "six weeks".



It is easy to look back in hindsight at Australia's part in World War II and think it was all a matter of standing firmly against fascist overlords in Europe and the Pacific. That was not how it felt at the time. In fact, the overriding emotion in most people at the end of the 1930s was an aversion to any suggestion that Australia's young men would don the khaki and set foot on the bloody battlefields their fathers, sons and uncles had faced. The feeling was shared across the Western world.

This explains the policy of appeasement through the late 1930s, and international attempts to mollify and negotiate with Hitler until the very end. Even on the day war was declared in Downing Street hopes remained in Whitehall that Hitler would pull out of his attack on Poland, and war might still be averted. Alexander Cadogan's diaries at the Foreign Office tell the story in dramatic detail.

LABOR

In Australia, the Labor Party was one step removed from appeasement in its isolationist stance. Critics who pour scorn on the appeasers – Chamberlain, Lyons and Bruce and Australia's leadership generally at the time - ignore Labor's disinterest in Europe's woes entirely, arguing that this was not Australia's affair.

In a parliamentary debate on Australia's need to prepare for war, in May 1939, Labor leader John Curtin argued a strong pacifist position, opposing any Australian involvement in a war with Nazi Germany. In his view, home defence was Australia's only priority. Those, he said, who were concerned with fighting Hitler were in fact opposed to peace. He went on to attack vested interests involved in "war-making".

Against this backdrop, the Menzies Government pushed on with legislation to draw up a National Registration Bill and the creation of a Department of Supply in readiness for a war economy. During the debate in parliament, Labor spokesmen stressed again and again that the nation's priorities were social – and that government priorities should be about making up to ordinary working Australians for the lean years of the 1930s.

The government saw its National Registration legislation pass, even after objections from several Country Party colleagues. While John Curtin would eventually support National Registration, Labor voices continued to reflect a great divide in a nation not prepared for war.

When Menzies referred to his declaration of war, on 3 September 1939, as his "melancholy duty" he reflected a community mood – one that would see the Labor Party criticise the embarkation of Australian troops to Europe and the Middle East from January 1940.

Opposition leader John Curtin was shackled not only by his divided party in NSW but also by the influence of left faction support for the Soviet Union, in spite of the Nazi-Soviet pact of August 1939, which lasted until June 1941.

At the NSW annual state conference at Easter 1940, for example, a motion was forced through known as the "Hands off Russia" resolution – absolving the Soviet Union of any blame for the war against the Allies. Only during the September 1940 federal election campaign, as he sought to capture swinging votes, did Curtin begin to unambiguously support the war effort – as if he had never opposed the embarkation of Australian troops for the Middle East.

During his wartime prime minister years, Menzies also tried but failed to form a national government. Curtin feared Labor would split even further in any national coalition. Menzies had offered to serve under Curtin in such a government.

THE WAR EFFORT: 1940-41

Australia's war did not begin with Japan as many Labor leaning historians might leave you thinking. On 5 January 1940, half a million Australians lined Sydney's streets to farewell 6000 Anzacs embarking for the Middle East. Whatever their misgivings about

another global war, Australians were with their lads to the end.

Newspapers reported Hitler and his Nazi regime as the dark enemy and over the following eighteen months would editorialise strongly for the Menzies Government to be more jingoistic in its approach to overseas commitment.

In spite of all the criticism from the extremes, the Menzies Government pushed on with transforming its administration for a war footing earning a certain respect from Labor when it took government at the end of 1941. Frederick Shedden, Defence Department chief under both Menzies and Curtin, has written that, on taking office, the ability of Curtin:

... to have the Defence platform of the Labor Party amended, could not have been immediately effective but for the foundations laid by the Defence Programs of the preceding United Australia Party governments. Curtin generously acknowledged the inheritance he had received.

At the time, England stood alone against Hitler, except for its dominions' support. There was no guarantee before June 1941 that Hitler would not take London as he had taken Paris. A Britain under German control meant a British empire under German control. Australia's part in the defence of Europe in 1940-41 was very much part of the defence of Australia.

Through 1940 and 1941, Australian Anzacs stood with the Allied commitment against Hitler and Mussolini, dictators supported for most of this time by the Soviet Union. And Singapore remained in British hands.

In North Africa and Palestine, in Greece and Crete, Australian forces were a vital part of Britain's stand against Hitler. Australians won victories in North Africa against the Italians in early 1941 before being temporarily forced back by the Germans, while in Greece and Crete they were forced to evacuate. In Tobruk, however, 14,000 Australians held fast against the Germans from April to August 1941. And in June and July 1941, Australians played a key role in defeating the Vichy French in Syria – for Jewish settlers in Palestine, Australians were enormously important.

Between January 1940 and August 1941, Menzies and Australia's representatives in London argued the case for Britain to strengthen its defences in the Pacific. A country of Australia's capacity was never going to be able to defend itself alone against the Japanese.

Australian troops had been abroad nearly a year as Menzies planned his trip to the UK in late 1940. Worries dogged him. Australian troops posted so far

away needed visiting to gain a reliable briefing on their conditions and command. The lack of attention from Whitehall on Singapore was also a concern, as well as the consideration, or lack of it, given to Australian commanders by their British High Command. Added to this were matters of trade and manufacturing opportunities for Australia in a wartime economy stretched by the burdens of expenditure and the interruption to trade routes. And there was the problem of a lack of ships for Australia's rural exports, especially wheat.

Menzies was warmly received in Britain. Newspapers carried his speeches and he published a small booklet of them before he left for home. The press found him good copy and a number of malcontents in the Conservative Party duchessed him in the hope he would continue to challenge Churchill at War Cabinet meetings. For all that, Menzies' relations with Churchill deteriorated as Menzies realized there was little chance of getting the UK prime minister to focus more on Singapore. The trip Menzies made to Eire further irritated Churchill – especially when Menzies reported that he found De Valera to be an engaging leader. Churchill despised de Valera. And Menzies' mission to Dublin had no effect on the Irish leader in his stance of neutrality in the war.

Churchill had far more pressing priorities; Britain faced invasion by Germany; France had fallen and the US still opposed entering the war. As Menzies delayed his departure for the US, the Allied Greek campaign fell apart. While Menzies focused increasingly on Churchill, the British PM's focus was entirely on Roosevelt. FDR had assured Americans in the 1940 presidential election campaign that no American soldier would be enlisted to fight Europe's wars.

GOING DOWN

The UAP/Country Party collective that welcomed Menzies back to Australia was infested with egos and malcontents alongside some very nervous ministers who saw their chances of retaining government sliding away. This is documented in my book *Menzies at War*.

In short, a cabinet reshuffle in July further alienated Menzies' colleagues Bill McCall, William Hutchinson and Charles Marr who had worked to undermine Menzies over two years; there were damaging leaks to the media. The Japanese advance into Indo-China, threatening Thailand, inspired a press campaign for Menzies to return to London to appeal to the War Cabinet and Churchill for direct support for Singapore. Labor would not agree to his going. The rumours of Menzies' imminent demise ran thick and fast in press and chattering circles.

Finally, Menzies placed his fate in the hands of his Cabinet colleagues, asking them for frank

assessments of his leadership. This happened at a meeting in Canberra on 26 August. After hearing around half of the Cabinet speak for a change in the leadership, Menzies went home for dinner with his wife where they agreed he should resign. Country Party leader Artie Fadden was elected leader of the government at a joint party meeting on 28 August. This is all retold in my book – including Menzies' personal account made a few days later and never published before which I have included at the back.

THE WILDERNESS AND REVIVAL

But, as you all know, that was far from the end of the Menzies story. And the reason for today's celebration attests to that.

The phoenix would rise from the ashes. The story of the next eight years for Robert Menzies is unique in Australian political history. It also says much about the character of Australia's longest serving prime minister.

That proud, erudite and all-too-often aloof barrister politician had taken a mighty tumble. Writing of the day years later, Robert Menzies recalled that his fall was "a bitter blow" to his pride and that he felt he had "been weighed in the balance and found wanting". But he had also told his private secretary Cecil Looker the night he resigned, and with tears in his eyes, that he would rise and fight again. Or as he would write much later: "My unspoken response was... 'I'll show 'em'". But Menzies also added that – in hindsight – "on balance, my humiliation of 1941 turned out to be a good thing for my country".

Distraught, however, at being out of the war effort, in late 1941, Menzies was prepared to take an Empire posting off shore if one should be offered. None was – and even the chance, in early 1942, to replace Dick Casey in Washington as Australia's representative did not eventuate when Labor realised Churchill had recommended it.

Biding his time in those Labor war years, Menzies took to making a series of radio lectures where he developed ideas around notions of what he called "the forgotten people". It was an inversion of sorts of US President Franklin D Roosevelt's "Forgotten Man" – the phrase FDR used to popularise his New Deal for the working and unemployed poor in the Depression years. Menzies, however, developed a platform around the notion of the forgotten middle classes – the un-unionised small entrepreneurs, civil servants, white collar workers and so on. Who would speak for them? It was the beginning of a philosophy to underpin the Liberal Party yet to come.

The August 1943 federal election was a massive landslide for Labor. Although Menzies was returned

as UAP leader after it, he was in fact weary at the political fight he saw before him. In fact, in January 1944, he allowed his name to go forward for the position of Chief Justice of Victoria, an ambition he had harboured over years. He was unsuccessful, as Country Party Premier Albert Dunstan was no mate of Menzies.

It cannot be estimated just how much that fateful decision of the Victorian premier in January 1944 helped the events that year for the non-Labor side of Australian politics. Without Robert Menzies, it is hard to believe the Liberal Party might have got off the ground as it did. And, while there were many who worked to bring the Liberal Party together, it is without doubt that the leadership and gravitas of Menzies at its helm – and behind the scenes – was an essential component for the new party's successful launch and growth in the years that followed.

There were bumpy years to withstand. Unity in New South Wales did not come quickly and it would be the work of John Carrick, especially, after the loss of the 1946 federal election that made all the difference in this state for the successful division NSW would become.

