**School of Media, Culture and Creative Arts**

**Department of Journalism**

**Curtin's Circus: The Prime Minister and Canberra News Correspondents, 1941-1945**

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**Doctor of Philosophy**

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## Declaration

To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgment has been made.

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university.

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# Abstract

While the Australian wartime Prime Minister, John Curtin, has been the subject of intensive biographical and historical material, particularly during World War II, very few publications have focused on his relationships with journalists. Certainly, there is a distinct absence of a comprehensive study of his mass media strategies that would give us a detailed insight into his leadership in a critical period. Major forces converged with the commencement of another global war, the rapid expansion of relatively new radio and film industries, along with the appointment as prime minister of a skilful Labor communicator, well-known for his passionately anti-conscription views during World War I.

This thesis investigates Curtin's success in persuading the predominantly conservative news media to promote his wartime views. First, it identifies the prime minister's mass media strategies to influence the Canberra Parliamentary Press Gallery journalists and their editors to accept his wartime policies and portray them positively in the media.

The thesis argues that Curtin revealed a genius for initiating, developing and overseeing mass media strategies that made the best use of the latest technology to persuade journalists to communicate his government's policies. In doing so, he extended the Australian public sphere, and his impact on political communications remains evident today. Curtin also bestowed a permanent legacy to benefit the parliamentary press gallery, contributing to our understanding of contemporary political journalism.

# Curtin's Circus: The Prime Minister and Canberra News Correspondents, 1941-1945



John Curtin speaks with federal press gallery journalists, including Joseph Alexander of *The Herald* (right, with glasses and folded arms), and press secretary, Don Rodgers (far right), circa 1945. Courtesy of the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library (JCPML acc. no. 00376/2).

# Contents

**Part II: Mass news media and political agenda setting: a case study of**

**John Curtin, 1941-1945**

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**Chapter 7**

**Figure 14**

Page 287: William Mahony, "Get Together, Mr. Curtin", *The Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks,* no. 3, 8 January 1943.

**Figure 15**

Page 288: (Anon.), "Curtin In Best Position To Judge Nation's Requirements", *The Daily Mirror*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks,* no. 3, 14 January 1943.

**Figure 16**

Page 299: William Mahony, "We'll Hang Out Our Washing On The – Brisbane Line", *The Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks,* no. 3, 24 June 1943.

**Figure 17**

Page 300: George Edmond Finey, "The Road Back", *The Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 3, 25 June 1943.

**Figure 18**

Page 303: Stuart Peterson, "Today's Peterson …. Price One Vote", *The Sun*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 3, 5 July 1943.

**Figure 19**

Page 313 (top): (Anon.), "Knockout Scene From The Sensation Film Serial 'Alone We Did It.'", *The Bulletin*, cited in *Scrapbooks,* no. 3, 23 June 1943.

**Figure 20**

Page 313 (below): Stuart Peterson, "Today's Peterson …. Key Of Destiny", *The Sun*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 3, 24 August 1943.

**Figure 21**

Page 315: (Anon.), "Curtin and the guest of honor", *The Sun*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 3, 5 September 1943.

**Figure 22**

Page 317: (Anon.), "Press Visitors From Canada", *The Herald*, Melbourne, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 3, 15 November 1943.

**Chapter 8**

**Figure 23**

Page 333: Norm Rice, "Look, Bert; and no Yanks about!", *The Bulletin*, 23 December 1942, retrieved on 11 February 2010 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/education/cartoonpd/index.html>.

**Figure 24**

Page 338: William Mahony, "Personal Representative", *The Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 4, JCPML acc. no. 00297/4, 21 April 1944.

**Figure 25**

Page 345: John Curtin speaks to British radio listeners in 1944. This photograph is courtesy of the State Library of Western Australia, The Battye Library, records of the J S Battye Library of West Australian History, Perth, BA499/22, 53436P, 1944.

## Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| AAP | Australian Associated Press |
| ABC | Australian Broadcasting Commission (1932 - June 1983) |
| | Australian Broadcasting Corporation (1 July 1983 - present) |
| AIF | Australian Imperial Force |
| AJA | Australian Journalists' Association |
| ALP | Australian Labor Party |
| AWC | Advisory War Council |
| BBC | British Broadcasting Corporation |
| DLP | Democratic Labor Party |
| DOI | Department of Information |
| FDR | Franklin Delano Roosevelt |
| LPA | Liberal Party of Australia |
| MP | Member of the Parliament |
| NSW | New South Wales |
| RAAF | Royal Australian Air Force |
| RAN | Royal Australian Navy |
| SA | South Australia |
| UAP | United Australia Party |
| UK | United Kingdom |
| US | United States of America |
| WA | Western Australia |

**Part 1: Global media theories and historical background**

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

This thesis aims to produce the first systematic study of John Curtin's skills in initiating the political uses of the media, journalism and mass communication that defined his prime ministerial and war leadership. For this purpose, the study sets out to answer the following research question: how successful was Curtin in persuading the predominantly conservative news media to promote his wartime views, and to what effect were the strategies that he employed? Media scholars, such as Henry Mayer[1] and Neville Petersen,[2] refer to the Australian press and radio services as being mostly conservative during the era of World War II from 1939 to 1945 (hereafter the war). Yet traditional "Left-Right" descriptions of the political party system can be inadequate to explain why news media publishers choose to endorse or to campaign against a prime minister.[3] Historical analyses hitherto have not elucidated how Curtin, as an Australian Labor Party (ALP) prime minister,[4] was able

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[1] Henry Mayer, *The Press in Australia* [hereafter *The press*], Lansdowne Press, Melbourne, 1968, p. 27.

[2] Neville Petersen, *News Not Views: The ABC, the Press, & Politics 1932-1947* [hereafter *News not views*], Hale & Iremonger, Sydney, 1993, p. 130.

[3] David Charnock and Peter Ellis, "The Structure of the Australian Party System and its Strategic Consequences", *Australian Journal of Political Science,* vol. 38, no. 3, November 2003, pp. 423-427; Franz Oswald, "Soft Balancing Between Friends: Transforming Transatlantic Relations", *Debatte: Journal of Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe*, vol. 14, no. 2, August 2006, pp. 158-159; Rodney Tiffen, *News & Power* [hereafter *News*], Allen & Unwin, Sydney, Wellington, London and Boston, 1989.
The authors' names will be cited in the same way as they appear in the texts. Some authors used slightly different variations of their names in multiple texts such as: Clem Lloyd and C.J. Lloyd; Stephen Brent Mickler and Steve Mickler; Rodney Tiffen and Rod Tiffen. Whenever possible, the place of publication has been included in the references of this thesis. Occasionally the place of publication has not been specified in the case of some online and print sources.

[4] Throughout this thesis, the term "labour" (using British spelling) has been used to describe the broader movement comprising the ALP, unions, Trades and Labour Councils and left wing groups such as socialists. The term 'Labor' (using American spelling) is used to refer to the Australian Labor Party. The ALP adopted American spelling for its name from the beginning. See Bobbie Oliver, "Shaping the Nation: John Curtin and Australia" [hereafter "Shaping the nation"], John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library [hereafter JCPML], Bentley, 2001, footnote 2, retrieved on 1 December 2010 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/shapingthenation/essay/footnotes.html>.

to generate favourable news and marshal his electoral popularity as a means to achieve a mandate to influence the media, a mandate that journalists felt obliged to respect.  He won 66.9 per cent of the votes in his electorate of Fremantle, Western Australia, in 1943 and the ALP achieved its greatest federal election victory at the time.[5]  This study will refer throughout to Curtin's journalism strategies as well as his use of wider mass media strategies and to a significant extent, these categories overlap.  The thesis argues that he displayed a genius for initiating, developing and overseeing innovative mass communication strategies that made the best use of the latest media technology to persuade journalists to promote his foreign policies and military decisions.

After working as a labour newspaper editor and writer, Curtin was appointed to be the prime minister on 7 October 1941 and retained this position until his untimely death on 5 July 1945.  He was born in the Victorian mining town of Creswick on 8 January 1885 and, due to his family's unfortunate financial circumstances, he left school by the age of 14 to take jobs as a "printer's devil", office cleaner, messenger and copy boy for newspapers in Melbourne, Victoria.[6] When he was *The Timber Worker* editor in Melbourne from 1913 to 1915, journalists from the city's weekly *Labor Call* viewed him as being one of their local movement's "most brilliant expositors".[7]  Later colleagues described him as "a rallying point when the fight was hardest, and an inspiration at all times", when he

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[5] See David Black, "Curtin as an Election Leader", JCPML, Bentley, 2008, retrieved on 28 January 2009 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/electionleader/1943/1943_outcome.html>; Lesley Carman-Brown, "Parliamentary Power", JCPML, Bentley, 2004, retrieved on 28 January 2009 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/aspirations/parliament.html>; Bobbie Oliver, *Unity is Strength: A History of the Australian Labor Party and the Trades and Labor Council in Western Australia, 1899-1999* [hereafter *Unity is strength*], API Network, Bentley, 2003, pp. 167-169.

[6] Cited in David Black (ed.), *In His Own Words: John Curtin's Speeches and Writings* [hereafter *In his own words*], Paradigm Books Curtin University, Bentley, 1995, p. 1; Ron Davidson, "John Curtin: From Revolutionary Firebrand to Journalist in Spirit", JCPML, Bentley, 2000, retrieved on 2 May 2008 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/journalist>.

[7] Cited in Black, *In his own words*, p. 16.  Also see Australian Newspaper History Group, *Australian Newspaper History Group Newsletter*, no. 3, January 2000, p. 7, retrieved on 5 December 2010 at <espace.library.uq.edu.au/eserv/UQ:11342/anjh03.pdf>.

was *The Westralian Worker* editor in Perth, WA, from 1917 to 1928.[8]  In Perth, he was also the Australian Journalists' Association (AJA) Western Australian District Committee president.  Along with writing lead editorials, Curtin had been pursuing intermittently a federal parliamentary seat since 1914, when he became the ALP's endorsed candidate for the Victorian seat of Balaclava.  Although he was not elected at the time, he succeeded in halving the Liberal Party majority of the previous year.  After moving to WA, he won the federal electorate of Fremantle in 1928, but was defeated in 1931 and returned to journalism.  He won the Fremantle seat back in 1934 and was elected to be the Labor Party's national leader the following year.[9]  When Curtin began his prime ministership at the age of 56, Australia had been fighting for more than two years alongside Great Britain and other Allied nations against Nazi Germany and the associated Axis powers.  After he had served in this position for about two months, Japan bombed the United States naval base of Pearl Harbour, Hawaii, and Curtin delivered a national radio broadcast to make Australia's first declaration of war against another country in December 1941.  Thus the former hard-hitting, anti-conscription journalist began developing his use of the mass media to enlist support for Australia's role in global battles until his death, about a month before Japan's surrender.

This particularity might be expected to have solicited the interest of researchers in media and political studies.  Yet there are no previous published findings on the specific character of his mass communication strategies to secure the support of the self-proclaimed "circus" of senior Canberra Parliamentary Press Gallery journalists.  *The Herald* Canberra wartime bureau head, Joseph Alexander, described himself as a member of the "travelling circus which went everywhere with

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[8] (Anon.), "'The Worker' Loses Jack Curtin For Movement's Greater Welfare", *The Westralian Worker*, Perth, cited in JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00984/243, 21 December 1928, p. 1.
[9] Black, *In his own words*, pp. 13, 77-122.

Curtin, saw him twice a day and shared his confidence to an extent previously unknown in the history of the press in Australia".[10]  Certainly, there is a distinct absence of a comprehensive study of his mass media strategies that would give us a detailed insight into his leadership in a critical period.  This was a period in which major forces converged with the commencement of another global war, the rapid expansion of relatively new radio and film industries, along with the appointment as prime minister of a skilful Labor communicator, well-known for his passionately anti-conscription views during World War I.[11]  Contrary to some scholars' views that the 1940s press gallery was mainly "hostile" and "anti-labour",[12] this thesis argues that Curtin gained the respect of many media professionals, particularly news

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[10] Joseph A. Alexander, interviewed by Mel Pratt, [hereafter "Alexander interview"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00551, 2 March 1971, transcript np.  Some authors have written of Curtin's confidential press briefings: Michelle Grattan, "The Prime Minister and the Press: A Study in Intimacy" [hereafter "The prime minister and the press"], in David Black (ed.), *John Curtin's Legacy: A series of public lectures from the JCPML,* JCPML, Perth, 2000, pp. 38-48; C.J. Lloyd, *Parliament And The Press: The Federal Parliamentary Press Gallery 1901-88* [hereafter *Parliament and the press*]*,* Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1988, pp. 125-157; Clem Lloyd and Richard Hall (eds), *Backroom Briefings: John Curtin's war* [hereafter *Backroom briefings*], National Library of Australia [hereafter NLA], Canberra, 1997; Lloyd Ross, *John Curtin: A Biography* [hereafter *A Curtin biography*], Macmillan Publishing Company*,* South Melbourne, 1977, p. 243; Geoffrey Serle, *For Australia and Labor: Prime Minister John Curtin* [hereafter *Australia and Labor*], JCPML, Bentley, 1998, p. 35.

[11] Other scholars have referred to Curtin's journalism relations.  Bridget Griffen-Foley, *The house of Packer: the making of a media empire* [hereafter *The house of Packer*], Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, 1999, p. 123; Petersen, *News not views*, pp. 163-166; R.M. Younger, *Keith Murdoch: Founder of a media empire* [hereafter *Keith Murdoch*], HarperCollins*Publishers*, Pymble, 2003, pp. 151-152.

[12] Mayer, *The press*, p. 27; Petersen, *News not views,* p. 130.

correspondents,[13] whose oral histories and autobiographies have been largely overlooked by previous researchers.[14]

In their memoirs, several wartime senior journalists, who identified themselves as representing "conservative" and "right-leaning" media companies, recalled how they changed their views about Labor and decided to vote for the ALP in 1943 because they admired Curtin's leadership including his use of the media.[15] For example, Edgar George Holt remembered that as a young *Argus* newspaper correspondent in 1929, he and "the whole of the Australian Press" were "totally committed" to Prime Minister Stanley Melbourne Bruce's Nationalist Party-Country Party coalition government, which was subsequently defeated by the ALP in the election of the same year. Holt said later as *The Daily Telegraph* chief leader (editorial) writer, he became "quite strong as a private citizen, private individual, in support of the Labor Party during the period of John Curtin". Afterwards Holt joined the Liberal Party, serving as its public relations director from 1950 to 1972 and then

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[13] Australian wartime journalists praised Curtin including: Alexander, "Alexander interview"; Theodor Charles Bray, interviewed by Mel Pratt [hereafter "Bray interview"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00512, 5 March 1971, transcript np; Frank Chamberlain, interviewed by Mel Pratt [hereafter "Chamberlain interview"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00552, August 1972-January 1973, transcript np; John Commins, interviewed by Mel Pratt [hereafter "Commins interview"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01092/1, 22-26 May 1971, transcript np; Harold Cox, interviewed by Mel Pratt [hereafter "Cox interview"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01060/1, 6 April 1973, transcript np; Frank Davidson, interviewed by Isla Macphail [hereafter "Davidson interview"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00127/1, 24 January 1996. transcript np; Irvine Douglas, interviewed by Mel Pratt [hereafter "Douglas interview"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01061/1, 15-19 June 1972, transcript np; Peter Ewing, interviewed by Bill Bunbury [hereafter "Ewing interview"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00492/2, 15 December 1999, transcript np; Allan Fraser, interviewed by Mel Pratt [hereafter "Fraser interview"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00550, August 1972–January 1973, transcript np; Edgar George Holt, interviewed by Mel Pratt [hereafter "Holt interview"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01059, 23 May 1978, transcript np; Alan D. Reid, interviewed by Mel Pratt [hereafter "Reid interview"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00501, 4 October 1972 and 28 February 1973, transcript np; Don Whitington, *Strive to be Fair: An Unfinished Biography* [hereafter *Strive to be fair*], Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1977, p. 82.

[14] In their history books, Clem J. Lloyd and Bob Wurth referred to some of these primary sources, but not for the purpose of ascertaining Curtin's prime ministerial mass media strategies. See Lloyd, *Parliament and the press,* pp. 125-157; Bob Wurth, *Saving Australia: Curtin's secret peace with Japan* [hereafter *Saving Australia*]*,* Lothian Books, South Melbourne, 2006, pp. 146, 158-159.

[15] Alexander, "Alexander interview"; Holt, "Holt interview"; Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, pp. 55, 59, 82.

as its senior political adviser.[16]  Holt's journalism colleague, Joseph Alexander, recalled thinking that in 1929, the new Labor Prime Minister, James Scullin, "was not the man" to lead the country after his party's election victory.  Yet he admired Curtin as "the greatest" prime minister.[17]  In his autobiography, Don Whitington wrote of his dislike for the harsh working conditions and meagre reporters' wages at the *Labor Daily* in the 1930s;[18] but later as *The Daily Telegraph* Canberra bureau head, he viewed Curtin as "the best Prime Minister Australia had since Federation".[19]  Even Whitington's mother "was prepared to vote Labor, [for] the first time in her life".[20]  These reminiscences suggested that the three journalists had not shown any previous allegiance to the ALP, while party political consideration did not hinder them from developing close professional relations with Curtin.

Neither did the political conservatism of the three journalists' employers, Sir Keith Murdoch and Frank Packer,[21] disincline them to praise Curtin at times during national crises.  For example, Murdoch published a *Herald* article, praising Curtin's "suave" manner, his "apt" and "correct" quotations, as well as his "graceful" sentences, as he was about to be sworn in as the new prime minister on 7 October 1941.[22]  Curtin's prime ministerial predecessor, Arthur Fadden, was the leader of the Country Party and had been relying on the United Australia Party (UAP) and two independent politicians to retain power.  When the independent members voted with the Labor opposition to reject Fadden's budget on 3 October, he advised the Governor-General, Lord Gowrie, that Curtin should be commissioned as the prime

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[16] Holt, "Holt interview".

[17] Alexander, "Alexander interview".

[18] Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, pp. 55, 59.

[19] Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, p. 82.

[20] Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, p. 84.

[21] Bridget Griffen-Foley, "Political opinion polling and the professionalization of public relations: Keith Murdoch, Robert Menzies, and the Liberal Party of Australia" [hereafter "Political opinion polling"], *Australian Journalism Review,* vol. 24, no. 1, 2002, p. 43; David McKnight, "Book Review: Bridget Griffen-Foley*, Sir Frank Packer, The Young Master*" (Bridget Griffen-Foley), *Labour History,* no. 82, November 2002, p. 235.

[22] Allan W. Dawes, "Men You Should Know About" [hereafter "Men you should know about"], *The Herald*, Melbourne, cited in *Scrapbooks compiled by the Prime Minister's Office*, [hereafter *Scrapbooks*], JCPML, Bentley, no. 1, JCPML acc. no. 00297/1, 6 October 1941.

minister.  At the time a *Herald* writer, Allan W. Dawes, remarked to his readers that:

> It is easier to be friends with John Curtin, I think, than with almost any other
> member of the Federal Parliament … He is a hard reader and an indefatigable
> worker.[23]

In 1942 Curtin seconded Packer, *The Daily Telegraph* owner, to be the director of
personnel of the newly created Allied Works Council, which was responsible for
carrying out all works required for war purposes by the Allied forces in Australia.
Packer's business partner, Edward Granville Theodore, became the director-general
of the Council.[24]  Theodore had been the federal Labor treasurer from 1929 to 1930,
when Curtin was a backbencher in the parliament.  These findings indicated that as
the prime minister, Curtin's associations with the media owners were more
multifaceted than a uniformly "hostile" relationship allows for.

In fact, some journalists developed strong links to the ALP, the left-wing
*Labor Daily* newspaper and unions including the AJA.  Between 1929 and 1940,
about ten per cent of the Federal Labor MPs had been journalists.  Curtin was not the
first prime minister to have been a newsman; his ALP predecessor and close friend,
Scullin, was the editor of the Ballarat *Echo.*  Also John Christian Watson, the Labor
Prime Minister for only four months in 1904, had been a newspaper compositor for
the *Australian Star.*  Alfred Deakin wrote for London's *Morning Post* before
becoming a non-Labor Prime Minister. [25]  When a labour newspaper editor and the
AJA's WA district president, Curtin arranged the nation's first university extension
classes for journalists.  Conducted by Walter Murdoch, Professor of English and
Literature at The University of Western Australia, the lecture series in 1919 focused
on the English language, politics and economic history.  This program resulted in the

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[23] Dawes, "Men you should know about".
[24] Bridget Griffen-Foley, "Packer, Sir Douglas Frank Hewson (1906 – 1974)" [hereafter
"Frank Packer"], *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, vol. 15,
2000, pp. 553-556, retrieved on 21 January 2009 at
<http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A150644b.htm>; National Archives of Australia
[hereafter NAA], "Fact sheet 181 – Civil Constructional Corps records held in Perth",
Canberra, 2010, retrieved on 25 November 2010 at <http://www.naa.gov.au/about-
us/publications/fact-sheets/fs181.aspx>.
[25] Mayer, *The press*, p. 190.

introduction of a Diploma in Journalism.[26]  Similar courses were adopted at

Queensland and Melbourne universities in 1921.[27]  Of the national leaders, Curtin

seemed to be one of the most prominent advocates for the professionalisation of

journalism.

This thesis argues that Curtin developed mutually beneficial interactions with

the news media of major democratic Allied nations.  With a crusading zeal, he strove

to enlist journalists' support for Australia's fight against the threats of Axis terrorism,

fascist aggression and Nazism.[28]  During his international mission to confer with

several Allied leaders in 1944, he talked with US correspondents at San Francisco's

Fairmont Hotel on 19 April to explain Australia's struggles.  Curtin declared to the

reporters:

> No country in the world has made a military effort in ratio to men and
> economic resources greater than Australia.  We have suffered great strains
> and great stresses more than any country on the Allied side.[29]

As he discussed Australia's "great strains and great stresses", he seemed to be

speaking comparatively about the Allied democracies' military services and national

populations.  About one out of every seven Australians participated in military

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[26] Black, *In his own words*, p. 1; John Edwards, *Curtin's gift: Reinterpreting Australia's greatest prime minister* [hereafter *Curtin's gift*], Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2005, p. 19; Ross, *A Curtin biography,* p. 77; Clem Lloyd, *Profession: Journalist* [hereafter *Journalist*], Hale & Iremonger, Sydney, 1985, pp. 165-167.

[27] Lloyd, *Journalist,* pp. 165-167.

[28] This discussion of Curtin's wartime leadership has been based on the following sources: David Black, "The Art of the Possible: Creating an independent Australian foreign policy 1941-1945", JCPML, Bentley, 2004, retrieved on 4 June 2008 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/artofthepossible/printessay.html>; Christopher Hubbard, *An Australian Introduction to International Relations* [hereafter *International relations*], Pearson Education Australia, Frenchs Forest, 2008, p. 147; Oliver, "Shaping the nation".

[29] Heather Campbell, "Diary of a Labour Man" [hereafter "Diary"] for 19 April 1944, JCPML, Bentley, 2008, retrieved on 11 February 2010 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/diary/primeminister/1944.html>; John Curtin, "Review Of War Commitments: Prime Minister's Statements", *Digest of Decisions and Announcements and Important Speeches by the Prime Minister (Right Hon. John Curtin)* [hereafter *DDA*], no. 81, 19 April 1944, p. 18.

service,[30] contrasting with approximately one in every ten Britons,[31] and about one out of every 12 Canadians[32] and Americans (see Appendix 1).[33]  At the San Francisco media conference, Curtin spent 90 minutes with news correspondents, including press writers, photographers and film teams, estimated to have numbered between 41 people and 66 people.[34]  He "joked easily" with reporters, engaged in an "off-the-record" discussion and journalists applauded his answer to a question.  A prominent Columbia Broadcasting System commentator, William "Wynter" (Winter), was quoted as saying Curtin's interview "was the most comprehensive ever held in San Francisco" because his answers "were the frankest we have ever had".[35]  This observation was supported by the British Consul-General in San Francisco, Godfrey

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[30] See John Curtin, "Prime Minister's Review, May, 1944", *DDA*, no. 81, 4 May 1944, p. 30; NAA, "Boer War to Vietnam", Canberra, 2010, retrieved on 6 June 2010 at <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/explore/defence/conflicts.aspx#section3>; Parliamentary Library, "Anzac Day 2010", Canberra, 1 April 2010, retrieved on 29 May 2010 at <http://www.aph.gov.au/library/pubs/anzac/stats.htm>.

[31] This figure includes England, Scotland and Wales, but not neutral wartime Ireland.  See Joe Hicks and Grahame Allen, "A Century of Change: Trends in UK statistics since 1900", research paper 99/111, House of Commons Library, London, 21 December 2009, pp. 6, 16, retrieved on 27 July 2010 at <www.parliament.uk/commons/lib/research/rp99/rp99-111.pdf>.

[32] Statistics Canada, "Estimated population of Canada, 1605 to present", Ottawa, 2009, retrieved on 6 June 2010 at <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/98-187-x/4151287-eng.htm#table2>; Veteran Affairs Canada, "Canada and the Second World War 1939-1945", Ottawa, 1998, retrieved on 6 June 2010 at <http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/remembers/sub.cfm?source=history/secondwar/canada2/intro>.

[33] Kenneth Paul O'Brien and Lynn Hudson Parsons, "Introduction: The Home-Front War", in Kenneth Paul O'Brien and Lynn Hudson Parsons (eds), *The Home-Front War: World War II and American Society*, Greenwood Press, Westport, 1995, p. 4; U.S. Census Bureau, "Historical National Population Estimates: July 1, 1900 to July 1, 1999", Washington DC, 28 June 2000, retrieved on 29 May 2010 at <www.census.gov/popest/archives/1990s/popclockest.txt>.

[34] Great Britain Foreign Office, "Political situation: consular reports, 1944" [hereafter "Political situation"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00779/13, 28 April 1944, pp. 1-3; Theo Moody, "Triumph For Mr Curtin At Press Talk" [hereafter "Triumph for Curtin"], *The Argus*, Melbourne, 21 April 1944, p. 1.

[35] Moody, "Triumph for Curtin", p. 1.  This *Argus* article referred to "William Wynter".  Yet the correct spelling was Winter, according to the *Los Angeles Times.*  See Myrna Oliver, "William Winter: Foreign Affairs Commentator", *Los Angeles Times*, Los Angeles, 9 November 1999, retrieved on 10 June 2010 at <http://articles.latimes.com/1999/nov/09/news/mn-31605>.

Fisher,[36] as well as the reports in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Star*.[37] As Curtin talked openly with journalists in an egalitarian manner, they published favourable news about his "energy and endurance"[38] to defeat the Axis powers.

Since major wars have "a special place in the news", creating mass audiences and initiating modern reporting techniques,[39] political leaders should have a "deep, intimate involvement" in the creation of media reports about their nations' roles in global conflicts.[40] Curtin developed the use of the relatively new media of direct national and international radio broadcasts and wartime newsreels.[41] He appointed Australia's first full-time prime ministerial press secretary, Donald (Don) Kilgour Rodgers, and, as a result, journalists viewed these new media forms as a major source of official news and background information about the nation's role in the war.[42] As this thesis argues, Curtin's ability to work closely with journalists to promote his foreign policies provides insights into how contemporary democratic governments may manage information needs during sensitive international conflicts.

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[36] Curtin's media conference was praised in a consular report sent by "Consul-General Fisher (San Francisco)".  A 1944 *Time* magazine report referred to Godfrey Fisher as the British Consul-General in San Francisco.  See (Anon.), "Prayer", *Time*, New York, 29 May 1944, retrieved on 30 November 2010 at <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,850888,00.html>; Great Britain Foreign Office, "Political situation", pp. 1-3.

[37] (Anon.), "Curtin, In Capital, Is Greeted by Hull; Lord Halifax Also Welcomes Australian Leader, Here For War Conferences", *The New York Times*, New York, 24 April 1944, p. 11; (Anon.), "Hail Curtin's Reception; Australians Are Gratified by U.S. Greeting of Prime Minister" [hereafter "Hail Curtin's reception"], *The New York Times*, New York, 22 April 1944, p. 7; Lawrence E. Davies, "Curtin On Coast; To See Roosevelt" [hereafter "Curtin on coast"], *The New York Times*, New York, 20 April 1944, p. 3.

[38] Cited in (Anon.), "Australia: Journey Into the World", *Time*, New York, 24 April 1944, retrieved on 30 November 2010 at <http://www.time.com/time/covers/0,16641,19440424,00.html>.  Positive headlines about this media conference also appeared in: (Anon.), "Hail Curtin's reception", p. 7; Davies, "Curtin on coast", p. 3; Moody, "Triumph for Curtin", p. 1.

[39] Jeremy Tunstall, *Journalists at work* [hereafter *Journalists*], Constable, London, 1971, p. 20.

[40] Richard V. Ericson, Patricia M. Baranek and Janet B. L. Chan, *Visualizing Deviance: A Study of News Organizations* [hereafter *Visualizing deviance*], Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1987, p. 39.

[41] For example, (Anon.) "Publicity: Relations with America: Australia Expands", *The Canberra Times,* Canberra, 31 October 1941, p. 4; John Curtin, "Relations with America" [hereafter "American relations"], *DDA*, no. 3, JCPML acc. no. 00110/8, 30 October 1941, pp. 13-14 (the online page numbers have been cited).

[42] Donald Kilgour Rodgers, interviewed by Mel Pratt [hereafter "Rodgers interview"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00497, 29 April 1971, transcript np.

Successive Australian prime ministers have sought public support for providing direct military assistance in foreign battles to strengthen the nation's reputation as a loyal ally of Britain and the US.  For example, Australia joined Britain's fight against a "communist insurgency" in the Malayan Emergency (1950-1960).[43]  Australia's support of US-led military interventions includes the Korean War (1950-1953),[44] the Vietnam War (1962-1975)[45] and the more recent coalition operations against terrorism in Afghanistan (11 October 2001 to the present)[46] and Iraq (16 July 2003 to the present).[47]  This thesis asserts that Curtin's mass communication strategies provide lessons for contemporary democratic leaders, particularly when they are using the media to explain their foreign policy goals to public audiences.

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[43] The Malayan government officially declared the Emergency was over on 31 July 1960, although Australia's military role did not end until 1963.  Seven thousand Australian Army personnel enlisted in this conflict (there were not recorded statistics for the nation's navy and air force).  Thirty-nine Australian servicemen were killed in Malaya during this time.  Australian War Memorial [hereafter AWM], "Australians at war: casualties as a result of service with Australian units" [hereafter "Australians at war"], Canberra, 2010, retrieved on 20 November 2010 at <http://www.awm.gov.au/research/infosheets/war_casualties.asp>; AWM, "Malayan Emergency, 1950-60", Canberra, 2010, retrieved on 20 November 2010 at <http://www.awm.gov.au/atwar/emergency.asp>; Jeffrey Grey, *A Military History of Australia* [hereafter *Military history*], Cambridge University Press, Port Melbourne, third edition, 2008, p. 208.

[44] In the three years of fighting, 17,164 Australian army, air force and navy personnel enlisted in this war.  Of these, 339 Australians were killed.  AWM, "Australians at war"; AWM, "Korean War (1950-53)", Canberra, 2010, retrieved on 20 November 2010 at <http://www.awm.gov.au/atwar/korea.asp>.

[45] Almost 60,000 Australians, including ground troops, air force and navy personnel, served in Vietnam; 521 died as a result of the war and over 3,000 were wounded.  AWM, "Vietnam War (1962-75)", Canberra, 2010, retrieved on 25 November 2010 at <http://www.awm.gov.au/atwar/vietnam.asp>.

[46] Australia's military contribution includes about 1,550 Defence Force personnel, deployed in Afghanistan.  According to the Australian War Memorial on 4 March 2011, some 23 Australians had been killed while serving with the nation's units in Afghanistan.  Australian Government Department of Defence, "Australia's Commitment In Afghanistan", Canberra, October 2010, retrieved on 20 November 2010 at <http://www.defence.gov.au/op/afghanistan/info/factsheet.htm>; AWM, "Encyclopedia: Deaths as a result of service with Australian units", Canberra, 2011, retrieved on 4 March 2011 at <http://www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/war_casualties.asp>.

[47] The Australian Government withdrew 550 troops from southern Iraq in 2008.  About 35 Australian defence personnel are currently deployed in Iraq.  Two of the nation's troops died during this conflict.  Australian Government Department of Defence, "Iraq troop numbers clarified", Canberra, 2010, retrieved on 20 November 2010 at <http://www.defence.gov.au/defenceblog/2008/0128_0203.htm>; Australian Government Department of Defence, "Operation Kruger", Canberra, 2010, retrieved on 20 November 2010 at <http://www.defence.gov.au/op/iraq/index.htm>; AWM, "Australians at war".