But the final march to the Lodge for Menzies came with his campaign to prevent the nationalisation of Australia's banks after Prime Minister Ben Chifley, in August 1947, hastily chose to use the federal government's extended wartime powers to nationalise banking. In 1948, on a visit to the UK, Menzies saw the Attlee Government's program of cradle-to-grave welfare and nationalisation of industry. Menzies returned to Australia convinced more than ever he should oppose what he called socialist "experiments ... financed by American loans".

Chifley's battle to nationalise the Australian banks was challenged and defeated in the High Court and eventually appealed before the Privy Council in London. As Bob Menzies and the Liberal Party of Australia campaigned against the legislation, that battle delivered a massive victory in the federal election of December 1949. Robert Menzies returned to the Lodge where he would stay for another 16 years.

Menzies could look back on a decade of risks and high flying at home and abroad – but it was one that he would acknowledge, much later, as years that had moulded him, more than anything, for the job of Australia's longest serving prime minister.

Anne Henderson is the author of Menzies at War and Deputy Director of The Sydney Institute.



PRESENT AND ABSENT: ANTISEMITISM WITHOUT JEWS

Colin Tatz

Absence makes the heart grow fonder — a nice enough proverb but not true for Jews. They can be absent from a space yet be present, even omnipresent, making the hearts of the hosts grow ever more hostile. And can a people who have never inhabited a place still be a human presence there? Yes. A brief look at the social and political history of Jews in the modern era attests to these contradictions.

We are accustomed to books on the Jews in literature¹, in the arts and sciences, in medicine, in the financial fields. We have libraries of books on the Holocaust, the establishment of Israel, the Middle East "problem", and so on. There is an immense but by no means finite literature on antisemitism, summarised meticulously in almost a thousand pages by Robert Wistrich in his recent *A Lethal Obsession: Anti-Semitism from Antiquity to the Global Jihad*.¹¹

In the modern era, Wistrich deals, inter alia, with the Nazi Judeocide, the Soviet war against Zion, France's *Liberté, Égalité, Antisemitisme*, Britain's Judeophobia, Jews in Eurabia, bigotry at the United Nations, Shylock meeting Uncle Sam, lying about the Holocaust, the holy wars of Hamas and Hezbollah, and the jihadism of Ahmadinejad and others. He touches only fleetingly on the anti-Jewish beliefs and values in several nation states that no longer have any Jews or have never had any.

Nor does Wistrich deal with what David Nirenberg calls the Western tradition of "anti-Judaism"¹², that is, not the view of real Jews but of imaginary Jews. Nirenberg tells us graphically about the ancient origins of the negative characteristics of these imagined people: hyper-intellectual, with a predilection for tyranny, but paradoxically, for subversive radicalism, and worldly materialism. He shows us the indelible, ineradicable conceptualisation of "the Jew" even in the absence of a Jew. Shakespeare, as I tell students, could never have met a Jew (during the era of their expulsion from England in 1290), yet was able to give an audience a vivid (and sustaining) picture of an imagined but quite absent Jew.



Senegal in West Africa was a French colony that gained independence in 1960. Of the 14.4 million populace today, 94 per cent are Muslims of many ethnicities, five per cent are Christians. The first president, Leopold Senghor, was a poet, philosopher, and a preacher of African socialism. He initiated Senegal’s now traditional involvement in humanitarianism and international peace-keeping. He and his colleagues showed a concern for differences in humankind, and a respect for different viewpoints and cultures.

Senegalese archaeologist Alioune Dème, working with the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, has “unearthed” a total of 100 “registered” Jews in West Africa; 75 victims of the Holocaust were born in Senegal, which today has a Jewish population of 50. Yet the antisemitism emanating from Senghor’s society is remarkable, ranging from mobs burning Israeli flags (egged on by elected parliamentarians), to the Senegalese UN ambassador declaiming that the major news organisations in America are “dominated by Jews”. Antisemitic literature abounds.

Today’s Malaysia has 28 million people. By all accounts, fewer than 100 Jews inhabit that domain. The official Penang census of 1899 showed the presence of 172 Jews, reduced to 30 by 1941. Baghdadi Jews began arriving from Iraq in the nineteenth century, but hardly in any numbers. Ezekiel Aaron Menasseh arrived from Baghdad in 1895 and claimed he was the only practising Jew in Malaya until after World War I. A synagogue opened in Penang in 1929, and closed in 1976 for want of a prayer quorum of ten adult men.

Today, in Malaysia, there is state-sponsored anti-semitism, instigated in the 1980s in part by the fanatical president Mahathir Mohammed. He banned the New York Philharmonic because they listed Ernst Bloch’s *Shlomo: A Hebrew Rhapsody* on their tour program. He forbade the film *Schindler’s List* as “pro-Jewish propaganda” in the 1990s. Jews, he proclaimed in an astounding inversion, are “the most gifted children of Goebbels”. The Zionists, he insisted, were the source of his country’s economic woes. Their airport bookstores take pride in pushing the sale of the notorious forgeries that emerged from the Paris offices of the Russian secret service in 1903, the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

Pakistan, with 150 million Muslims, has no Jews. Yet the anti-Jewish vitriol and venom, said one eminent journalist, “flows as easily as water”. Jews are said to have conspired to destroy the World Trade centre in 2001, and a widespread belief there is that all Israelis and Jews who worked in those buildings were given advance warning not to go work on 9/11. We now know that Pakistanis were behind the attacks on Mumbai in India in 2008, with a very specific targeting of Chabad House, a Jewish centre, barely a pinpoint in a city of 15 million people. In a country

where three-quarters of the people are illiterate, the teachings, preachings and sayings of the religious leaders hold almost total sway.

The Japanese are not illiterate, the people are not dependent on *mullahs*, and they are not Muslim jihadists. Japan, with 127 million people, has had no visible Jews — from 1,000 maximum according to one source, to 100 from another. Japanese began to learn about Jews when they came across the *Protocols* from Russians during military campaigns after World War I. So, at the start of World War II, Japanese became “aware” that Jews were “smart”. They devised the “Fugu Plan”, a little-known footnote in war history, named after fugu, the dangerous puffer fish that is a delicacy that is enthralling because the chef has to allow tasty ingestion without the toxin breaking out of its sac.

The Fugu Plan involved capturing Jews in the Dutch East Indies and environs, taking them to occupied Manchuria and politely enslaving them, treating them with some kindness, and putting them to work to smarten up the economy and the administration. The risk was that they could turn out to be poisonous.



In 1996, the noted historian Bernard Wasserstein wrote about the *Vanishing Diaspora: The Jews in Europe Since 1945*.^{iv} “The Jews are vanishing from Europe — and not only because of Hitler.” In 1939, there were close on ten million Jews in Europe. More than half were murdered, but emigration and low birth rates reduced that number to fewer than two million by 1994. Pockets of ultra-Orthodox Jews, the *haredim*, Wasserstein forecast, will remain but they will be “picturesque, like the Amish in Pennsylvania”.

His figures for Jewish diminution in some countries are startling:^v

Country	1937	1994	2013
Austria	191,000	7,000	9,000
Bulgaria	49,000	1,900	2,000
Czechoslovakia (Cz Rep/ Slovakia)			
	357,000	7,000	6,500
Germany	553,000	55,000	118,000
Greece	77,000	4,800	4,500
Hungary	400,000	56,000	45,000
Latvia	95,000	18,000	6,300
Lithuania	155,000	6,500	3,400
Poland	3,250,000	6,000	3,200
Romania	850,000	10,000	9,400
USSR/CIS (Russia)	2,609,000	812,000	190,000
Yugoslavia (Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia)			
	71,000	3,500	3,600

For reasons that baffle me, Germany has the fastest growing Jewish population in the world today, with some 118,000 souls. Perhaps they take comfort from the way Germany has admitted guilt, held thousands of trials, made apology and reparations, instituted anti-discrimination laws, criminalised Holocaust denialism, and built magnificent museums as reminders and memorials. Germany, it seems, is the most aware society of a Jewish absence — and the reasons for it.

Diminution notwithstanding, antisemitism in the countries listed above has not only continued but escalated. In the first decade of this century, the old Jew-hatreds have emerged, often masquerading as “mere” anti-Zionism and anti-Israeli politics. The rampant and increasingly physical form of antagonism goes without comment let alone punity, in film, in the media, in political life. Resurrection of the reputations of mass killers comes with medals and memorials. Victims become the persecutors and the destroyers of upstanding and heroic nationalists. A few still retain a sliver of memory and seeming remorse, as in the building of Holocaust museums in Frankfurt, Berlin, and Warsaw.

I visited Lithuania in 2003 and was impressed by the way the government has erected historical memorials and memorial plaques across the country: having erected them, Jews have to maintain them. The now 3,400 Jews in Vilnius^{vi} have a cultural and religious life but are assailed daily in the media and in parliament.



What does all this tell us? Certainly, about the historicity, longevity, the eternity of disliking Jews. In a lifetime of reading works on anti-Semitism, I have yet to find a society that doesn't have, or has never had, an inescapable, prevalent dislike, disdain and denunciation of Jews. The books abound. We can start with Leon Poliakov's four-volume history of antisemitism (1972–1976), move to Bernard Glassman's study (1973) of imagined Jews and their stereotypes in England between 1290 and 1700; we can follow the phenomenon in Jacob Katz's ensuing era in his *From Prejudice to Destruction: Anti-Semitism, 1700–1933* (1980), and conclude with Nirenberg and with Robert Wistrich's monumental *A Lethal Obsession* (2010). There is overwhelming evidence of a pervasive, ever-present hostility to Jews.

But is antisemitism a disease, a genetic and hereditary one at that? Yes, in a curious sense, in the sense of historical continuity. Is it curable, treatable? No. It is part and parcel of the Western intellectual tradition, assuming sometimes relatively benign manifestations, as when the Roman historian Tacitus

complained that Jews were “sinister and revolting”, in part because they wouldn't “feed and intermarry with gentiles”. At the other end of the scale, we have the most singular case of the deliberate manufacture of death in purpose-built factories in the middle of Europe in the middle of the “civilized” twentieth century. What Hitler intended was not just the elimination of real Jews but the annihilation of the very idea of Jew.