**Literature review**

This section reviews all of the key literature informing this thesis.  First, I situate the study in the field of historical literature about Curtin, particularly pertaining to his dealings with press journalists in Australia's liberal democratic society.  Secondly, I discuss the theoretical and conceptual literature on government-media relations that inform this thesis.  These theories help to establish a critical framework within which to interpret and understand the interactions between Curtin and news organisations in the wider historical, political and social contexts of the expanding mass media.  The latter part of this section will engage with these theories because they will inform the thesis' analysis of Curtin's prime ministerial media strategies.

While Curtin has been the subject of intensive biographical and historical material, particularly concerning his wartime leadership,[48] very few publications have focused on his relationships with journalists, radio broadcasts and film strategies.  When the political scientist, Henry Mayer, published his history of Australian newspaper journalism in 1964, an academic reviewer commended his "immensely valuable contribution" to "a scarcely touched field of serious study";[49] however, Mayer made only one brief reference to Curtin in his book.[50]  The history of journalism, both in and outside of Australia, remains an under-studied field, because, it has been argued, there has been little interest in understanding the ideals,

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[48] For example, Black, *In his own words*; David Day, *John Curtin: A life* [hereafter *John Curtin*], HarperCollins*Publishers*, Sydney, 1999; John Edwards, *Curtin's gift*; Bobbie Oliver, "Fighting Labor's Battles: Conscription, the Great Depression, and Party Unity" [hereafter "Labor's battles"], JCPML, Bentley, 2010, retrieved on 14 November 2010 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/battles/index.html>; Oliver, "Shaping the nation"; Ross, *A Curtin biography*; Bob Wurth, *Saving Australia: Curtin's secret peace with Japan* [hereafter *Saving Australia*], Lothian Books, South Melbourne, 2006.
[49] W.J. Hudson, "Book review" (Henry Mayer), *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology*, vol. 1, no. 2, September 1965, p. 138.
[50] Mayer, *The press*, p. 190.

practices and mediating influences that shape the news and thus, our perceptions of the world.[51]

To understand how Curtin crafted journalism strategies to promote his foreign policies, this study uses historical and international relations publications that provide insights into the social, political and diplomatic challenges that he faced. Some scholars portray him as skilfully forging an improved alliance with the United States and leading Australia in an entirely new direction to becoming a fully independent nation, a significant shift from British imperial domination.[52]  Along with these texts about his foreign policies, many biographers have credited his achievements in defeating persistent Axis Japanese invasion threats to his strong political leadership and international relations acumen.[53]  While David Day and John Hirst remark on the historical tradition of elevating Curtin to the status of a hero and "the best Prime Minister", they also note that at the turn of the twenty-first century, "a few doubters" have disagreed with his Labor ideology.[54]  Furthermore, some authors have discussed whether the Australian Federal Government accepted too readily a subordinate role for the nation's military forces under the command of US

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[51] Ann Curthoys, "Introduction: Histories of Journalism", in Ann Curthoys and Julianne Schulz (eds), *Journalism: Print, Politics and Popular Culture*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1999, pp. 1-7; Bridget Griffen Foley, "In conversation with Bridget Griffen-Foley", *Global Media Journal*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2009, retrieved on 29 December 2010 at <http://www.commarts.uws.edu.au/gmjau/2009_3_1_toc.html>; Karin Wahl-Jorgensen and Thomas Hanitzsch, "Introduction: On Why and How We Should Do Journalism Studies", in Karin Wahl-Jorgensen and Thomas Hanitzsch (eds), *The Handbook of Journalism Studies*, Routledge, New York and Abingdon, 2009, p. 4.

[52] For example, Black, "The art of the possible"; Hubbard, *International relations*, p. 147; Oliver, "Shaping the nation".

[53] Alan Chester, *John Curtin* [hereafter *Curtin*], Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1943, pp. 177-184; H.C. Coombes, *John Curtin – A Consensus Prime Minister?* [hereafter *John Curtin*], The Australian National University, Canberra, 1984, pp. 3-15; Day, *John Curtin*, pp. 581-584; Edwards, *Curtin's gift,* pp. 157-160; Norman E. Lee, *John Curtin: Saviour of Australia* [hereafter *Saviour of Australia*]*,* Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1983, pp. 167-170.

[54] David Day, "Curtin as Hero", *The Sydney Papers,* vol. 12, no. 2, autumn 2000 [hereafter "Curtin as hero"], pp. 60-67; John Hirst, *Looking for Australia* [hereafter *Australia*], Black Inc., Melbourne, 2010, pp. 166-167, 197.

General Douglas MacArthur, following his arrival at his Melbourne base on 21 March 1942.[55]  The new alliance resulted in Australian social upheavals, particularly after Curtin succeeded in changing his party's anti-conscription policy, which he had endorsed as a World War I news editor, and then introducing the *Defence (Citizen Military Forces) Bill* in 1943.  Under this legislation, members of Australia's militia could be required to serve in any area of MacArthur's command in the South West Pacific Zone.[56]  Although the "Curtin halo" effect[57] appears in some biographies,[58] other historical and foreign policy texts[59] will be used from Chapters 6 to 9 to gain a more balanced assessment of how he presented the war, particularly regarding his inclusions and deliberate omissions of vital information in his press statements, radio broadcasts and newsreel commentaries.

Historians, political scientists and biographers briefly refer to Curtin's press and radio interactions; these authors provide a valuable glimpse into his communication strategies.  These books include biographies of Australian news owners, such as Sir Keith Murdoch[60] and Sir Frank Packer,[61] as well as histories

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[55] David Black, "Assessments of the Curtin-MacArthur relationship", JCPML, Bentley, 2006, retrieved on 12 May 2008 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/macarthur/assessment1.html>; Peter Edwards, "Curtin, MacArthur and 'the surrender of sovereignty': a historiographical assessment" [hereafter "The surrender of sovereignty"], *Australian Journal of International Affairs,* vol. 55, no. 2, 2001, pp.175-185; Peter Edwards, **"**Remembering 1942: Another look at Curtin and MacArthur", *2002 History Conference – Remembering 1942,* Canberra*,* 2002, retrieved on 31 March 2008 at
<http://www.awm.gov.au/events/conference/2002/edwards.htm>; Grey, *Military history,* pp. 177-178; Paul Hasluck, *The Government and the People, 1942-1945,* Australia in the War of 1939-45, Australian War Memorial and Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, series 4, vol. 2, 1970, p. 628; Hirst, *Australia*, pp. 172, 184, 190; David Horner, *Defence Supremo: Sir Frederick Shedden and the Making of Australian Defence Policy,* Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, 2000, p. 142; Peter Stanley, *Tarakan: An Australian Tragedy*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, 1997, pp. 1-2.
[56] Black, *In his own words*, pp. 214-218; Bobbie Oliver, *Peacemongers: Conscientious objectors to military service in Australia, 1911-1945*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, South Fremantle, 1997, pp. 84-86, 143-144; Oliver, *Unity is strength,* p. 166.
[57] Day, "Curtin as hero", pp. 60-67.
[58] Chester, *Curtin*; Lee, *Saviour of Australia.*
[59] For example, Black, *In his own words*; Grey, *A military history*; Oliver, *Unity is strength*; Wurth, *Saving Australia.*
[60] Younger, *Keith Murdoch*, pp. 151-152.
[61] Griffen-Foley, *The house of Packer,* p. 123.

about the expansion of the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC),[62]
commercial radio,[63] the Canberra Parliamentary Press Gallery[64] and the Australian
Journalists' Association (AJA).[65]  For example, Ian Ward and Leslie Finlay Crisp
have noted Curtin's early recognition of a shift from local political meetings to radio
broadcasts in the mid-1930s.[66]  During the 1943 election campaign, he became the
first party leader to deliver an election manifesto from Canberra through a radio
hook-up, as David Black describes.[67]  Some researchers have produced case-specific
studies on war reporting and journalism sub-cultures during twentieth-century
military conflicts; however, they do not specifically focus on Curtin's skill as a
media strategist.[68]  With respect to his press associations, John Edwards and Clem J.
Lloyd have remarked on his unusually warm relations with Canberra's senior
reporters;[69] some researchers refer to his occasional disappointments over the anti-
Labor attitudes of Murdoch and Packer.[70]  Lloyd commented that Curtin held twice-
daily, confidential news conferences that he timed to help reporters file news stories

[62] K.S. Inglis, *This is the ABC: The Australian Broadcasting Commission 1932-1983*
[hereafter *ABC*], Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1983, pp. 96, 99, 110-112, 117;
Neville Petersen, *News Not Views: The ABC, the Press, & Politics 1932-1947* [hereafter
*News not views*], Hale & Iremonger, Sydney, 1993, pp. 163-166.
[63] Ian Ward, "The early use of radio for political communication in Australia and Canada:
John Henry Austral, Mr Sage and the Man from Mars" [hereafter "The early use of radio"],
*Australian Journal of Politics and History,* vol. 45, no. 3, 1999, p. 322.
[64] Lloyd, *Parliament and the press*, pp. 125-157.
[65] Lloyd, *Journalist*, pp. 150, 156, 167, 202, 205, 210, 215, 218, 235.
[66] Ward, "The early use of radio", p. 322; L.F. Crisp, *The Australian Federal Labour Party
1901-1951,* Hale & Iremonger, Sydney, 1978, pp. 78, 88.  For his book title, Crisp used the
British spelling of "Labour".
[67] Black, *In his own words,* p. 226.
[68] For example, Rod Kirkpatrick has focused on the impact of the war on the Australian
provincial press.  See Rod Kirkpatrick, "War and lasting change: The battle for survival on
the provincial newspaper front", *ejournalist,* vol. 1, no. 2, 2001, pp. 1-12, retrieved on 29
June 2008 at <http://www.ejournalism.au.com/ejournalist/KIRK.PDF>.  Amanda Laugeson
has examined soldiers' military magazines during World War I in: Amanda Laugesen,
"Aussie magazine and the making of digger culture during the Great War*", National Library
of Australia News,* vol.14, no. 2, November 2003, pp. 15-18.  Fay Anderson and Richard
Trembath have investigated foreign correspondents from the Boer to Gulf Wars.  See Fay
Anderson and Richard Trembath, "The Greatness and Smallness of Their Story: Australian
War Correspondents in the Twentieth Century" [hereafter "Australian war correspondents"],
in S. Nolan (ed.), *When Journalism Meets History 2003*, Melbourne, RMIT Publishing,
2004, retrieved on 5 June 2008 at
<http://search.informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=818775115965463;res=E-
LIBRARY>.
[69] Edwards, *Curtin's gift,* pp. 19-21; Lloyd, *Parliament and the press,* p. 131.
[70] Denis Fitzgerald and Lesley Wallace, "Investigating John Curtin: The Research Papers of
Tom Fitzgerald", JCPML, Bentley, 2003, retrieved on 7 May 2008 at
<http://john.curtin.edu.au/fitzgerald>; Griffen-Foley, "Political opinion polling", p. 44.

by their deadlines, including weekends.  In mid-1941, Prime Minister Robert Menzies would give a single daily news conference, arranged by his part-time press secretary, Claude Charles Dawson.[71]  Lloyd's history and Northey's biographical article of Dawson enable comparisons to be made between the Curtin and Menzies interviews.  Although historians have remarked on Curtin's top-secret press briefings,[72] this thesis is the first study to extend our knowledge of his use of a wide range of mass media strategies – including his speeches, press statements, newsreels and off-the record interviews – to create positive coverage of his foreign policies.

Biographies of Curtin provided important, sometimes succinct, descriptions of his private and professional background.  Numerous authors have sympathetically portrayed the young John Curtin, from a working-class family in Creswick, Victoria, and his rapid ascendancy in his career as a journalist to become a union newspaper editor, devoted to reading scholarly books and actively participating in political meetings.[73]  These biographical accounts of his career as a journalist help to explain his egalitarian approach as the prime minister,[74] when he addressed reporters as his colleagues, still wearing his AJA badge on his coat each day.[75]

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[71] Lloyd, *Parliament and the press,* pp. 125-126; R. E. Northey, "Dawson, Claude Charles (1902 - 1945)", *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, vol. 13, 1993, pp. 594-595, retrieved on 25 January 2011 at <http://adbonline.anu.edu.au/biogs/A130660b.htm>.

[72] Grattan, "The prime minister and the press", pp. 125-126; Lloyd and Hall, *Backroom briefings*; Ross, *A Curtin biography,* p. 243; Geoffrey Serle, *For Australia and Labor: Prime Minister John Curtin*, JCPML, Bentley, 1998, p. 35.

[73] For example, Chester, *Curtin,* pp. 1-44; Ross, *A Curtin biography*, pp. 1-78; Davidson*, "John Curtin".

[74] Black, *In his own words*, p. 1; Edwards, *Curtin's gift,* p. 19; Ross, *A Curtin biography,* p. 77; Lloyd, *Journalist,* pp. 165-167.

[75] Davidson, "John Curtin".

While several historians have analysed Curtin's strongly worded editorials, focusing on his support for the working class and social justice,[76] few researchers have studied his rhetoric.[77]  His forceful, sometimes emotive writing seemed significant in assisting him to win the federal seat of Fremantle in November 1928 and eventually ascend to the Labor leadership in 1935.[78]  As the prime minister, Curtin's oratory style was "dynamic",[79] reflecting "inspiring eloquence"[80] and having the tone of a "wise teacher".[81]  Although several researchers have written of wartime Australian journalists' orientation towards British imperial values,[82] some scholars describe Curtin's demands for ABC broadcasters to stop mimicking English accents by publicising more local voices on national programs.[83] I have researched Curtin's writings, speeches and wartime radio and newsreel broadcasts, to expand our understanding of his use of language to communicate his vision of Australia to the public. Chapters 6 to 9 assess Curtin's ability to persuade journalists to reproduce his words positively in their news reports, which are now preserved in bound

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[76] Black, *In his own words*, pp. 17-47; Davidson, "John Curtin"; Oliver, *Peacemongers*, p. 44; Bobbie Oliver, " 'Rats', 'Scabs', 'Soolers' and 'Sinn  Feiners': A Re-assessment of the role of the Labour Movement in the Conscription Crisis in Western Australia, 1916-17", *Labour History,* no. 58, 1990, pp. 61-64; Dianne Sholl, "John Curtin at the Westralian Worker 1917-1928", BA (Hons) thesis, The University of Western Australia, Crawley, 1975.

[77] Black, *In his own words*, p. 204; James Curran, *The Power of Speech: Australian Prime Ministers Defining the National Image*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 2006, pp. 26-36; Coombes, *John Curtin,* p. 6; David Day, "John Joseph Curtin", in Michelle Grattan (ed.), *Australian Prime Ministers*, New Holland Publishers, Sydney, Auckland, London and Cape Town, revised edition, 2008, p. 235; Ross, *A Curtin biography*, p. 284.

[78] David Black, "Biography of John Curtin", JCPML, Bentley, 2010, retrieved on 21 November 2010 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/resources/biography/details.html>.

[79] Ross, *A Curtin biography*, p. 284; Black, *In his own words*, p. 204.

[80] Ken Inglis, "Parliamentary Speech", *Papers on Parliament*, no. 28, November 1996, p. 53, retrieved on 26 November 2010 at <http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/pubs/pops/index.htm>.

[81] Coombes, *John Curtin,* p. 6.

[82] Carl Bridge and Kent Fedorowich, "Mapping the British world", *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* vol. 31, no. 2, 1 May 2003, p. 9; Bridget Griffen-Foley, "The Crumbs Are Better Than a Feast Elsewhere: Australian Journalists on Fleet Street", *Journalism History,* vol. 28, no. 1, spring 2002, p. 35; Neville Meaney, "Britishness and Australia: Some reflections", *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* vol. 31, no. 2, 1 May 2003, p. 126; Simon J. Potter, "Strengthening the Bonds of the Commonwealth: the Imperial Relations Trust and Australian, New Zealand and Canadian broadcasting personnel in Britain, 1946-1952", *Media History,* vol. 11, no. 3, December 2005, p. 193.

[83] Inglis, *ABC*, pp. 96, 99, 110-112, 117; David Pyvis, "When the AIR BEER CEER pushed the Aussie twang", *Issues in Educational Research*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1993, pp. 4, 8.

scrapbooks,[84] microfilm collections[85] and in digitised archives.[86]

Likewise, there is a lack of available publications about Curtin's newsreel commentaries for wartime audiences.  Historical researchers, Niall Brennan[87] and Neil McDonald,[88] have assessed the propaganda values of the innovative Australian "eye witness" newsreels of this era.  For example, after the cameraman, Damien Parer, filmed *Kokoda Front Line!* in the Kokoda Track, the documentary team won an Academy Award in 1942; this was the first time that an Australian motion picture had been so honoured.  The majority of war footage was produced under the direction of the Film Division of the Commonwealth Department of Information.[89] According to McDonald, the Kokoda newsreel had an "enormous impact" on Australian moviegoers in September 1942, strengthening public support for the war.[90]  Research suggests that to date, David Day has been the only author to discuss the influence of Curtin's film image.  Day refers to an official newsreel screened in an outdoor cinema near Darwin, showing an unpretentious Curtin strolling in his modest, suburban garden in Cottesloe, Western Australia.  The visual image generated spontaneous standing ovations from servicemen in the audience; this was evidence that the popular prime minister was "Australia personified" for many citizens.[91]  In Chapter 3, it will be argued that Curtin expanded the nation's film

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[84] *Scrapbooks,* October 1941-July 1945.

[85] This thesis will use newspaper copies of *The Age* and *The Sydney Morning Herald* (1941-1945), held in microfilm at the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library and State Library of Western Australia.  Also this study will use the microfilm collections of *The West Australian* issues (1941-1945), lodged at The J S Battye Library of West Australian History.

[86] *The Canberra Times* and *The Argus* newspaper issues (1941-1945) have been accessed using the digitised archives at the NLA, retrieved on 20 November 2010 at <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper>.

[87] Neil McDonald, *"*Getting it Right – Damien Parer, Osmar White and Chester Wilmot on the Kokoda Track" [hereafter "Getting it right"], *The Sydney Papers,* vol. 14, no. 2, 2002, pp. 96-109.

[88] Niall Brennan, *Damien Parer: Cameraman* [hereafter *Cameraman*], Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1994.

[89] Anderson and Trembath, "Australian war correspondents"; McDonald, *"*Getting it right", pp. 99-109.

[90] McDonald, "Getting it right", pp. 99-105.

[91] Day, "Curtin as hero", p. 65.

industry to produce more newsreels focusing on Australia for Allied audiences.[92]  An evaluation will be made of his film messages, particularly from Chapters 6 to 9, to demonstrate that he set precedents in the prime minister's use of relatively new media to reach wider audiences.[93]


Curtin was also able to generate public enthusiasm for the nation's role in the war, leading to his 1943 election victory, because he censored graphic reports about Australian casualties and fatalities.  Presiding over a strict censorship regime, he appointed the ALP member for Melbourne, Arthur Calwell, to head the Department of Information to scrutinise news dispatches.  Historian John Hilvert has detailed the government's censorship to minimise negative news that might hurt national morale and alert Axis enemies to secret Allied military manoeuvres.[94]  Since Curtin was not directly involved in the censorship routine, he was able to assert forcefully, "[t]here should be no censorship of political opinions"[95] because "[t]he free institutions of democracies–parliament, press, pulpit, radio, and right of free criticism and public speech–are the things for which we are fighting".[96]  Curtin tolerated criticism of Labor policies when it did not relate to confidential war battles, according to

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[92]  See Brennan, *Cameraman*, pp. 126, 136-137.  The wartime films included: Charles Chauvel (director and producer), *The Rats of Tobruk* (movie), Chamun Productions, Australia, 1944; Charles Chauvel (director), Charles Chauvel and Charles Munro (producers), *The Fighting Rats of Tobruk* (movie)*, America and Canada, 1945; Tom Gurr (director), Jack. S. Allan (producer), *Jungle Patrol* (newsreel), Commonwealth Government of Australia, Ministry of Information, Australia, 1944; Ken G. Hall (producer), *Kokoda Front Line!*, (newsreel), The Australian News & Information Bureau, Australia, 1942; Ken G. Hall (director and producer), *South-west Pacific* (newsreel), Cinesound Productions, Australia, 1943.

[93] For example, Australian Government Department of Information, Cinesound Productions, Cinesound Review, Department of Information, Movietone and U.S. Army Signal Corps (producers), *At The Front*: *1939-1945: Australia's WWII Newsreels* (newsreels)*, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00441/2, 1939-1945; British Movietone News (producer), *Newsreels of Curtin, 1942-1945* (newsreels), JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00734/1, 1942-1945.

[94] John Hilvert, *Blue Pencil Warriors: Censorship and Propaganda in World War II* [hereafter *Blue pencil warriors*]*, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, 1984, pp. 197-203.

[95] John Curtin, "Chief Publicity Censor–Prime Minister's Statement On Action Against Newspapers", *Digest of Decisions and Announcements and Important Speeches by the Prime Minister (Right Hon. John Curtin)* [hereafter *DDA*], no. 81, 19 April 1944, p. 44.

[96] John Curtin, "Duty With Press" [hereafter "Duty with press"], *DDA*, no. 81, 19 April 1944, p. 46.

Hilvert.[97] While infrequent arguments erupted between news proprietors and government ministers, most notably over Packer's refusal to censor material in *The Daily Telegraph* in 1944,[98] it did not appear to affect Curtin's popularity among voters.  Chapter 5 will examine this episode, as well as the Canberra correspondents' general cooperation with the confidentiality restrictions,[99] because institutionalised censorship underlay Curtin's journalism interactions.


This study investigates the previously untapped resources of secret diaries, private letters and oral histories of leading people in wartime Canberra to ascertain Curtin's mass communication strategies.  Beginning in Chapter 3, this study will examine Menzies' published diary[100] and radio transcripts[101] to ascertain his views of the media and contrast his approach with Curtin's journalism strategies.  Clem Lloyd and Richard Hall have published an annotated collection of the private "off-the-record" reporters' notes of Frederick Thomas Smith, the former Canberra political news chief of Australian United Press.  Between mid-1942 and 1945, Smith attended the prime minister's confidential news conferences; his top-secret transcripts are lodged in the Manuscript Collections, National Library of Australia.[102]  While Smith's Canberra colleague, E. H. (Harold) Cox of the *The Sun News-Pictorial*, also secretly wrote about the Curtin interviews, research suggests a dearth of published findings on this primary source.  Cox commented on the prime ministerial briefings in his letters to his employer, Murdoch.[103]  Similarly the unpublished diaries of *The Herald* Canberra bureau chief, Joseph Alexander, had yet to be studied as a source of

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[97] Hilvert, *Blue pencil warriors,* pp. 197-203.

[98] JCPML, "John Curtin's Legacy*",* Bentley, 2005, retrieved on 10 May 2008 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/legacyex>.

[99] Alexander, "Alexander interview"; Holt, "Holt interview"; Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, p. 77.

[100] A.W. Martin and Patsy Hardy (eds), *Dark and Hurrying Days: Menzies' 1941 Diary,* NLA, Canberra, 1993.

[101] Robert Menzies, radio transcripts, Menzies Virtual Museum, East Melbourne, 1939-1942, retrieved on 19 November 2010 at <http://www.menziesvirtualmuseum.org.au/transcripts/ForgottenPeople/ForgottenCont.html>.

[102] Lloyd and Hall, *Backroom briefings.*

[103] Harold Cox, "Typescript reports, 1944-1964*"* [hereafter "Typescript reports"], NLA, Canberra*,* Manuscript Collections, NLA, MS acc. no. 4554, 1944-1964, transcript np. Harold Cox's notes on Curtin's interviews were lodged later at the NLA and became digitally available on the JCPML website.

insight into Curtin's media policies.[104]  These diaries – which Alexander donated
with his other papers to the National Library of Australia (NLA) between 1944 and
1977, and which at his request, were made available publicly only after his wife
Catherine's death in 1983 – were written in scribbled haste.[105]  He condensed the
day's newsworthy events – from "the great tank battles of the Western Desert"[106] to
Wagga Wagga's wartime economic boom[107] – to a single page.  As he recalled:

> It is very roughly written, one day to a page, in my almost unreadable
> handwriting, for my own use and reference.  The day's doings were recorded
> each evening while the events described were red-hot in my mind.[108]

Moreover, at least 11 journalists discussed their professional relationships with
Curtin during their oral histories about their careers.[109]  Many years after the war,
two other wartime correspondents, Tom Mead[110] and Don Whitington,[111] published
autobiographies that included some reminiscences of Curtin's briefings.  The press
secretary, Don Rodgers, left an account of the Curtin administration that is lodged at
the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library.[112]  I have made the first analysis of these
14 journalists' memoirs[113] in order to compare Curtin's public image with his private
discussions; this analysis is contained in Chapters 6 to 9.

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[104] Alexander, "Alexander interview"; J.A. Alexander, "Papers 1833-1957" [hereafter
"Papers"], NLA, Canberra, Manuscript Collections, NLA acc. no. MS 2389, 1833-1957,
transcript np.  Brief excerpts of Alexander's diary entries about the Pearl Harbour disaster
were published in: Wurth, *Saving Australia*, pp. 146, 158-159.
[105] Alexander, "Papers".
[106] Alexander, "Papers", 22 November 1941.
[107] Alexander, "Papers", 10 August 1943.
[108] Alexander, "Alexander interview".
[109] Alexander, "Alexander interview"; Bray, "Bray interview"; Chamberlain, "Chamberlain
interview"; Commins, "Commins interview"; Cox, "Cox interview"; Davidson, "Davidson
interview"; Douglas, "Douglas interview"; Ewing, "Ewing interview"; Fraser, "Fraser
interview"; Holt, "Holt interview"; Reid, "Reid interview".
[110] Tom Mead, *Breaking The News: The events which changed life in Australia through the
eyes of a man who worked at the front line of journalism and politics* [hereafter *Breaking the
news*], Dolphin Books, Sydney, 1998, pp. 50, 58, 68-69.
[111] Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, pp. 74-92.
[112] Rodgers, "Rodgers interview".
[113] The journalists are: Joseph A. Alexander, Theodor Charles Bray, Frank Chamberlain,
John Commins, Harold Cox, Frank Davidson, Irvine Douglas, Peter Ewing, Allan Fraser,
Edgar George Holt, Tom Mead, Alan D. Reid, Donald Kilgour Rodgers and Don
Whitington.  See the preceding four footnotes for specific citations.

To ascertain whether Curtin's associations with the Australian media were innovative, studies of his counterparts' press relations were canvassed.  Similarly to Curtin, the Canadian Prime Minister, Dr William Lyon Mackenzie King, was a former newspaperman who, during the war, recruited journalists to become his government censors.[114]  Although there is a lack of detailed academic analyses of Mackenzie King's media relations, a number of related studies will inform this comparative analysis.  Paul Chantrill demonstrates the utility of a two-country comparative analysis of the political systems of Canada and Australia, because such a study can be valuable to extend our knowledge of the degree to which each country's federal parliamentary democratic government tolerated the ideal of a free press during the war.[115]  King's early professional career in journalism and public relations has been examined by Henry Stanley Ferns and K.W.L. Hallahan.[116]  The Canadian leader's initial resistance to conscription has been studied by Frances V. Harbour, who has also written of the political pressures he faced and his persuasive tactics to win media and public support.[117]  George Kerr investigates mainstream Canadian journalists, their editors and media enthusiasm for the government's war aims.[118]  A unique analysis of Mackenzie King's confidential diary notes about John Curtin,[119] along with his views of the media[120] is in Chapter 4.  King's diaries became available to researchers by 1981 and all entries – nearly 30,000 pages and more than 7,500,000 words – were published online in 2002.[121]  As well as giving a

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[114] George D. Kerr, "Skirting the Minefield: Press Censorship, Politics and French Canada, 1940" [hereafter "Press censorship"], *Canadian Journal of Communication*, vol. 8, no. 2, 1982, p. 48.

[115] Paul Chantrill, "Social Policy Development in Australia and Canada: Historical and Comparative Approaches", *Australian-Canadian Studies,* vol. 17, no. 1, 1999, pp. 41-58.

[116] Henry Stanley Ferns, *The age of Mackenzie King: the rise of the leader,* Heinemann, London, 1955, pp. 95, 167, 182; K.W.L. Hallahan, "Mackenzie King*:* Rockefeller's 'other' public relations counsellor in Colorado", *Public Relations Review,* vol. 29, no. 4, November 2003, pp. 401-414.

[117] Frances V. Harbour, "Conscription and Socialisation: Four Canadian Ministers", *Armed Forces and Society,* vol. 15, 1989, pp. 227-247.

[118] Kerr, "Press censorship", pp. 46-47.

[119] William Lyon Mackenzie King, "The Diaries of William Lyon Mackenzie King" [hereafter "Diaries"]*,* Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, 1944, pp. 433, 457, 561, 564-565, retrieved on 8 December 2008 at <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/king/index-e.html>.  The page numbers were cited from the online version and not from the original diary.

[120] For example, King, "Diaries", 1939, pp. 454, 468, 523.

[121] Library and Archives Canada, "A Real Companion and Friend: The diary of William Lyon Mackenzie King", Ottawa, 2002, retrieved on 9 December 2008 at <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/king/001059-131.html>.

scholarly framework for the discussion in Chapter 4 about King, this literature will provide a historical context in Chapter 8, when evaluating the impact of Curtin's journalism strategies on the Ottawa Press Gallery during his visit to Canada in 1944.


Curtin's relationship with the media will also be compared with Roosevelt's journalism interactions.  While many scholars have focused on Roosevelt's regular series of radio talks, colloquially known as the "fireside chats",[122] fewer analyses have been made of his relationships with reporters and his use of wartime newsreels. Historians Steven Casey, Richard W. Steele and Betty Houchin Winfield write of Roosevelt's bi-weekly news conferences (less frequent than Curtin's), and his political constraints due to severe criticisms from some powerful press owners.[123] Diana Martinelli and Jeff Mucciarone examine Roosevelt's reliance upon his press secretary, Stephen T. Early, to speak directly with reporters.[124]  A study was made of Roosevelt's press conference transcripts,[125] the drafting of media releases,[126] radio

[122] For example, Thomas Bonner, *Our Recent Past* [hereafter *Our recent past*], Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, 1963, p. 213; Earnest Bradenburg and Waldo W. Braden, "Franklin Delano Roosevelt" [hereafter "Roosevelt"], in Marie Kathryn Hochmuth (ed.), *History and Criticism of American Public Address,* Longmans, Green and Co., New York, vol. 3, 1958, pp. 520, 522; John T. Flynn, *Country Squire in the White House*, Doubleday, Doran and Company Inc., New York, 1940, p. 57; Elvin T. Lim, "The Lion and the Lamb: De-mythologizing Franklin Roosevelt's 'fireside chats'" [hereafter "Fireside chats"], *Rhetoric & Public Affairs,* vol. 6, no. 3, 2003, pp. 437-464; Arthur S. Link, *American Epoch: A History of the United States Since the 1890's* [hereafter *American epoch*], Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1955, p. 383. Link deliberately included "1890's" in his book title.
[123] Steven Casey, *Cautious Crusade: Franklin D. Roosevelt, American public opinion, and the war against Nazi Germany,* Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York, 2001, pp. 155, 215; Richard W. Steele, "News of the 'Good War': World II News Management", *Journalism Quarterly*, vol. 62, no. 4, winter 1985, pp 707-16, 783; Richard W. Steele, "Preparing the Public for War: Efforts to Establish a National Propaganda Agency, 1940-41," [hereafter "Propaganda"] *The American Historical Review,* vol. 75, no. 6, October 1970, p. 1653; Betty Houchin Winfield, *FDR and the News Media*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 1990, p. 2.
[124] Diana Knott Martinelli and Jeff Mucciarone, "New deal public relations: A glimpse into FDR press secretary Stephen Early's work" [hereafter "Stephen Early"], *Public Relations Review,* vol. 33, no. 1, March 2007, pp. 49-57.
[125] Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Presidential News Conference: Franklin D. Roosevelt", in John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters (eds), *The American Presidency Project* [hereafter *American presidency project*], Santa Barbara, 1941-1945, retrieved on 19 November 2010 at <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/news_conferences.php>.
[126] For example, Stephen Early, "Draft Of Proposed Release", JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00269/3, 22 April 1944, p. 15; Stephen Early to General Watson, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00269/3, 22 April 1944, p. 14; Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Press conference",

speeches,[127] newsreels[128] and private cables to Curtin.[129]  This study extends to an

examination of the media strategies developed by the two leaders' wives, Elsie

Curtin[130] and Eleanor Roosevelt.[131]  The leaders' private and public communications

contain information that helps in assessing whether they were successful in

persuading journalists and media audiences to support their military alliance.

Likewise, archival research and scholarly literature informs the evaluation of

Churchill's media policies as he and Roosevelt strove to bolster support for their

"beat Hitler first" strategy while seeking to reassure Australia of their Pacific war

*The American presidency project*, 6 May 1944; Franklin D. Roosevelt to Winston Churchill, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00719/1/14, 17 March 1942.

[127] Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Audio/Video: Franklin D. Roosevelt", in Woolley and Peters, *American presidency project*, retrieved on 19 November 2010 at <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/medialist.php?presid=32>; Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Franklin D. Roosevelt's Fireside Chats", in Woolley and Peters, *American presidency project*, retrieved on 19 November 2010 at <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/fireside.php>.

[128] Granada Media (producer) *Roosevelt: Men Of Our Time* (documentary), JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00813/1, 1990; Universal Studios (producer), *Modern History: Franklin D. Roosevelt – Six Fireside Chats, 1933-1938,* (newsreels), Internet Archive, 1933-1938, retrieved on 24 November 2010 at <http://www.archive.org/details/WorldHistoryFranklinD.Roosevelt-SixFiresideChats1933-1938>.

[129] For example, (Anon.) "Roosevelt Opens Direct Wireless Link to Australia", *The Washington Post*, Washington DC, 26 December 1941, p. 1; Long Breckinridge to Grace Tully, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00266/2, 24 December 1941, p. 41; Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, "Safe Files – Australia Index", Hyde Park, box 2, 1 June 1941-9 June 1942.

[130] (Anon.), "Australian Leader's Wife Real Person", *Republican,* Waterbury, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00964/124, 5 May 1944; (Anon.), "Curtin's Wife Breaks a Tradition To See U.S., Britain With Premier", *The New York Times*, New York, 4 April 1944, p. 14; (Anon.), "Impression of U.S.A.: Mrs Curtin Interviewed", *The West Australian*, Perth, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00964/119, 28 April 1944; (Anon.), "Mrs. Curtin Buys Gloves, No Nylons; Prime Minister's Wife Compares Shopping Conditions Here and in Australia", *The New York Times*, New York, 26 April 1944, p. 20; (Anon.), "Mrs Curtin Honor Guest At Luncheons", *The Washington Post*, Washington DC, 12 May 1944, p. 12; (Anon.), "Mrs. Curtin to Accompany Husband Here", *The Washington Post*, Washington DC, 6 April 1944, p. 9; (Anon.), "Mrs Curtin's Racy Story Of Her Trip", *The Argus*, Melbourne, 21 July 1944, p. 8; (Anon.), "Not Like Movies", *Valley News,* Tarentum, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00964/127, 6 May 1944; (Anon.), "Shepherdstown AAWU Hears Mrs. Curtin and Lady Dixon", *The Washington Post*, Washington DC, 15 May 1944, p. 3.

[131] ScreenSound Australia, *Mrs Roosevelt's Visit To Canberra, 1943* (newsreel), JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01049/1, 1943; *Scrapbooks*, no. 3, JCPML acc. no. 00297/3, 4-5 September 1943.

commitments.[132]   A number of sources indicate he did not hold daily press conferences.[133] David Stafford argues that Churchill predominantly relied upon the radio to broadcast his powerful oratory and evocations to imperial history.[134] K.E. Garay examines Churchill's rhetoric and his love of brevity, clarity and "Basic English".[135] A study by Jonathan Sikorsky refers to the power of British newsreels to capture the energy of the prime minister's wartime leadership and increase public morale.[136] Churchill's published history of World War II,[137] private cables[138] and newsreel appearances with Curtin[139] reveal their attempts to mask tensions by promoting their alliance to public audiences.  This thesis evaluates the British, Canadian and US leaders' media messages and confidential communications to gain insights into their journalism strategies.  For instance, national and international

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[132] Advisory War Council, "Discussions with General MacArthur" [hereafter "MacArthur discussions"], NAA, Canberra, CA495, A2684, 967, 26 March 1942, pp. 1-2 (the online page numbers are pp. 8, 12-13); John Curtin, "Broadcast by the Prime Minister from London", *DDA*, no. 81, 8 May 1944, pp. 53-56; Franklin D. Roosevelt to Winston Churchill, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00719/1/11, 22 March 1942.

[133] Lloyd, *Parliament and the press,* p. 126; Richard Moss, "Curtain goes up on new £6 million Churchill museum" [hereafter "Churchill museum"], *Culture 24,* Brighton, 9 February 2005, retrieved on 24 November 2010 at <http://www.culture24.org.uk/history+%26+heritage/war+%26+conflict/world+war+two/art 26042>; Jackie Storer, "Churchill's bunker revealed", *BBC News Online,* London, 8 April 2003, retrieved on 12 May 2008 at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/2929063.stm>; Simon Tait, "A war leader's love affair with the press", *The Times,* London, 8 March 2008, p. 80.

[134] David Stafford, *Roosevelt and Churchill: men of secrets,* Abascus, London, 1999, p. xv.

[135] K.E. Garay, "Empires of the Mind? C.K. Ogden, Winston Churchill and Basic English" [hereafter "Empires of the mind"], *Canadian Historical Association Historical Papers,* vol. 23, no.1, 1988, retrieved on 12 May 2008 at <http://www.winstonchurchill.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=527>.

[136] Jonathan Sikorsky, "From British Cassandra to American Hero: The Churchill Legend in the World War II American Media" [hereafter "Churchill"], *Finest Hour*, The Churchill Centre, no. 108, autumn 2000, retrieved on 12 May 2008 at <http://www.winstonchurchill.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=360>.

[137] Churchill, *The second world war*, pp. 4-5, 8-9.

[138] For example, Winston Churchill to John Curtin, NAA, Canberra, A816, 52/302/142, 20 February 1942, p. 285; Winston Churchill to John Curtin, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00869/57, 17 July 1943, p. 6; John Curtin to Winston Churchill, NAA, Canberra, A816, 52/302/142, 22 February 1942, pp. 279-280; John Curtin to Winston Churchill, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00869/57, 18 August 1943, p. 29.

[139] British Movietone (producer), "Empire Premiers Assemble", in *Newsreels of Curtin, 1942-1945* (newsreel), JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00734/1, 1944.

archives reveal the four Allied leaders' private views of reporters.[140]  By applying an international perspective, it is argued that Curtin enjoyed uniquely close and direct relations with the "travelling circus" of Canberra correspondents, who accompanied him on confidential prime ministerial trips.[141]

Other studies were consulted to assess contemporary journalists' perceptions of Curtin, as well as the influence of his media strategies on his successors' communication policies.  While no previous literature has traced the effects of Curtin's communications systems on modern government-media interactions, a number of academic journalism, historical and political science publications will inform this assessment.  Lloyd, for example, examines the increasing importance of radio to Curtin's successors, from J.B. (Ben) Chifley to R.J.L. (Bob) Hawke, as well as the rising dominance of televised political reporting.[142]  Robert Crawford assesses the role of the media, public relations and advertising in Menzies' 1949 election victory and E.G. (Gough) Whitlam's successful 1972 campaign.[143]  Media and politics scholars, including Steve Mickler,[144] Helen Ester,[145] Nick Economou and Stephen Tanner,[146] discuss J.W. (John) Howard's preference for talkback radio during his prime ministership.  At the same time, according to Lloyd and Greg Barns,

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[140] For example, Geoff Burgoyne to John Curtin, JCPML, Bentley, N/C. acc. no. 009, 27 March 1942; John Curtin to Geoff Burgoyne, JCPML, Bentley, N/C. acc. no. 010, 20 April 1942; William Lyon Mackenzie King, "Diaries", 27 April 1939, p. 454; Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Messages between Roosevelt & Churchill, August 1943 - February 1944", JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00796/3, 1943-1944.

[141] Alexander, "Alexander interview".

[142] Lloyd, *Parliament and the press*, pp. 158-268.

[143] Robert Crawford, "Modernising Menzies, Whitlam, and Australian Elections", *The Drawing Board: An Australian Review of Public Affairs*, vol. 4, no. 3, March 2004, pp. 137-161.

[144] Steve Mickler, "Talkback Radio, Anti-elitism And Moral Decline: A Fatal Paradox?" [hereafter "Talkback radio"], *Southern Review: Communication, Politics & Culture*, vol. 37, no. 3, 2005, pp. 29-34, retrieved on 9 April 2010 at <http://search.informit.com.au.dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/documentSummary;dn=990068020742095;res=IELHSS>.

[145] Helen Ester, "The media", in Clive Hamilton and Sarah Maddison (eds), *Silencing Dissent: How the Australian Government is controlling public opinion and stifling debate*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2007, pp. 117-118; Helen Ester, "Who's Been Watching The Watchers? Australian Political Journalism" [hereafter "Australian political journalism"], *ejournalist*, vol.1, no. 2, 2001, p. 6, retrieved on 15 May 2010 at *<ejournalist.com.au/v1n2/ESTER.pdf>*.

[146] Nick Economou and Stephen Tanner, *Media, Power and Politics*, Pearson Education Australia, Frenchs Forest, 2008, p. 32.

prime ministers have increasingly preferred to communicate in official statements, distributed by government media offices.[147]  With respect to television strategies, Frédérick Bastien has examined political leaders' interviews on current affairs programs and talk shows, particularly their attempts to discuss substantive policies in ways that will reach wider audiences.[148]  Gwyneth Howell and Bruce da Silva investigate federal politicians' adoption of online election campaign tactics;[149] while Geoffrey Craig, Rachel Gibson et al comment on the internet's "greater potential for interactivity" between governments and the governed.[150]  Although several researchers have surveyed the Canberra Parliamentary Press Gallery,[151] none have published findings about journalists' opinions of Curtin.

To answer the thesis' research question, this study will draw upon theoretical and conceptual approaches that are derived from media and communication studies. More specifically, these theoretical approaches relate to the following topics: the notion of the public sphere; the social function of journalists; the state's role vis-a-vis citizens; how political leaders use the news media; the semiotics of governments' visual images and language, and the significance of news values and processes.  The concept of the public sphere, a specific domain of national discussion about the governance of society, people and things including the government and media, will inform this thesis' investigation of Curtin's journalism strategies.  Media scholars have used the concept of the public sphere to understand the role of journalism in

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[147] Greg Barns, *Selling the Australian Government: Politics And Propaganda From Whitlam To Howard*, University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 2005, p. 10; Lloyd, *Parliament and the press*, pp. 176, 244-250.

[148] Frédérick Bastien, "Beyond Sex and Saxophones: Interviewing Practices and Political Substance on Televised Talk Shows", *The Canadian Political Science Review*, vol. 3, no. 2, June 2009, pp. 70-88.

[149] Gwyneth Howell and Bruce Da Silva, "New media, first time voters and the 2007 Australian federal election", *Public Communication Review*, vol. 1, 2010, pp. 27-33.

[150] Geoffrey Craig, *The Media, Politics and Public Life*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2004, pp. 89-90; Rachel K. Gibson, Wainer Lusoli, Andrea Römmele and Stephen J. Ward, *Electronic Democracy: Mobilisation, organisation and participation via new ICTs*, Routledge, London and New York, 2004, pp. 2-4.

[151] For a short bibliography on some of these surveys, see Helen Ester, "Australian political journalism", pp. 1-7.  Also refer to: John Henningham, "Political Journalists' Political Preferences and Professional Values", *The Australian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 30, no. 2, 1995, pp. 321-334; Lloyd, *Parliament and the press*; Julianne Schultz, *Reviving the Fourth Estate: Democracy, Accountability, and the Media*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998.

social governance.[152]   While key public sphere theorist, Jürgen Habermas, and other scholars from the Frankfurt School of social theory posited the decline of "rational-critical debate"[153] within the public sphere and the rise of a "manipulable" press,[154] some scholars have not been as pessimistic about the media's ability to engage citizens critically in public discussions.[155]   As I discuss in detail further in the thesis, Curtin extended the public sphere by expanding the Australian government's use of popular culture and the media to communicate more openly and frequently with journalists and public audiences.[156]   I did not set out to conduct a study of, and produce findings on, the understanding of the Australian public sphere; nonetheless, my research has shown that the impact of Curtin's media and mass communication strategies was that he and his government made a major contribution to the extension of the Australian public sphere.

Following the work of Richard V. Ericson, Patricia M. Baranek and Janet B.L. Chan, this study considers news media and journalism as a critical process in the governance of society.  Journalistic practice is a central agency in the governance of a "knowledge", "administered" or "information" society.  Thus news reporters are "information brokers" and "knowledge linkers", who are engaged in "reproducing the knowledge of their sources".[157]   To evaluate Curtin's media strategies, this thesis

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[152] Juho Rahkonen, "Mapping Media and Communication Research" [hereafter "Mapping research"], Australian Communication Research Centre, Department of Communication, Helsingin Sanomat Foundation, University of Helsinki, Helsinki, 2007, p. 58, retrieved on 15 February 2009 at <http://www.valt.helsinki.fi/blogs/crc/ReportAustralia.pdf>.

[153] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* [hereafter *The public sphere*], MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1989, p. 184.  Similar theorists from the Frankfurt School include: Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Verso, London, 1944, pp. 120-67.

[154] Habermas, *The public sphere*, p. 185.

[155] For example, James Curran, "Rethinking the media as a public sphere" [hereafter "Rethinking the media"], in Peter Dahlgren and Colin Sparks (eds), *Communication and Citizenship: Journalism and the Public Sphere*, Routledge, London and New York, 1997, pp. 42-43; John Hartley, *Popular Reality: Journalism, Modernity, Popular Culture* [hereafter *Popular reality*], Arnold, London and New York, 1996, pp. 71, 72, 234; Ian Ward, "The Press, Television and the Public Sphere" [hereafter "The public sphere], in Ian Ward (ed.), *Politics of the media,* Macmillan, South Melbourne, 1995, p. 14.

[156] For example, Alexander, "Alexander interview"; (Anon.) "Publicity: Relations with America: Australia Expands", *The Canberra Times,* Canberra, 31 October 1941, p. 4; Curtin, "American relations", pp. 13-14.

[157] Ericson, Baranek and Chan, *Visualizing deviance*, p. 16; Stephen Brent Mickler, Visualising Aboriginality: Image Campaigns and News Routines in the Western Australian

will investigate the "mundane milieu"[158] in which news stories and commentaries were created and circulated to produce "extraordinary public policy campaigns" in newspapers, radio programs and newsreels.[159]  Applying the concept of the governmental, and not simply communication function of news in an administered society, this study posits that senior Canberra journalists cooperated with Curtin to "visualise" and "define" the threat to the nation, principally Axis aggression, in Ericson et al's terms, as a social deviation from moral and ethical principles of fairness, justice and decency.[160]

Ericson et al's concept draws upon Michel Foucault's influential understanding of "governmentality".[161]  Similarly to Ericson et al, Foucault includes journalism as a part of governance.  He defines governmentality as: "The ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power".[162]  Therefore governmentality is constituted of an ensemble of tactics, calculations and reflections.  Foucault describes this ensemble as "socially assembled human technologies", involving the media and including the following: "technologies of production, which permit us to produce, transform and manipulate things"; "technologies of sign systems, which permit us to use signs, meanings, symbols, or signification"; and "technologies of power".[163]  Following this Foucauldian concept of governmentality, this thesis asserts that Curtin viewed journalists as a crucial part of his governance as he used tactics, calculations and technologies to communicate

Media [hereafter Visualising Aboriginality], PhD thesis, Murdoch University, Murdoch, 1996, pp. 20-21.

[158] Mickler, Visualising Aboriginality, p 24.

[159] Mickler, Visualising Aboriginality, p. 1.

[160] Ericson, Baranek and Chan, *Visualizing deviance*, p. 5; Mickler, Visualising Aboriginality, p. 21.

[161] Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller (eds), *The Foucault Effect: Studies In Governmentality: With Two Lectures By And An Interview With Michel Foucault* [hereafter *The Foucault effect*]*,* The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1991, p. ix; R. McGreggor Cawley and William Chaloupka, "American Governmentality: Michel Foucault and Public Administration" [hereafter "American governmentality"], *American Behavioral Scientist,* vol. 41, no. 1, September 1997, pp. 30-31.

[162] Michel Foucault, "Governmentality" [hereafter "Governmentality"], in Burchell, Gordon and Miller (eds), *The Foucault effect*, p. 102.

[163] Michel Foucault, "Technologies of the Self", in L.H. Martin, H. Guttman and P.H. Hutton (eds), *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, Tavistock Publications, London, 1988, p. 18.

his foreign policy objectives to public audiences.  This theoretical approach is more productive than functional conceptions of the government and the media as separate, autonomous entities, such as the view of journalists acting as a "Fourth Estate" to monitor independently the executive, legislative and judiciary branches of government.[164]  The work of Foucault, Ericson and other scholars help us to understand the relationships of power and consensus between Curtin and the news media.

 

Since Curtin often appealed to the ideals of liberty, democracy and freedom in his radio and newsreel broadcasts,[165] the discussion of his governance will also be grounded in the work of the political theorist and historian of ideas, Isaiah Berlin.[166] An understanding of liberty, or freedom, is central to human being and human agency in politics, according to Berlin.[167]  Individual rights, including liberty, equality, justice and courage, constitute a "central core" of values shared by all people.[168]  Individuals gain liberty when they are able to choose freely and stand up for their convictions.[169]  While Curtin continued the previous federal administrations' censorship policies, he publicly said that his government vetoed

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[164] Niall Lucy and Steve Mickler, *The War on Democracy: Conservative Opinion in the Australian Press*, University of Western Australia Press, Crawley, 2006, particularly pp. 2-9, 87, 147-152; Mark Pearson and Camille Galvin, "The Australian Parliament and press freedom in an international context", *Pacific Journalism Review,* vol. 13, no. 2, 2007, pp. 139-143; Julianne Schultz (ed.), *Reviving the Fourth Estate: Democracy, Accountability, and the Media,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998, pp. 1-6; Rod Tiffen, "The press" [hereafter "The press"], in Stuart Cunningham and Graeme Turner (eds.), *The Media and Communication in Australia*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, second edition, 2006, p. 97.

[165] For example, Cinesound Productions and Cinesound Review (producers), *Compiled speeches of John Curtin, 1941 – 1945* (newsreels) [hereafter *Compiled speeches*), JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00130/1, 1941-1945; John Curtin, "Radio broadcast to the United States" [hereafter "US radio broadcast"], *DDA*, no. 22, 14 March 1942, pp. 9-13.

[166] Isaiah Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty* [hereafter *Liberty*], Oxford University Press, London, 1969; Isaiah Berlin, *Freedom and Its Betrayal: Six Enemies of Human Liberty* [hereafter *Freedom and its betrayal*], ed. Henry Hardy, Chatto & Windus, London, 2002; Isaiah Berlin, *The Proper Study of Mankind: An Anthology of Essays* [hereafter *The proper study of mankind*], Chatto & Windus, London, 1997.

[167] William A. Galston, "Moral Pluralism and Liberal Democracy: Isaiah Berlin's Heterodox Liberalism" [hereafter "Moral pluralism"], *The Review of Politics*, vol. 71, 2009, pp. 85, 88.

[168] Galston, "Moral pluralism", pp. 96-97.

[169] Isaiah Berlin, *Freedom and its betrayal*, pp. 103-104; Berlin, "From Hope and Fear Set Free", in *The proper study of mankind,* p. 109.

stories only due to the "overriding consideration of security".[170]  In their reminiscences, wartime correspondents stated that they generally supported and upheld their confidentiality agreements with Curtin to safeguard national security.[171]  Occasional media breaches of government censorship are examined later in this thesis, particularly in Chapters 5 and 9.[172]  This thesis argues that while censorship underlay Curtin's media interactions, he based his journalist relationships on values of liberty and a respect for individual rights.

Other related theories on government and the media inform this thesis.  Using the political economy approach, this study will examine the historically close links between news proprietors and leading politicians.[173]  To understand Curtin's media interactions, this study considers the wider historical, political economic context of the news organisations' developments by focusing on patterns of media ownership and control, the links between these institutions and the government, and the production and distribution of information.[174]  As outlined by Ericson et al, a political leader can use the media to be successful in setting news agendas.[175]  The term, agenda setting, refers to the extent to which journalists, editors and publishers prioritise significant news stories to try to influence audiences in "what to think

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[170] Cited in John Curtin, "Communiques–Prime Minister's Statement", *DDA*, no. 81, 19 April 1944, p. 44.  Other sources were: John Curtin, "Duty With Press", *DDA*, no. 81, 19 April 1944, p. 45; John Curtin, "Chief Publicity Censor–Prime Minister's Statement On Action Against Newspapers", *DDA*, no. 81, 19 April 1944, pp. 43-44.

[171] Alexander, "Alexander interview"; Cox, "Cox interview"; Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, p. 78.

[172] See Holt, "Holt interview"; Frederick Thomas Smith, cited in Lloyd and Hall, *Backroom briefings*, p. 228.

[173] Griffen-Foley, *The house of Packer*, p. 123; Scott Fitzgerald, Corporations and Cultural Industries: Time Warner, Bertlesmann, and News Corporation [hereafter Corporations and cultural industries], PhD thesis, Curtin University of Technology, Bentley, 2008; Petersen, *News not views*, pp. 163-166; John Street, *Mass Media, Politics and Democracy* [hereafter *Mass media*], Palgrave, Hampshire and New York, 2001, pp. 10-11; Younger, *Keith Murdoch*, pp. 151-152.

[174] Fitzgerald, Corporations and cultural industries, p. 120; John Sinclair, "The media and communications: Theoretical traditions", in Stuart Cunningham and Graeme Turner (eds), *The Media and Communications in Australia,* Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2002, first edition, pp. 24-29.

[175] Ericson, Baranek and Chan, *Visualizing deviance*, pp. 359-360; Foucault, "Governmentality", pp. 102-103; Foucault, "Technologies of the self", p. 18.

about and what to think", especially during elections.[176]  Rodney Tiffen's insights on journalism as a product of professional routines, "institutional demands and processes" inform this study as well.[177].  According to Tiffen, news is also shaped as a "dynamic element in the relations and actions of participants" including politicians and reporters.[178]  This study investigates Curtin's intimate knowledge and use of predictable journalism routines, such as press deadlines, in order to publicise his media messages.  Given his background as a labour-oriented news editor, he discussed war-related information with the press gallery reporters on a frequent, informal basis to build strong professional relations with journalists.  The theories pertaining to the political economy, agenda setting and news making approaches help to explain how Curtin was able to generate favourable news in the media.

In evaluating the extent to which Curtin promoted positive stories about his administration and minimised negative reports, the theoretical work on "news values" by Johan Galtung, Mari Ruge[179] and other scholars are brought to bear.  As they have demonstrated, journalists share a set of values on the stories that they deem to be "newsworthy" and deserving their attention.[180]  A highly publicised media report has generally fulfilled certain criteria including: it is relevant and clear to the news organisation's audience and will have a high impact on them; it pertains to "power elites", a term that can be defined according to political, economic and cultural factors; it contains particularly negative overtones or remarkably good news,

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[176] W. Lance Bennett, *News: The Politics of Illusion,* Addison Wesley Longman, New York, 2003, p. 6.
[177] Tiffen, *News,* p. 3.
[178] Tiffen, *News,* p. 4.
[179] Johan Galtung and Mari Ruge, "The structure of foreign news: the presentation of the Congo, Cuba and Cyprus crises in four Norwegian newspapers" [hereafter "Foreign news"], *Journal of International Peace Research,* vol. 1, 1965, pp. 64-91.
[180] Richard V. Ericson, "How Journalists Visualize Fact", *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science,* vol. 560, November 1998, pp. 83-95; Stuart Hall, "The determinations of news photographs" [hereafter "News photographs"], in Stanley Cohen and Jock Young (eds), *The Manufacture of News: Deviance, Social Problems and the Mass Media*, Constable and Co, London, 1973, p. 182; Tony Harcup and Deidre O'Neill, "What is News? Galtung and Ruge revisited" [hereafter "News"], *Journalism Studies,* vol. 2, no. 2, 2001, pp. 261-2, 265; Denis McQuail, *Mass Communication Theory,* Sage Publications, London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi, 1994, p. 271; Mickler, Visualising Aboriginality, particularly pp. 22-28; Tunstall, *Journalists*, p. 21.

and it promotes strong visual elements.[181]  These theories will be important when analysing Curtin's ability to persuade news reporters to magnify Australia's role in conflicts and conceal frictions with some Allied leaders, thus accomplishing the Foucauldian task of masking national power.[182]

**Methodology**

This study has pursued a multimethod approach to identify the particular aspects of Curtin's strategies pertaining to the news media of his era, principally the metropolitan, daily press,[183] newsreels,[184] also known as "shorts",[185] and radio (although many Australians at this time referred to the "wireless",[186] this study will use the term, radio).  While the broad theoretical and conceptual approaches to the question are derived from media and communication studies, they are combined with archival research methods developed in the discipline of history.  As discussed earlier, a new examination is made of primary sources, some of which are rarely viewed, including the following: Allied prime ministers' private diaries;[187] reporters'

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[181] Galtung and Ruge, "Foreign news", pp. 65-71; Harcup and O'Neill, "News", pp. 262-264.

[182] Teresa Bergman, "Can Patriotism Be Carved In Stone?: A Critical Analysis Of Mt. Rushmore's Orientation Films", *Rhetoric & Public Affairs,* vol. 11, no. 1, spring 2008, p. 96; Michel Foucault, "Film and Popular Memory: An Interview with Michel Foucault," trans. Martin Jordan, *Radical Philosophy*, vol. 11, 1975, pp. 25, 27.

[183] According to Tiffen, the press was pre-eminent in the sphere of information and enjoyed a "social monopoly".  Tiffen, "The press", p. 97.

[184] Poppy de Souza, "Road to Kokoda (1942)", National Film and Sound Archive [hereafter NFSA], Acton, 2009, retrieved on 20 June 2009 at <http://australianscreen.com.au/titles/road-to-kokoda>; Poppy de Souza, "South-west Pacific (1943)", NFSA, 2009, retrieved on 19 June 2009 at <http://australianscreen.com.au/titles/south-west-pacific>.

[185] Alan Osbiston, "Australian Films Overseas", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Sydney, 18 July 1944, p. 2.

[186] Carl Bridge, "1932: A Hell of a Year by Gerald Stone" (Gerald Stone), *Reviews in Australian Studies*, vol. 1, no. 9, 2006, pp. 1-2, retrieved on 5 December 2010 at <www.nla.gov.au/openpublish/index.php/ras/article/download/416/448>.

[187] This thesis will use the diaries of wartime Canadian Prime Minister, William Lyon Mackenzie King, and the Australian Prime Minister, Robert Menzies, in early 1941.  See King, "Diaries"; A.W. Martin and Patsy Hardy (eds), *Dark and Hurrying Days: Menzies' 1941 Diary* [hereafter *Dark and hurrying days*], NLA, Canberra, 1993.

confidential notes;[188] private cables written by the Australian, British and US leaders;[189] and US General Douglas MacArthur's discussions with the Australian Advisory War Council.[190]   Other research methods include a limited content analysis of selected Curtin texts, a semiotic evaluation of his visual messages, a comparative press analysis and a survey of current journalists.   Through this multimethod approach, this thesis will show that, overall, the media positively portrayed Curtin's groundbreaking foreign policies, and it will provide a detailed analysis of the tactics and strategies that he employed to accomplish this.

To gauge the persuasiveness of his prime ministerial rhetoric in influencing wartime reporters, this study will conduct a limited content analysis of Curtin's keywords in his media and parliamentary addresses.[191]   More specifically, a selected sample of 11 major Curtin addresses will be analysed to identify his key messages (see Appendices 2-3).   The Curtin addresses relate to his wartime foreign policies and include major radio talks, parliamentary speeches and a widely read newspaper editorial.   Curtin gave these 11 addresses from 1941, the first year of his prime ministership, until 1944.   During his final months, he was frequently absent from the parliament due to illness from November 1944 until his death on 5 July 1945.[192]

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[188] Alexander, "Alexander interview"; J.A. Alexander, "Papers 1833-1957" [hereafter "Papers"], NLA, Canberra, Manuscript Collections, NLA acc. no. MS 2389, 1833-1957, transcript np; Harold Cox, "Typescript reports, 1944-1964" [hereafter "Typescript reports"], NLA, Canberra, Manuscript Collections, NLA, MS acc. no. 4554, 1944-1964, transcript np; Lloyd and Hall, *Backroom briefings.*

[189] For example, Winston Churchill to John Curtin, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00869/57, 17 July 1943, p. 6; John Curtin to Winston Churchill, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00869/57, 13 August 1943, pp. 22-23; Franklin D. Roosevelt to John Curtin, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, Hyde Park, 1 June 1942, retrieved on 28 September 2009 at <http://docs.FDRlibrary.marist.edu/psf/box2/a09a01.html>.

[190] For example, Advisory War Council, "MacArthur discussions", pp. 1-2.

[191] Content analysis coding schedules will be used that have been based on research methods described by David L. Altheide and Anders Hansen et al.  See David L. Altheide, *Qualitative media analysis,* Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, 1996; pp. 39-41; Anders Hansen, Simon Cottle, Ralph Negrine and Chris Newbold, *Mass Communication Research Methods* [hereafter *Mass communication*]*,* Macmillan Press, Houndsmill, Basingstoke, Hampshire London, 1998, p. 117.

[192] See (Anon.), "Mr. Curtin's Health: Longer Rest Likely", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 4, JCPML acc. no. 00297/4, 14 June 1945; McLaughlin to Defence Secretariat, NAA, Canberra, A461, R4/1/12, 6 November 1944, p. 65; Frederick Geoffrey Shedden, "Advisory War Council Minutes, Records of Frederick Shedden" [hereafter "AWC minutes"], JCPML, Bentley, vol. 8, JCPML acc. no. 00928/9, 30 November 1944, p. 1.

Although research suggested that he was still able to release statements, announcements and three radio messages during the early half of 1945, he did not give another major broadcast on foreign policy, as he had in 1944.[193]  Therefore this study will focus on the selected 11 texts during significant events of the war. Keywords have been coded or classified in accordance with his representation of Australia's role in the global battles and the post-war world.  Some of the keywords relate to Curtin's portrayal of nationhood and the ways in which he referred to Australia and "country".  Also this analysis measures his use of inclusive language such as "we", "us", "our" and "the people".  Another area of interest is Curtin's use of ideals about "freedom", "liberty", "democracy" and "independence", his vision of the future that included "hope" and a sense of national "unity".  Other keywords pertain to war and defence as well as his government policies relating to the economy and jobs.  Furthermore, this study will investigate the ways in which he represented the world: his use of "civilisation" terms; his references to Britain, "the old country" or "the mother country", and his depiction of a "new world order" involving the US will be examined.  This limited content analysis will identify the main ideas that he communicated to audiences, as well as the ways in which he attempted to inspire them to share his vision for Australia.

To measure the simplicity, accessibility and appeal of his words, the Flesch Reading Ease and Flesch-Kincaid grades of these selected 11 Curtin addresses will be calculated.  The Flesch readability score spans a hundred-point scale.  A higher score indicates the speech includes simple language.  A lower score implies the document is more complex.  The standard recommended writing score is 60 to 70.[194] The other formula, the Flesch-Kincaid score, ranks documents on a school grade level.  The recommended Flesch-Kincaid score for most public documents is about eight, close to the reading level of "middle-brow" newspapers and suitable for an

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[193] JCPML, "Index to John Curtin's speeches in the Digest of Decisions and Announcements and Important Speeches by the Prime Minister, 1941-1945" [hereafter "Index to John Curtin's speeches"], Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01148/1, 2007.  According to this source, Curtin released three radio messages in 1945.  The first two broadcasts focused on the "Third Victory Loan" and were delivered on 12 March and 22 April.  The other radio talk was a recorded message on Empire Day on 24 May.

[194] Lim, "Fireside chats", pp. 445-446.

eighth-grade student.[195]  In the early twentieth century, US educators began a "democratic project" to measure readability and help more immigrants' children to understand secondary school textbooks.[196]  Rudolph Flesch first developed his readability formula as a doctoral thesis in 1943 at Columbia University's Teachers College in New York City.  As a result of the war, the US government became increasingly interested in finding ways to make its reading materials more understandable for adults.[197]  Churchill also sponsored scholarly attempts to devise a universal language, "Basic English", which was to become distinctive for its "brevity, clarity, cogency".[198]  Although his plan was not fulfilled, Roosevelt indicated his interest in "Basic English" to the US Secretary of State, Cordell Hull.[199] The readability of the selected Curtin addresses will be compared with the presidential speeches of Roosevelt, often described by scholars as setting the "gold standard for American political oratory".[200]  Thus the Flesch and Flesch-Kincaid formulas are applied to glean an understanding of whether Curtin's prime ministerial messages were targeted effectively to Australian people, whose average education level was about nine years of schooling.[201]

Along with ascertaining the readability of the 11 major Curtin addresses, his speaking rate will be calculated with the use of the available recorded radio talks

[195] Trevor Day, "Twelve Writing Tips for Administrative Staff", University of Bath, Bath, 2008, retrieved on 27 September 2009 at <www.bath.ac.uk/learningandteaching/resources/TwelveWritingTipsRevisedTD.pdf>.