And if it is an illness, then it is one of the many forms of cancer, often of a metastasising nature, not responsive to surgery, radiotherapy or chemotherapy. “If only they knew what we're like, truly like, they'd stop” is the often unstated but conscious mantra.

Antisemitism is ever there, and despite the unceasing efforts of anti-discrimination bodies world-wide, the best one can hope for is some form of amelioration, of alleviation, part of the time. And that can only come about, as my mentor in Holocaust history Yehuda Bauer tells me, when the world comes to recognise that nearly 50 million people died world-wide as a result of Hitler's war against the Jews; if the world fails to see that, then “never again” becomes a pointless mantra — and in a bizarre way, a tiresome cliché.

Some friends, colleagues and readers of my writings question this very assertion about the ubiquity and eternity of antisemitism. Has it ended with our world today, the era of globalisation and secularisation, and a greater than ever concern with human rights? No, it grows, as evidenced by radical Islamic jihadism, which has taken on the whole panoply of earlier Christian antisemitism, and the resurrection of Christian Jew-hatred (and imminent violence) in Hungary and Ukraine.

The only possible “treatment” is to criminalise antisemitic *behaviour* because we can never never get to the prejudiced *mindsets* part of it. If one suggested that all Western and Eastern nations criminally outlaw antisemitic actions, one can readily wager that the overwhelming masses would fight to protect their right to hate Jews, into eternity.

ENDNOTES

ⁱ *The Jew in the Text: Modernity and the Construction of Identity*, eds. Linda Nochlin and Tamar Garb, London, Thames and Hudson, 1995.

ⁱⁱ Published by Random House, New York, 2010.

ⁱⁱⁱ David Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism: the Western Tradition*, New York: Norton, 2013.

^{iv} London, Hamish Hamilton.

^v I have added the 2013 statistics.

^{vi} The local community president told me the number is closer to 5,000.

BOOK REVIEWS

Ross Fitzgerald

David Horner, *The Spy Catchers. The Official History of ASIO, Volume 1, 1949 – 1963*, Allen & Unwin: Sydney, 2014, pp 710, \$59.99; Val Noone and Rachel Naughton (eds), *Daniel Mannix: His Legacy*, Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission: Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne, 2014, pp 178, \$20; and Ann Moyal, *A Woman Of Influence: Science, Men & History*, University of Western Australia Press, 2014, pp 201, \$34.99

AUSTRALIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE ORGANISATION (ASIO)

In 1943 the United States Army's Signal Intelligence Service began intercepting and then decrypting Soviet cable traffic between KGB headquarters in Moscow and KGB officers around the world.

Codenamed "Venona", this top-secret operation disclosed the existence of a significant spy ring in Australia in the 1940s, some of which centred on employees of federal Labor's Dr HV Evatt's Department of External Affairs and its then Secretary Dr John Burton.

At the very least, all this compelling evidence of Soviet espionage was damaging Australia's national security and our relationship with our allies, especially Great Britain and America.

Although the existence and importance of the Venona program was only confirmed by the release of the intercepts by the US National Security Agency in 1996, for years it had been used covertly to prove that there were Australian citizens who were spying for the Soviet Union and who had been passing on top secret information via the head of the Australian spy ring, Australian Communist Party official, Walter Seddon Clayton – codenamed "Klod".

Indeed, as David Horner demonstrates, it was the Venona intercepts that led to the formation of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) in March 1949.

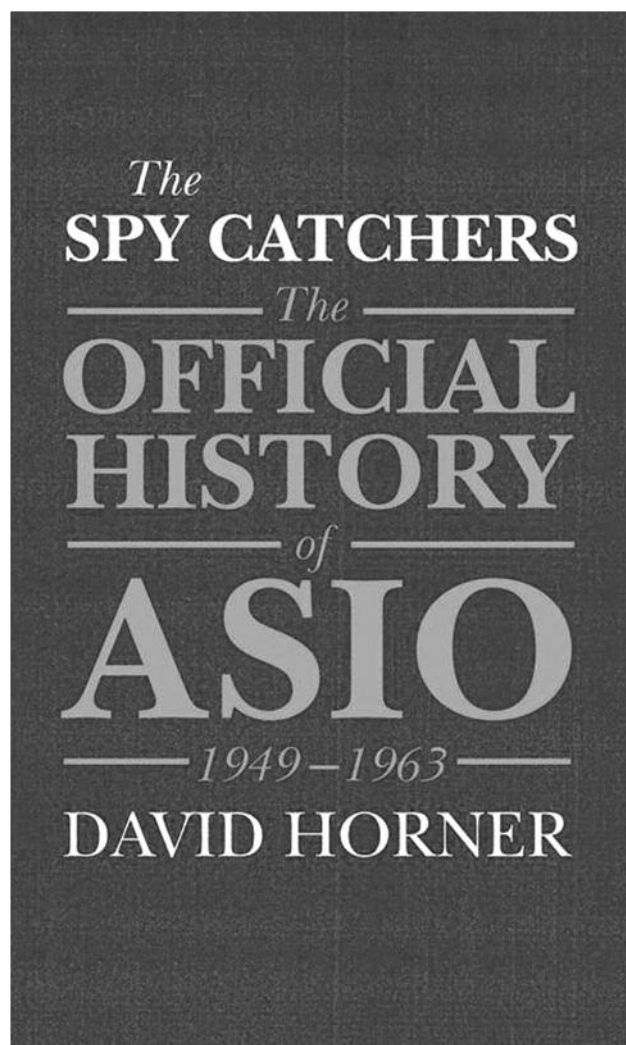
This finely researched and often understated first volume of its official history explains in detail why and how ASIO was formed. It also describes and

illuminates what was arguably ASIO's greatest triumph – the defection of the Soviet diplomat and KGB agent Vladimir Petrov and his wife Evdokia in April 1954. In the process, it confirms that much of the information provided by the Petrovs was corroborated by the Venona decrypts. Not surprisingly, in April 1954 the Soviets closed their embassy in Canberra

After detailing the reopening of the Soviet Embassy in June 1959, David Horner's massive 710 page book ends with the expulsion in February 1963 of the Embassy's First Secretary, the highly placed intelligence operative Ivan Skripov.

Throughout this fascinating history of ASIO, which is to be the first of a three volume work, Horner also details many other activities of our nation's spy catchers that have up to now never been revealed.

Throughout the period covered by this volume, and well beyond, Wally Clayton steadfastly denied that he was ever involved in espionage or that he had any connection with the Soviet Embassy.



However, as Horner points out, although it only came to light in 2010, in 1993 Clayton confessed to Laurie Aarons, the long-serving national secretary of the Communist Party of Australia (CPA), that he had indeed passed highly classified information to the Soviet Embassy. Moreover two years before David Horner and Desmond Ball's coauthored *Breaking the Codes: Australia's KGB Network* was published in 1998, Professor Ball had confronted the ninety year-old Clayton, with copies of the Venona transcripts. At that time Clayton readily admitted that he was Klod, quipping with a smile: "It was an awful name they gave me, wasn't it?"

Clayton's admission was confirmed to me by his wife Peace Joy Clayton (nee Gowland), when I interviewed her in Newcastle four days after Walter Clayton died aged 91 on 22 October 1997.

In an interview published on 15 November 1997 in Brisbane's *Courier Mail* (then edited by Chris Mitchell, now editor-in-chief of *The Australian*), Mrs Clayton confided to me that, to escape intense ASIO scrutiny, she and her husband had planned to defect to the Soviet Union some time after the 1954–55 Royal Commission on Espionage - which is analysed in considerable detail in volume one of *The Spy Catchers*.

In fact, the Claytons' plan to live permanently in the Soviet Union was only thwarted when, in April 1957, the Liberal/Country Party government of Robert Gordon Menzies withdrew their passports.

The reality is that Clayton remained in hiding until he made a surprise appearance at the Petrov Royal Commission's hearings. Although Horner doesn't mention it, ASIO and state and federal police had unsuccessfully scoured the country for "Klod", even though, from time to time, he and Peace had nevertheless managed to get together in the bush on the NSW south coast.

It seems clear from what has so far appeared in *The Spy Catchers* that ASIO's long-term head, Brigadier Sir Charles Spry, distrusted both Dr Evatt and especially Dr Burton whom he regarded as being a "Fellow Traveller" (i.e. a communist sympathiser), if not an actual member of the Communist Party of Australia (CPA).

While the jury may still be out on the status of Dr Burton (as it is on whether or not MI5's Roger Hollis was a Soviet double agent), it is manifestly obvious that Dr Evatt was far too erratic and unstable to be a spy.

Likewise it still remains unclear if the son of well-known Communist novelist Katharine Susannah

Prichard (codename "Academician"), Rick Throssell (an External Affairs officer codename "Ferro") actually supplied any information to the Russians. The same ambiguity applies to Detective Sergeant Alfred Hughes of the NSW Police (codename "Ben").

However, it is indisputable that Ian Milner ("Bur") and Jim Hill ("Tourist") both of who were employed in External Affairs in the 1940s, and also Frances Bernie ("Sister") who had worked as Evatt's typist, were an integral part of Walter Clayton's network of espionage in Australia in the 1940s. It is also clear that, until he left Australia, the TASS representative Feydor Nosov (cover name "Technician") had been the person identified by Venona as the Russian journalist in intimate contact with "Klod".

Occasionally in this volume, Horner admits to considerable problems facing ASIO when it came to matters of national security and the evaluation of information supplied by its scores of agents and informers. Hence while the actual identity of agents had to be respected, it is clear that, under the cover of secrecy, there could always be what Horner terms "mean-spirited persons who for vindictive and malicious reasons inform against those they do not like".

Moreover, even though their information may not have been true, it often could have had the appearance of truth, which meant that grave injustices were sometimes done to people, especially on the left of politics, about whom such adverse intelligence had been supplied.

As Horner concludes, there is little doubt that ASIO under Spry had a manifestly conservative bent. In practice, this meant that the agency concentrated most of its activities on uncovering individuals who were either members of, or sympathetic to, the Communist Party of Australia. Thus right wing supporters were not given anything like the same attention as supposed Communists and fellow travellers.