[196] Louis J. Sirico Jr., "Readability Studies: How Technocentrism Can Compromise Research and Legal Determinations" [hereafter "Readability studies"], *Villanova University School of Law, School of Law Working Paper Series*, The Berkeley Electronic Press, Berkeley, paper 104, 2008, p. 107, retrieved on 8 June 2010 at <http://law.bepress.com/villanovalwps/papers/art104>.

[197] Sirico, "Readability studies", p. 108.

[198] Garay, "Empires of the mind".

[199] Cited in Garay, "Empires of the mind", p. 288.

[200] Cited in Lim, "Fireside chats", p. 438.  This view has been supported in the following: Bonner, *Our recent past,* p. 213; Bradenburg and Braden, "Roosevelt", pp. 520, 522; Link, *American epoch,* p. 383; Daniel Scroop, "The Making of FDR: The Story of Stephen T. Early, America's First Modern Press Secretary" [hereafter "The making of FDR"], *Times Higher Education,* London, 21 November 2008, retrieved on 10 December 2008 at <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?storyCode=402574&sectioncode=26>.

[201] S.R. Carver, *Official Year Book Of The Commonwealth Of Australia, 1941* [hereafter *Year book*], Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, Canberra, no. 34, 1942; Jonathan Kelley and M.D.R. Evans, "Trends In Educational Attainment In Australia" [hereafter "Educational attainment"], *WwA: Worldwide Attitudes*, 26 August 1996, pp. 1-8, retrieved on 27 September 2009 at <http://www.international-survey.org/wwa_pub/articles/hst-ed5.htm>.

from this selected sample.[202]   Analysing emphases and oratorical pacing will help to evaluate his skill as a media communicator.[203]   Expert recommendations have varied on the optimal pace of public speech, with some scholars advising a languid pace of 100 words each minute[204] while other authors advocate 125 words a minute in a formal business setting.[205]   Curtin has been portrayed as a former "street corner speaker",[206] who knew how to make a favourable impression at labour public meetings, "where your voice had to hit the back of the hall".[207]   He also "understood the power of words", the former Labor Prime Minister, Paul Keating, remarked in 2002.[208]   According to the social scientist, Ken Inglis, "at necessary moments during the war, Curtin could speak with a simple and inspiring eloquence".[209]   This description resembles Earnest Bradenburg and Waldo W. Braden's appraisal of Roosevelt's radio talks as being distinct and clear because of his commonly used words, short sentences and his mean rate of speaking that was between 105 words and 110 words each minute.[210]   Another rhetoric scholar, Elvin T. Lim, wrote that FDR spoke an average 117 words a minute during his radio "fireside chats".[211] Comparing the two leaders' speaking rates will indicate whether Curtin continued to

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[202] John Curtin, "General Election ALP Policy Statement", JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00421/2, 26 July 1943, transcript np; John Curtin, "National Broadcast by Prime Minister" [hereafter "National broadcast"], *DDA*, no. 10, 8 December 1941, pp. 19-22; Curtin, "US radio broadcast"; pp. 9-13.

[203] The John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library vouched that the speed had not been altered or artificially manipulated in the selected sample of radio broadcasts that I accessed from the JCPML archives.

[204] Lim, "Fireside chats", p. 458, endnote 42; Peter Kenny, *A Handbook of Public Speaking for Scientists & Engineers*, IOP Publishing Ltd (Institute of Physics Publishing), London, 1988, p. 20.

[205] Cynthia J. Pasquale, "Talking at the speed of confound", *The Denver Post*, Denver, 29 June 2006, retrieved on 10 September 2009 at <http://www.denverpost.com/ci_3991442?source=rss>; Public Broadcasting Service [hereafter PBS], "All About Public Speaking", Falls Church, 2009, retrieved on 27 September 2009 at <http://www.pbs.org/standarddeviantstv/transcript_public.html>.

[206] (Anon.), "Street Corner Speaker to Prime Minister", *The Herald*, Melbourne, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 1, 4 October 1941.

[207] Ken Inglis, "Parliamentary Speech" [hereafter "Parliamentary speech"], *Papers on Parliament*, no. 28, November 1996, p. 53, retrieved on 26 November 2010 at <http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/pubs/pops/index.htm>.

[208] Paul Keating, "An Australian Vision: Foreign Policy Challenges in the 21st Century", JCPML, Bentley, 2002, retrieved on 26 November 2010 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/events/speeches/keating.html>.

[209] Inglis, "Parliamentary speech", p. 53.

[210] Bradenburg and Braden, "Roosevelt", pp. 520, 522.

[211] Lim, "FDR's fireside chats", p. 446.

be "a very fast speaker", as he was described in *The West Australian* in 1916,[212] or if he adjusted his pace later in his radio broadcasts for mass audiences.


Curtin amplified his major messages by filming his talks on wartime newsreels. The principles of semiotics, "the science of signs", will be employed to investigate how he was portrayed in these visual productions.[213]  Although Curtin's wartime prime ministerial predecessors, Robert Menzies and Arthur Fadden, had sponsored morale-boosting films, archival research revealed little newsreel footage of them during this era.[214]  In contrast, Curtin appeared in a "vast" record of moving images, and research suggested they were screened in other Allied countries.[215]  In applying semiotics to these available films, this thesis is concerned with the "signs" that may generate meaning about Curtin's character.  According to semiotic theorists, a sign is composed of a "signifier" and the "signified".  A "signifier", which may include visual images, camera angles, shots, editing techniques or sound, conveys the "signified", the mental impression or the meaning.  With the use of Arthur Asa Berger's semiotic film conventions,[216] it will be ascertained whether the newsreels, including the camera shots, angles, commentaries and associated film techniques, represented Curtin as a heroic, dynamic and strong leader (see Appendices 4-5). This study represents an innovation in applying the analysis of still and moving images to the historical case study of Curtin to evaluate the success of his political communications during wartime.

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[212] Cited in Oliver, *Unity is strength*, p. 66.

[213] Roland Barthes, *Mythologies,* trans. Annette Lavers, Paladin Grafton, London, 1973; Arthur Asa Berger, *Media Analysis Techniques* [hereafter *Media*], Sage Publications, Beverly Hills, London and New Delhi, 1982, p. 14; Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics,* trans. Roy Harris, Open Court, Chicago, 1995; Michel Foucault, "Orders of discourse", trans. Rupert Swyer, *Social Science Information,* vol. 10, no. 2, April 1971, pp. 7-30; Hansen, Cottle, Negrine and Newbold, *Mass communication,* p. 207; Lucy and Mickler, *The war on democracy,* pp. 21-22, 26.

[214] Carol Fallows, *War: Australian Memories in Black and White,* Murdoch Books, Sydney, 2005; NFSA, "Australian Prime Ministers" (fact sheets on Sir Arthur William Fadden and Sir Robert Gordon Menzies), Acton, 2008, retrieved on 3 December 2010 at <http://www.nfsa.gov.au/the_collection/collection_spotlights/apms>.

[215] NFSA, "Australian Prime Ministers" (fact sheet on John Joseph Curtin – hereafter "Curtin fact sheet"), Acton, 2008, retrieved on 3 December 2010 at <http://www.nfsa.gov.au/the_collection/collection_spotlights/apms>.

[216] Berger, *Media*, pp. 38-39; Hansen, Cottle, Negrine and Newbold, *Mass communication,* p. 207.

A second limited content analysis will be conducted to gain an understanding of how news journalists covered selected Curtin addresses and related media events. Curtin's addresses were reported in the following day's newspapers and therefore, an analysis will be made of the specific press coverage in the following metropolitan, mainstream dailies: *The Age* in Melbourne, *The Canberra Times*, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The West Australian* in Perth. These broadsheets were selected because they include more in-depth political reports than the smaller, pictorial tabloids. The content analysis will ascertain the degree of press acceptance of the 11 Curtin addresses by assessing the extent to which journalists reproduced his keywords and messages to public audiences from 1941 to 1944 (see Appendix 6). As he was frequently unwell and away from his prime minister's office in early 1945, the news coverage of two related events during this year will be examined: his return to the parliament on 22 January after an absence of about three months due to health reasons; and his death on 5 July. This analysis will be based on the Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism formula that a news article is deemed "positive" if two-thirds of the statements appear to support a national leader.[217] Further, this study will investigate the following critical factors: whether Curtin was portrayed as the principal source of the newspaper article; whether he was directly quoted in the report extensively; whether he appeared to be setting the news agenda or reacting to criticism; whether his keywords were promoted prominently; and if this story was "re-reportable" and generated follow-up stories.[218] Moreover, other relevant broadsheet and tabloid editorials or leaders, editorial cartoons, photographs, radio coverage and films pertaining to Curtin's media messages will be analysed (see Appendices 3 and 5-7). The outcome of these analyses is that an assessment will be made of the impact of Curtin's public communications on the

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[217] Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism, "Winning The Media Campaign: Methodology", *Journalism.org*, Washington DC, 2008, retrieved on 26 September 2009 at <http://www.journalism.org/node/13314>; PBS (producer), *The Online NewsHour* (television program – transcript), Washington DC, 24 June 2009, retrieved on 26 September 2009 at <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/media/jan-june09/obama_06-24.html>.

[218] Steve Mickler and Alec McHoul, "Sourcing the Wave: Crime Reporting, Aboriginal Youth and The WA Press", *Media International Australia incorporating Culture and Policy*, no. 86, February 1998, p. 136.

press, radio and film teams, who were responsible for relaying and interpreting his messages to media audiences.


As discussed earlier, to gain a comparative understanding of the character of Curtin's mass communication skill within the Allied 1940s milieu, this thesis will contrast his media strategies with those of three other democratic leaders of the era: Churchill, Roosevelt and Mackenzie King.  King's diaries, for instance, reveal insights on his journalist relationships,[219] radio broadcasts[220] and his opinions of Curtin's press interactions during the Australian prime minister's visit to Ottawa in 1944.[221] Moreover, Roosevelt's news interview transcripts show his rapport with journalists.[222]  Similarly Churchill's private cables to Curtin and Roosevelt convey his interest in generating favourable news coverage about his wartime policies.[223] This cross-national comparison will extend to an assessment of their film strategies[224] and censorship.[225]   Specifically, this method will provide an international context to evaluate the closeness of Curtin's media associations and appraise his ability to minimise negative reports and promote positive coverage of his war strategies.

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[219] King, "Diaries", 27 April 1939, p. 454.  Pages will be cited from the online version and not from the original diary pages.

[220] King, "Diaries", 3 September 1939, pp. 923, 925.

[221] King, "Diaries", 1 June 1944, p. 565.

[222] Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Presidential News Conference: Franklin D. Roosevelt" [hereafter "Press conference"], in John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters (eds), *The American Presidency Project* [hereafter *The American presidency project*], Santa Barbara, 1941-1945, retrieved on 19 November 2010 at <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/news_conferences.php>.

[223] Winston Churchill to John Curtin, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00869/57, 16 August 1943, p. 26; Winston Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Messages between Roosevelt & Churchill", JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00796/3, August 1943–February 1944.

[224] Acorn Media (producer), *Churchill's Bodyguard* (documentary), 2006; Library and Archives Canada, "Mackenzie King on the Airwaves and the Silver Screen", Ottawa, 2002, retrieved on 10 December 2008 at <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/king/023011-1070.09-e.html>; Sikorsky, "Churchill"; Universal Studios (producer), *Modern History: Franklin D. Roosevelt – Six Fireside Chats, 1933-1938,* (newsreels), Internet Archive, 1933-1938, retrieved on 24 November 2010 at <http://www.archive.org/details/WorldHistoryFranklinD.Roosevelt-SixFiresideChats1933-1938>.

[225] For example, Kerr, "Press censorship", p. 48; Roosevelt, "Press conference", 8 December 1941, transcript np; Charles Edward Lysaght, "Brendan Bracken: 'The Fantasist Whose Dreams Came True'" [hereafter "Bracken"], *Finest Hour,* The Churchill Centre, no. 113, winter 2001-2002, pp. 14-19; Steele, "Propaganda", p. 1653.

Curtin's public statements will also be contrasted with his private remarks through an examination of his confidential discussions on foreign policies.  His private views will be revealed by a study of top-secret, official cablegrams,[226] Australian Advisory War Council minutes,[227] diary notes,[228] letters[229] and journalists' transcriptions of his off-the-record briefings.  These sources will be valuable for providing insights into Curtin's media dealings because they were written during the war, when the authors did not have the luxury of historical reflection.[230]  Through comparison of Curtin's private and public comments, this study will attempt to ascertain the extent to which he omitted or magnified vital information concerning Australia's wartime role; his ability to use the media to mask his occasional foreign policy disagreements with other Allied leaders; and his skill in persuading journalists to cooperate with the prevailing censorship system and reproduce his main messages pertaining to international relations.

National public opinion polling began in 1941,[231] thus providing data to enable an assessment of Curtin's media messages.  Audiences indicated their support of

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[226] For example, John Curtin to Winston Churchill, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00869/57, 13 August 1943, pp. 22-23; John Curtin to Winston Churchill, NAA, Canberra, A816, 52/302/142, 22 February 1942, pp. 279-280.

[227] The Australian Advisory War Council minutes will be examined in the following sources: Advisory War Council, "Minutes of Advisory War Council Meetings", NAA, Canberra, series no. A5954, 815/1, 16 June 1943-11 May 1944; Advisory War Council, "Records of the Advisory War Council", JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00641/1, 1942; Shedden, "AWC minutes", vols 3-4, 7-8, JCPML acc. no. 00928/4-00928/5, 00928/8-00928/9, 6 August 1941-26 March 1942, 16 June 1943-30 August 1945.

[228] Alexander, "Papers".

[229] For example, Geoff Burgoyne to John Curtin, JCPML, Bentley, N/C. acc. no. 009, 27 March 1942; John Curtin to Geoff Burgoyne, JCPML, Bentley, N/C. acc. no. 010, 20 April 1942; John Curtin to H.S. Mowell, JCPML, Bentley, Bentley, R. acc. no. 005, 6 April 1942; H.S. Mowell to John Curtin, JCPML, Bentley, R. acc. no. 004, 1 April 1942.

[230] Alexander, "Papers"; Cox, "Typescript reports"; Lloyd and Hall, *Backroom briefings.*

[231] Michele Levine and Gary Morgan, "The Power of Newspaper Editorial & Advertising" [hereafter "Newspaper editorial"], *Country Press Association 106th Annual Conference*, Sydney, 2006, retrieved on 20 June 2009 at <www.roymorgan.com>.

Curtin's leadership in a major 1942 poll[232] and during the 1943 election, as well as by writing letters[233] and listening to broadcasts.  For example, one of his direct, international broadcasts was aired by more than 700 US radio stations in 1942 and reached listeners in the British Isles, Canada, Europe and South America.[234]  During this era, press owners disseminated information to readers through a predominantly one-way form of communication.  Yet the "Letters to the Editor" section was a distinctive site, "where the governed are invited to take a governmental posture towards society"; this was a semblance of two-way communication between news producers and readers.[235]  At the time, Australian broadsheets and tabloid publishers showed differing levels of commitment to letters pages.  During the war, *The Canberra Times* rarely featured readers' letters[236] while Brisbane-based *The Courier-Mail* editor, Theodor Bray, spoke of his support for publishing the views of "the little man in the street".[237]  The journalism scholar, Henry Mayer, expressed reservations about assessing such press columns because some ALP supporters might have decided not to bother sending a written note because of their "general conviction" that a conservative editor did not want to publish their views.[238]  Therefore, scholars should approach the analysis of readers' letters with caution.  Moreover, perhaps because of newsprint rationing, letter pages were not a regular, major feature of the

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[232] Several Roy Morgan Research findings were cited as "Australian Public Opinion Polls" in *The Courier-Mail* on 14 August 1942.  (Anon.), "Mr Curtin's Job Pleases People", *The Courier-Mail,* Brisbane, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 2, JCPML acc. no. 00297/2, 14 August 1942.

[233] Reverend Dr A.C. Button, "Australia & Britain", *The Age*, Melbourne, 16 March 1942, p. 2; Mark Talpley, "Tribute From An Elector", *The Age*, Melbourne, 11 December 1942, p. 4; J.J. Mulligan to *The Sydney Morning Herald* editor, NAA, Canberra, CA 12, M1415, 237, 31 December 1942, p. 103; J.J. Mulligan to John Curtin, NAA, Canberra, CA 12, M1415, 237, 1 January 1943, p. 102.

[234] (Anon.), "Broadcast to Americas", *The Age*, Melbourne, 16 March 1942, p. 2; (Anon.), "Dr Evatt's Mission To U.S.A. Not As Medicant, Says Mr. Curtin", *The Canberra Times,* Canberra, 16 March 1942, p. 1; (Anon.), "Pledge To U.S.A.", *The West Australian*, Perth, 16 March 1942, p. 5; John Curtin, "US radio broadcast".

[235] Mickler, Visualising Aboriginality, p. 28.

[236] This statement is based on an examination of the following issues of *The Canberra Times*: 9 December 1941; 29 December 1941; 20 February 1942; 16 March 1942; 9 May 1942; 11 December 1942; 12 February 1943; 27 July 1943; 15 December 1943; 9 May 1944; 18 July 1944; 9 May 1945; 6 July 1945.  These issues were selected because they included news coverage of major events and addresses pertaining to Curtin.

[237] Bray, "Bray interview".

[238] Mayer, *The press*, p. 137.

four wartime broadsheets.[239]  To the degree that relevant wartime readers' letters and recorded opinions were available, they have been included in this study.


To gain some appreciation of Curtin's significance for present-day government-media communications, this study conducted a survey of 21 contemporary political journalists.  As part of a questionnaire, each journalist has been asked for his or her opinion of Curtin's legacy for the Australian public and the news media profession (see Appendices 8a-8d).  As this survey ascertained, most of the respondents knew little about Curtin, implying that his achievements might have been largely forgotten in the contemporary media.  Yet a few senior journalists praised his "intimate", bipartisan and equitable relations with the press gallery, his foreign policy achievements and his ability to create an atmosphere of national unity.[240]  During telephone interviews, some journalists talked about current political practices, such as interactive, question-and-answer interviews[241] and off-the-record discussions,[242] techniques that Curtin initiated (although most respondents did not know this).[243]  This survey, then, provides an indication of Curtin's media legacy as well as the value of his prime ministerial mass communication strategies for modern leaders and journalists.  Through the multimethod approach described earlier, combining archival research, limited content media analyses, semiotic film analyses, questionnaires and interviews, this thesis will build a picture of Curtin's influence on political communications, journalism and the mass media.

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[239] The four broadsheets to be investigated in this limited content analysis are: *The Age*, *The Canberra Times*, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The West Australian.*

[240] Michael Cavanagh, personal communication, 27 January 2010; Correspondent A, confidential personal communication, 30 March 2010; Editor B, confidential personal communication, 24 March 2010; Shane Wright, personal communication, 27 December 2009; Bob Wurth, personal communication, 24 November 2009.

[241] Chief of Staff C, confidential personal communication, 23 March 2010; Peter Kennedy, personal communication, 18 December 2009; Les Welsh, personal communication, 4 December 2009.

[242] Malcolm Farr, personal communication, 12 March 2010; Peter Kennedy, personal communication, 18 December 2009; Glenn Milne, personal communication, 17 November 2009.

[243] Alexander, "Alexander interview"; Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, pp. 77-78.

## Chapter descriptions

To gain insights on how Curtin was able to persuade journalists to promote his foreign policies, Chapter 2 will situate this thesis in relation to the topic's academic field and outline the theoretical approaches underpinning this study.  While a few authors have referred briefly to Curtin's media interactions,[244] I describe in Chapter 2 the theoretical stance of this thesis, which is to show the interrelation of political leaders and news media as governmental processes rather than simply communication processes.  Following the work of Ericson et al, the thesis understands journalism as critical to the governance of modern, administered society.[245]  To this end, Chapter 2 will elaborate in more detail relevant media and cultural theoretical approaches, which have been outlined earlier in this introductory chapter, including Habermas' notion of the public sphere;[246] the concept of news in an administered society, as outlined by Ericson et al;[247] Foucault's writing on "governmentality";[248] Berlin's liberalism theories;[249] the political economy and agenda-setting approaches to news analysis;[250] Rodney Tiffen's insights on journalistic processes, particularly Australian political reporting;[251] as well as the influential list developed by Galtung and Ruge about significant news values.[252] These theories inform the analysis of Curtin's use of mass communication and popular culture strategies.  Chapter 2, then, provides the academic conceptual and theoretical frameworks of this thesis.

Chapter 3 begins with an examination of the development of Australia's main metropolitan dailies, particularly the historical conditions that influenced these companies and contributed to their political outlooks.  It is argued that many

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[244] Griffen-Foley, *The house of Packer*, p. 123; Inglis, *ABC*, pp. 96, 99, 110-112, 117; Lloyd, *Parliament and the press*, pp. 125-157; Lloyd, *Journalist*, pp. 150, 156, 167, 202, 205, 210, 215, 218, 235; Petersen, *News not views*, pp. 163-166; Ward, "The early use of radio", p. 322; Younger, *Keith Murdoch*, pp. 151-152.

[245] Ericson, Baranek and Chan, *Visualizing deviance,* p. 16; Foucault, "Governmentality", pp. 87-104.

[246] Habermas, *The public sphere*.

[247] Ericson, Baranek and Chan, *Visualizing deviance*.

[248] Foucault, "Governmentality", pp. 87-104.

[249] Berlin, *Liberty*; *Freedom and its betrayal*; *The proper study of mankind*.

[250] Fitzgerald, Corporations and cultural industries; Street, *Mass media*.

[251] Tiffen, *News*.

[252] Galtung and Ruge, "Foreign news", pp. 64-91.

prominent media professionals, including Sir Keith Murdoch, shifted their support from Prime Minister Menzies partly because of his authoritarian and dismissive approach towards journalists.[253]  Curtin was able to generate reporters' support through the following initiatives: appointing news executives to federal government positions; developing professional working relations with Murdoch and his news companies, and elevating the status of press gallery journalists by treating them with an egalitarian respect.[254]  Moreover, Elsie Curtin held press conferences in Australia and the US, thereby pioneering direct relationships between a prime minister's wife and international journalists.[255]  Furthermore, Curtin expanded the government's use of popular culture by instigating direct talks to more radio and film audiences at home and in other Allied nations.[256]  Through the use of popular culture symbols, Curtin strove to portray himself as being both a commonsense Australian and a forceful, democratic leader.[257]  He appealed to Australia's "gallant" fighting traditions to promote a sense of national identity.[258]  In sum, Chapter 3 contrasts Curtin's strategies with those of his prime ministerial predecessors and identifies his distinctive use of the press, radio and films.

Chapter 4 conducts a cross-national analysis to investigate the particularity of Curtin's media interactions in comparison with those of three other Allied leaders of

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[253] Alexander, "Alexander interview"; Douglas, "Douglas interview"; Griffen-Foley, "Political opinion polling", p. 43; Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, pp. 62-63, 86.

[254] For example, Alexander, "Alexander interview"; Alexander, "Papers", 21, 27, 28 and 31 August 1943; Griffen-Foley, "Frank Packer", pp. 553-556.

[255] (Anon.), "Impression of U.S.A.: Mrs Curtin Interviewed", *The West Australian*, Perth, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00964/119, 28 April 1944; (Anon.), "Mrs. Curtin Buys Gloves, No Nylons; Prime Minister's Wife Compares Shopping Conditions Here and in Australia", *The New York Times*, New York, 26 April 1944, p. 20; (Anon.), "Mrs Curtin's Racy Story Of Her Trip", *The Argus*, Melbourne, 21 July 1944, p. 8.

[256] For example: (Anon.), "Publicity: Relations with America: Australia Expands", *The Canberra Times,* Canberra, 31 October 1941, p. 4; Cinesound Productions and Cinesound Review, *Compiled speeches*; Curtin, "American relations"; Curtin, "US radio broadcast"; NFSA, "Curtin fact sheet".

[257] Cited in (Anon.), "Australia: Journey Into the World", *Time*, New York, 24 April 1944, retrieved on 30 November 2010 at <http://www.time.com/time/covers/0,16641,19440424,00.html>; (Anon.), "Canberra Hush: A Poignant Scene", *The West Australian*, Perth, 5 July 1945, p. 7; (Anon.), "Mr. Curtin's Tragedy", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Sydney, 6 July 1945, p. 2; (Anon.), "Vale, John Curtin", *The Canberra Times*, Canberra, 6 July 1945, p. 3; Day, "Curtin as hero", pp. 1-3.

[258] John Curtin, "Broadcast by the Prime Minister from London" [hereafter "London broadcast"], *DDA*, no. 81, 8 May 1944, pp. 53-56.

liberal democracies: Churchill, Mackenzie King and Roosevelt.  They shared similar contests and contexts as Curtin because all four men were leaders of free democracies, who needed to persuade and convince mass populations.  I have chosen not to compare him with the dictators of the Axis powers because they used repressive police tactics to transform the public spheres of conquered countries into echo chambers for state propaganda while Curtin developed his relationships with journalists and initiated media strategies to win over Australians to support his leadership.  Similarly to Curtin, these other three Allied leaders had journalism backgrounds and used the media to counteract the Nazi propaganda machines.[259]  As Curtin expanded the prime ministerial press secretary's role,[260] this chapter investigates the role of media advisors during the leaderships of Churchill, King and Roosevelt.  While Roosevelt, or FDR, employed the first US presidential full-time press secretary, neither Churchill nor King created such a position.[261]  None of these three leaders held such frequent and interactive interviews as Curtin's media briefings.[262]  Yet their administrations employed journalists to become government censors and achieve the news media's consensus.[263]  Churchill, King and Roosevelt also expanded the use of radio talks, newsreels and other films to communicate their

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[259] Philip M. Boffey, "Franklin Delano Roosevelt at Harvard", *The Harvard Crimson*, Cambridge, 13 December 1957, retrieved on 8 December 2008 at <http://www.thecrimson.com/article.aspx?ref=108910>; Library and Archives Canada, "The Political Man of Letters: Mackenzie King as Writer and Bookman", 2002, retrieved on 8 December 2008 at <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/king/023011-1010.02-e.html>; Simon Tait, "A war leader's love affair with the press", *The Times,* London, 8 March 2008, p. 80.

[260] Rodgers, "Rodgers interview", transcript np.

[261] Gordon C. Case, "The Lessons of Munich: Mackenzie King's Campaign to Prepare Canada for War", *Canadian Military Journal,* vol. 5, no. 4, 2004-2005, retrieved on 9 December 2008 at <http://www.journal.forces.gc.ca/vo5/no4/history-histoire-eng.asp>; Linda Lotridge Levin, *The Making of FDR: The Story of Stephen T. Early, America's First Modern Press Secretary,* Prometheus Books, New York, 2008; Martinelli and Mucciarone, "Stephen Early", pp. 49-57; Wendy Maxwell, interviewed by James Holland, *James Holland's Second World War Forum*, 2003, retrieved on 9 December 2008 at <http://www.secondworldwarforum.com/my-oral-history-archive/civilians/wendy-maxwell-british>; Moss, "Churchill museum".

[262] (Anon.), "Canada At War", *Time*, New York, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01222/15, 12 June 1944, p. 16; Douglas, "Douglas interview"; Lloyd, *Parliament and the press*, p. 126; Richard M. Perloff, *Political Communication: Politics, Press, and Public in America,* Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, New Jersey and London, 1998, p. 39.

[263] For example, Kerr, "Press censorship", p. 48; Roosevelt, "Press conference", 8 December 1941; Lysaght, "Bracken", pp. 14-19; Steele, "Propaganda", p. 1653.

goals to public audiences.[264]  They were often portrayed as celebrities during the war, but they left different legacies for their nations' media.  Since their private documents were preserved carefully by their executors, Churchill and Roosevelt were shown to be great communicators and role models in several contemporary news outlets.[265]  It seemed that neither Churchill nor Roosevelt kept a diary that would become subject to media scrutiny later.  After the publications of King's diaries, Canadian journalists argued whether they should have been more interrogative towards the prime minister during the war.[266]  To provide an international context to evaluate the closeness of Curtin's media associations, Chapter 4 contrasts the roles of other Allied democratic leaders' press secretaries, news conferences, radio talks, newsreels, censorship policies and their media images.

Following this cross-national comparison, Chapter 5 investigates in more detail the role of the Australian prime ministerial press secretary, news interviews, radio, newsreels and censorship in Curtin's wartime administration.  This chapter evaluates the reforms, innovations, trends and developments in Australian journalism that contributed to Curtin's media interactions.  Applying a conceptual approach that sees journalism as a product of "institutional demands and processes",[267] this chapter asserts that Curtin, as a former labour newspaper editor, was able to generate positive news because he understood the media profession's everyday work routines.  This

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[264] King, "Diaries", 3 September 1939, pp. 923, 925; Steven Schoenherr, "History of the Newsreel", University of San Diego, San Diego, 2008, retrieved on 10 December 2008 at <http://history.sandiego.edu/gen/filmnotes/newsreel.html>; Sikorsky, "Churchill", pp. 30-36.

[265] (Anon.), "Churchill 'greatest PM of 20th Century'", *BBC News World Edition*, London, 4 January 2000, retrieved on 26 May 2009 at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/575219.stm>; PBS (producer), *The Online NewsHour* (television program – transcript),Washington DC, 27 November 2008, retrieved on 12 December 2008 at <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/white_house/july-dec08/historians_11-27.html>; Patrick T. Reardon, "FDR books on Obama's nightstand", *Chicago Tribune,* Chicago, November 18, 2008, retrieved on 11 December 2008 at <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/politics/obama/chi-FDR-barack-obama-books-1118,0,4563603.story>; Edward Rothstein, "Churchill, Heroic Relic or Relevant Now?", *The New York Times,* New York, 29 March 2003, retrieved on 11 December 2008 at <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9505E6D71639F93AA15750C0A9659C8 B63>; *Time,* New York, vol. 172, no. 21, 24 November 2008, front cover.

[266] Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (producer), *Front Page Challenge* (television broadcast)*,* Toronto, 27 March 1978, retrieved on 10 December 2008 at <http://archives.cbc.ca/version_print.asp?page=1&IDLan=1&ID.C.lip=7244&IDDossier=0 &IDCat=335&ID.C.atPa=260>.

[267] Tiffen, *News,* p. 3.

chapter, therefore, outlines the processes involving news gathering, processing and production.  Curtin sponsored major professional media reforms, such as the Australian Journalists' Association Code of Ethics 1944,[268] and instigated "off-the-record" interviews.[269]  He also initiated media developments such as releasing more important announcements on the radio, rather than in the press;[270] broadcasting radio talks directly to US audiences;[271] insisting the ABC should adopt more Australian-oriented programs;[272] funding a film-processing laboratory, and opening a publicity association in New York to promote more local films to overseas audiences.[273] Many of these initiatives became established media procedures.  Despite a brief censorship dispute during Curtin's absence in 1944 and a nine-day Sydney journalists' strike during the same year, he mainly achieved reporters' cooperation.[274]  This Labor prime minister's media strategies appeared to resemble those of Roosevelt more closely than the policies of Churchill and King.  Yet the British, Canadian and the US leaders did not seem to invest as much time and trust in journalists as did Curtin.  Chapter 5 delves into the day-to-day news operations of Australia's wartime press, radio and film professions to ascertain the impact of Curtin's strategies on the media.

Chapter 6 focuses on Curtin's endeavours to gain journalists' endorsement for his foreign policies from late 1941 until 1942.  The chapter begins with his journalist interactions when it is announced that he will be appointed as the prime minister in October 1941.  Even though he had sought a federal parliamentary seat since 1914, he seemed surprised by the appointment, according to *The Sun-News Pictorial* Canberra correspondent, Harold Cox.[275]  News owners published editorials that

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[268] Lloyd, *Journalist*, p. 229.
[269] Alexander, "Alexander interview".
[270] (Anon.), "A Lesson To Be Learnt", *The Sun*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 2, 20 March 1942.
[271] JCPML, "Index to John Curtin's speeches".
[272] Inglis, *ABC*, pp. 96, 99, 110-112, 117.
[273] (Anon.), "Publicity: Relations With America: Australia Expands", *The Canberra Times*, Canberra, 31 October 1941, p. 4; Curtin, "American relations", pp. 13-14.
[274] Cox, "Cox interview"; Holt, "Holt interview"; Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, pp. 78, 96-105.
[275] Cox, "Cox interview".

conveyed their support for the new prime minister.[276]  The chapter will continue to analyse his media strategies during the following events: Australia's declaration of war against Japan in December 1941; his appeals for US military assistance; the Japanese bombings on the city of Darwin in the Northern Territory in February 1941; his disagreement with Churchill over the allocation of Australian troops; Australia's role in overseas conflicts including the Battle of the Coral Sea and fighting on the Kokoda Track in New Guinea; as well as the national conscription debate.  This chapter contains a limited content analysis to identify Curtin's keywords and messages in six major addresses that he gave during this period.  Further, the readability scores are calculated for these six addresses and, when possible, the speaking rates are given.  This content analysis of Curtin's communications has been elaborated in the methodology section earlier in this introductory chapter.

More specifically, Chapter 6 analyses the following texts:

1. Curtin's announcement of war with Japan on 8 December 1941.  This announcement – the first independent declaration of war made by an Australian prime minister – was broadcast on the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) radio to national audiences.[277]

2. The prime minister's press article on "Australia looks to America".  This newspaper editorial was published in *The Herald*, a Melbourne-based newspaper, on 27 December 1941.[278]

3. His parliamentary speech on 19 February 1942 to announce the Japanese bombings on Darwin.[279]

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[276] Supportive press editorials were published to announce Curtin's prime ministerial appointment in Australian metropolitan dailies including the following: *The Advertiser*, *The Age*, *The Argus*, *The Brisbane Telegraph*, *The Canberra Times*, *The Courier-Mail*, *The Daily Mirror*, *The Herald*, *The Mercury*, *The Sun*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The West Australian*.  See *Scrapbooks,* no. 1, 4-9 October 1941.

[277] Curtin, "National broadcast", pp. 19-22.

[278] John Curtin, "The Task Ahead", *The Herald*, Melbourne, cited in JCPML, Bentley, 27 December 1941, retrieved on 25 January 2011 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/pmportal/text/00468.html>.

[279] John Curtin, "Attack On Darwin", *DDA*, no. 19, 19 February 1942, p. 9.

4. His radio talk to American audiences that was broadcast from the Canberra radio station, 2CY, to the US on 14 March 1942.  The radio broadcast also reached listeners in the British Isles, Canada, Europe and South America.[280]

5. His parliamentary announcement of the Battle of the Coral Sea on 8 May 1942.[281]

6. The prime minister's parliamentary address about the Kokoda campaign on 10 December 1942.[282]

Along with providing an analysis of Curtin's public communications in 1941 and 1942, Chapter 6 examines his private discussions with military and political leaders through archival research of cable telegrams,[283] Cabinet minutes,[284] reporters' notes,[285] oral histories[286] and other secret diplomatic documents.[287]  Also this chapter conducts a limited content analysis of relevant news coverage of the selected Curtin texts, as explained earlier in the methodology section.  Furthermore, a semiotic analysis has been conducted to examine relevant newsreels, editorial cartoons and photographs.  Thus in this chapter, it is argued that on the whole, the media favourably reproduced Curtin's inclusive key messages about the need for civic "duty"[288] as he prepared to expand Australia's conscription policies.

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[280] Curtin, "US radio broadcast", pp. 9-13.

[281] John Curtin, "Naval Engagement – Coral Sea" [hereafter "Coral Sea"], *DDA*, no. 28, 8 May 1942, pp. 4-5.  This study will consider two separate announcements made by Curtin in the parliament on 8 May 1942.  In the transcripts of the same date, the *DDA* also included texts of two communiqués, which were not included in this analysis.

[282] John Curtin, "State Of The War", *DDA,* no. 47, 10 December 1942, pp. 17-24.

[283] For example, Winston Churchill to John Curtin, NAA, Canberra, A816, 52/302/142, 20 February 1942, p. 285; John Curtin to Winston Churchill, NAA, Canberra, A816, 52/302/142, 22 February 1942, pp. 279-280.

[284] Advisory War Council, "MacArthur discussions", 26 March-17 June 1942; Advisory War Council, "AWC minutes", 1942; Shedden, "AWC minutes", vols 3-4, JCPML acc. no. 00928/4-00928/5, 6 August 1941-26 March 1942.

[285] Alexander, "Papers", 1941-1942; Lloyd and Hall, *Backroom briefings*, pp. 49-123.

[286] Alexander, "Alexander interview"; Commins, "Commins interview"; Cox, "Cox interview"; Fraser, "Fraser interview"; John Frith, interviewed by Shirley McKechnie [hereafter "Frith interview"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01064/1, 30 April-1 May 1994, transcript np; Reid, "Reid interview"; Rodgers, "Rodgers interview".

[287] For example, Franklin D. Roosevelt to John Curtin, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, Hyde Park, 1 June 1942, retrieved on 28 September 2009 at <http://docs.FDRlibrary.marist.edu/psf/box2/a09a01.html>; Franklin D. Roosevelt to Winston Churchill, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00719/1/11, 22 March 1942.

[288] Curtin, "Coral Sea", pp. 4-5.  Refer to: *The Age*, *The Canberra Times*, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The West Australian*, 9 May 1942.

Chapter 7 uses the same multimethod approach to analyse three major media events in Australia in 1943.  This chapter will continue the content analysis of Curtin's keywords and messages by examining the following texts:

1. His parliamentary address on 11 February 1943 that announced the imposition of military conscription beyond Australian territorial limits.[289]
2. His radio broadcast on 26 July 1943 to promote his party's achievements and policies during the federal election campaign.[290]
3. His speech on the state of the war at the Labor Party's federal conference in Canberra on 14 December 1943.[291]

Additionally, an evaluation is made of the impact of Curtin's messages on the news media by analysing relevant press, radio and film coverage.  This chapter asserts that journalists responded favourably to his 1943 foreign policy statements that were aimed at strengthening British Commonwealth collaboration and Australia's new alliance with the US.

Curtin's global communications expanded in 1944, and Chapter 8 analyses his ability to publicise Australia's war achievements to international audiences during his visits to Roosevelt in the US, Churchill in England and Mackenzie King in Ottawa.  A cross-national comparison is made of the four Allied leaders' media strategies during their 1944 meetings, as well as Elsie Curtin's press statements in the US.  Chapter 8 analyses the following Curtin texts:

1. His radio broadcast to British listeners on 8 May 1944 to stress his approval of the "Beat Hitler First" strategy and galvanise their support to defend Australia in the Pacific war.[292]
2. His parliamentary speech on 17 July 1944 to announce the availability of "large and powerful" Allied forces, enabling more Australian troops to

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[289] John Curtin, *Commonwealth of Australia: Parliamentary Debates* (hereafter *CPD),* vol. 173, 11 February 1943, pp. 592-596.
[290] John Curtin, "General Election ALP Policy Statement", JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00421/2, 26 July 1943, transcript np.
[291] John Curtin, "State Of The War", *DDA*, no. 70, 14 December 1943, pp. 31-36.
[292] Curtin, "London broadcast", pp. 53-56.

work in "economic services" at home and alleviate a national food shortage.[293]

As this chapter has demonstrated, the resultant news coverage of these two speeches was favourable.  Journalists generally cooperated with Curtin's attempts to magnify Australia's role in the Pacific war even as US troops led the final victories against Japanese forces.  Curtin's international mass communication strategies have been contrasted with Menzies' more distant media interactions during his visit to Allied countries as the prime minister in 1941.[294]

Chapter 9 begins by examining Curtin's attempts to focus media attention on Australia's military role in the final stages of the Pacific war as he increasingly struggled with personal health problems.  He attempted to divert news coverage from political tensions to his foreign policy priorities including publicising Australia's involvement in the Allied advancement towards Japan, counteracting MacArthur's US-oriented public relations unit, campaigning for justice for the nation's prisoners of war and securing an "effective voice"[295] in the United Nations.  In early 1945 he was frequently ill and sometimes appointed colleagues to act as the prime minister. This chapter will examine media reports about his return to the parliament on 22 January 1945 after about three months' absence due to illness, as well as his death later that year.  This investigation provides insights into Australian news reporters' consensus to present him as the nation's legitimate leader in the early months of 1945 until his death about a month before Japan's surrender.[296]  Similarly to US press reports about Roosevelt's health in early 1945, the Australian media cooperated with the government to assure citizens that Curtin would recover from his illness.  As

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[293] John Curtin, "Meeting of Prime Ministers – Australian Prime Minister's Report", *DDA*, no. 84, 17 July 1944, pp. 28-44.

[294] This comparison will be based on sources including: Campbell, "Diary"; Martin and Hardy, *Dark and hurrying days.*

[295] John Curtin, "Prime Minister's Statement, February, 1944", *DDA*, no. 75, 9 February 1944, p. 19.

[296] For example, (Anon.), "Mr. Curtin's Health: Longer Rest Likely", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 4, JCPML acc. no. 00297/4, 14 June 1945; Clive Turnbull, "Mr Curtin And The Nation's Future", *The Herald*, Melbourne, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 4, 24 May 1945.

US correspondents had portrayed Roosevelt's death as a shock to Americans,[297] similarly many Australians were reportedly astonished by the loss of Curtin.[298]  In this chapter, it is argued that Australia's senior federal political journalists largely supported Curtin's desire to remain as the prime minister in the final year before his death; they cooperated with national security requirements to help conceal the news about his ill health.


Chapter 10 uses questionnaires and interviews, as described earlier in this chapter, to gain some appreciation of Curtin's significance for present-day government-media communications.  This study conducts a survey of 21 current political journalists to ascertain their opinions of Curtin as well as more contemporary prime ministerial media strategies.  Of the survey respondents, 11 journalists shared their views in telephone interviews[299] and another three editors returned completed questionnaires as part of this thesis.[300]  Chapter 10 argues that Curtin's innovative use of media conferences, news briefings, confidential interviews and relatively new audiovisual technology have now become accepted conventions practised by politicians to communicate with journalists.  Successive Australian leaders have continued to use and develop many Curtin journalism initiatives to communicate more directly to public audiences.  Among a small minority of respondents, who were the more senior editors, Curtin is a journalism figure and a

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[297] Meghan O'Shaughnessy, "The Hidden Campaign: FDR's Health and the 1944 Election (review)", (Hugh E. Evans), *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* [hereafter "FDR's health"], vol. 6, no. 4, winter 2003, pp. 792-794.

[298] (Anon.), "A People's Judgement", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Sydney, 6 July 1945, p. 3; (Anon.), "Nation Loses Her Leader", *Truth*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 4, 8 July 1945; (Anon.), "Opinion-He Was A Good Man", *The Daily Mirror*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 4, 5 July 1945.

[299] They were Andrew Bolt (*Herald Sun*); Paul Bongiorno (Network Ten); Tony Eastley (Australian Broadcasting Corporation Radio); Malcolm Farr (*The Daily Telegraph*); Peter Kennedy (Australian Broadcasting Corporation Television); Glenn Milne (*The Australian*); David Speers (Sky News); Les Welsh (Curtin FM); the author and former Australian Broadcasting Corporation Radio news editor Bob Wurth; and two others, Editor B and Chief of Staff C, who requested confidentiality.

[300] They were Australian Broadcasting Corporation Radio Australia correspondent Michael Cavanagh; *The West Australian* economics editor Shane Wright; and another journalist, Correspondent A, who asked not to be named.

founding father in their profession.[301]   Yet most journalists knew little of Curtin's leadership and his mass media strategies.   The survey findings indicate that most journalists are not conscious of their own profession's history and of its leading lights.   These findings support those of previously published research that there has been little written by way of a history of Australian journalism.[302]   This thesis aims to contribute towards the development of this needed history.   Thus the survey findings in Chapter 10 allows for this thesis to build a picture of the legacy left by Curtin.

As the concluding chapter, Chapter 11 marshals the findings of the previous chapters to assert that Curtin was a successful and innovative media strategist.   These findings extend to his initiatives in news statements, international radio broadcasts and newsreel appearances.   He frequently used inclusive public language, an impersonal characterisation of the war enemy and attempted to create a sense of national unity, balancing his calls for civic "duty" by appealing to liberty ideals.[303] By the time of the Allied advance in 1944, his tone became more optimistic as he invited Australian people to establish a national "purpose" in the "new world" order.[304]   While Curtin's radio talks were slightly intellectual and faster than the recommended standards, they were not beyond the comprehension of working-class listeners, given the average education levels at the time.[305]   Moreover, this thesis argues that Curtin communicated more frequently to radio listeners than did Roosevelt, who was recognised for his ready acceptance and use of relatively new

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[301] Editor B, confidential personal communication, 24 March 2010; Shane Wright, personal communication, 27 December 2009; Bob Wurth, personal communication, 24 November 2009.

[302] Ann Curthoys, Julianne Schultz, and Paula Hamilton, "A history of Australian journalism, 1890 to the present: report on a research project", *Australian Studies in Journalism*, no. 2, 1992, p. 45; John Henningham, cited in Denis Cryle, "Australian newspaper industry: Intercolonial perspectives", *Australian Studies in Journalism*, no. 1, 1992, p. 101; Margaret Van Heekeren, "Who's Gough Whitlam? What journalism graduates don't know about the past and what news editors want them to know", *Australian Journalism Review*, vol. 27, no. 1, 2005, pp. 209-218.

[303] Curtin, "Coral Sea", pp. 4-5; "US radio broadcast", pp. 9-13.

[304] Curtin, "London broadcast", pp. 53-56; "Prime ministers' meeting", pp. 28-44.

[305] S.R. Carver, *Year book*; Kelley and Evans, "Educational attainment".

media technology.[306]  This study has calculated that the selected sample of 11 Curtin texts received mainly positive news coverage in *The Age*, *The Canberra Times*, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The West Australian.*  At least 12 wartime senior journalists affirmed in their historical reminiscences that he was a great prime minister.[307]  Furthermore, this thesis argues that film teams cooperated with Curtin to create the appearance of a relationship between him and the moviegoers watching his newsreel images.  After he practised different gestures, postures and words, the film teams edited series of eye-level close-ups and medium shots to convey an intimate, personal connection between the prime minister and cinema audiences.[308]  These media strategies assisted him as he strove to secure Australia's role in the post-war world while publicly masking his occasional disagreements with other Allied leaders.

**Conclusion**

This introductory chapter has outlined the methodological and theoretical frameworks of this thesis to answer the research question: how successful was Curtin in persuading the predominantly conservative news media to promote his wartime views?  The central theories informing this thesis are based on the insights that journalism is a critical part of social governance; that news is a governmental function within an "administered society".[309]

This thesis uses a multimethod approach to analyse the keywords, readability and speaking rates of selected Curtin public communication texts and the extent to

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[306] Bonner, *Our recent past,* p. 213; Bradenburg and Braden, "Roosevelt", pp. 520, 522; Lim, "FDR's fireside chats", p. 438; Link, *American epoch,* p. 383; Scroop, "The making of FDR".

[307] Australian wartime journalists praised Curtin in their oral histories including: Alexander, "Alexander interview"; Bray, "Bray interview"; Chamberlain, Chamberlain interview"; Commins, "Commins interview"; Cox, "Cox interview"; Davidson, "Davidson interview"; Douglas, "Douglas interview"; Ewing, "Ewing interview"; Fraser, "Fraser interview"; Holt, "Holt interview"; Reid, "Reid interview"; Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, p. 82.

[308] For example, ScreenSound Australia, *Parliament in Session* (newsreel), JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00876/4, 1944.

[309] Ericson, Baranek and Chan, *Visualizing deviance*, p. 16; Mickler, Visualising Aboriginality, pp. 20-21.

which his messages were reproduced by the media to news audiences.  A semiotic analysis builds a picture of Curtin's media image in newsreels, press photographs and editorial cartoons.  Curtin's public speaking is contrasted with his private statements and behind-the-scene relationships, as revealed in confidential Allied leaders' cables, secret wartime diaries, Advisory War Council minutes and oral histories.  On this basis of the material, Curtin's private discussions are compared with his public image, as revealed in media interviews, press statements and films. His media strategies are contrasted with those of his Australian prime ministerial predecessors, particularly Menzies during his prime ministership from 1939 to 1941. This results in an assessment of Curtin's ability to minimise negative reports and promote positive news coverage of his foreign policies.  The thesis aims to demonstrate that Curtin's impact on political communications is evident today.  He has bestowed a powerful legacy for political journalism and government-media relations, although it seems many journalists are unaware that they are benefiting from the strategies that he created.

# Chapter 2

## Media and cultural conceptual approaches

This chapter will discuss the theoretical and conceptual literature that informs how and why the media cooperated with Curtin in Australia's liberal democratic wartime society.  These theories will help to establish a critical framework within which to interpret and understand the interactions between Curtin and news organisations in the wider historical, political and social contexts of the expanding mass media.  More specifically, this chapter elaborates the theoretical approaches on the following related topics: the notion of the public sphere; the social function of journalists; the state's role towards citizens; how liberal-democratic governments govern; how political leaders use the news media; the semiotics of governments' visual images and language; and the significance of news values and processes.  The three central concepts that inform my thesis are: Jürgen Habermas' notion of the public sphere;[1] the governmental function of news in an administered society, as outlined by Richard V. Ericson, Patricia M. Baranek and Janet B. L. Chan, who were influenced by Michel Foucault;[2] and Isaiah Berlin's discourse of political liberalism.[3]  While this thesis is no sense a systematic Foucauldian analysis, it is nonetheless worthwhile to discuss Foucault's concept of "governmentality" because a) it deeply informed Ericson et al's concept of news in an administered society and b) it can help to provide insights into the modern character of governance in general.[4]  Also I will examine these related terms and concepts: the political economy and agenda-setting

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[1] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* [hereafter *The public sphere*], MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1989.

[2] Richard V. Ericson, Patricia M. Baranek and Janet B. L. Chan, *Visualizing Deviance: A Study of News Organizations* [hereafter *Visualizing deviance*], Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1987.

[3] Isaiah Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty* [hereafter *Liberty*], Oxford University Press, London, 1969; Isaiah Berlin, *Freedom and Its Betrayal: Six Enemies of Human Liberty* [hereafter *Freedom and its betrayal*], ed. Henry Hardy, Chatto & Windus, London, 2002; Isaiah Berlin, *The Proper Study of Mankind: An Anthology of Essays* [hereafter *The proper study of mankind*], Chatto & Windus, London, 1997.

[4] Michel Foucault, "Governmentality" [hereafter "Governmentality"], in Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller (eds), *The Foucault Effect: Studies In Governmentality: With Two Lectures By And An Interview With Michel Foucault,* The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1991.

approaches to news analysis;[5] Rodney Tiffen's insights into journalistic processes, particularly Australian political reporting;[6] the semiotic analytic approaches of Ferdinand de Saussure, Arthur Asa Berger and other scholars;[7] as well as the influential list developed by Johan Galtung and Mari Ruge about significant news values.[8]  These key conceptual and theoretical approaches to the study of journalism, media and social governance inform the analysis of Curtin's use of journalism strategies and popular culture.

**Engaging more reporters in public spheres**

The theory of "the public sphere", a historic domain of rational deliberation including the government, the citizenry and media, assists us to understand the role of journalism in governmental affairs.[9]  In his book, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (1989), the Frankfurt School social theorist, Jürgen Habermas, traces the origins of the public sphere to the ancient Greek city state and the *polis* of free citizens.  In the Hellenic model, this social space became "a realm of freedom and permanence".[10]  By the 1789 French Revolution, the public sphere was structured by the newspaper,

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[5] Scott Fitzgerald, Corporations and Cultural Industries: Time Warner, Bertlesmann, and News Corporation [hereafter Corporations and cultural industries], PhD thesis, Curtin University of Technology, Bentley, 2008; John Street, *Mass Media, Politics and Democracy* [hereafter *Mass media*], Palgrave, Hampshire and New York, 2001, pp. 10-11.

[6] Rodney Tiffen, *News & Power* [hereafter *News*], Allen & Unwin, Sydney, Wellington, London and Boston, 1989.

[7] Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* [hereafter *Mythologies*], trans. Annette Lavers, Paladin Grafton, London, 1973; Arthur Asa Berger, *Media Analysis Techniques* [hereafter *Media*], Sage Publications, Beverly Hills, London and New Delhi, 1982, pp. 38-39; Michel Foucault, "Orders of discourse" [hereafter "Discourse"], trans. Rupert Swyer, *Social Science Information,* vol. 10, no. 2, April 1971, pp. 7-30; Niall Lucy and Steve Mickler, *The War on Democracy: Conservative Opinion in the Australian Press* [hereafter *The war on democracy*], University of Western Australia Press, Crawley, 2006, pp. 21-22, 26; Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* [hereafter *General linguistics*], trans. Roy Harris, Open Court, Chicago, 1995.

[8] Johan Galtung and Mari Ruge, "The structure of foreign news: the presentation of the Congo, Cuba and Cyprus crises in four Norwegian newspapers" [hereafter "Foreign news"], *Journal of International Peace Research,* vol. 1, 1965, pp. 64-91.

[9] Juho Rahkonen, "Mapping Media and Communication Research" [hereafter "Mapping research"], Australian Communication Research Centre, Department of Communication, Helsingin Sanomat Foundation, University of Helsinki, Helsinki, 2007, p. 58, retrieved on 15 February 2009 at <http://www.valt.helsinki.fi/blogs/crc/ReportAustralia.pdf>.

[10] Habermas, *The public sphere*, pp. 3-4.

particularly by the rise of political news journals in Paris.  At this time, it was recognised that in order to create a truly "public" opinion, the mass media needed to be a "linkage" between two domains, between personal and official opinions.[11]  As political and economic motives increasingly influenced the press publishers, their papers became ideologically motivated, the "carriers and leaders of public opinion" and "instruments in the arsenal of party politics".[12]  Ever more publishers in Great Britain and the United States were moving from overt ideological positions to entrepreneurships dealing in advertisements during the nineteenth century.  The growth of newspaper advertisements coincided with the establishment of a bourgeois, constitutional state and the legalisation of the political, public sphere in the nineteenth century.  As publishers increasingly concentrated on commercial opportunities, they became "manipulable" and adversely affected by their companies' advertising departments, according to Habermas.[13]

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, large newspaper syndicates emerged, including those owned by William Randolph Hearst in the US and Lord Northcliffe in London.  These monopolistic press organisations led to the "homogenization of news services" as newspaper companies shared printing plates and used factories to produce their inserts.[14]  The dominance of advertising resulted in lower newspaper prices, the mass "penny press" and the "depoliticization" of editorial content.[15]  By the 1880s, literary journals were overshadowed by cheap, sensationalist and popular newspapers with yellow-coloured comics that were dubbed "yellow journalism".  The techniques of the cartoon, news picture and human-interest story emerged from this genre of the weekly press, which "was as optically effective as it was undemanding on the literary level".[16]  At about the end

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[11] Habermas, *The public sphere,* pp. 181, 183-184, 245-248.

[12] Habermas, *The public sphere,* p. 182.  Indeed, Curtin himself worked as a journalist with precisely this form of newspaper, including *The Westralian Worker*, a labour movement publication. See "Personal papers of John Curtin family", JCPML, Bentley, SER acc. no. 0207, 1906-1988, retrieved on 5 July 2008 at <http://dtl.lis.curtin.edu.au/F/?func=direct&doc_number=000000525&current_base=era01web>.

[13] Habermas, *The public sphere,* pp. 184-185.

[14] Habermas, *The public sphere,* pp. 186-187.

[15] Habermas, *The public sphere,* p. 169.

[16] Habermas, *The public sphere,* p. 168.

of the nineteenth century, the US form of mass press became dominant throughout the European continent and it was "designed predominantly to give the masses in general access to the public sphere".[17]  Despite the prevalence of yellow journalism, traditional elites and social reformers criticised the popular news content for hampering "the ability of the public to engage in sustained or complex thought or deliberation".[18]  Many people in the media profession, including John Curtin, sought to develop newspapers that would involve more readers in political discussions in the early twentieth century.[19]  As editor of the *The Westralian Worker*, Curtin argued that the media might have a positive, informative and educational role.  He wrote in a 1922 editorial:

> The power of the press is greater than that of the Caesars of the school books, or the statesmen of our existing Legislatures.  It shapes and moulds the thought of millions, even as the potter shapes the clay spinning on his wheel.[20]

While working at his Perth newspaper office and through his involvement with the state's AJA, he became part of a broader movement that had emerged in western societies at the turn of the twentieth century as journalists sought to improve their professional standing by founding press clubs, associations, codes of ethics, unions and also schools of journalism to teach students how to develop respected careers.[21]  Curtin recognised the enormous opportunities offered by the media to influence mass opinions more than 20 years before he became the prime minister.

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[17] Habermas, *The public sphere,* pp. 169.

[18] Kevin G. Barnhurst and John Nerone, "Journalism History" [hereafter "Journalism history"], in Karin Wahl-Jorgensen and Thomas Hanitzsch (eds), *The Handbook of Journalism Studies*, Routledge, New York and Abingdon, 2009, pp. 20-21.

[19] During the latter years of the nineteenth century and the early half of the twentieth century, the following news publications began to be published to provide more analyses of current events: *International Herald Tribune* (1887); *The Christian Science Monitor* (1908); *Time* (1923); and *Newsweek* (1933).

[20] John Curtin, "The Editor Writes A Message", *The Westralian Worker*, Perth, 17 March 1922, retrieved on 8 October 2009 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/journalist/worker2.html>.

[21] Barnhurst and Nerone, "Journalism history", p. 21.

With the rise of the relatively new media of the twentieth century – film, radio and television – politicians became increasingly interested in attempts "to sell politics" to public audiences.  Between the two world wars, public relations strategies were developed by some of the largest US enterprises.  The "opinion management" methods became useful to Roosevelt to ensure a "national consensus" when the US entered the war in December 1941; however, the techniques were not diffused widely outside that country until after the war.  As a result, the industry of market and opinion research became prevalent after the upheavals of World War II.  According to Habermas, the cutting edge of the modern public sphere was in the US, where it was dominated by middle-class control and the consumption of the flow of cultural materials, such as popular films.  The mass media expanded their influence and changed the concept of the public sphere; increasingly distinctions were blurred between the private and public domains, Habermas wrote.[22]  Journalism was transformed into powerful mass media monopolies that were deemed to shape public opinion.

Although Habermas has pessimistically traced the decline of "rational-critical debate"[23] and the rise of commercialised, profit-maximising mass media, other authors have written that the news may encourage audiences to participate in public life.[24]  This section will examine scholarly analyses of the public sphere to help this thesis to determine how communication was facilitated between the Curtin government and the media by formal and informal relationships.  While Habermas' theoretical account became very influential among researchers, it has been subject to critical evaluation in media studies and political science fields.  The theory has been challenged for idealising the historical, bourgeois public sphere, which was dominated by wealthy men and excluded the participation of women and working people.[25]  For example, the German film director, Alexander Kluge, and the philosopher and social theorist, Oskar Negt, discuss the possibilities of an

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[22] Habermas, *The public sphere*, pp. 181-216.
[23] Habermas, *The public sphere*, p. 184.
[24] John Hartley, *Popular Reality: Journalism, Modernity, Popular Culture* [hereafter *Popular reality*], Arnold, London and New York, 1996, pp. 71, 72, 234; Ian Ward, "The Press, Television and the Public Sphere" [hereafter "The public sphere"], in Ian Ward (ed.), *Politics of the media,* Macmillan, South Melbourne, 1995, p. 12.
[25] Ward, "The public sphere", pp. 13-15.

"oppositional" public sphere, influenced by workers.[26]  Feminist literary theorist,
Rita Felski, expands this concept of the public sphere to concentrate on women's
achievements in society.[27]  Other scholars, including James Curran, John Hartley and
Ian Ward, object to Habermas' view that the broadcast media have led to the
corruption of society into depoliticised consumers.[28]

This rejection of the most pessimistic assumptions of the Frankfurt School of
Marxist social theorists, such as Habermas,[29] is highly significant.  Particularly
communication and cultural studies have recognised the democratic, liberating
function of modern popular culture.  For example, thousands of educated Iranian
youths attracted global media attention for their "social networking" protest tactics to
challenge the Islamic Republic's fraudulent elections in June 2009.  They organised
rallies through cell phone connections, emails and online video clips in their so-
called "Twitter Revolution", as it was dubbed by international journalists.[30]  While in
China, only eight per cent of citizens were considered to be internet users in 2006,
more urban, young professional people, white-collar workers and students have been
posting blogs to debate their nation's public affairs within the confines of

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[26] Alexander Kluge, Thomas Y. Levin and Miriam B. Hansen, "On Film and the Public
Sphere" [hereafter "On film and the public sphere"], *New German Critique,* no. 24/25,
autumn 1981-winter 1982, pp. 206-220; Stuart Liebman, "On New German Cinema, Art,
Enlightenment, and the Public Sphere: An Interview with Alexander Kluge" [hereafter "An
interview with Alexander Kluge"], *October*, vol. 46, autumn 1988, p. 42; Dana Polan, "The
Public's Fear; Or, Media as Monster in Habermas, Negt, and Kluge" [hereafter "Media as
monster"], in Bruce Robbins (ed.), *The Phantom Public Sphere*, University of Minnesota
Press, Minneapolis, 1993, pp. 33-41.
[27] Rita Felski, *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics: Feminist Literature and Social Change* [hereafter
*Beyond feminist aesthetics*]*,* Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1989, pp. 164-182;
Hartley, *Popular reality,* p. 68.
[28] James Curran, "Rethinking the media as a public sphere" [hereafter "Rethinking the
media"], in Peter Dahlgren and Colin Sparks (eds), *Communication and Citizenship:
Journalism and the Public Sphere*, Routledge, London and New York, 1997, pp. 42-43;
Hartley, *Popular reality,* pp. 71, 72, 234; Ward, "The public sphere", p. 15.
[29] Similarly pessimistic media theories were developed by Theodor Adorno and Max
Horkheimer of the Frankfurt School of philosophers.  See: Theodor Adorno and Max
Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Verso, London, 1944, pp. 120-67; Dorinda Outram,
"The Enlightenment Our Contemporary", in William Clark, Jan Golinski and Simon
Schaffer (eds), *The Sciences in Enlightened Europe*, The University of Chicago Press,
Chicago and London, 1999, pp. 32-40.
[30] Reza Afshari, "A Historic Moment in Iran", *Human Rights Quarterly*, vol. 31, no. 4,
November 2009, pp. 839-855.

Communist Party censorship.[31]  Due to the rising wealth of many workers and the middle class at the turn of the twenty-first century, popular culture has allowed for the spreading of ideas that aid the establishment of participatory democracy.  In the light of Habermas' conception of the public sphere, Chapters 6 to 9 will examine Curtin's expansion of the Australian governments' use of popular culture to communicate more frequently and openly with voters.[32]  As it will be discussed in Chapter 10, Curtin set media precedents that assisted successive prime ministers to use the latest technology to speak directly with more diverse media audiences and involve them in political discussions.

Despite influential critiques of Habermas' particular conception of it, then, the concept of the public sphere remains pertinent to researchers, who reject the notion that the expanding electronic media have resulted in social alienation and disenfranchisement.  The electronic media, it is argued, can also provide more, not fewer, opportunities for people to engage in open, peaceful debates.  According to Ward, the concept of the public sphere "holds out the possibility of a universal, democratic and informed politics".[33]  The media scholar, Michael Meadows, states this concept has become popular among Australian researchers, who use it as a theoretical approach to analyse the practice of journalism.[34]  Thus while more contemporary theorists[35] reject the idealisation of a bourgeois, nineteenth-century "forum of rational-critical debate",[36] they reconceptualise the concept of a public sphere to evaluate citizens' participation in public affairs.  This concept of a "universal, democratic and informed" public sphere[37] is useful to this study's evaluation of Curtin's mass communication strategies to involve more citizens, including journalists, in governmental affairs.

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[31] Rebecca Mackinnon, "Flatter world and thicker walls? Blogs, censorship and civil discourse in China", *Public Choice*, vol. 134, 2008, pp. 31-46.

[32] (Anon.), "Publicity: Relations with America: Australia Expands", *The Canberra Times,* Canberra, 31 October 1941, p. 4; Curtin, "American relations", pp. 13-14.

[33] Ward, "The public sphere", p. 12.

[34] Rahkonen, "Mapping research", p. 58.

[35] Curran, "Rethinking the media", pp. 42-43; Felski, *Beyond feminist aesthetics,* pp. 164-182; Hartley, *Popular reality,* pp. 68, 71, 72, 234; Kluge, Levin and Hansen, "On film and the public sphere", pp. 206-220; Liebman, "An interview with Alexander Kluge",  p. 42; Dana Polan, "Media as monster", pp. 33-41; Ward, "The public sphere", pp. 13-15.

[36] Habermas, *The public sphere,* p. 184.

[37] Ward, "The public sphere", p. 12.

Hartley, for instance, extends this idea about active – not docile – audiences in a public sphere. He affirms that news audiences can become active "citizens of media" and advocates "abandoning the habit of taking media producers to be monsters and consumers to be mice". Some media have contributed to more citizens' involvement in contemporary ethnic, gender, environmental, youth and peace-seeking politics.[38] For example, although the specific effects of news magazines on public discourse during the Vietnam War cannot be determined, millions of American readers subscribed to these media publications because they wanted more depth and perspective in the news of this conflict.[39] In terms of the online media, the internet studies scholar, Michele Willson, states technologically aided communication has not destroyed the ideal of community, which is "associated with a valued sense of connection and belonging". Although Willson refers to being "uneasy about uncritically valorizing the so-called networked society", she asserts "that community is not lost, rather that the ways in which we examine, understand and negotiate being-together need to change". It is important, she notes, to use innovative communications technology to avoid "the excluding and conforming practices of the past" and to prevent a community that is "repressive and conformist".[40] Thus multiple truths and diverse knowledge are shaped in an active, inclusive and informative public sphere.