While this book is primarily about the people who staffed ASIO, I find it somewhat surprising that in his preface, Horner states that "ASIO's officers were, and are, normal, dedicated Australians". This point of view is reinforced in the book's conclusion where Horner claims that the overwhelming majority of those who worked for ASIO were "honourable, everyday Australians".

If there is one thing that comes through loud and clear about all those men and women who worked tirelessly and often obsessively to protect our

national (and sometimes international) security is that they were far from being “normal” or “everyday”.

ARCHBISHOP DANIEL MANNIX (1864-1963)

In the year that Volume 1 of ASIO’s official history finishes, Melbourne’s controversial, long-serving Catholic Archbishop Daniel Mannix died on 6 November 1963 – the day after that year’s Melbourne Cup. He was aged 99 years and eight months.

Born in County Cork, Ireland in 1864, educated for the priesthood at St Patrick’s College, Maynooth, where he became professor of philosophy, then of moral theology, and ultimately at the age of 39 its president, Dr Mannix arrived in Australia in March 1913 where he was somewhat radicalised as Coadjutor Archbishop in charge of the working-class St Mary’s, West Melbourne from 1913 to 1917. When Archbishop Thomas Carr died after a battle with cancer, Mannix became the third Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne - from 1917 to 1963.

During this time, as a loyal son of Ireland who exercised considerable power in his adopted land, Mannix was arguably the most influential, and yet divisive, churchman in Australia.

In *Daniel Mannix: His Legacy* 12 writers – ten from Australia, two from Ireland – offer fresh and often insightful views of Mannix’s religious and political activities and about his influence. The contributions from Irish scholars are a detailed piece re-assessing Mannix’s impact on Ireland. One is written by Dermot Keogh, Professor Emeritus of History, University College Cork and one is by Dublin-based Patrick Mannix (seemingly no direct relation) that, in particular, discusses the alliance between Mannix and his friend, the republican politician Eamon de Valera, who became President of Ireland.

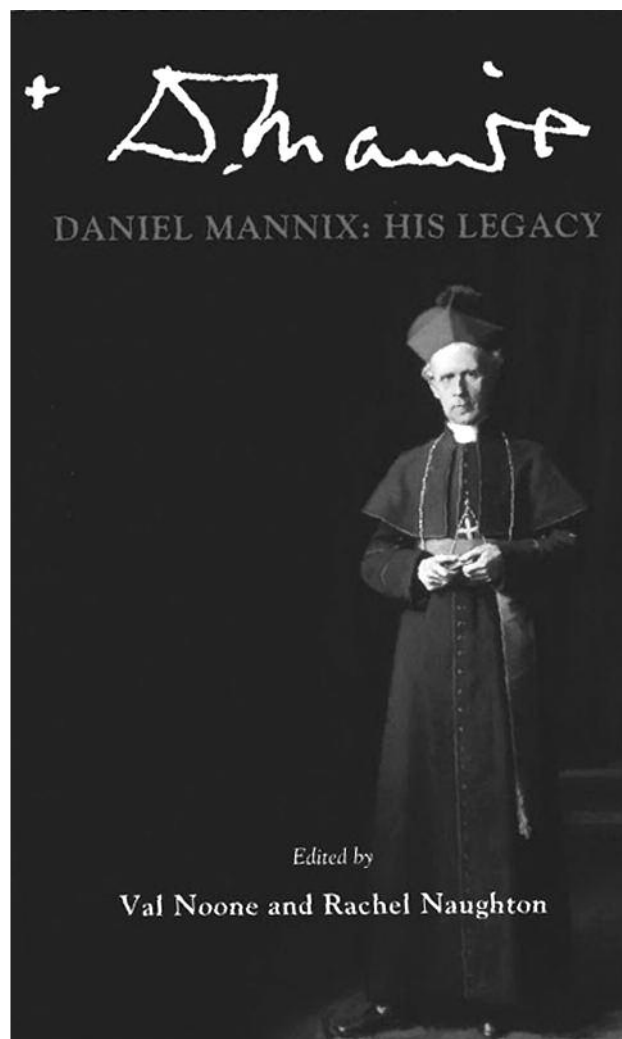
Victorian-based writers Patrick Morgan and Brian Costar offer sometimes contrasting summaries of Mannix’s 50 years in Melbourne. Yet both agree that his very public, and ultimately successful, clashes with Prime Minister W.H. (“Billy”) Hughes in 1916 and especially in 1917 - against the introduction of military conscription in Australia - gave the Archbishop a national profile. Hence, Mannix became a hero to many Catholics and a baleful figure to others, especially Protestants – some of whom demonised him as “that firebrand Mannix” and “the Mad Dog from Maynooth”.

The tall, gaunt, Irish-born prelate with his distinctively searching eyes was regularly contrasted in cartoons and the press with Billy Hughes – short,

Welsh and pugnacious - who was widely known as the “Little Digger.”

A number of contributions to this well-produced and helpfully illustrated book point out that in the late 1940s and especially in the 1950s and early 1960s Mannix helped foment acute political divisions in Australia, especially in Victoria. He did this by strongly supporting anti-communist industrial groups in our trade union movement and especially by backing B.A. (Bob) Santamaria’s Catholic Social Studies Movement – commonly known as the “Movement”. He then wholeheartedly supported the largely Catholic Democratic Labor Party – of which Santamaria was never a member - and whose preferences for years kept the ALP out of office.

In his fascinating chapter, Professor Costar maintains, “The Movement had no compunction about penetrating the ALP branch structure by recruiting potential members from among Catholic parishioners.” This was, he argues, “a successful if dangerous tactic and was based on the methods of the Communist Party”.



While some scholars still dispute this, in his memoirs Santamaria explained: "My thought was that the battles to defeat Communist power in the labour movement ...should essentially be one of cadre against cadre, cell against cell, fraction against fraction." Mannix himself agreed. In an ABC TV interview with Gerald Lyons in 1962 - a year before he died - the Archbishop said: "I don't know any way of fighting Communism except by their own methods." However Mannix added: "Ban them? I don't agree. Fight them in the open."

What all scholars agree about - including Gabrielle McMullen in this book - is that, throughout his long reign as Archbishop of Melbourne, Mannix was a great believer in the value of education and a strong and persistent advocate of the manifest advantages of Catholics in Australia taking what he termed "their proper place in the universities".

One of the highlights of *Daniel Mannix: His Legacy* is an article about why, and in what manner, the Archbishop lived in his large but essentially austere home of Raheen. This well written piece is by Brenda Niall - whose biography of Mannix is due to be published next year.

Each morning from his turreted red brick mansion in Kew, almost always wearing a silk top hat, carrying a cane, and with coins, including sixpences, in his pocket to give to children and to the poor, Mannix walked to his workplace at St Patrick's Cathedral in Melbourne. In the afternoon, he strolled back home. It is a sign of the times that, as far as we know, the Archbishop was never accosted on his walks and that no urchins ever threw stones or apples to try and dislodge his hat!

As David Schutz points out in his fascinating chapter about the controversy concerning the huge Catholic Eucharistic procession in Melbourne in 1934 which was held on Sunday - supposedly a day of rest - Mannix could be quite rigid in rejecting overtures from other prominent churchmen. This included those from the Anglican Archbishop of Melbourne, Frederick Head, who died in 1941 and who had unsuccessfully requested that the controversial Catholic prelate come to meet him.

That Mannix's refusal to Head's request was not unusual is demonstrated by the fact that Mannix almost never went out to socialise, or to dine. Instead, numerous people came to visit him at Raheen, although as far as we know, this did not include the Anglican Archbishop.

With guests at his home, Mannix's usual practice was not to speak, but to listen. Intriguingly, at Raheen,

Mannix never used the telephone. According to Dr Niall, all messages came through his housekeeper.

Moreover, living in Kew afforded Mannix a number of wealthy Catholic neighbors, most notably his friend and admirer, the well-known "entrepreneur", racing buff and gambling identity, John Wren who featured heavily in Frank Hardy's notorious 1950 novel *Power Without Glory*. So too did Mannix - under the thinly disguised title of Archbishop Daniel Malone.

As Elizabeth Malcolm makes clear in chapter five of this fascinating book, Hardy's description of Mannix's striking physical appearance started thus: "He was an Irishman. He was tall, slim, and sharp featured ...with high cheek bones." Hardy added: "He carried himself erect, with dignity. Only the closest scrutiny of his eyes would have disturbed the observer. At first sight, they were mischievous and twinkling, deepset beneath black projecting eyebrows ...but they were ill-matched. The left eye seemed to be half closed, giving a vague air of slyness and cunning to an otherwise even-featured, intellectual and frank countenance."

Throughout his 50 years in Melbourne, whether they revered or distrusted him, or felt a mixture of both, Mannix's physical distinctiveness was a gift to caricaturists throughout the nation.

But if there is any ambiguity about Mannix's legacy in Australia, it seems undeniable that the most fundamental fact about the Catholic Archbishop is what Edmund Campion terms "his Irishry". As Dermot Keogh reminds us, shortly after Daniel Mannix died in 1963, Irish President Eamon de Valera praised his long service to his native land, saying that for over five decades Mannix had been "for this nation (of Ireland) a stronghold, a redoubt that was never surrendered or taken".

ANN MOYAL

First a disclaimer. In the late 1970s, when Ann Moyal and I worked at Brisbane's Griffith University - she as director of the Science Policy Research Centre, me as lecturer in Humanities - we had a close friend in common, the physicist Professor Robert Segall. More recently, Dr Moyal and I were members of the judging panel for the 2014 Prime Minister's Literary Awards - in the dual categories of Non-Fiction and Australian History. For the record, to work with her was a challenge and a pleasure.

Born in 1926, and a graduate of Sydney University, Moyal is an outstanding independent scholar and arguably the pre-eminent historian of Australian

science and of technology. A former academic, in 1995 Dr Moyal – who for decades has been a highly productive writer and researcher - founded the vibrant and sometimes influential Independent Scholars Association of Australia.