This expansive concept of the public sphere, which encompasses the democratic, liberating function of popular culture and active, astute citizens of the media, assists our understanding of Curtin's interactions with wartime correspondents. As it will be argued in Chapter 3 and the ensuing chapters, Curtin extended the boundaries of the sphere in which a prime minister traditionally associated with journalists. While his predecessor, Menzies, preferred to deal directly with news executives, Curtin engaged Canberra correspondents in two-way

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[38] Hartley, *Popular reality*, pp. 71, 72, 234.

[39] This specifically relates to the American subscribers of *Newsweek*, *Time* and *U.S. News & World Report*, which included increasingly critical and sceptical analyses of the Vietnam War policies by mid-1967. See: James Landers, *The weekly war: newsmagazines and Vietnam*, University of Missouri Press, Columbia, 2004, pp. 3-5.

[40] Michele Willson, *Technically Together: Rethinking Community within Techno-Society* [hereafter *Technically together*], Peter Lang Publishing, New York, 2006, pp. 1-3, 20.

public policy discussions in his private office.[41]  Furthermore, he sponsored advanced, broadcast media technology to communicate more frequently with Australian and international audiences.[42]  Through his development of new media strategies, he moved away from "the excluding and conforming practices of the past"[43] to encourage more citizens to participate in the public sphere.

## The social function of journalists

If the modern public sphere is the arena in which politics and governance are played out, whom or what is the organising agency of public discourse?  The conceptual approach of this thesis is informed by insights into the news media's "governmental" function and roles.  Journalists are responsible for interpreting matters of social governance to public audiences.  As they cultivate their news sources, or "contacts", and search for current story ideas, reporters need to be active and key participants in governing society.[44]  This social function of the news assists us to gain a better understanding of Curtin's relationships with the media.  As Steve Mickler notes, news is "manufactured" and the process involves "multiple and lengthy production lines".  The main subjects of the news stories, including political leaders such as Curtin, institutions and organisations, often have critical roles in constructing news reports about themselves.[45]

Furthermore, journalists are the central agents in articulating society's views, in producing authoritative meanings about world events through the lenses of their "preferences and prejudices", shaped in daily newsrooms and at editorial meetings.

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[41] Alexander, "Alexander interview".

[42] (Anon.), "Publicity: Relations with America: Australia Expands", *The Canberra Times,* Canberra, 31 October 1941, p. 4; Curtin, "American relations", pp. 13-14.

[43] Willson, *Technically together*, p. 2.

[44] Steve Mickler, *The Myth of Privilege: Aboriginal Status, Media Visions, Public Ideas* [hereafter *The myth of privilege*], Fremantle Arts Centre Press, South Fremantle, 1998, p. 14; Stephen Brent Mickler, Visualising Aboriginality: Image Campaigns and News Routines in the Western Australian Media [hereafter Visualising Aboriginality], PhD thesis, Murdoch University, Murdoch, 1996; Ericson, Baranek and Chan, *Visualizing deviance,* p. 356.

[45] Mickler, *The myth of privilege*, p. 14.

For Ericson et al, the most significant role adopted by journalists is to be "knowledge linkers" and "information brokers" between the government and public audiences. Reporters seek the views of official spokespeople[46] and "engage in reproducing the knowledge of their sources".[47]  Mickler, Ericson et al have written of the value of analysing the relationships and influences that contribute to the construction of news. "Studying the ways in which journalists make sense of the world is a significant means of achieving understanding of society", Ericson et al write.[48]  Further, the news media influence every aspect of the public domain of contemporary society, consisting of the spheres of the economic, political, cultural and the representational.[49]  Ericson et al write that news reporters help to "shape the moral boundaries and contours of social order, providing an ongoing articulation of our sense of propriety and impropriety, stability and change, order and crises".[50]  Journalism works as a form of knowledge to make "the impression of truth" and to assist to maintain social order.[51]  This conception of news journalists as active participants in the manufacturing of news making challenges the traditional notion that the media merely present an objective "mirror" of reality.[52]

This theorisation of the function of journalism within an administered, information society expands upon an argument made by the historian and philosopher, Foucault, that social institutions produce discourses that shape people's understanding and practices.[53]  As Mickler notes, following Ericson et al, "bad news" stories are an "inevitable focus" of this information society, whose public domain exists through mass communications.[54]  Furthermore, "bad news"

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[46] Douglas M. McLeod and James K. Hertog, "The Manufacture of 'Public Opinion' by Reporters: Informal Cues for Public Perceptions of Protest Groups" [hereafter "The manufacture of public opinion"], *Discourse & Society*, vol. 3, no. 3, July 1992, p. 260.
[47] Ericson, Baranek and Chan, *Visualizing deviance*, p. 16; Mickler, Visualising Aboriginality, pp. 20-21.
[48] Ericson, Baranek and Chan, *Visualizing deviance,* p. 15.
[49] Mickler, Visualising Aboriginality, p. 22.
[50] Ericson, Baranek and Chan, *Visualizing deviance,* p. 356.
[51] Ericson, Baranek and Chan, *Visualizing deviance,* p. 346; Hartley, *Popular reality*, p. 240.
[52] Tiffen, *News,* p. 4.
[53] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*, trans. A. Sheridan, Allen Lane Penguin Books, London, 1977; Willson, *Technically together,* p. 10.
[54] Mickler, Visualising Aboriginality, p. 22.

commentaries are a characteristic of liberal democracies because of their "discourse of politics and failure", which allow national leaders and aspiring candidates to campaign for "the need for more correction, repair, alteration, improvement, and resources".[55]  The essence of the journalism method is "visualisation", meaning news reporters are in the business of "making something visible to the mind even if it is not visible to the eye".  Through the media's intense focus on negative news, for example, the Axis enemies during World War II, journalists help to shape our cultural identity and our sense of that which is wrong or "deviations" in the world.[56]

Another social characteristic of the news media is that journalists are part of a "knowledge *class*", who take or retain power by controlling knowledge, as described by John Frow, John Hartley and other scholars writing from a broad cultural studies perspective.[57]  These information workers include reporters, writers and other media professionals,[58] who speak "for" others while controlling the institutions of cultural capital and social life.[59]  Although Frow's 1995 analysis has been resisted by some Marxist and feminist sociologists, who do not recognise a separate, intellectual social class, his ideas are widely accepted as being relevant to cultural studies disciplines.[60] These approaches to the social function of the news[61] will permit more insights into how Curtin worked with journalists to consolidate his leadership.  As it will be argued in the next chapter and ensuing chapters, he held highly interactive conferences to provide journalists with more responsibilities to interpret matters of governance to public audiences.  As a result, the reporters became active and key participants in governing society.  By elevating the role and status of these wartime correspondents, Curtin indeed seemed to view them as part of a "knowledge class",

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[55] Ericson, Baranek and Chan, *Visualizing deviance,* pp. 359-360.

[56] Ericson, Baranek and Chan, *Visualizing deviance,* p. 356.

[57] John Frow, *Cultural Studies & Cultural Value* [hereafter *Cultural studies*], Oxford University Press, New York, 1995; Hartley, *Popular reality,* p. 241; Andrew Milner, *Literature, culture and society* [hereafter *Literature*], Routledge, London and New York, 2004, pp. 37-41; Joe Moran, *Interdisciplinarity* [hereafter *Interdisciplinarity*], Routledge, London and New York, 2002, pp. 75-81.

[58] Frow, *Cultural studies*, p. 90; Moran, *Interdisciplinarity*, p. 77.

[59] Frow, *Cultural studies*, pp. 164-165; Milner, *Literature,* pp. 34, 35-36.

[60] Moran, *Interdisciplinarity*, p. 77.

[61] Ericson, Baranek and Chan, *Visualizing deviance*; Michel Foucault, "Film and Popular Memory: An Interview with Michel Foucault", trans. Martin Jordan, *Radical Philosophy*, vol. 11, summer 1975, pp. 24-29; Frow, *Cultural studies.*

who would work with him to galvanise public support for Australia's battles against Axis enemies.[62]

It is useful here to consider Foucault's concept of "the politics of truth" because wartime Canberra correspondents worked with the prime minister to imprint images of reality in the public consciousness.  This thesis will draw on this concept to demonstrate how news media processes produced official discourses that contributed to wartime societies' "regimes of truth" about Curtin.[63]  As Foucault notes, truth is constructed as a genre and discourse.  Reporters are involved in the "general politics" of deciding the truth as they accept and reproduce types of communication.[64]  News coverage is affected by such factors as cultural values, financial constraints, technology and journalists' access to information sources, particularly relating to politicians.[65]  Thus truth is subject to "immense diffusion and consumption" in diverse forms and it is disseminated by the "apparatuses of education and information", including the mass media.[66]  This process is complex because the news is a "contested site"[67] and "[t]here is a battle 'for truth', or at least 'around truth'", Foucault writes.  Newsmakers and reporters are continuously negotiating which statements are true and false.  Journalists contribute to the "régime of truth" because they assist in producing and circulating media statements deemed "factual" by powerful, political elites.[68]  Informed by Foucault's concept of "the politics of truth", this thesis understands that the wartime Canberra correspondents were not objectively mirroring "universal values" when filing their reports; external and internal pressures affected their news selection.

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[62] Alexander, "Alexander interview".

[63] John L. McMullan, "News, Truth, and the Recognition of Corporate Crime" [hereafter "News"], *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice*, vol. 48, no. 6, October 2006, pp. 905-939, retrieved on 23 July 2009 at <http://proquest.umi.com.dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/pqdlink?Ver=1&Exp=07-22-2014&FMT=7&DID=1180603141&RQT=309>; John L. McMullan and Melissa McClung, "The Media, the Politics of Truth, and the Coverage of Corporate Violence: The Westray Disaster and the Public Inquiry", *Critical Criminology*, vol. 14, 2006, pp. 67, 71.

[64] Michel Foucault, "Truth and Power" [hereafter "Truth and power"], trans. Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham and Kate Soper in Colin Gordon (ed.), *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, The Harvester Press, Brighton, 1980, p. 131.

[65] McMullan, "News".

[66] Foucault, "Truth and power", p. 131.

[67] McMullan, "News".

[68] Foucault, "Truth and power", pp. 132-133.

A number of scholars have developed Foucault's concept of "the politics of truth" to analyse journalists' production, ordering and distribution of the news in ways that uphold dominant views of the world.[69] This "politics of truth" is related to Ericson et al's model of the governmental function of news in an administered society. According to both concepts, journalism is a part of government that sustains an overriding, political perception of reality. Although many reporters purpose to be objective by using depictive, realism grammar,[70] the media have the power to visualise and define deviations from moral and ethical principles of fairness, justice and decency.[71] Foucault will be examined further because he has provided the most influential conception of governmental functions.[72] The next sub-section will establish central features of his ideas on "governnmentality".[73] This broad term, "governmentality", includes the construction of the news and the interrelated, social functions of the media, politicians, the public, government agencies and associated organisations.[74] Foucault focuses on "the art of government", a subject that has intrigued political theorists since the posthumous publication of the Italian statesman

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[69] For example, Hartley, *Popular reality*, p. 245 (and Hartley's references to the intellectual tradition of "Foucauldianism"); McMullan, "News"; Mickler, Visualising Aboriginality.

[70] Allen Feldman, "On Cultural Anesthesia: From Desert Storm to Rodney King", in Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois (eds), *Violence in War and Peace: An Anthology,* Blackwell Publishing, Malden, 2003, p. 207.

[71] Ericson, Baranek and Chan, *Visualizing deviance,* p. 21.

[72] Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller (eds), *The Foucault effect: studies in governmentality: with two lectures by and an interview with Michel Foucault* [hereafter *The Foucault effect],* The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1991, p. ix; R. McGreggor Cawley and William Chaloupka, "American Governmentality: Michel Foucault and Public Administration" [hereafter "American governmentality"], *American Behavioral Scientist,* vol. 41, no. 1, September 1997, pp. 30-31.

[73] Foucault, "Governmentality", p. 30; Michel Foucault, "Method", in Louise Amoore (ed.), *The Global Resistance Reader,* Routledge, New York, 2005, p. 86; Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-76,* trans. David Macey, in Mauro Bertani, Alessandro Fontana and François Ewald (eds), Penguin Books, London, 2003, pp. 15-21; Foucault, "Truth and power", p. 118.

[74] James Cracraft, "A Berlin For Historians", *History and Theory,* vol. 41, October 2002, pp. 277-279; Bruce Curtis, "Foucault on Governmentality and Population: The Impossible Discovery" [hereafter "Foucault"], *Canadian Journal of Sociology,* vol. 27, no. 4, fall 2002, p. 521; John Hartley, *Understanding News* [hereafter *Understanding news*], Metheun & Co., London and New York, 1982, p. 12; Mark Hearn, "Michel Foucault, Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-76*"* (Michel Foucault), *Labour History*, no. 86, May 2004, p. 219; Philippe Marlière, "The Rules of the Journalistic Field: Pierre Bourdieu's Contribution to the Sociology of the Media", *European Journal of Communication,* vol. 13, no. 2, 1998, p. 223; Maarten Simons and Jan Masschelein, "The Learning Society and Governmentality: An introduction" [hereafter "Governmentality"], *Educational Philosophy and Theory,* vol. 38, no. 4, 2006, p. 418.

and writer Niccolò Machiavelli's *The Prince*.[75]  After Machiavelli, many political writers were not as concerned with sovereignty and "imposing laws on men"; their notion of government was conceived as "the right manner of disposing things so as to lead ... to an end which is 'convenient' for each of the things which are to be governed".[76]  Informed by this concept, the next chapters will examine Curtin's "art of government" and his use of the media and popular culture to lead the democratic society of wartime Australia.[77]

According to Foucault, western liberal governments (such as Curtin's administration) have used modern technologies to promote self-government and manage the nation state.[78]  While Foucault's model of power has directly influenced the development of Ericson et al's model of the governmental function of news in an administered society, he mainly focuses on past forms of government and does not provide many detailed analyses of more contemporary political developments.[79]  Yet the notion of governmentality, encompassing political newsmakers and journalists, provides a theoretical framework to examine the practice of liberal democracy.  This concept of governmentality is useful to analyse the relations between Curtin and the press gallery as part of the central research question of this thesis.  Foucault's theory helps us to understand the historical functions of governed societies, such as wartime Australia, that have produced a citizenry with optimal capacities, a sense of self-government and an inclination towards self-discipline.

This thesis intends to demonstrate that Curtin viewed journalists as a crucial part of his governance.  This relationship is aptly described by Ericson et al's observation that reporters are "knowledge linkers" and "information brokers"

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[75] Foucault, "Governmentality", pp. 88-89, 90; Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince,* transl. Peter Bondanella and Mark Musa, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1998.
[76] Foucault, "Governmentality", p. 95.
[77] Foucault, "Governmentality", pp. 95-97; Curtis, "Foucault", p. 521.
[78] Michel Foucault, "Technologies of the Self", in L.H. Martin, H. Gutman and P.H. Hutton (eds), *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault,* Tavistock Publications, London, 1988, p. 18.
[79] Foucault, "Governmentality", pp. 87-104; Simons and Masschelein, "Governmentality", p. 419.

between governments and public audiences.[80]  These theoretical approaches assist us to understand the relationships of power and consensus between governments and the media much better than simplistic concepts of them as constituting separate, autonomous entities.  As it will be discussed later, Curtin was able to work successfully with Canberra correspondents because he treated them as colleagues rather than replicating Menzies' authoritarian communications system.[81]  The next section considers how liberal democratic administrations, like John Curtin's, use the news media as a critical part of their governance.

## How do liberal-democratic governments govern?

An understanding of Curtin's governance, communication methods and media strategies is informed by Isaiah Berlin's liberalism theories.  More specifically, Berlin's theories are informative to the discussion of Curtin's rhetorical devices from Chapters 6 to 9.  One of the most distinguished representatives of the liberal tradition, Berlin wrote about US politics and public opinion for the wartime British Government and his weekly reports were sent to Churchill.  As a liberal, he was aligned with the eighteenth century European Enlightenment tradition and its philosophical focus on human reason.  An understanding of liberty, or freedom, is central to human being and human agency in politics, according to Berlin.[82]  He declares: "The values of the Enlightenment ... are deeply sympathetic to me".[83]  To Berlin, all individuals possess human dignity, inviolable rights, minimal freedoms that must not become subject to government abuse.  "Acceptance of common values (at any rate some irreducible minimum of these) enters our conception of a normal human being," he writes.[84]  These individual rights, including liberty, equality, justice and courage, constitute a "central core" of values shared by all people.  As William A. Galston states, it may not be possible to identify the *summum bonum,* or

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[80] Ericson, Baranek and Chan, *Visualizing deviance*, p. 16; Mickler, Visualising Aboriginality, pp. 20-21.
[81] Alexander, "Alexander interview".
[82] William A. Galston, "Moral Pluralism and Liberal Democracy: Isaiah Berlin's Heterodox Liberalism" [hereafter "Moral pluralism"], *The Review of Politics*, vol. 71, 2009, pp. 85, 88.
[83] George Crowder, *Isaiah Berlin: Liberty and Pluralism,* Polity Press, Cambridge, 2004, p. 98.
[84] Berlin, *Liberty,* p. xxxi.

a universally accepted, supreme good, but it is realistic to specify the *summum malum*, or the great evils of the human condition.[85]  Curtin would appeal to such values in his film and radio broadcasts to inspire Australians to fight fascist Axis enemies.[86]


Curtin's media policies manifested elements of both the negative and positive conceptions of liberty, as defined by Berlin.  Curtin appealed to ideals of liberty when persuading journalists, and all Australian citizens, to accept his conscription policies, and this will be discussed further in Chapter 7.  How Curtin used the rhetoric of liberty in his press statements, radio broadcasts and newsreels to engage media producers' consensus to omit negative statements and amplify his language to public audiences, is evaluated in Chapters 6 to 9.[87]


**How democratic politicians generate positive news on their administrations**

When commenting on how governments use the media, Ericson et al note that "[p]owerful sources" (those people providing information) may develop strategies to "avoid and make news".[88]  Since journalists "are a part of a system of politics", they are "perpetually referring and deferring to the valued facts of authorized knowers in bureaucratic settings".[89]  Through this type of political discourse, reporters articulate politicians' views and media audiences perceive the world through "the eyes of the existing authority structure".[90]  As Foucault states, western liberal governments can master advanced technology, including media, to enable the effective management of a nation.  Also any analysis of media power must refer to the political economy of

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[85] Galston, "Moral pluralism", pp. 96-97.

[86] For example, Cinesound Productions and Cinesound Review (producers), *Compiled speeches of John Curtin, 1941 – 1945* (newsreels) [hereafter *Compiled speeches*), JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00130/1, 1941-1945; John Curtin, "National Broadcast by Prime Minister" [hereafter "National broadcast"], *DDA*, no. 10, 8 December 1941, pp. 19-22; John Curtin, "Radio broadcast to the United States" [hereafter "US radio broadcast"], *DDA*, no. 22, 14 March 1942, pp. 9-13.

[87] For example, Cinesound Productions and Cinesound Review (producers), *Compiled speeches*; Curtin, "National broadcast", pp. 19-22; Curtin, "US radio broadcast", pp. 9-13.

[88] Ericson, Baranek and Chan, *Visualizing deviance*, p. 364.

[89] Ericson, Baranek and Chan, *Visualizing deviance*, p. 359.

[90] Ericson, Baranek and Chan, *Visualizing deviance*, p. 359.

the mass media, according to politics scholar, John Street.  Since it is evident the media have power, Street writes, then the important questions become: who gets to benefit from it and who has access to media power?[91]  The political economy approach can provide answers to these questions by focusing on the production and distribution of news content, the patterns of media ownership and control, as well as the links between the news institutions and the capitalist structure.[92]  To understand media power, it has been necessary to study the wider historical, political economic context of a news organisation's development[93] and the ways in which this control is mediated.[94]  This approach is particularly relevant in Australia because of the nation's concentrated media ownership[95] and the historically close links between news proprietors and the nation's leading Labor and Liberal politicians.[96]

For example, sociologist Scott Fitzgerald analyses news corporations' development within the field of critical political economy and identifies broad categories of state intervention in the media.[97]  Since World War I, for instance, the development of radio has been subject to government regulations in western industrialised countries, including Australia, to increase its commercial efficacy.  In accordance with public service and public utility philosophies, unrestrained competitive media enterprises are not consistent with the common interest. Governments have enacted political initiatives to ensure a plurality of media

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[91] Street, *Mass media,* p. 99.

[92] John Sinclair, "The media and communications: Theoretical traditions" [hereafter "Theoretical traditions"], in Stuart Cunningham and Graeme Turner (eds), *The Media and Communications in Australia,* Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, first edition, 2002, pp. 24-29.

[93] Fitzgerald, Corporations and cultural industries, p. 120.

[94] Street, *Mass media,* p. 143.

[95] David Denemark, "Mass Media And Media Power In Australia", in Shaun Wilson, Gabrielle Meagher, Rachel Gibson, David Denemark and Mark Western (eds), *Australian Social Attitudes: The First Report*, University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 2005, p. 220; Rahkonen, "Mapping research", pp. 58-60; Sinclair, "Theoretical traditions", pp. 24-29; Christopher Warren, "The Price Of Freedom: New Media Ownership Laws And A Free Australian Press", *University of New South Wales Law Journal*, vol. 30, no. 1, 2007, pp. 269-270.

[96] For example, Fitzgerald, Corporations and cultural industries, pp. 350, 357; Bridget Griffen-Foley, *The house of Packer: the making of a media empire,* Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, 1999, p. 123; Neville Petersen, *News Not Views: The ABC, the Press, & Politics 1932-1947* [hereafter *News not views*]*,* Hale & Iremonger, Sydney, 1993, pp. 163-166; R.M. Younger, *Keith Murdoch: Founder of a media empire,* HarperCollins*Publishers*, Pymble, 2003, pp. 151-152.

[97] Fitzgerald, Corporations and cultural industries, pp. 3, 117-118, 358.

voices.[98]  European broadcasting stations and telecommunications have operated historically as public utilities, funded by taxation, to provide all citizens with universal access to primary communications networks and encourage programs that promote information, "culture" and entertainment.  In the US, the dominant strategy has been to regulate commercial and cultural sectors to ameliorate the harmful influence of capitalist competition.[99]  In accordance with the *Australian Broadcasting Commission Act 1932*, the ABC radio was officially subsidised and subject to government influence.[100]  Almost eight decades later, Australian government regulators require radio and television corporations to produce balanced, impartial and accurate news; however, critics say commercial influences still adversely affect fair broadcasting.[101]  This requirement is an artefact of the Australian Constitution,[102] with section 51 giving legislative authority to the Commonwealth Government over only the electronic media and not the older press organisations.[103]  Within this framework of national cultural regulation, this study examines Curtin's objectives and strategies to use radio and film media to communicate his wartime goals.

This consideration of liberal democratic governments' use of the media returns to Foucault's notion of governmentality and the social function of journalism set out by Ericson et al.  The news media derive legitimacy from governmental, political and legal authorities.  Reporters constantly use the "rhetorics, personalities, methods and press releases" of the elected establishment.  Through such interdependent, mutually beneficial relationships, news reporting can be shown as "impartial" to public audiences.[104]  As Ericson et al write:

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[98] Fitzgerald, Corporations and cultural industries, pp. 116-120.
[99] Fitzgerald, Corporations and cultural industries, pp. 120-121.
[100] Petersen, *News not views*, p. 38.
[101] Joseph Fernandez, *Media Law Handbook*, Network Books, Australia Research Institute, Perth, fifth edition, 2007, pp. 209-211.
[102] Ward, "The public sphere", p. 6.
[103] Office of Legislative Drafting, Attorney-General's Department, *Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act (The Constitution),* Canberra, 1 July 2001, section 51, p. 28.
[104] Hartley, *Popular reality*, p. 241.

By giving such predominant attention to the law and legal authorities, the news media can go a long way towards making convincing the image that they are an objective, impartial, universal and general voice of the people.[105] Their mutual association helps journalists to be seen as objective and assists governments to publish their perspectives in the mass media, to retain power and to direct society. Thus a political leader may set media agendas by working with journalists to outline his or her vision to public audiences, and it is the assertion of this thesis that Curtin fulfilled this role of a successful leader in the wartime news media.

Contemporary communications studies traditionally focus on how wars are propagandised by the mass media, a legacy of the global conflicts. Journalism scholar, Allen Feldman, notes the largely untheorised relationship between war and media technology that account for a lack of explanations about how modern, global conflicts generate new visual cultures, new news networks, new modes of witnessing and archiving the traumatic.[106] This thesis examines the relations between the wartime news media and political leaders, a research area that has been far less studied than the related issue of journalists' impact on public opinion.[107]

**Processes of political news making**

To comprehend fully the extent of Curtin's media associations, the thesis analyses the news as the product of institutional demands, processes, and structures rather than being solely personality-driven.[108] Although Canberra wartime correspondents were responsible for producing the "extraordinary, the sensational, the campaign-style treatments" of the day's leading news, they were able to generate such stories

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[105] Ericson, Baranek and Chan, *Visualizing deviance*, p. 53.

[106] Allen Feldman, "War and Media Theory" (syllabus), Department of Media, Culture and Communication, New York University, New York, 2009.

[107] Peter Van Aelst, Kees Brants, Philip Van Praag, Claes De Vreese, "The Fourth Estate as Superpower? An Empirical Study on Perceptions of Media Power in Belgium and the Netherlands", *International Communication Association*, Montreal, 21 May 2008, p. 1, retrieved on 7 February 2009 at <http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p231966_index.html>.

[108] Street, *Mass media,* p. 143; Tiffen, *News,* p. 3.

only by developing the "routine relationship between journalists and sources".[109]  As Street writes: "Media power is the product of political decisions, values and processes".[110]  To produce irregular, unpredictable, news commodities, media organisations have established institutionalised routines, predictable, productive means for gathering information, and shared conventions about newsworthiness and presentation.  Rodney Tiffen notes this view of journalism is known as the news making approach, news as a structured activity.[111]  Due to his journalism background, Curtin used his knowledge of reporting routines, including news deadlines, conferences and "off-the-record" confidentiality agreements, to develop journalism strategies.[112]  Other significant news characteristics influence audience perceptions of reality.  For instance, the news is also shaped by media competition, budgets and space limitations.[113]  Informed by the news making approach, Chapters 3 and 5 investigate Curtin's use of established reporting procedures to help strengthen his relationships with the press gallery.

As the war led to a greater concentration of Commonwealth Government powers at the expense of state legislatures, the Canberra press gallery was expanded to report on federal parliamentarians' increased initiatives.  The gallery now accommodates a higher concentration of writers, broadcasters, camera operators, photographers and other journalist teams than anywhere else in the nation.  "Greater size can help a gallery reach a 'critical mass' which gives it more impact, and makes it more likely politicians will respond to stories rather than ignore them", Tiffen writes.[114]  If the parliamentarians are seeking to influence the news directly, they will be in a stronger position if they are a "patron" sponsoring an important story rather than a "petitioner" asking for publicity.  Their efforts will be more effective if they are trying to promote and prolong good news instead of defusing negative news about themselves.  The parliamentarians' success will also depend upon whether and

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[109] Mickler, Visualising Aboriginality, p. 16.

[110] Street, *Mass media,* p. 144.

[111] Tiffen, *News,* pp. 3, 4, 155-158.

[112] C.J. Lloyd, *Parliament And The Press: The Federal Parliamentary Press Gallery 1901-88* [hereafter *Parliament and the press*], Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1988, pp. 125-157; Clem Lloyd and Richard Hall (eds), *Backroom Briefings: John Curtin's war* [hereafter *Backroom briefings*], National Library of Australia [hereafter NLA], Canberra, 1997.

[113] Tiffen, *News,* pp. 4, 25, 50.

[114] Tiffen, *News,* p. 36.

how the news attention is impinging upon the political conflicts in which they are engaged.[115]   While it is crucial to examine the parliamentarians' media interactions in an analysis of federal political journalism, it is also important to trace the development of technologies that have altered the tone and nature of these relationships.   Australian political news coverage has changed in response to technical developments, according to Tiffen.[116]   For the purpose of achieving a more comprehensive analysis of the Australian media during Curtin's prime ministership, this thesis will examine the processes of news making, including their organisational attributes, news characteristics, source structures, technological developments and the dissemination of information to audiences.

## The semiotics of news

In an analysis of news media content, it is important to study texts (including written, audio and visual formats) not only as accurate documents of real events, but as "works of imaginative reconstruction ... intended to produce responses and feelings in viewers and readers".[117]   The study of semiotics emphasises images, impressions and the "science of signs" as much as the written and spoken words.   Semiotic methods of analyses will be used in the evaluation of Curtin's media image, as shown in relevant photographs, editorial cartoons and newsreels.   Anders Hansen et al write that in scholarly media analyses, "[v]isuals are all too often taken at face-value and simply assumed to 'reflect' or 'mirror' the events and people captured on film".[118]

        This qualitative approach will be grounded in linguistic theories about signs and language as developed by de Saussure and Berger.   According to de Saussure, a

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[115] Tiffen, *News,* pp. 31-34, 36-37, 51, 65.
[116] Tiffen, *News,* p. 25.
[117] Street, *Mass media,* p. 35.
[118] Anders Hansen, Simon Cottle, Ralph Negrine and Chris Newbold, *Mass Communication Research Methods* [hereafter *Mass communication*]*,* Macmillan Press, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and London, 1998, p. 190.

sign is composed of a "signifier" (the quasi-material form) and the "signified" (the mental concept represented by the sign).  The signifiers bring the world into meaning and produce "reality effects" for those interpreting the signifiers.[119]  For example, in a wartime 1940s newsreel, a scene of Churchill looking down at the camera (the signifier), would convey power and authority (the signified), according to Berger's semiotic film conventions.[120]  If the signifier is a political leader gazing up at the camera, the signified represents a small, weak and forgettable person.  This study includes an analysis of visual imagery, based on Berger's semiotic film conventions (see Appendix 4).[121]

Along with media images, "(n)ews is a representation of the world in language", as the literature and linguistics scholar, Roger Fowler, writes.  Systems of signs are structured into codes – the principal code is language – and they acquire meaning.  As a semiotic code, language "imposes a structure of values, that are social and economic in origin, on whatever is represented", Fowler explains.[122]  Newspaper colloquialisms, incomplete sentences, written questions and varied typography in a press article suggest the journalist's biases, emphases and his or her attempt to mimic a speaking voice.[123]  As cultural studies theorists, Stuart Hall et al, write, each newspaper reflects a distinctive "public idiom", which is the publication's own version of the language of its public audience, the readers to whom the editorial content is principally addressed.[124]  A limited content analysis, conducted from Chapters 6 to 9, will analyse the language used in news reporting of Curtin to sustain dominant political views of reality.

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[119] Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*; de Saussure, *General linguistics*; Foucault, "Discourse", pp. 7-30; Lucy and Mickler, *The war on democracy*, pp. 21-22, 26.
[120] Street, *Mass media,* p. 27.
[121] Berger, *Media*, pp. 38-39; Hansen, Cottle, Negrine and Newbold, *Mass communication,* p. 207.
[122] Roger Fowler, *Language in the News: Discourse and Ideology in the Press* [hereafter *Language in the news*]*,* Routledge, London and New York, 1991, p. 4.
[123] Fowler, *Language in the news,* pp. 4, 39.
[124] Fowler, *Language in the news,* p. 40; Stuart Hall, Chas Critcher, Tony Jefferson, John Clarke and Brian Roberts, *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State, and Law and Order,* The Macmillan Press, London and Basingstoke, 1981, p. 61.

**News values**

Another key component in the analysis of the wartime media representations of John Curtin is understanding how stories are considered to be newsworthy.  Journalists construct news, facts and reality, as discussed earlier; this process is shaped by their professional values.[125]  As Ericson notes, a tone of factuality is produced by media communication practices, which blur distinctions among facts, value, information and knowledge.[126]  He writes:

> Communication does not stand apart from reality.  There is not, first, reality and then, second, communication about it.  Communication participates in the formation and change of reality.[127]

Galtung and Ruge developed a list of twelve factors they deemed important to news editors.  Their "working hypotheses" are accompanied by their warning: "No claim is made for completeness in the list of factors or 'deductions'".[128]  Other media scholars have further developed Galtung and Ruge's taxonomy, including more mundane, day-to-day events.[129]  This will inform the gleaning of insights into the operation of professional news values to the way that wartime journalists and editors represented John Curtin.