A Woman Of Influence is Moyal's fifteenth book. It is also her second memoir, following on from the brilliantly autobiographical account of working for four years in London in the mid-1950s as personal research assistant to the eminent media baron and manqué historian, Lord Beaverbrook. When they first met Moyal was 27, he 75.

Breakfast with Beaverbrook: Memoirs of an Independent Woman was received with acclaim in England and Australia when it was released in hardback in 1995 and then republished as a paperback in 1996.

Subtitled "Science, Men & History", Moyal's current offering – the finely honed *A Woman Of Influence* - is an intimate account of Moyal's sometimes complex, often fulfilling personal relationships, of her battle with cancer of the kidney, and also a description of her passionate and intriguing life in letters and of the mind.

Moyal also writes movingly of her friendships, including those with Dymphna and Manning Clark, who introduced her to the prolific yet underestimated expatriate, the Melbourne-born writer Alan Morehead (1910-1983) who in the late 1930s had become a foreign correspondent for Beaverbrook's *Daily Express*. As it happens, in my twenties, Morehead's *Gallipoli*, *The White Nile*, *The Blue Nile*, and especially *The Fatal Impact* (an account of the invasion of the South Pacific from 1767 to 1840) were four of my favourite works of generalist history.

Indeed, as Moyal confides, one of her most significant monographs is the biographical *Alan Morehead: A Rediscovery* - published by the National Library of Australia in 2005. Although relatively brief, in my opinion it is as important as Moyal's massive two-volume account of the correspondence of Australia's pioneer geologist, the Rev W.B. Clarke, *The Web of Science* published the year before. Indeed, in terms of quality, Moyal's monograph on Morehead is on a par with her signature book, *Platypus*.

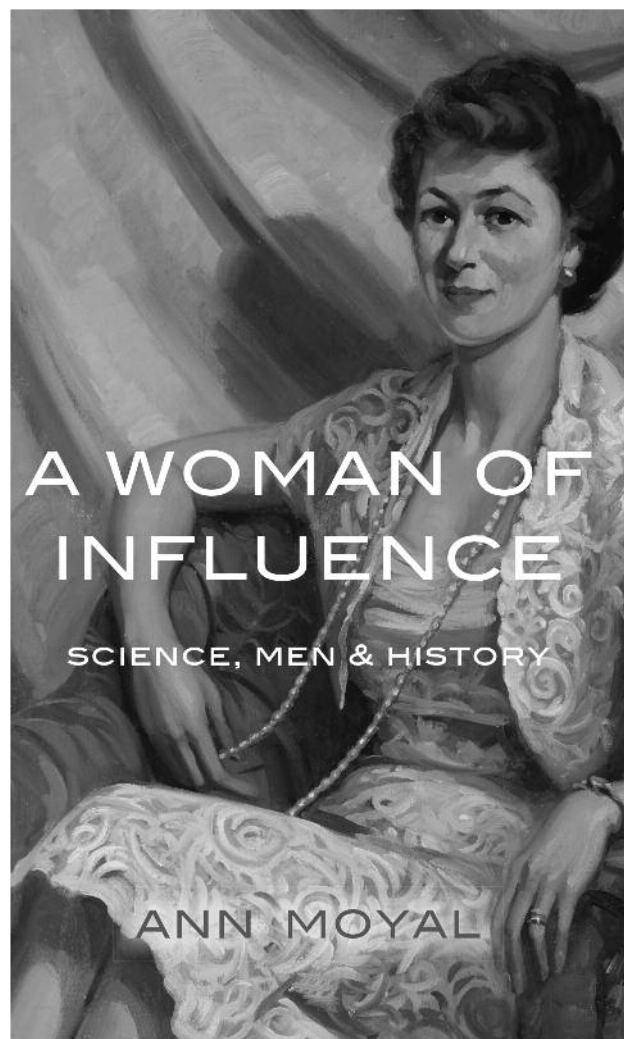
Subtitled *The Extraordinary Story of How a Curious Creature Baffled the World*, this marvelous work attracted lively interest when it was first published in 2001 and even more so when a new and updated edition appeared in 2010.

As well as dealing with her own life as a thrice married, childless, writer-researcher with a

considerable gift for love and friendship, in *A Woman of Influence* Moyal contemplates Australia's social and political future and also grapples with mortality as she approaches her own demise. The latter, Moyal suggests, is best approached via a motto of the late octogenarian New South Wales based artist Margaret Olley - "Hurry Last Days!"

It is pleasing to report that, like the irrepressible Olley, Moyal steadfastly rejects Goethe's bleak reflection on advancing old age. "We look back on our life," Goethe wrote, "as a thing of broken pieces, because our mistakes and failures are always the first to strike us, and outweigh in our imagination what we have accomplished and attained."

While the above approach seemed to characterise the latter years of the late Bob Santamaria, the still very much alive Ann Moyal thinks not. Instead, she takes good note of the thoughts of British author Diana Athill who at the age of 90, in *Somewhere Towards the End*, summarised her attitude to old age thus: "Regret little, and resist despondency!"



Although the feisty and energetic Moyal confides that she is aware of “the failures and the abortive and wasted efforts” that litter some of her past, she very much regards her current time of self-scrutiny and historical reflection as a strong reason for gratitude and celebration.

Thinking about what has happened in and to our nation since she returned from Britain at the end of 1958 to help the eminent historian Sir Keith Hancock at the Australian National University found the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (whose eighteen volumes are now a jewel in the crown of historical scholarship), Moyal maintains that many positive changes have taken place in women’s role in science and also in the study and compass of Australian history.

While there still remains a long way ahead to achieving sexual equality in employment and elsewhere, it seems hard to dispute the fact that Australia’s universities are no longer so male-dominated, Anglo-Celtic and elitist as when Moyal graduated from Sydney University in 1947 with a first class honours degree in history.

From my perspective, Australia is indeed fortunate to boast of such a truly independent thinker, who, as this powerful memoir makes abundantly clear, often worked (and works) against the grain.

Ross Fitzgerald is Emeritus Professor of History and Politics at Griffith University, and the author of 36 books. He is currently co-writing A Dozen Soviet Spies Down Under? to be published by Connor Court in Melbourne.



CORRECTION RE LOUIS MAGEE

In reviewing Frank Mount’s *Wrestling with Asia: A Memoir* in the December 2012 issue of *The Sydney Institute Quarterly*, Gerard Henderson wrote that he was the second president of the Melbourne University Democratic Labor Party Club in the 1960s. In fact, Gerard Henderson was the third DLP Club president – after Frank Mount and Louis Magee.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

In reviewing Hal Colebatch, *Australia’s Secret War: How Unions Sabotaged Our Troops in World War II* in Issue 43 of *The Sydney Institute Quarterly*, Ross Fitzgerald commented inter alia:

Colebatch has long had a bee in his bonnet about the unions, partly because, at the end of the First World War, the Fremantle waterside workers had given his journalist father, Sir Hal Colebatch, a very hard time, including pelting him with rocks. This was during Sir Hal’s brief stint as premier of Western Australia from 17 April 1919 to 17 May 1919.

Hal Colebatch wrote the following letter to *The Sydney Institute Quarterly* on 10 March 2014:

Dear Sir

While favourably and gratifyingly reviewing my book on Australian wartime strikes and sabotage, *Australia’s Secret War*, Ross Fitzgerald claims I have a bee in my bonnet on the subject because my father clashed with striking watersiders in 1919. This is also a line the far left has adopted, being unable to attack the contents of the book in any other way.

No doubt I also have a “bee in my bonnet” about tariffs, as I have written a biography of the low-tariff campaigner Bert Kelly, and about gold-mining, as I have written a biography of Claude de Bernales. I do not know what gems of analysis Professor Fitzgerald might mine from the fact that I also write poetry and science-fiction.

Ross Fitzgerald has never met me or interviewed me, and can have no idea as to my motives in writing the book, such as he states so confidently. Unfounded claims by reviewers of knowledge of an author’s motives is bad practice.

I suggest that recording certain unions’ wartime thuggery and treachery, and the latter-day leftist academic history industry’s caitiff efforts to ignore this, is its own justification and does not need further reason or explanation.

This attempt at psycho-analysis spoils what is otherwise a very competent review, which shows praiseworthy understanding of the nuances of a complex subject.

Hal G. P. Colebatch

PS: Contrary to Ross Fitzgerald’s claim, my cousin Professor Hal Kempley Colebatch is not a West Australian.

GERARD HENDERSON'S **MEDIA WATCH** - INCORPORATING **SANDALISTA WATCH**

The inaugural issue of “Gerard Henderson’s Media Watch” was published in April 1988 – over a year before the first edition of the ABC TV *Media Watch* program went to air. Since November 1997 “Gerard Henderson’s Media Watch” has been published as part of *The Sydney Institute Quarterly*. In 2009 Gerard Henderson’s Media Watch Dog blog commenced publication – it appears on The Sydney Institute’s website each Friday. Currently Gerard Henderson’s *Media Watch* takes the form of his new series titled “Sandalista Watch” which is influenced by George Orwell.

RAI GAITA'S SANDALISTA SLUDGE

In his 1937 book *The Road to Wigan Pier*, George Orwell defended “the ordinary decent person” against “the intellectual, book-trained socialist”. He wrote that the latter:

“... type is drawn, to begin with, entirely from the middle class, and from a rootless town-bred section of that middle class at that. ...It includes...the foaming denouncers of the bourgeoisie, and the more-water-in-your-beer reformers of whom [George Bernard] Shaw is the prototype, and the astute young social-literary climbers...and all that dreary tribe of high-minded women and sandal-wearers and bearded fruit-juice drinkers who come flocking towards the smell of ‘progress’ like bluebottles to a dead cat.”

As readers of the *Media Watch Dog* blog will be aware, 2014 has been a big year for Professor Rai Gaita and the Melbourne based Gaita Fan Club. Both in the groves of academe and on the streets (of Castlemaine, no less).

First up, the taxpayer subsidised Faculty of Education, Humanities and Law at Flinders University provided a generous grant which made it possible for the Gaita Fan Club to get together in suburban Adelaide and pay homage to Down Under’s very own Philosopher King.

Second, a taxpayer subsidised generous grant also made possible the publication *A Sense for Humanity: The Ethical Thought of Raimond Gaita* – which is the collection of papers delivered at the Flinders University conference. This tome, edited by Craig Taylor and Melinda Graefe, is published by the taxpayer subsidised Monash University Publishing. Nice subsidy, if you can get it.

A Sense for Humanity contains contributions from a roll-up of the Sandalista Set who could make it to Flinders University for the occasion – writer J.M. Coetzee, academic Christopher Cordner, screen-writer and poet Nick Drake, philosopher Professor Miranda Fricker, poet and writer Barry Hill, political scientist Geoffrey Brahm Levey, writer Anne Manne, Emeritus Professor and author Robert Manne, writer Alex Miller, academic Brigitta Olubas, academic Helen Pringle, Emeritus Professor Dorothy Scott, legal academic and author Gerry Simpson, academic Craig Taylor and academic Steven Tudor. Get the picture? There is not one factory worker among this lot.

TO THE BARINGHUP STATION

Which is a reminder of the Gaita Fan Club’s other great cause for 2014. Namely, your man Gaita’s involvement in the KEEP BARINGHUP CLEAN campaign – which is designed to prevent a chicken factory being built on the Moorlort Plains in Central

Victoria, not all that far from Castlemaine. Why the Moolort Plains? Well, you see, Rai Gaita grew up in this area. And, believe it or not, the landscape of the area influenced the cadences of Professor Gaita's thought – as depicted in the learned professor's depressing tome *Romulus, My Father*.

As *The Age's* literary editor Jason Steger declared on 22 February 2014, the Moolort Plains' landscape affected not only the "mood and tone" of *Romulus, My Father* but – wait for it – "even the rhythm of its sentences". How about that? Steger, as one of Melbourne's leading Sandalistas, is an authority on such matters.

The Gaita Fan Club does not want to have the cadence or rhythm of any future sentences your man Gaita might write adversely affected by the construction of something as uninspiring and crass as a chicken factory near where the young Gaita first breathed and later walked. So it participated enthusiastically in what was called the "No Poultry Matter: Raimond Gaita in Conversation With..." series which was designed to raise money to keep Baringhup free of chicken factories and chicken factory workers. The location for the various "No Poultry Matter" conversations was the Phee Broadway Theatre in fashionable Castlemaine.

Professor Gaita's conversation companions consisted of Melbourne based leftists Helen Garner, Arnold Zable and Robert Manne. At various occasions they put on their sandals and headed north to Castlemaine – a country town which is close enough to Moorlort Plains to be influenced by that particular landscape's mood and tone. At the Phee Broadway Theatre, Professor Gaita conversed and conversed and conversed with Ms Garner, and then with Dr Zable (for a doctor he is) and then with Professor Manne about The Brilliant Thought of Rai Gaita, the correctness of various left-wing causes, the inappropriateness of chicken factories and like matters. To re-phrase Karl Marx somewhat, it was the case of "Chicken Workers of the World: Piss Off".

No one seemed to find it improper that a group of progressive taxpayer subsidised Melbourne intellectuals should head to Castlemaine for a night of conversation with the Philosopher King in order to stop a proposed chicken factory which would provide well-paying jobs for the people of Central Victoria. But, then, these get-togethers by the Rai Gaita Fan Club were very much a meeting of the sandal-wearing intelligentsia, by the sandal-wearing intelligentsia, for the sandal-wearing intelligentsia.

RAI GAITA V GEORGE ORWELL

There is a similar presence of self regard and lack of self awareness in *A Sense of Humanity*. Robert Manne's contribution to this work is titled "A Political Friendship". You see, Robert and Rai have been friends for years, since they met at Melbourne University almost half a century ago.

In his essay, Professor Manne writes that he and Professor Gaita – when young men at Melbourne University "came to share" the English writer George Orwell (1903-1950). By this, your man Manne means that he and your man Gaita were influenced by Orwell. But were they really? Orwell was a great writer who happened to be a strong anti-communist in the years before his death. He was also a journalist who wrote clear and direct articles and books. Unlike Rai Gaita.

Here is Orwell's guide to modern English usage – as set out in his 1946 essay "Politics and the English Language":

...one can often be in doubt about the effect of a word or a phrase, and one needs rules that one can rely on when instinct fails. I think the following rules will cover most cases:

(i) Never use a metaphor, simile, or other figure of speech which you are used to seeing in print.

(ii) Never use a long word where a short one will do.

(iii) If it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out.

(iv) Never use the passive where you can use the active.

(v) Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word, or a jargon word if you can think of an everyday English equivalent.

(vi) Break any of these rules sooner than say anything outright barbarous.

Put simply, George Orwell's position was that if an intelligent and educated person could not understand what he or she read – then the fault was with the writer, not with the reader.

Unlike George Orwell, Down Under's Philosopher King and members of the Gaita Fan Club are into sludge. This is what Gerry Simpson – who acknowledges the influence on his work of Rai Gaita

– writes in *A Sense for Humanity*, in his chapter titled “International Law’s Common Humanity, Or are Pirates Necessary?”, about the Treaty of Westphalia and all that:

The development of crimes against humanity in the twentieth century offers a microcosm of some of the themes sketched so far. Remember the whole idea of law as a form of judgment standing over sovereigns had been sidelined up to this point. Westphalia expressly rejected a structuring principle that was to become central from Versailles onwards: namely the idea that inter-state relations, and in particular war, can be organised on the basis of some sort of centrally enforced accountability for illegal acts.

Justice was thoroughly relativised. If International law began in 1648, it did so in a forgiving, agnostic mood, introducing us to sovereignty as a form of forgetfulness... By the twentieth century, this Westphalian fusion of sovereignty and amnesia had become deeply fashionable. Oblivion has given way to war crimes trials – all this in the midst of a fetishistic culture of compulsory commemoration.

Which raises the question. What is the Gaita Fan Club on about? It’s much the same in the “Afterword” – titled “Anne Manne and Raimond Gaita in Conversation”. In fact, their “conversation” takes the form of an exchange of formal letters extending to some 14,000 words on Gaita’s part alone. Gaita’s contribution includes the following:

Sophisticated urbanity has attractions beyond the pleasures of condescending to moral intensity. The charm, brilliance, subtlety and sophistication of Bernard Williams made them evident to British and, to some extent, American philosophers during much of my academic life. David Wiggins, who was subtle with a vengeance, was also influential at the time I wrote *Good and Evil: An Absolute Conception* (which along with much else I have written could have been subtitled *Against Urbanity*).

He says of Hume: “Hume’s theory partakes copiously of the benevolence and good humour of its author, whom many of his readers might confidently choose...for a

cheerful and trustworthy companion in a shipwreck”. Cora Diamond, on the other hand, reports Dorothea Krook as complaining that, “Hume’s approach to morality is...shallow, trivial, low, frivolous, unserious, unsolid, unreal, lacking any sense of the higher, lacking any genuine sense of evil. Hume’s cheerfulness is the complacent comfortableness of the eighteenth-century clubman; reading Hume is like being asphyxiated in a sea of cotton wool”. I don’t know that I would dare go so far, but I see her point and understand her frustration. She might have said much the same of Aristotle.

Quite so. Or perhaps not. Who would know? Gaita’s paragraphs are meaningless. Indeed, Rai Gaita prides himself on the fact that his prose is all but incomprehensible. Here is what he wrote in his 2011 book *After Romulus* which followed *Romulus, My Father*.

They [Chapters 2 and 3] are, in parts, difficult essays. I ask the reader to read them slowly, but, if having done that they are still hard to fathom, to move on and to return to them later. Difficult though the essays are, I hope that the reader will find in all of them the voice they heard in *Romulus, My Father*. If she does, then recognising in “Character and Its Limits” the same voice as in “An Unassuageable Longing” and in both the voice of the author of *Romulus, My Father*, she might find, when she returns to the difficult passages she had skipped, that they are not as foreign and therefore not as difficult as they had seemed on first reading.

How frightfully twee. Gaita refers to his reader (if there is one) as “she”. He then gives condescension a bad name when he advises his female reader to read his essays slowly on multiple occasions. He would be well advised to write clear English in the first place.

And here is an example from Chapter 3 in *After Romulus* – taken from the first paragraph – in which the Thought of Rai Gaita is set out:

“You ask who he was? Let me answer in the time-honoured fashion and tell you a story.” In those words Isak Dinesen, the *nom de plume* of Karen Blixen, author of *Out of Africa*, expressed a conception of

narrative identity. She assumed, of course, that the question was not incorrigibly naive in its assumption that something would count as an answer when, in principle, nothing could. That would hardly be worth saying were it not for the fact that many people wonder whether there is such thing as who someone really is. If such scepticism were justified, then writing and reading biography would make no sense, or if it did, be so ironic as to be barely recognisable. But because many people do process such scepticism, I'll respond to it by reflecting on what I was doing when I tried to write *Romulus, My Father* truthfully. Reflection on truth is essentially philosophical and is hard, but I'm afraid that there is nothing to be done about that. Philosophy always needs to be read slowly and more than once.

Can you bear it? George Orwell would never have written such a sentence as "This would hardly be worth saying were it not for the fact that many people wonder whether there is such a thing as who someone really is". This is mere verbal sludge. Such language, no doubt, would have its fans at the Phee Broadway Theatre in fashionable Castlemaine. But not at the chicken factory at, say, Baringhup.

RAI GAITA'S SLUDGE ON UNIVERSITIES VISITS ABC'S "BIG IDEAS"

Rai Gaita's impenetrable prose has a following at ABC Radio National. On 22 October 2013, ABC Radio National's *Big Ideas* program ran Professor Gaita's Lecture "The Voice of the Academy in the Conversation of Citizens". This was the third lecture in the Herbert and Valmae French Foundation's 2013 Eminent Lecture Series at the taxpayer subsidised Australian National University.

In this 7500 word lecture, Professor Gaita only named 17 names: including Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, John Stuart Mill, Martin Luther, John Henry Newman, Matthew Arnold, Hannah Arendt and Roy Holland (Dr Gaita's Ph.D. supervisor). That's one person for every 440 words.