"Frequency" is the first important factor that determines a story's newsworthiness, according to Galtung and Ruge.  If a news journalist is searching for

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[125] Peter L.M. Vasterman, "Media-Hype: Self-Reinforcing News Waves, Journalistic Standards and the Construction of Social Problems", *European Journal of Communication,* vol. 20, no. 4, 2005, pp. 508-530.

[126] Richard V. Ericson, "How Journalists Visualize Fact" [hereafter "Journalists"], *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science,* vol. 560, November 1998, p. 83.

[127] Ericson, "Journalists", p. 84.

[128] Galtung and Ruge developed their list of news values after examining 1,262 press cuttings in Norwegian newspapers that concerned three international events: the political crises in the Congo and Cuba in 1960, and Cyprus in 1964. See: Galtung and Ruge, "Foreign news", pp. 64-91.

[129] For example, Tony Harcup and Deidre O'Neill, "What is News? Galtung and Ruge revisited" [hereafter "News"], *Journalism Studies,* vol. 2, no. 2, 2001, pp. 261-262, 265; Jeremy Tunstall, *Journalists at work* [hereafter *Journalists*], Constable, London, 1971, p. 21.

a story, he or she is more likely to publish a recent, significant, local event than to report on a long-term social trend. Secondly "threshold" influences the media; the event with a greater intensity produces a higher impact on news producers. A story is deemed to be more valuable if it imparts "unambiguity"; that it is about an uncomplicated event not easily lending itself to multiple interpretations. "Meaningfulness" is the fourth value; a story needs to be relevant to an audience's nationality, ethnicity and cultural background. Fifth, a news editor may foreshadow or desire an event to occur and then find a story that is in "consonance" with his or her prediction. A rare event is likely to be published due to its "unexpectedness"; while "continuity" is the seventh news value because a headline is often repeated when it is familiar and accessible to audiences. Due to the media's spotlight on the powerful, they tend to describe "elite nations" – this term can be defined according to political, economic and cultural factors – and "elite people" with whom audiences can identify. Editors prefer human interest stories with a "reference to persons" rather than impersonal, anonymous and esoteric depictions of social forces. Lastly "negative news" can be viewed as unambiguous, unexpected, not long-lasting and this is the twelfth value listed by Galtung and Ruge. In the light of this taxonomy, it is tenable that the Canberra wartime correspondents would prefer to report on a story about a political leader, such as Curtin, if the news item met the following criteria: it is relevant and may produce a large impact on national audiences; it is communicated clearly; it can be personalised; and it focuses on shocking, negative news such as global military battles.[130]


Scholars have expanded the Galtung and Ruge catalogue of news values. For example, similarly to Ericson et al, Douglas M. McLeod and James K. Hertog have discussed journalists' tendency to seek the "unusual" and characterise this as being "deviant" from the mainstream.[131] Further, Jeremy Tunstall,[132] Tony Harcup and Deidre O'Neill,[133] concur that journalists often respond to strong visual elements because a news editor may decide to publish a "non-newsworthy", whimsical and trivial story when it includes an image of a dramatic event, humorous incident or

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[130] Galtung and Ruge, "Foreign news", pp. 65-71; Harcup and O'Neill, "News", pp. 262-264.
[131] McLeod and Hertog, "The manufacture of public opinion", p. 260.
[132] Tunstall, *Journalists,* p. 21.
[133] Harcup and O'Neill, "News", p. 265.

glamorous celebrity.  Hall emphasises the role of ideology in the formation of news values[134] while Denis McQuail notes it is important to focus on political and economic factors too.[135]  In their analysis, Harcup and O'Neill note that the terms, "threshold", "unambiguity" and "negative news", are highly subjective because they are open to different interpretations by editors.[136]  After their study of UK newspapers, Harcup and O'Neill concluded that newsworthy stories must focus on one or more of the following requirements: power elites; celebrities; entertainment; an element of surprise; particularly negative overtones; remarkably good news; a magnitude of people and impact; and a follow-up story.[137]  Other significant news values have been identified by Mickler, Ericson et al.[138]  They write journalists spend a great deal of time to visualise and define "deviance" from "moral and ethical principles of fairness, justice and decency".[139]  In wartime Australia, the deepest "deviance" was personified by Nazi and other fascist supporters.  Furthermore, news organisations focus on the "media events" of celebrations, coronations and conquests, as described by the journalism analysts, Daniel Dayan and Elihu Katz. The rhetoric of media events emphasises great individuals and apocalyptic events, including heroic missions and political contests, to enlist mass support.[140]  These definitions of news values will be very useful in determining whether Curtin was able to magnify journalists' reports about him and enlist their support in helping him to govern.

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[134] Stuart Hall, "The determinations of news photographs" [hereafter "News photographs"], in Stanley Cohen and Jock Young (eds), *The Manufacture of News: Deviance, Social Problems and the Mass Media*, Constable and Co, London, 1973, p. 182; Harcup and O'Neill, "News", p. 265.

[135] Denis McQuail, *Mass Communication Theory* [hereafter *Mass communication theory*], Sage Publications, London, Thousand Oakes and New Delhi, 1994, p. 271.

[136] Harcup and O'Neill, "News", pp. 268-269.

[137] Harcup and O'Neill analysed 1,276 page lead stories in every issue of *The Sun, Daily Telegraph* and *Daily Mail* in March 1999.  See: Harcup and O'Neill, "News", pp. 277, 279.

[138] Ericson, "Journalists", pp. 83-95; Ericson, Baranek and Chan, *Visualizing deviance*, pp. 139-178; Mickler, Visualising Aboriginality, particularly pp. 22-28.

[139] Mickler, Visualising Aboriginality, p. 21.

[140] Daniel Dayan and Elihu Katz, *Media Events: The Live Broadcasting of History*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge and London, 1992, pp. 1-24.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has identified the theories and concepts that assist with explaining the complex associations and interdependence of news journalists, political leaders and their governments.  A theoretical and conceptual framework has been developed for this study of media and politics.  First, it has been useful to elucidate Habermas' notion of the public sphere in which government leaders, the news media and public audiences interact with one another.[141]  While Habermas' public sphere is criticised as being too limited, scholars have expanded this concept to include the democratic, liberating function of popular culture, diverse audiences and multiple perspectives.[142]  This concept will be particularly relevant when analysing Curtin's use of popular culture to attract broad public support for his wartime strategies.  Moreover, the insights of Ericson et al will underlie this thesis' main assertions, particularly their theorisation of the function of journalism within an administered, information society.  As they note, the news media are a part of government that assist in constructing, ordering and distributing information to audiences.[143]  Journalists are also members of a "knowledge class",[144] who take or retain power through their close links with political newsmakers to influence the public's awareness of facts.  Ericson et al's concept draws upon Foucault's writings.  According to Foucault, truth has been produced as a genre and discourse by "governmentality".  As discussed earlier, governmentality encompasses journalism institutions, procedures, analyses, reflections, calculations and tactics that allow for the use of "this very specific albeit complex form of power".[145]  This power is applied to the distribution and shaping of public knowledge, including reports published in the media.  Governmentality is the linking factor among journalists, politicians, public audiences, government agencies and associated organisations.  These ideas of the public sphere and the governmental function of news in an administered society will be applied later in the analysis of the role and effect of Curtin's mass media strategies in his wartime governance of the country.

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[141] Habermas, *The public sphere.*

[142] Curran, "Rethinking the media", pp. 42-43; Hartley, *Popular reality,* pp. 71, 72, 234; Ward, "The public sphere", p. 12.

[143] Ericson, Baranek and Chan, *Visualizing deviance,* p. 346; Hartley, *Popular reality*, p. 240; Mickler, Visualising Aboriginality, p. 20.

[144] Frow, *Cultural studies*, pp. 119-30; Hartley, *Popular reality,* p. 241; Milner, *Literature*, pp. 37-41; Moran, *Interdisciplinarity*, pp. 75-81.

[145] Foucault, "Governmentality", pp. 102-103.

Furthermore, Isaiah Berlin's conceptions of liberty inform this thesis' discussions of Curtin's vision of democracy that he forcefully projected in wartime press articles, film appearances and radio broadcasts.  Curtin inherited the ideals of the European Enlightenment movement with its emphasis on human reason and a responsible government free from public coercion.[146]  These ideas will be explored further in Chapter 7 during the discussion of Curtin's journalism strategies to elicit public support for the extension of compulsory military service to more young men in 1943.  This thesis asserts that Curtin's democratic liberalism, as exemplified in his mass media strategies,[147] created a powerful legacy for Australian leaders.

Other conceptual approaches and analytical tools have been considered in this chapter and they relate to political economy, agenda-setting and semiotics.  Through the political economy approach, it is possible to understand media power by identifying patterns of ownership and control of news organisations, as well as the links among them, political leaders and government structures.[148]  This approach will be taken later in this thesis when analysing powerful wartime news organisations and the media strategies of Allied leaders in Australia, Britain, Canada and the US.  Another relevant conceptual tool is agenda-setting, referring to the extent to which news organisations prioritise news stories, shape public knowledge and influence politicians.[149]  A semiotic analysis of relevant films, photographs, radio broadcasts and press articles[150] will be conducted to ascertain whether Curtin was generally portrayed as a forceful leader.

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[146] Berlin, *Freedom and its betrayal*; *Liberty*; *The proper study of mankind*; John Curtin, "Duty With Press", *DDA*, no. 81, 19 April 1944, p. 46.

[147] For example, Cinesound Productions and Cinesound Review, *Compiled speeches*; Curtin, "National broadcast", pp. 19-22; Curtin, "US radio broadcast", pp. 9-13.

[148] Fitzgerald, Corporations and cultural industries, p. 120; Sinclair, "Theoretical traditions", pp. 24-29; Street, *Mass media,* p. 99.

[149] Street, *Mass media,* p. 99; Ericson, Baranek and Chan, *Visualizing deviance,* p. 53.

[150] Berger, *Media*, pp. 26-27; Hansen, Cottle, Negrine and Newbold, *Mass communication,* p. 207.

Lastly, this chapter has evaluated theories and concepts pertaining to news processes – particularly those of Tiffen[151] and Ericson[152] – as well as to journalistic values, as elucidated by Galtung and Ruge.[153]  To be successful media strategists, political leaders should be familiar with news making processes and "the *mundane milieu* in which news stories and commentaries are created and circulate".[154]  These work practices include the development of the "routine relationship between journalists and their sources – sources that are mainly expert, bureaucratic and political",[155] as well as the use of the latest media technology.  Politicians need to release timely information that coincides with media deadlines.  The Canberra Parliamentary Press Gallery, from 1941 to 2010, provides a unique venue to analyse news making processes because of the increasing concentration of journalists and the diverse number of sources, ranging from ministers to opposition backbenchers.  These politicians will be more successful in publicising their main messages if they are trying to promote and prolong good news, rather than seeking to defuse negative reports about themselves.  Their stature is elevated further in the public domain if they are able to generate positive feedback from their audiences that can be published in a variety of media formats and that can influence news editors.[156]  To provide us with the components constituting a newsworthy article, Galtung, Ruge and other scholars have described the news values that permeate newsrooms and journalistic culture.  Scholars concur the media are predisposed to negative news, such as foreign enemies, and eye-catching visual images, particularly if the reports are given legitimacy by authoritative sources.[157]

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[151] Tiffen, *News,* pp. 3, 4, 155-158.
[152] Ericson, "Journalists", pp. 83-95.
[153] Galtung and Ruge, "Foreign news", pp. 64-91.
[154] Mickler, Visualising Aboriginality, p. 20.
[155] Mickler, Visualising Aboriginality, p. 20.
[156] Tiffen, *News,* pp. 31-34, 36-37, 51, 65.
[157] For example, Ericson, "Journalists", pp. 83-95; Ericson, Baranek and Chan, *Visualizing deviance*, pp. 139-178; Galtung and Ruge, "Foreign news", pp. 64-91; Hall, "News photographs",
p. 182; Hartley, *Understanding news*, pp. 75-81; Harcup and O'Neill, "News", pp. 261-280; McQuail, *Mass communication theory*, p. 271; Mickler, Visualising Aboriginality, particularly pp. 22-28; Tunstall, *Journalists,* p. 21.

Thus conceptual approaches and tools of media-government relations enable insights into how successful political leaders may marshal journalists and news coverage to ensure their definition of issues and national priorities prevail, along with declared consent and re-electability.  The next chapter begins to focus closely on Curtin's interactions with the mass media.  To evaluate the successes of his journalism strategies, Chapter 3 examines the historical context of Australia's emerging mass media leading to the war and especially the news making policies developed by Curtin's predecessor, Menzies, from 1939 to 1941.

# Chapter 3

## The changing context of the Australian press, film and radio professions,

## 1831-1945

This chapter begins with a historical examination of the major social, political, technological and economic conditions that shaped the development of the principal metropolitan newspapers in Australia.  Since the establishment of most Australian capital city dailies in the nineteenth century, the press publishers had actively intervened in politics and they were sometimes elected to be parliamentarians.  To investigate further the interlinked layers of governmental politics, media organisations and public audiences, the first section will analyse the impact of these mutual influences on the main city newspaper organisations throughout the nation. This examination will enable a comparison to be made later between the pre-war and wartime press in such areas as their relations with political leaders, editorial policies, target audiences, as well as their selection and presentation of the news.  Secondly, for the purpose of making this comparison, the chapter will analyse the intricate news interactions developed by Curtin's conservative rival and prime ministerial predecessor, Menzies, who governed from 26 April 1939 to 29 August 1941. Menzies' difficult, multifaceted and intense relationships with the press gallery[1] contrasted remarkably with the positive reception by journalists of Curtin as a new Labor prime minister.[2]  The third section will ascertain the extent of Curtin's influence on the practices of the wartime Australian mass media, focusing on the

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[1] E.g. Bridget Griffen-Foley, "Political opinion polling and the professionalization of public relations: Keith Murdoch, Robert Menzies, and the Liberal Party of Australia" [hereafter "Political opinion polling"], *Australian Journalism Review,* vol. 24, no. 1, 2002, pp. 42-45; C.J. Lloyd, *Parliament And The Press: The Federal Parliamentary Press Gallery 1901-88* [hereafter *Parliament and the press*], Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1988, pp. 125-130.

[2] The appointment of Curtin as the prime minister was welcomed by such newspapers as *The Canberra Times, The Herald* (Melbourne), *The Sun* (Sydney) and *The West Australian.* (Anon.), "The New Ministry", *The Canberra Times,* Canberra, 7 October 1941, p.2; *Scrapbooks compiled by the Prime Minister's office* [hereafter *Scrapbooks*], John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library [hereafter JCPML], Bentley, no. 1, JCPML acc. no. 00297/1, 7 October 1941.

mainstream, city newspapers, film industries and radio stations.  To set about answering the research question – "How successful was Curtin in persuading the predominantly conservative news media to promote his wartime views?" – this chapter identifies the political attitudes and ideas conveyed by the Australian press publishers, prominent journalists and other media professionals, who influenced public perceptions of this prime minister.  They were responsible for interpreting his military strategies for audiences, framing his film appearances and reporting on his radio talks.  This study uses rarely researched primary sources to show that the news media manifested a growing plurality of voices that were broadly supportive of Curtin's strategies to create a more independent, assertive Australian identity.

**Politics of the press, 1831-1939**

With the exception of *The Canberra Times*, all of Australia's capital city dailies were established in the nineteenth century.[3]  Although all of these newspapers were products of their varied, local histories, the major metropolitan press often adhered to conservative formats and sometimes proprietors resisted innovations in layouts until the transformative 1940s.  Political cartoons, for example, were a feature of some newspapers for more than 150 years;[4] but at *The Sydney Morning Herald*, established in 1831, the Fairfax proprietors did not employ a cartoonist until 1944.[5]  At the turn of the twentieth century, most of the press establishments viewed it as unnecessary for serious publications to promote news stories on the front covers to attract readers' attention.  While in Melbourne, *The Herald* became the first Australian newspaper to feature a main news page on the front cover regularly from 1889, many mainstream dailies did not incorporate page one news as a usual format until well into the

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[3] The following section will provide short historical summaries of many Australian capital city dailies.  Also the Darwin newspaper indexes date to 1883.  See Northern Territory Library, "Northern Territory Newspapers", 2007, retrieved on 14 July 2010 at <http://www.ntl.nt.gov.au/collections/northern_territory_newspapers>.

[4] Parliament of Victoria, "Celebrate 150 years", Melbourne, no. 8, February 2006, p. 1.

[5] John Frith, interviewed by Shirley McKechnie [hereafter "Frith interview"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01064/1, 30 April-1 May 1994.

twentieth century, according to Victor Isaacs and Rod Kirkpatrick.[6]  For example, in the late nineteenth century, the main Sydney newspapers displayed front and back pages that were entirely filled with classified advertisements.[7]  Gradually more traditional press owners approved page one headlines and reports.  By 10 December 1949, *The West Australian* became the last metropolitan daily to show a main news page on the front cover regularly.[8]

Visual images reflected shifting newspaper editorial attitudes on Australia's place in the world and these views ranged from imperialism to racism to international cooperation.  In the early twentieth century, the nation showed "the early signs of widespread Australian aspirations to effective nationhood".[9]  Occasionally line drawings were used to illustrate significant news, such as the inauguration of the Australian Commonwealth on 1 January 1901 and the death of Queen Victoria on 22 January in the same year.  At first, photographs were published very sparingly as small portraits of people in the news.  The first press photographs appeared in two Melbourne newspapers, *The Age* and *The Argus,* on 22 April 1908;[10] *The Sydney Morning Herald* followed this trend with a photographic feature about the Australian visit of the US Navy squadron, known as The Great White Fleet, in August of the same year.[11]  The arrival of the battleships indicated a peak in closer US-Australia ties, but the bilateral relationship then languished until World War II.[12]  Emerging radical nationalism, notions of "White Australia" and racial superiority appeared in *The Bulletin* magazine and industrial cartoons of the urban, labour press.[13] Technological improvements, particularly the radio transmission of photographs

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[6] Victor Isaacs and Rod Kirkpatrick, *Two hundred years of Sydney newspapers: A short history* [hereafter *Sydney newspapers*], Rural Press, North Richmond, 2003, pp. 8, 13; Rod Kirkpatrick, "Select chronology of significant Australian press events to 2005" [hereafter "Australian press events"], National Library of Australia [hereafter NLA], Canberra, September 2006, retrieved on 21 January 2009 at <http://www.nla.gov.au/anplan/heritage/1851-1900.html>.

[7] Isaacs and Kirkpatrick, *Sydney newspapers*, p. 8.

[8] Kirkpatrick, "Australian press events".

[9] Christopher Hubbard, *Australian and US military cooperation: fighting common enemies* [hereafter *Australian and US cooperation*]*,* Ashgate, Aldershot and Burlington, 2005, p. 12.

[10] Kirkpatrick, "Australian press events".

[11] Isaacs and Kirkpatrick, *Sydney newspapers*, p. 13.

[12] Hubbard, *Australian and US cooperation*, p. 12.

[13] Peter Love, *Labour and the Money Power: Australian Labour Populism 1890-1950*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1984, particularly pp. 10-17, 72.

during the 1920s, led to more visually appealing pictorial features.  Despite the new columns set aside for photographs, creative standards in layout, production and journalistic techniques made incremental progress for Australia's principal, established newspapers.[14]

Sometimes the nineteenth-century newspaper owners were also politicians, as in the case of the first *West Australian* proprietors, John Hackett and Charles Harper, who established the daily on 1 January 1885.[15]  Harper held the North District seat in the Legislative Council from 1878 and 1890, while Hackett represented the South-West Province in the Council from 1890 until his death in 1916.  Although Hackett reflected the same concerns about direct democracy and radical politics as many other western legislators, he identified himself as an "advanced liberal".  For example, he published *West Australian* editorials to campaign successfully for additional funding to government schools to improve public education standards.  According to the historian, Lyall Hunt, the press owner was a "central figure" in these reforms and his newspaper became "the instrument of the change", leading to the emergence of free, compulsory and secular education in WA in 1899.[16]

Similarly to Hackett's professional background as a politician and news proprietor, *The Sunday Times* owner and news editor, Frederick Vosper, was a parliamentarian when he established his Perth newspaper in 1898.  Although the newspapers' journalists were trained to write for papers of record and to avoid bias, they became involved in political disputes that were characteristic of the prevailing

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[14] Isaacs and Kirkpatrick, *Sydney newspapers*, pp. 12-13.

[15] Various newspapers had been published in Fremantle and Perth WA for short time spans since 1830.  Kirkpatrick, "Australian press events".

[16] O. K. Battye, "Harper, Charles (1842 – 1912)" [hereafter "Harper"], *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, vol. 4, 1972, pp. 348-349, retrieved on 21 January 2008 at <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A040395b.htm>; Lyall Hunt, "Hackett, Sir John Winthrop (1848-1916)" [hereafter "Hackett"], *Australian Dictionary of Biography,* Melbourne University Press, vol. 9, 1983, pp. 150-53, retrieved on 21 January 2009 at <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A090143b.htm>.

international trend of sensationalist "yellow journalism".[17]  For example, *Sunday Times* writers harshly denounced the state engineer C.Y. O'Connor's pipeline proposal to transport water from Perth to the drought-stricken Goldfields.  Some of Vosper's contemporaries blamed his editorial criticism for contributing to O'Connor's suicide in 1902.[18]  Five years later, *The Sunday Times'* second publisher, James McCallum Smith, led WA protesters who were agitating for secession from the nation.  Smith continued to manage *The Sunday Times* while he joined the Legislative Assembly as a conservative MP in 1914.[19]  Thus the first *West Australian* and *Sunday Times* proprietors established a tradition of political interference in governmental affairs[20] and later Curtin would need to negotiate the newspaper managements' attempts to influence him.[21]

Although some of the first major newspaper owners were not as overtly involved in politics, they and their families became deeply entrenched in the public spheres of their cities.  Since its origins in 1831, *The Sydney Morning Herald* was known as the city's authoritative newspaper and it came under the control of the Fairfax family in 1841.[22]  The first issue of Melbourne's *The Age* was published on 17 October 1854; two years later, it was acquired by the Syme family, competing

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[17] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1989, p. 168.
[18] Leigh Hays, Criena Fitzgerald and Andrew MacDonald, "WA and Federation: Frederick Vosper", State Library of WA, Perth, 2000, retrieved on 21 January 2009 at <http://www.slwa.wa.gov.au/federation/fed/017_vosp.htm>; Roger Stitson, "Constructing Australia: Pipe Dreams", Film Australia, Woolloomooloo, 2007, retrieved on 22 January 2009 at <http://www.filmaust.com.au/constructingaustralia>.
[19] Donald Grant, "Smith, James MacCallum (1868 – 1939)" [hereafter "James McCallum Smith"], *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, vol. 11, 1988, pp. 651-652, retrieved on 21 January 2008 at <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A110671b.htm>.
[20] Beate Josephi, "Federation: The West Australian between Empire and Nation", *ejournalist*, vol. 1, no. 2, 2001, pp. 1-17, retrieved on 10 December 2010 at <ejournalist.com.au/v1n2/josephi.pdf>.
[21] Lloyd Ross, *John Curtin: A Biography* [hereafter *A Curtin biography*], Macmillan Publishing Company, South Melbourne, 1977, pp. 141-142.
[22] Kirkpatrick, *Sydney newspapers*, p. 15.

with *The Argus,* which began to be published in the city on 2 June 1846.[23]   In Tasmania, the first issue of the bi-weekly *Hobarton Mercury* was published on 5 July 1854 by John Davies, a London-born former convict of Hobart.  According to *The Mercury* history, Davies might have committed a "petty crime" to escape the harsh conditions of England and obtain free shipping passage to a potential "land of opportunity".  Benefiting from the fluidity of the colonial society, he was discharged after serving a six-year sentence and joined the police force, being promoted to a chief constable in Sydney in 1840.  The Davies family retained control of their newspaper during World War II.[24]   Their experience indicated that Australian urban communities offered opportunities for social mobility for such individuals as Davies and Curtin in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[25]   The nation's fledgling journalism profession presented numerous possibilities for an enterprising, cash-strapped young man, such as Curtin, who was intelligent but lacked a formal education, to distinguish himself in society.

While traditional newspapers, including *The West Australian*, reflected an "empire loyalty",[26] and *The Sydney Morning Herald* publishers resisted such "gimmicks" as competitions and comic strips,[27] more sensational, tabloid newspapers emerged.  In Sydney, for example, the first issue of *Truth* was published

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[23] Sybil Nolan, "Half a Century of Obscurity: The Age, 1908-64" [hereafter "The Age"], *ejournalist*, 2001, pp. 2-5; Geoffrey Serle, "Syme, Sir Geoffrey (1873-1942)" [hereafter "Geoffrey Syme"], *Australian Dictionary of Biography,* Melbourne University Press, vol. 12, 1990, pp. 154-55, retrieved on 21 January 2009 at <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A120172b.htm>; Jim Usher (ed.), *The Argus: Life & Death of a Newspaper* [hereafter *The Argus*], Australian Scholarly Publishing, North Melbourne, 2007, pp. 11, 30.

[24] F.C. Green, "Davies, John (1813 – 1872)" [hereafter "John Davies"], *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, vol. 4, 1972, pp. 27-28, retrieved on 21 January 2009 at <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A040027b.htm>; Kirkpatrick, "Australian press events"; Peter Mercer, "The History of The Mercury" [hereafter "The Mercury"], Mercury Print Museum, Hobart, 2007, retrieved on 21 January 2009 at <http://ink.iim.uts.edu.au/mercury/print_museum/merc_history.htm>.

[25] David Black (ed.), *In His Own Words: John Curtin's Speeches and Writings* [hereafter *In his own words*], Paradigm Books Curtin University, Bentley, 1995, p. 1; Green, "Davies", pp. 27-28; Peter Love, "'The Boy – His Relation to Industry': George Swinburne on Technical Education and Nation Building", in Bobbie Oliver (ed.), *Labour History in the New Century*, Black Swan Press, Perth, 2009, p. 5; Mercer, "The Mercury".

[26] Beate Josephi, "Reluctant consent: The West Australian's slow embrace of a sense of nationhood" [hereafter "West Australian"], in Denis Cryle and Jean Hillier (eds), *Consent and Consensus: Politics, Media and Governance in 20th century Australia* [hereafter *Consent and consensus*],  API Network, Perth, 2005, pp. 45, 56.

[27] Kirkpatrick, *Sydney newspapers*, p. 15.

on 3 August 1890 and six years later, it was acquired by John Norton.  With his "new weekly journal of sport, crime and exposé articles",[28] Norton entered the "very competitive" market to attract Sunday newspaper readers.[29]  As a Protectionist and later an independent politician, Norton was elected to the New South Wales Legislative Assembly at various times between 1898 and 1910.[30]  Other prosperous Sydney proprietors included Robert Clyde Packer and his associates at Smith's Newspaper Ltd, who launched the *Daily Guardian* in 1923 and *The Sunday Guardian* in 1929, "setting the pace in turning news into entertainment".[31]  In contrast to the sensationalist trend, Thomas Mitchell Shakespeare began publishing *The Canberra Times* in 1926 with the motto, "Serve the national city and through it the nation"; its pages were dominated by federal parliamentary reports.[32]  In Melbourne, Keith Murdoch, a World War I news correspondent, became the managing director of the "modest company",[33] The Herald & Weekly Times Ltd, in 1924.[34]  Murdoch acquired more newspapers including *The Adelaide Advertiser* and *The Courier-Mail* in Brisbane.  After he led a Melbourne syndicate that bought *The West Australian* in 1926, he issued shares to local people to appease their concerns about interstate control and retain the newspaper's WA identity.[35]  As well as managing the Melbourne afternoon *Herald*, Murdoch ran the city's morning *Sun News-Pictorial*, known for its brash, "modern" format.[36]  While the mid-1920s marked "the height of competition" among rapidly expanding media companies, the

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[28] Michael Cannon, "Norton, John (1858 – 1916)" [hereafter "John Norton"], *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, vol. 11, 1988, pp. 41-42.

[29] Kirkpatrick, *Sydney newspapers*, p. 15; Kirkpatrick, "Australian press events".

[30] Cannon, "John Norton", pp. 41-42.

[31] Richard White, "Packer, Robert Clyde (1879 – 1934)", *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, vol. 11, 1988, pp. 117-118, retrieved on 14 July 2010 at <http://adbonline.anu.edu.au/biogs/A110126b.htm>.

[32] H. J. Gibbney, "Shakespeare, Arthur Thomas (1897 – 1975)" [hereafter "Arthur Shakespeare"], *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, vol. 11, 1988, pp. 573-574, retrieved on 21 January 2008 at <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A110722b.htm>.

[33] The Herald & Weekly Times, *Keith Murdoch: Journalist*, The Herald & Weekly Times Ltd., Melbourne, 1952, p. 5.

[34] Kirkpatrick, "Australian press events"; Geoffrey Serle, "Murdoch, Sir Keith Arthur (1885 – 1952)" [hereafter "Keith Murdoch"], *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, vol. 10, 1986, pp. 622-627, retrieved on 22 January 2008 at <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A100610b.htm>.

[35] Kirkpatrick, "Australian press events"; Serle, "Keith Murdoch".

[36] Nolan, "The Age", p. 2; Serle, "Geoffrey Syme".

1930s depression led to the collapse of nine papers because the owners were unable to adjust to the new economy of large-scale production. [37]

With the trend towards oligopolistic control of the nation's newspapers, some of the media owners' sons became fierce rivals.  The press industry's economic strength had become more concentrated since 1903, when 17 proprietors owned 21 dailies.[38]  In 1936 Packer's son, Frank, helped form a new company, Consolidated Press, including Sydney's *The Daily Telegraph*, which became influential among the city's middle-income market.  Frank Packer's business partner, Edward Granville Theodore, had been the federal treasurer in the Scullin Labor Government from 1929 to 1930.[39]  Meanwhile Norton's son, Ezra, inherited *Truth* and he launched the afternoon "scandal" Sydney paper, *The Daily Mirror*, in 1941.[40]  Most of the newspaper owners also wrote editorials on occasions; Packer, Norton and Warwick Fairfax had been young journalists in their fathers' newspaper offices.[41] Shakespeare's son, Arthur, had been a sub-editor and later he became *The Canberra Times* owner.[42]  By 1941, Australia's six capital cities produced 15 daily newspapers, controlled by ten proprietors.[43]  Thus as Australian society diversified, mainstream press proprietors produced serious broadsheets and different tabloids, aimed at the working and middle classes, to cater to a wider range of public readerships. According to the wartime news correspondent, Don Whitington, the newspaper

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[37] Henry Mayer, *The Press in Australia* [hereafter *The press*], Lansdowne Press, Melbourne, 1968, p. 31.

[38] Bridget Griffen-Foley, "The Fairfax, Murdoch and Packer Dynasties in Twentieth-Century Australia" [hereafter "The Fairfax, Murdoch and Packer dynasties"], *Media History*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2002, p. 94.

[39] Bridget Griffen-Foley, "Packer, Sir Douglas Frank Hewson (1906 – 1974)" [hereafter "Frank Packer"], *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, vol. 15, 2000, pp. 553-556, retrieved on 21 January 2009 at <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A150644b.htm>; Kirkpatrick, *Sydney newspapers*, pp. 13, 15.

[40] Valerie Lawson, "Norton, Ezra (1897 – 1967)" [hereafter "Ezra Norton"], *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, vol. 15, 2000, pp. 495-497, retrieved on 21 January 2009 at <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A150576b.htm>.

[41] Griffen-Foley, "Frank Packer"; Lawson, "Ezra Norton"; Gavin Souter, *Heralds and Angels: The House of Fairfax 1841-1990* [hereafter *The house of Fairfax*], Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1991, pp. 44, 47.

[42] Gibbney, "Arthur Shakespeare", pp. 573-574.

[43] Griffen-Foley, "The Fairfax, Murdoch and Packer dynasties", p. 94.

oligopoly was "controlled and manipulated" by principally four men in the 1940s: Fairfax, Murdoch, Norton and Packer. [44]

Even so, Murdoch seemed to be the "political king-maker" among the press owners since his promotion of conservative politicians in the 1920s and 1930s.[45] At *The Herald*, for example, he published secret government cables that might have contributed to influencing the 1931 election outcome, with the defeat of the Scullin Labor government and the victory of Joseph Lyons as the new prime minister and leader of the conservative United Australia Party (UAP).[46] *The Herald* senior political journalist, Joseph Alexander, reported on the criticisms that Scullin had written about some of his party members and then cabled to the acting Prime Minister, J.E. Fenton. At the time, Scullin was meeting major London financial advisers, attempting to solve the economic woes of the depression, and *The Herald* report focused on ALP divisions during a deep crisis. Scullin initiated a police investigation to discover who leaked the cables and although no-one was charged, Alexander was temporarily suspended from the press gallery. After several months, Scullin removed the ban and Alexander resumed his Canberra editorial position, never divulging the source of the leak. Alexander reminisced that "the decisive role was played by Keith Murdoch in the selection and grooming of a successor to Scullin".[47] Later, scholars agreed with Alexander's acknowledgement that Murdoch had used his newspaper to help replace the Labor Federal Government with an administration more sympathetic to his business interests.[48] This episode indicated that since press proprietors did not always support an incumbent prime minister in the 1930s, one decade later Curtin would need to develop adept media strategies to secure their consensus to report on his foreign policies favourably.