The rest was fact-free words. Lotsa fact-free words. Here's an example of what Gaita told his ANU audience in October last year in his left-wing interpretation of contemporary universities:

Raimond Gaita: Now I think it's implausible to think that an obligation to be prepared to think anything – and to proclaim its results publicly – can be derived from reflection on a career in the degraded and servile institutions that are now called universities. If one wants to render even plausible the claim that an academic is obliged to be prepared to think anything, then I think one needs to appeal to a tradition of thought about universities that is now barely recognisable to us. And that, at any rate, is what I want to argue today. One might, of course, appeal to a conception of what it is to be a real free thinker that stands independently of institutions. Socrates would then be a striking example....

Well, the best thought, I think, about the university was not about a platonic form of it, nor was it about an historical paradigm. It was thought that it was in work with a distinctive form of the life of the mind that universities nourished. Thought in dialogue with a history of reflection that goes back at least to Socrates. It was that historical death, rather than a metaphysical essence or a historical paradigm, that ensured fertile reflection upon one historically accidental form of the life of the mind – the academic form.

And that same quiet contingent, historical death, also secured for the concept some distance from times and places to make it possible for thinkers to judge – whether they did it rightly or wrongly doesn't matter to my point – to judge that their desires, their purposes, their aspirations and even the spirit of the times were faithful or faithless to the idea of a university. Which, though often expressed in the singular, was of course never just one thing. This is thought of a kind that can deepen without limit and can never be exhausted by a set of definitions focused on the purpose of such institutions.

And so your man Gaita went on in this incoherent way. And on. And on. He even discussed his bad back. Really. Here we go. Stay tuned:

Raimond Gaita: For a long time, I believe, we've been bereft of a common understanding that would enable us to

give authoritative voice to a conception, positive and deep, of the value of academic forms of the life of the mind. I've a passion for philosophy and – until back trouble set in – I had it for mountaineering as well. Both yield higher pleasures. But quite rightly the taxpayer does not pay for both.

If intrinsic value of university studies is nothing more serious than the pleasures that accompany the disciplined exercise of the powers of the mind, then it's right that serious people should look to their extrinsic benefits, be they political or economic.

The reasons we academics find it difficult to argue persuasively for a more serious conception of the intrinsic value of study is not because philistines dominate our audience – nor is it because of the effects of unemployment on students or the effects of market driven policies on staff and courses. Such economic and political factors are important but, like their expression in managerial speak, their impact on the university is as much effect as it is cause of our inarticulacy. In the '60s, the universities were vulnerable to the call that they serve their requirements of political idealism. They are now vulnerable to the pressures to serve the economic imperatives of the nation.

So, your man Gaita believes that mountaineering does not need to be subsidised by taxpayers. How about that? Here is Professor Gaita on the question of how we should live?

Raimond Gaita: Socratic philosophy has no end in both senses of that word. It's not an inquiry that could end in a discovery that would, at least in principle, settle the question he asks about his life – how should one live? And though it had profound significance, it's significance did not lie in the fact that it satisfied a purpose. Not one that he set himself or one set for him by his psychology – by the psychological conditions of identity, for example.

Nor is he in the grip of a compulsion from which he is unable to free himself even if he wanted to. If he were in the grip of a

compulsion, if that was the way of explaining the cannot when he says he cannot give up philosophy, if he were it would make sense for someone who thought that perhaps he's obsessively focused on one thing and should have a more rounded life. That he should "get a life", as we put it. To ask him to try at least for a time what he says he can't do.

But to think like that is like thinking that Luther – as I put it last week – that Luther was simply psychologically nailed to the spot when he said: "Here I stand, I could do no other", that perhaps he should try to do what he said he cannot do, that it might not be as hard as he thought, or perhaps he should take therapy so that he would be less anal about his principles. Rather than think we can explain our sense of such necessities by reference to our desires, needs and preferences, we should think of our desires, needs and preferences – and also our sense of who we are – are sometimes transformed by values that are sui generis and to which such necessities are intrinsic.

Interesting. Your man Gaita has a new interpretation of the Protestant Reformation – namely, Martin Luther was an anal kind of guy. And here is Rai Gaita on his idea of a university:

Raimond Gaita: And I think I'm now in a position to attend to a question that I suspect might have been forming in your minds. Why don't we just abandon sterile discussion about what counts as a university and focus on what we want for particular institutions of higher education in this or that place? Well, here's an answer towards it, or a gesture towards an answer. Ethical necessities and impossibilities, of the kind I mentioned earlier, are inseparable from any idea of intrinsic value that could seriously answer Callicles's challenge ...

My sense of the university was partly formed by having been educated as an undergraduate in a university in which actually a sense of obligation to public was very strong – the University of Melbourne in the '60s when I was there. That's not at all inconsistent with the point – to put it most weakly – not inconsistent

with the point that I made that the most distinctive public responsibility of a university is to, as it were, to protect students for a time from the pressures of worldliness.

At the moment, I mean universities are being transformed by their connection to the world. I mean when I think back, as it were, to my own upbringing, you know, at university it would've just been inconceivable that universities could have the connections to the military and to business and so on that they – nobody could believe that there could be such a time and the institution still be called a university. But the greatest threat, that seems to me, to academic autonomy is not power of these institutions, it's their immensely attractive urbanity. Speaking the truth to urbanity is a more difficult thing for academics these days than speaking truth to power.

So Gaita provides gestures towards answering his very own questions and calls on taxpayers to find his idealised “search for worldliness”.

RAI GAITA ON WHY BEHEADERS ARE NOT EVIL

There was lots more. But that's enough. What's surprising is that someone decided to run this incoherent rave on the taxpayer funded public broadcaster.

Alas, the tradition of inviting Rai Gaita into an ABC studio to talk about nothing much at all continues. On 19 October 2014, Radio National *Sunday Extra* presenter Jonathan Green presided over a discussion titled “Good v Evil: The politics of language”. This is the blurb used by Green to commence the discussion:

The word evil has been used countless times by Prime Minister Tony Abbott when describing Islamic State, which he's also dubbed as a “death cult”. He's even gone on to compare the gruesome acts of Islamic State to atrocities of the Nazis. The conflict between Evil v Good is nothing new, but it's creeping more and more into the political lingo.

The line-up for the “Good versus Evil” discussion was Raimond Gaita (author of *A Sense for Humanity*) and James Dawes (author of *Evil Men*). Jonathan Green

commenced proceedings with an obligatory sneer at Prime Minister Tony Abbott – with the endorsement of The Chaser Boys (average age 38^{1/2}). Let's go the transcript:

Jonathan Green: Thanks in large part to the work of Tony Abbott, the idea of evil is playing an increasing role in our recent politics – our public conversation. As Tony Abbott would put it, “sometimes dire and dreadful measures are necessary in response to the pure evil we are now seeing”. But the sudden ubiquity of evil, it caught the eye of The Chaser team from ABC TV's *Media Circus*. [Here Green played a Chaser grab which had the Prime Minister saying “Evil, evil, evil, evil, evil, evil, evil, evil, evil, with evil”.]

Jonathan Green: No laughing matter, of course. The sudden presence of the Islamic State – the aggressive presence, the threatening presence of IS – Australia's re-engagement in combat operations in Iraq, these are things that have required explanation and rationale. A fight against evil. Well, that's a time honoured formulation. But stop. And pause. Think about that for a moment. To have a political discussion in which one of the elements is the notion of evil – well the fact that that is happening – well that something – is something worth considering in its own right. Joining me now is Rai Gaita... Also joining me, via Skype, is James Dawes. James is from the Department of English at McAlister College in Minnesota, USA. He's the author of the book *Evil Men*.

So Jonathan (“Proudly the ABC's Sneerer-in-Chief”) Green commenced with The Chaser's ridicule of Tony Abbott before commenting: “No laughing matter, of course”. Of course. Green then asked Rai Gaita to define the term “evil”. Here is the learned professor's response:

Raimond Gaita: Let me put it this way. I think there's a very serious question as to whether the concept of evil marks out something distinctive amongst our moral concepts, as distinct from being a hyperbolic way of saying something is really morally terrible. And I've tried to argue that it does. Although I ought to add the qualification that there's no such thing

as *the* concept of evil. There have been different conceptions of it in our tradition. And I imagine that Tony Abbott, were he to be asked “Do you really believe there is such a thing as evil?” he would say “Yes”. In one way or another, I don’t know how well but in one or another, he would then elaborate in ways that were part of the Catholic tradition.

For my part I’ve wanted to say that we have a need of a concept different from the merely morally terrible. If we also have the idea of what I’ve called “inalienable preciousness” of every human being. But if you think of evil like that and if you think of, as I do, that that kind of preciousness of every human being has been revealed by, sort of, deeds of wondrous goodness in our history. Sometimes by religious people called saints and sometimes by other people. Then it will often have the opposite implications that people draw from it. If you do believe that every human being is inalienably precious – or if to put this in a perhaps a much more secular version, that every human being possess an inalienable dignity – then you will believe that there ought to be no human being whatsoever, no matter how terrible their deeds may have been and indeed no matter how terrible their character seems to be, that should be in any way cast out. Or, as it were, expelled from a sense of a common humanity.

So what Rai Gaita is saying here is that no one, but no one, is evil – since every human being has an “inalienable preciousness”. Including Adolf Hitler, Josef Stalin, Jack the Ripper and more besides.

Needless to say, Professor Dawes agreed with Professor Gaita – in the ABC kind of way. Dawes described evil as a “pernicious term”. And then Jonathan Green agreed with John Dawes who had already agreed with Rai Gaita. There followed a leading question – in the Radio National way – following an excerpt from George W. Bush:

Jonathan Green: Former US President George W. Bush – that’s his State of the Union address just months before the 9/11 attacks. Ray Gaita, is there a – there’s not far you can go in political rhetoric beyond that. Is this a sign of a certain exhaustion in the rhetoric in politics – that we resort to evil?

Raimond Gaita: Well, I think the concept of evil really has no serious place in politics. I can’t think of any political event whose understanding is deepened by describing it as evil. And it’s just absurd to say that the beheading of that person is an act of pure evil. It says nothing. I mean, there are things that are morally terrible and I think much of what ISIL does is morally terrible. But obviously, if you were to say “look, we’re going to wage a war against the morally terrible” – that doesn’t have the same kind of rhetorical appeal as: “We’re going to wage war against evil” – especially if you imply that this is a war of good against evil.

So, according to Gaita, evil doesn’t exist. Moreover, he believes that it is absurd to say that a beheading is an act of pure evil. A chap might cut off another chap’s head in order to send a “The Caliphate is coming” message. But, according to Green and Gaita, such action is not evil. It’s just a sign of moral weakness. Can you bear it?

Then Green suggested that the use of the term “evil” was a sign of the West’s “current lack of confidence”. He found broad agreement:

Raimond Gaita: Ahh, well I think sometimes it is. I’m not sure that it is in the case of Tony Abbott. Because sometimes I think one ought to take a political leaders [sic] more or less at their face value, in certain contexts anyway. And I suspect that Tony Abbott believes this is evil. And he probably thinks there is such a thing as pure evil. I suspect Bush was a bit like that too. But I think it’s important to recognise that, at least in the case of Tony Abbott, it’s a pretty degenerate application of the concept of evil. But I can’t take seriously someone’s concept of evil when – let’s say a few months before – when he was confronted with the evidence about torture in Sri Lanka, he said “Oh well, sometimes bad things happen”. Something to that effect.

Jonathan Green then asked Gaita whether there is a separation “between the deed and the person doing it”. Gaita embraced the thought of Hannah Arendt, author of *The Banality of Evil*:

Raimond Gaita: Well, I, I – there are so many different conceptions of evil. But

insofar as I take it seriously I don't think it characterises the person. One thing I think is uncontroversially true, which is that evil deeds can be done for quite banal motives. That was Hannah Arendt who introduced the idea of the banality of evil in relatively contemporary discussion about [Adolf] Eichmann. And though there's some dispute now whether Eichmann was as she describes him. What I think is true is that evil deeds can be done for utterly banal and ordinary motives. And I don't think the concept of evil has any explanatory value. And so people who complain, you know, that to call someone evil or to call an act evil offers no understanding of its genesis and motives and so on, I think are absolutely right. That doesn't mean it plays no role in the characterisation of what was done. And some of our responses to it. But that's quite different from thinking it has any explanatory role in our thought at all.

So there you have it. Beheadings are just banal – except, presumably, to the victims. The conversation rambled on in a rambling way. Until Jonathan Green asked the leading question, which found Professor Gaita in complete confusion:

Jonathan Green: So Rai Gaita, just finally. I mean, you would suggest that we have other, more solid, firmer frameworks for having these discussions? That this is an unnecessary exaggeration?

Raimond Gaita: Ahh, well it's not so much an exaggeration. It introduces a concept that really should have no application in political discourse. While it might have a kind of ubiquitous use in certain political classes, it's also a concept about which the intelligentsia is almost universally sceptical. So it's a paradoxical thing. That one has to, as it were, decry its awful usage by someone like Abbott and Bush – it's demonising, oversimplifying and so on usage.

But then there can be a kind of urbane condescension to its use in the intelligentsia which I think is also very mistaken. And I would argue, if I could just use these political categories, that if one wants to think about let's say genocide, and what kind of morally terrible thing it is.

Then one has to think about the Holocaust and whether one regards it as a paradigm of genocide and therefore sets the standard for the application of the concept, or whether it's merely the extreme of it. I'm inclined to think that there are certain aspects of the Holocaust which are worse than the genocidal aspect of it. And for that I do think we need a concept of evil.

Jonathan Green: [interjecting] It's deliberation perhaps? It's –

Raymond Gaita: Yeah, it's that aspect of the Holocaust that makes people sometimes inclined to say it's mysterious, can't be explained and so on. But that's not its genocidal aspect. Considered just as an act of genocide – even the most terrible act of genocide ever – one doesn't need the concept of evil. Someone like Aristotle, for example, who had no such concept, could easily have the conceptual resources to develop a concept of genocide. They were, after all, the ancient Greeks and so on, knew just as much as we do about our potentiality for barbarous action. And they didn't need the concept. And I don't think we need the concept in politics. And to use it in politics I think is almost always an act of demonisation, oversimplification and worse.

Jonathan Green: A fair point, I think, to bring our conversation to a close. One thing is certain, I suspect, we've not heard the last of that particular usage of evil in our political conversation.

So there you have it. According to Gaita, not even the murder of six million Jews warrants the use of the term "evil".

A SENSE OF CONFUSION

The *Sunday Extra* discussion on evil was a load of tosh. It was one of those "debates" – so beloved by the ABC – where everyone agreed with everyone else and a fine ideological time was had by all.

The fact is that Rai Gaita has spent virtually his entire life in universities. He has little knowledge of the real world. Australia's Philosopher King seems to believe that governments should throw taxpayers' money at universities. Moreover he holds the view that factories should not be established in rural areas if

they are unlikely to affect the tone of the region which, in turn, influences the cadences of the sentences of members of the intelligentsia. And when it comes to the ISIS terrorists who delight in beheading Shia, Christians, Jews and the like – well, whatever they are, they're not evil. According to Professor Gaita, that is.

And yet Rai Gaita's incoherent philosophy is all the rage with the members of Sandalista Set who turn up to praise Australia's own Philosopher King. *A Sense For Humanity* must be one of the least reader-friendly books published in Australia in recent times. Without taxpayer subsidies, it would never have made it to print.

Only the Sandalista Set would rave about the comments by Rai Gaita which appear towards the end of *A Sense For Humanity*:

Rai Gaita: Think, for example, of a mother who sorrows for two of her children, one of who [sic] murdered the other. She sorrows for the son who is wronged, for the loss of his life, of course, but also because of the wrong he suffered, which is compounded by the fact that it was his brother who killed him. She also sorrows for the murderer that her other son became, because he will be imprisoned or suffer other consequences of that sort, or because he suffers the pains of remorse, which he does not. Her sorrow focuses on the significance of his having become a murderer, and it is deepened by the fact that it appears not to matter to him. If he should become remorseful, then the pain of it would be the form of understanding what he is by virtue of what he did and was all along even though he had not even an inkling of it. The murderer, his victim and their mother come into contact with a value different in kind from anything we would include in psychology of human nature that was not itself morally informed. These are all matters I have emphasised in my work.

What absolute tosh. But much beloved by the chicken factory hating Sandalista Set.



PASSION AND HISTORY



It is 1154 and Henry Plantagenet avenges his family honour by taking back the English throne. The kingdom he inherits is impoverished, and lawless. With his beautiful and indomitable Eleanor of Aquitaine, this golden couple crush rebellious barons and restore England's prestige and glory. However, an equally ambitious financial magician is needed to restore the royal treasury. Opportunistic Thomas Becket answers the call, using his appointment of Chancellor to fill not only the King's coffers but also his own. In a dance of ambition, vengeance and forbidden passions, Henry, his Queen and the Chancellor fight for political power and control. Hear Blanche D'Alpuget explain the power and passion that ruled England in the twelfth century.

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Internationally acclaimed author, most recently of *The Lion Rampant* in conversation with **STEPHANIE DOWRICK** author & social activist

DATE: Tuesday 10 February 2015
**Book from 26 Jan

TIME: 5.30 for 6pm

VENUE: The Gallipoli Club, 12 Loftus Street (between Bridge Street & Alfred Street), Sydney **BAR OPENS AT 5 PM - LIGHT REFRESHMENTS**

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SPEAKER: ANNABEL CRABB (Political journalist & commentator; author most recently of *The Wife Drought*.)
DATE: Wednesday 28 January 2015 **Book from 14 Jan** **TIME:** 5.30 for 6pm
ASSOCIATES & 1 ASSOCIATE GUEST ONLY
TOPIC: The Wife Drought
VENUE: The Gallipoli Club, 12 Loftus Street (between Bridge Street & Alfred Street), Sydney
BAR OPENS AT 5 PM - LIGHT REFRESHMENTS

SPEAKER: THE HON. DOMINIC PERROTTET MP (NSW Minister for Finance & Services)
DATE: Thursday 5 February 2015 **Book from 21 Jan** **TIME:** 5.30 for 6pm
TOPIC: To be advised
VENUE: The Gallipoli Club, 12 Loftus Street (between Bridge Street & Alfred Street), Sydney
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SPEAKERS: BLANCHE D'ALPUGET (Internationally acclaimed author, most recently of *The Lion Rampant*) in conversation with
STEPHANIE DOWRICK (author & social activist)
DATE: Tuesday 10 February 2015 **Book from 26 Jan** **TIME:** 5.30 for 6pm
TOPIC: Passion and History
VENUE: The Gallipoli Club, 12 Loftus Street (between Bridge Street & Alfred Street), Sydney
BAR OPENS AT 5 PM - LIGHT REFRESHMENTS

SPEAKER: PROFESSOR DAVID HORNER (Professor of Australian defence history, ANU's Strategic & Defence Studies Centre; author most recently of *The Spy Catchers – the Official History of ASIO*.)
DATE: Tuesday 17 February 2015 **Book from 3 Feb** **TIME:** 5.30 for 6pm
TOPIC: Telling the Secrets – Writing the Official History of ASIO
VENUE: The Gallipoli Club, 12 Loftus Street (between Bridge Street & Alfred Street), Sydney
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SPEAKERS: WENDY McCARTHY AO (Chair, Headspace),
MATT NOFFS (Founder of the Street University),
LANE HINCHCLIFFE (Managing Director & Program Co-ordinator of Project 15),
DAVID COLE (Founder, The Balanu Foundation)
DATE: Tuesday 10 March 2015 **Bookings from 24 Feb** **[NOTE TIME] TIME:** 5.00 for 5.30pm
TOPIC: Our Troubled Youth – Some Answers
VENUE: The Gallipoli Club, 12 Loftus Street (between Bridge Street & Alfred Street), Sydney
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