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[44] Don Whitington, *Strive to be Fair: An Unfinished Biography* [hereafter *Strive to be fair*], Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1977, p. 85.
[45] Cited in Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, p. 86. This view was supported in Mayer, *The press*, pp. 29, 143.
[46] Lloyd, *Parliament and the press,* pp. 88–109; Nick Richardson, "Sir Keith Murdoch's relationship with Prime Minister Joseph Lyons" [hereafter "Sir Keith Murdoch"], National Archives of Australia [hereafter NAA]*,* Canberra, 5 May 2006, pp. 1–10; Serle, "Keith Murdoch".
[47] Joseph A. Alexander, interviewed by Mel Pratt [hereafter "Alexander interview"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00551, 2 March 1971, transcript np.
[48] Alexander, "Alexander interview".

At another Murdoch newspaper, *The West Australian*, the editorial management recognised Curtin's achievements as the Labor federal member for Fremantle from 1928 until his defeat in 1931.  Curtin's biographer, Lloyd Ross, wrote that about three years later, *The West Australian* editor, H.J. Lambert, joined other community leaders in attempting to persuade him to nominate for the safe Labor seat of Bourke, Victoria.  After hearing rumours that Curtin might stand for the Bourke seat, Lambert wrote a "purely personal" letter to him before the 1934 election.  In fact, Curtin's mentor, Frank Anstey, had announced his retirement as the ALP Federal Member for Bourke and was urging his protégé to nominate for the same seat.  Lambert advised Curtin that he "would be wise to take this step" because he would be more likely to win an easy victory and the nation needed "the best brains of every school of thought to grapple with the problems which confront us".  The conservative press editor emphasised that he did not concur with Labor's political views; however, he wanted Curtin to stay in politics.  Lambert noted: "I believe that the best safeguard against the sterilization of constructive thinking is that all schools of thought should find expression through their most capable mediums".  Although the private letter indicated Lambert's blatant attempts to influence the election campaign, the candid tone suggested there might have been a friendship between the two men.  Lambert also noted to Curtin that his letter was "tinged with regret" because if his advice was heeded, "you may lose your identification with WA".[49]  Yet Curtin was determined to re-nominate for the Fremantle seat and he won the 1934 election with a majority of 2,000 votes.[50]  Immediately he announced his top priorities would be economic recovery and job creation; although the national unemployment rate had fallen from 29 per cent in 1932, it was almost 18 per cent in 1935.  Lambert's letter indicated that the conservative media still valued an ALP politician, such as Curtin, during times of crisis.

On the whole, however, a number of scholars have agreed that the media owners were generally conservative in the late 1930s.[51]  For example, Murdoch's managing editor at *The Adelaide Advertiser*, Lloyd Dumas, strengthened his alliance

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[49] Cited in Ross, *A Curtin biography*, pp. 141-142.
[50] Ross, *A Curtin biography*, p. 144.
[51] Griffen-Foley, "Political opinion polling", p. 42, 44; Mayer, *The press,* p. 27; Neville Petersen, *News Not Views: The ABC, the Press, & Politics 1932-1947* [hereafter *News not views*], Hale & Iremonger, Sydney, 1993, p. 130.

with South Australia's Liberal and Country League Government in a bid to boost his
newspaper's influence.  After the state government's election in November 1938,
Dumas agreed to back the industrialisation policies of the Adelaide leader, Thomas
Playford.  The agreement assisted the government to maintain power for a record
term of nearly 27 years.[52]  Given *The Canberra Times* motto of impartial journalism,
Shakespeare seemed to be an exception among the press proprietors because he did
not directly attempt to intervene in politics "to avoid any conflict of interest".[53]
News editors and owners initially assured Menzies of their support when he became
the new UAP prime minister on 26 April 1939.  Yet fractures emerged in his press
relationships by the time of his resignation on 29 August 1941 during the Nazi
advances.[54]

## Menzies and the media, 1939-1942

While senior wartime correspondents praised Menzies' rhetorical skills,[55] his media
strategies as the prime minister and leader of the UAP have not been a prominent
subject of scholarly analysis.  A few media historians – such as Griffen-Foley,[56]
Lloyd[57] and Petersen[58] – devoted some attention to his complex press relations as

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[52] S. Cockburn, "Dumas, Sir Frederick Lloyd [1891 – 1973]" [hereafter "Lloyd Dumas"],
*Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, vol. 14, 1996, pp. 44-46,
retrieved on 21 January 2009 at <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A140047b.htm>.
[52] Government of South Australia, "SA Newspapers: Early history", Adelaide, 2007,
retrieved on 21 January 2009 at <http://www.samemory.sa.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=604>;
Kirkpatrick, "Australian press events".
[53] Gibbney, "Arthur Shakespeare", pp. 573-574.
[54] Irvine Douglas, interviewed by Mel Pratt [hereafter "Douglas interview"], JCPML,
Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01061/1, 15-19 June 1972, transcript np; Griffen-Foley, p. 44; Alan
D. Reid, interviewed by Mel Pratt [hereafter "Reid interview"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML
acc. no. 00501, 4 October 1972-28 February 1973, transcript np.
[55] E.g. Menzies' speech-making abilities were praised during oral history interviews with
Frank Chamberlain of the *The Sun News-Pictorial,* Peter Ewing of *The West Australian* and
Edgar Holt of *The Daily Telegraph.*  See Frank Chamberlain, interviewed by Mel Pratt
[hereafter "Chamberlain interview"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00552, August
1972-January 1973, transcript np; Peter Ewing, interviewed by Bill Bunbury [hereafter
"Ewing interview"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00492/2, 15 December 1999,
transcript np; Edgar George Holt, interviewed by Mel Pratt [hereafter "Holt interview"],
JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01059, 23 May 1978, transcript np.
[56] Griffen-Foley, "Political opinion polling", pp. 42-45.
[57] Lloyd, *Parliament and the press,* pp. 125-130.
[58] Petersen, *News not views,* pp. 107-109.

part of their larger research projects about other prominent figures of his era.  Yet Menzies cared deeply about his public image, scrutinising the media reports about himself and delivering polished speeches in newsreels and radio broadcasts.[59] Increasingly he shifted from press interviews to the radio airwaves to speak with supporters, as shown by an analysis of his diary,[60] oral histories of his contemporaries,[61] wartime film footage[62] and radio transcripts.[63]  These sources suggested that as the prime minister, he was unable to conceal his "thinly veiled disdain" for the Canberra press gallery.[64]  Also he blamed negative media coverage for contributing to a loss of confidence in his leadership that led to his resignation in 1941.[65]  The next year, he began a series of weekly Friday night radio broadcasts to speak directly to the so-called "forgotten people" from Australia's middle class.[66] Yet Menzies' seeming retreat from face-to-face news interviews might not have been entirely his choice.  Journalists did not appear to be as interested in reporting on his opinions once he ceased to be the prime minister.  For example, a wartime correspondent, Frank Chamberlain, recalled that the press table was "quite empty" at one of Menzies' public speeches during the 1943 election campaign.  Chamberlain said the press organisations had already received a transcription of Menzies' statement and they did not think it would be sufficiently newsworthy to justify

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[59] Lloyd, *Parliament and the press,* p. 127.

[60] Robert Menzies, cited in A.W. Martin and Patsy Hardy (eds), *Dark and Hurrying Days: Menzies' 1941 Diary* [hereafter *Dark and hurrying days*]*,* NLA, Canberra, 1993, pp. 69, 82, 126.

[61] Alexander, "Alexander interview"; Chamberlain, "Chamberlain interview"; Douglas, "Douglas interview"; Reid, "Reid interview".

[62] Robert Menzies, "Declaration of War" [hereafter "War declaration"], Menzies Virtual Museum, East Melbourne, 3 September 1939, retrieved on 18 May 2009 at <http://www.menziesvirtualmuseum.org.au/1930s/1939.html#MenziesEvents>; Robert Menzies, "Transcript of Press Conference Film" [hereafter "Press conference film"], Menzies Virtual Museum, East Melbourne, 1941, retrieved on 18 May 2009 at <http://www.menziesvirtualmuseum.org.au/1940s/1941.html#MenziesEvents>; Penny Robins (executive producer), *The Prime Ministers' National Treasures: Robert Menzies' Camera* (television broadcast – hereafter *Robert Menzies' camera*), Film Australia, Old Parliament House and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation [hereafter ABC], Canberra, 11 September 2007, retrieved on 27 January 2011 at <http://www.filmaust.com.au/primeministers/default.asp>.

[63] Robert Menzies, "The Forgotten People" [hereafter "Forgotten people"], Menzies Virtual Museum, East Melbourne, 22 May 1942, retrieved on 18 May 2009 at <http://www.menziesvirtualmuseum.org.au/transcripts/ForgottenPeople/ForgottenCont.html>.

[64] Lloyd, *Parliament and the press*, p. 125.

[65] Griffen-Foley, "Political opinion polling", p. 43.

[66] NAA, "Robert Menzies: In office", Canberra, 2009, retrieved on 11 December 2010 at <http://primeministers.naa.gov.au/primeministers/menzies/in-office.aspx>.

sending reporters to cover the event.[67]  According to Griffen-Foley, several press proprietors met Menzies one evening in July 1942 to discuss rebuilding his national stature; however, Murdoch "privately harboured doubts about the politician" because he seemed "short of some valuable qualities"[68] including the necessary diplomacy to unify conservatives.[69]  This section will identify the successes and failures of Menzies' media strategies from 1939 to 1942 to provide a basis for comparing these with Curtin's mass communications and journalist relationships.

When Germany invaded Poland on 1 September 1939, Menzies was relatively inexperienced in his prime ministerial role, but quickly cultivated strong relations with the news media to strengthen his position.  He had been sworn in as Australia's leader on 26 April after Lyons' sudden death.  On the same day, he made his first prime ministerial radio broadcast, directly appealing to Australians by declaring:

> I am a singularly plain man, born in the little town of Jeparit, on the fringe of the Mallee; educated at Ballarat, in a state school, and then by scholarship at a public school and Melbourne University.  Apart from having parents of great character, intelligence and fortitude, I was not born to the purple.[70]

Although he publicly emphasised his humble, hard-working and "plain" origins, Menzies' series of educational scholarships assisted him to become one of the nation's most well-known constitutional lawyers.  In 1929, he became "the youngest King's Counsel in Australia".[71]  He developed a rapport with the press gallery because as an arbitrator in 1927, he helped to introduce a professional grading

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[67] Chamberlain, "Chamberlain interview".
[68] Cited in Griffen-Foley, "Political opinion polling", p. 44.
[69] Griffen-Foley, "Political opinion polling", p. 52.
[70] Robert Menzies, Menzies Virtual Museum, East Melbourne, 26 April 1941, retrieved on 18 May 2009 at
<http://www.menziesvirtualmuseum.org.au/1930s/1939.html#MenziesEvents>.
[71] Cited in NAA, "Robert Menzies: Before office", Canberra, 2009, retrieved on 11 December 2010 at <http://primeministers.naa.gov.au/primeministers/menzies/before-office.aspx>.  The ALP politician, Herbert Vere Evatt, was also appointed as a King's Counsel in 1929, but he was about eight months older than Menzies.  See G. C. Bolton, "Evatt, Herbert Vere (Bert) (1894 – 1965)", *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, vol. 14, 1996, pp. 108-114, retrieved on 11 December 1010 at <http://adbonline.anu.edu.au/biogs/A140124b.htm>.

system for journalists and to improve their working conditions significantly. According to Griffen-Foley, his legal support for the Australian Journalists' Association (AJA) provided an "inestimable advantage" later when he sought positive publicity in his news conferences.[72]  Lloyd contended the new leader's "credibility with journalists was reasonably high".[73]  As *The West Australian* correspondent, Peter Ewing, reminisced:

> Bob Menzies had a very good relationship with all newspaper men – just because he was Bob Menzies who gave us the award, you know, to some extent.  But I think he liked newspaper people too and … whenever he was in Perth, he would always be at any AJA thing too.[74]

While Menzies and Curtin were "[t]otally different men", they shared "this common link with the newspaper fraternity", Ewing commented.[75]  According to Edgar Holt, a *Daily Telegraph* correspondent, Menzies was a brilliant speechwriter and orator with a "feeling for words".[76]  Menzies, with his links to Victoria, continued to develop a close affinity with *The Age* in Melbourne[77] and enjoyed a high level of media goodwill as the war against Germany escalated.

In a similar manner to major Allied democratic leaders, Menzies made use of radio and film technology to galvanise public opinion in favour of fighting Nazism. As the first Australian prime minister to announce the nation's involvement in war in a radio broadcast, he invoked empire loyalties by proclaiming on 3 September 1939:

> Fellow Australians,
>
> It is my melancholy duty to inform you officially that in consequence of a persistence by Germany in her invasion of Poland, Great Britain has declared

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[72] Griffen-Foley, "Political opinion polling", p. 42.
[73] Lloyd, *Parliament and the press,* pp. 125-130.
[74] Ewing, "Ewing interview".
[75] Ewing, "Ewing interview".
[76] Holt, "Holt interview".
[77] Griffen-Foley, "Political opinion polling", p. 42.

war upon her and that, as a result, Australia is also at war.  No harder task can

fall to the lot of a democratic leader than to make such an announcement.[78]

This declaration of imperial obedience was consistent with government policies that influenced the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC).  Since its inception in 1932, the broadcaster was meant to be a bastion of imperialism, as media scholar, David Pyvis, has noted.  In the early days, the ABC executives deliberately pursued "exaggerated English accents" for their programs.  In Sydney, one half of the station's announcers were English in 1939.[79]  As a well-known "film buff",[80] Menzies established the Department of Information (DOI) to direct the content of stirring, morale-boosting battle footage five days after the war began.[81]  Through his radio broadcast and the DOI, Menzies established innovative practices in the use of relatively new media technology in wartime Australia.

His publicity officer, Claude Charles Dawson, had worked for Lyons from 1938 to 1939 and was encouraging him to continue the former prime minister's practice of two media conferences each day.  Neither Lyons nor Menzies shared confidential information with the press gallery.  Due to the pressures of war, Menzies adopted a system of a single daily interview, which did not satisfy the reporters, according to Lloyd.[82]  Yet one wartime journalist, Don Whitington, remembered, "he held two press interviews on most days" during the winter of 1941.[83]  In an oral history interview, Alan Reid, a former reporter for the Sydney *Sun*, remembered Menzies' "extraordinary rapport" with his favourite journalist, Eric McLaughlin, a correspondent for the rival *Sydney Morning Herald.*  McLaughlin and Menzies "used to spend the bulk of Saturday mornings closeted together in the Cabinet ante room, and the result was Eric [McLaughlin] knew everything that was going on within

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[78] Menzies, "War declaration".

[79] David Pyvis, "When the AIR BEER CEER pushed the Aussie twang" [hereafter "Aussie twang"], *Issues in Educational Research*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1993, p. 4.

[80] Robins (executive producer), *Robert Menzies' camera.*

[81] Carol Fallows, *War: Australian Memories in Black and White* [hereafter *War*], Murdoch Books, Sydney, 2005, p. 8.

[82] Lloyd, *Parliament and the press,* pp. 125-126.

[83] Whitington, *Strive to be fair,* p. 72.

Government", Reid recalled.  Menzies provided frequent "scoops" for McLaughlin's weekly column.  Reid commented:

> The other newspapermen, myself included, had to wait for Eric McLaughlin's
> Monday column – in those days the 'Sydney Morning Herald' ran a column
> every Monday – and this gave a wonderful preview of Menzies' intentions
> and his approach.[84]

Despite his formal media meetings, therefore Menzies often released news in a selective, partial and controlled way.[85]

According to Reid, the relations became strained because of disagreements between Menzies and *The Sydney Morning Herald* editors about defence policies. The Menzies Cabinet was criticised in the newspaper for being too slow to make decisions and for "their incapacity for the responsibilities [that] war was forcing on them".[86]  Also, on 19 February 1941, a *Sydney Morning Herald* editorial writer criticised the federal administration for showing signs of "vacillation" because many press owners had "submitted willingly" to newsprint rationing; however, the government had permitted more newspaper titles as well as the increased consumption of writing and parchment paper.[87]  McLaughlin's editors had been instructing him to write this type of negative news.  Yet McLaughlin refused and he was replaced by Ross Gollan.  Reid said: "Gollan's instructions were that Menzies had to go".  As the prime minister prepared the country for more overseas battles, he faced increasing press criticism, internal divisiveness within the UAP-Country Party coalition and an Axis offensive in Europe.[88]

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[84] Reid, "Reid interview".
[85] Reid, "Reid interview".
[86] (Anon.), "The Prime Ministership", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Sydney, 29 August 1941, p. 6.
[87] (Anon.),"Pruning Non-Essentials", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Sydney, 19 February 1941, p. 10.
[88] Douglas, "Douglas interview"; NAA, "Fact Sheet 78 – Sir Robert Gordon Menzies", Canberra, March 2000, retrieved on 30 January 2011 at <http://www.naa.gov.au/about-us/publications/fact-sheets/fs78.aspx>.

Editorial discontent increased when Menzies appointed Murdoch to be the director-general of information on 8 June 1940.  Responsible for enacting the government's censorship policies, Murdoch was confronted by hostile, rival press proprietors, leading to his resignation in December of the same year.[89]  Although Ewing fondly remembered Menzies' achievements as an arbitrator in 1927, when he helped to improve journalists' working conditions, Alexander recalled the prime minister's "sharp contempt for the Press" from 1939 to August 1941.  As Murdoch "greatly resented Menzies' attitude to journalism",[90] he did not fully endorse the UAP leader in *The Herald* by this time.  As Griffen-Foley has noted, Murdoch held equivocal private views about Menzies and became unsure whether he was the "suitable successor" to Lyons.[91]

As the first Australian leader to fly overseas, Menzies created an historical record of the Nazi devastation by making home movies with his tiny, clockwork, wind-up film camera and writing detailed descriptions of his journey in his diary. Menzies' voyage to Asia, the Middle East, the UK and North America was made from 24 January to 24 May 1941.  His objectives were to secure more aircraft to defend Australia, visit troops in the Western Desert and consolidate Churchill's assistance to protect Singapore, which subsequently surrendered to Japan on 15 February 1942.[92]  The historian, David Day, suggested that as Menzies departed Sydney, he might have been considering "the possibility of transferring his considerable talents to Westminster".[93]  Towards the end of his London visit, Menzies wrote in his diary that the British minister and press proprietor, Maxwell Aitken, urged him to remain there, saying it was "absurd that I should go back to Australia!"[94]  The editors of Menzies' diary, A.W. Martin and Patsy Hardy, noted

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[89] Griffen-Foley, "Political opinion polling", p. 43; Serle, "Keith Murdoch"; Souter, *The house of Fairfax*, p. 46.
[90] Alexander, "Alexander interview".
[91] Griffen-Foley, "Political opinion polling", p. 43.
[92] Robert Menzies, *Menzies' 1941 Diary* [hereafter *Menzies' diary*], Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House, Canberra, 5 March 1941, retrieved on 18 May 2009 at <http://moadoph.gov.au/exhibitions/online/menzies/japan.htm#3foot>; Penny Robins, *Robert Menzies' camera.*
[93] David Day, *The great betrayal: Britain, Australia & the onset of the Pacific War 1939-42*, Angus & Robertson Publishers, North Ryde, 1988, p. 115.
[94] Menzies, cited in Martin and Hardy, *Dark and hurrying days*, p. 121.

that his criticisms of Churchill were a "recurring theme" in his private notes.[95]
During a London press conference, Menzies asked Australian news representatives whether he should stay in Britain to participate in War Council meetings.  Irvine Douglas recalled the "majority opinion" of the editors was "that his place was in Australia and not in Britain".[96]  These sources revealed Menzies' British loyalties.

In contrast to leading wartime Labor politicians – such as Curtin, Ben Chifley, Francis Forde and Scullin – who bequeathed very few memoirs to the National Library of Australia,[97] Menzies and his secretary accumulated so many documents that they left "the largest personal archive ever acquired".[98]  As a result, Menzies' diary entries provided many direct, unguarded and private comments that were largely absent from Curtin's official, published writings.  For example, in a diary excerpt on 5 March 1941, he conveyed his impatience with a journalist, who had criticised his Japanese strategy as being "appeasement".  He commented tersely:

> Curious interview with British & Australian press.  Some noodle [representing *The Argus*] thinks my speech about the Pacific was "appeasement".  What a perversion.  What a tyranny over inferior minds words and phrases exercise!  I must be careful not to say "Good day" to my neighbour.  Our true policy vis á vis Japan is firmness & [sic] friendliness: the two are not inconsistent.[99]

In other diary pages, however, Menzies wrote he received "excellent" coverage in *The Times* and *The Telegraph* in London, as well as from *The Washington Post.*[100]
During his four-month trip, he gave 90 speeches and broadcasts.[101]  While monitoring sympathetic press reports, he described his interest in watching a "talkie" film of his speech and broadcasting from a London radio station to US listeners.[102]
Yet in a Cinesound newsreel, depicting Menzies' Tobruk visit, he did not directly address the camera and thereby did not communicate with cinema audiences.  Filmed

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[95] Martin and Hardy, *Dark and hurrying days,* p. 159.
[96] Douglas, "Douglas interview".
[97] Graeme Powell, "The First in the Field: Prime Ministers' Papers in The National Library of Australia" [hereafter "Prime ministers' papers"], *Australian Academic & Research Libraries,* vol. 36, no.1, March 2005, pp. 57-58.
[98] Powell, "Prime ministers' papers", p. 59.
[99] Menzies, cited in Martin and Hardy, *Dark and Hurrying Days*, p. 82.
[100] Martin and Hardy, *Dark and hurrying days,* pp. 62, 113, 130.
[101] Martin and Hardy, *Dark and hurrying days,* p. 136.
[102] Martin and Hardy, *Dark and hurrying days,* pp. 82, 89.

by Damien Parer, the newsreel included two close-up camera shots, looking down, to show Menzies asleep in a fighter plane over the Tobruk harbour.  The film narrator said that as a wartime leader, Menzies was subject to criticism that was "not always just", but did not elaborate on this remark.  Parer also showed scenes of Australian troops cheering Menzies; however, the occasional camera technique of looking down on him and the commentary that he was a criticised prime minister signified that he was slightly weak.  These film methods indicated that Menzies' media relations were more troubling than he suggested in his diary.[103]

Some journalists, such as the Australian Associated Press London-based deputy editor, Irvine Douglas, remembered Menzies' criticism of the press.  In his oral history interview, Douglas talked about waiting for Menzies at a London conference in 1941:

> Menzies came in and scarcely apologised for being late, and then said, 'You know, I loathe the press … Do you know, when I became Prime Minister, I took over as press officer Dick Dawson who had been with Mr Lyons, and do you know, Dawson tried to tell me that I should see the press twice a day?  I ask you, twice a day?  He told me that Lyons used to'.[104]

Douglas also discussed his reaction to Menzies' statement:

> And this made my hackles rise and I said, 'Well, it didn't do him [Lyons] any harm, did it?'  All Menzies could say was, 'I wonder, I wonder,' and that was that.[105]

Douglas' comments were particularly candid, considering his professional credentials as a publicity officer for the conservative Commonwealth Government from 1934 to 1938 and a private secretary to Lyons between 1936 and 1938. Menzies had served as a deputy prime minister to Lyons.  But by 1938, Menzies was involved in a campaign with Murdoch to destabilise Lyons.  Murdoch was "[b]ecoming increasingly impatient with Lyons' leadership" and wanted the

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[103] Cinesound Productions, *From Palestine to Bengazi With The Prime Minister* (newsreel), Australia, 1941.
[104] Douglas, "Douglas interview".
[105] Douglas, "Douglas interview".

government to quicken the pace of rearmament.[106]  The animosity within the UAP resurfaced between Menzies and Lyon's former private secretary.  Douglas' opinion was supported by other Canberra news colleagues.[107]  In his autobiography, Whitington remarked that Menzies "made few efforts to charm the men who were presenting him to the Australian public through the columns of the metropolitan and country press".[108]  The ABC's first press gallery news reporter, Warren Denning, privately wrote of Menzies' "subtle, super-refined leg-pulling" attitude towards reporters.[109]  These sources indicate that Menzies was intensely focused on the far-flung theatres of war and did not divert his full energies to maintaining close press relations.

After returning to Australia, Menzies faced dissension from his coalition partner, the Country Party.  During a filmed interview, he emphasised his desire to avoid disruptive, partisan politics during the war:

> I come back to Australia with just one sick feeling in my heart and that is that I must now come back to my own country and play politics.  I think that it's a diabolical thing that anybody should have to come back and play politics – however *cleanly*, however *friendly* – at a time like this.[110]

He spoke solemnly, accentuating "cleanly" and "friendly" to indicate his preferred style of honest politics.  Yet the internal divisiveness within his coalition government, the Labor opposition's refusal of his invitation to join an all-party government[111] and increased media antipathy led to his resignation.  According to Griffen-Foley, "Menzies held the press responsible for the campaign of destabilisation that culminated in him losing the UAP leadership in 1941".[112]  He particularly blamed *The Sydney Morning Herald* and to a lesser degree, *The Daily*

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[106] Griffen-Foley, "Political opinion polling", p. 43.  Similar comments were published in Lloyd, *Parliament and the press,* p. 125.

[107] Lloyd, *Parliament and the press,* p. 129; Petersen, *News not views*, p. 94; Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, p. 72.

[108] Whitington, *Strive to be fair,* p. 72.

[109] Cited in Lloyd, *Parliament and the press,* p. 129.

[110] The transcription did not include italics.  See Robins, *Robert Menzies' camera*; Menzies, "Press conference film".

[111] David Black, "Australian Governments 1939-1945", JCPML, Bentley, 2006, retrieved on 18 May 2009 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/ww2leaders/index.html>.

[112] Griffen-Foley, "Political opinion polling", p. 43.

*Telegraph* and *The Herald.*[113]   Moreover, the Axis offensives did not help to restore confidence in his leadership.  In April, for instance, the Nazi General, Erwin Rommel, forced Allied troops to retreat into Egypt, but the fortress of Tobruk, Libya, garrisoned mainly by the 9th Australian Division, held out against the siege.  In Greece, the Commonwealth troops evacuated Crete in May, leaving the mainland and all Greek Aegean islands under German occupation.  On 29 August, Menzies was replaced by Arthur Fadden, leader of the Country Party within the coalition government, who resigned fewer than two months later because of a House of Representatives vote of "no confidence" over his budget proposals.  Labor was in government on 7 October.  Although Menzies and the journalists did not appear to trust one another by this time, the disastrous military battles worsened his public relations problems.

Despite the coalition instability, Menzies had prepared Australia for war and as he retained the affluent, suburban Melbourne electorate of Kooyong, he immediately began to plan his leadership comeback.  His weekly, homespun radio chats, given on Friday evenings, were a pivotal strategy in his 1942 political campaign.  While the historians, Griffen-Foley and Lloyd, have focused on Menzies' cooling press relations,[114] there was scarce scholarly material about his radio talks that were instrumental in assisting him to maintain his House of Representatives seat while in the political opposition.  Beginning on 22 May 1942, the talks were directed to "the forgotten people", which was later the title of his published collection of radio essays.  They were the middle class, representing the "backbone of this country" and "constantly in danger of being ground between the upper and the nether millstones of the false class war".[115]  Even as the Labor Government was advising the ABC producers to eschew the English accents of the past in favour of distinctive Australian voices,[116] Menzies told his radio listeners: "I am – like you – dyed-in-the-

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[113] Martin and Hardy, *Dark and hurrying days,* pp. 140-141.
[114] Griffen-Foley, "Political opinion polling", pp. 41-59; Lloyd, *Parliament and the press,* pp. 125-130.
[115] Menzies, "Forgotten people".
[116] Pyvis, "Aussie twang", p. 8.

wool British".[117]   The weekly essays were broadcast by Sydney's 2UE, which had begun operating in 1925, and its associated commercial stations in Victoria and Queensland.  In his volume of essays, Menzies wrote "many thousands" of people listened to the radio programs and "hundreds" of his supporters asked him to publish the transcriptions.[118]

While directing his remarks to his voters, Menzies used his broadcasts to deride the Australian press.  For example, he rebuked one unnamed newspaper organisation for "carrying its hostility beyond defeat ... The campaign was deliberate and sustained".  He extended his criticisms to other journalists, who reflected "a perceptible tendency to mingle report with comment".  In his view, government-media relations were unsatisfactory because "[i]t is unfortunate that both Parliament and Press cannot regard themselves as engaged in a vital joint enterprise".[119]  Also he spoke admiringly of US journalists to the detriment of Australian news reporters:

> In point of fact the newspapermen by whom I have been cross-examined in the
> United States are conspicuously the best-informed, the quickest and the
> shrewdest that I have encountered anywhere in the world.[120]

Although Menzies spoke compassionately about the need to fulfil post-war aspirations for economic progress, thereby creating a sense of a friendship with his target radio listeners, he also tried to influence them to share his dislike of Australia's press.

On the whole, Menzies made some lasting innovations in Australian media practices, particularly in his recognition of the potential benefits of the relatively new

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[117] Robert Menzies, "Our American Allies" [hereafter "American allies"], Menzies Virtual Museum, East Melbourne, 23 January 1942, retrieved on 18 May 2009 at <http://www.menziesvirtualmuseum.org.au/transcripts/ForgottenPeople/Forgotten14.html>.
[118] Robert Menzies, "Foreword: The Forgotten People", 1942, Menzies Virtual Museum, East Melbourne, retrieved on 18 May 2009 at <http://www.menziesvirtualmuseum.org.au/transcripts/ForgottenPeople/ForgottenCont.html>.
[119] Robert Menzies, "Freedom of Speech and Expression", Menzies Virtual Museum, East Melbourne, 26 June 1942, retrieved on 18 May 2009 at <http://www.menziesvirtualmuseum.org.au/transcripts/ForgottenPeople/Forgotten3.html>.
[120] Robert Menzies, "American allies".

wartime newsreels.  World War I cinemagoers were shown only silent pictures of battle zones.[121]  Also Menzies was the first leader to deliver a radio broadcast to announce that Australia was following Britain to war.  Five days later, he established the DOI "to mobilise the film medium for national ends".[122]  Similarly to Churchill, Menzies attempted to use films to stir cinema audiences to fight the Nazis.  The DOI recruited its first cameraman, Parer, who filmed overseas battle scenes and helped create the popular *Letter to Australia* newsreel series in 1940.  Some of the documentary scenes showed volunteers queuing to enlist in the military, soldiers training on a beach and a stand-up of one young man, who said he was eager to travel from his home in Central Australia "to get to old Hitler".  Government legislation stipulated that conscripted soldiers could be used only for the defence of the nation on Australian soil.  Yet Menzies' low-key "business as usual" slogan did not inspire many young people to volunteer for overseas combat roles in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF).[123]  Despite Menzies' interest in creating home movies as historical records of devastated battle zones, he did not seem to make any considerable use of the film medium to communicate publicly to cinema audiences.

Although Menzies initially enjoyed friendly press relationships, he later used his radio talks to try to snub newspaper reporters.  According to news correspondents' oral histories, Menzies' friendships with journalists began to disintegrate when he criticised their profession and selected a favourite *Sydney Morning Herald* correspondent to write exclusive, political, weekly columns.[124]  Confronted by the rising Nazi challenge abroad and the aggressive in-fighting in his coalition government, Menzies even lost *The Sydney Morning Herald* support and he eventually blamed the press for generating negative publicity that forced him to resign.  When in opposition, he turned to the radio microphones in the middle of 1942 to broadcast his homey essays about Australian life and appeal to the "forgotten" middle class.  He was one of Australia's first conservative politicians to

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[121] National Film and Sound Archive, "Australians in the First World War", Acton, 2008, retrieved on 22 January 2009 at
<http://www.nfsa.gov.au/the_collection/collection_spotlights/australians_in_ww1_1.html>.
[122] Fallows, *War*, p. 8
[123] Fallows, *War*, pp. 8, 14-15.
[124] Alexander, "Alexander interview"; Douglas, "Douglas interview"; Reid, "Reid interview".

deliver weekly radio talks to this constituency.  Through his extensive use of the airwaves to speak directly with voters, he developed a powerful persona that assisted him to become Australia's longest serving prime minister from 19 December 1949 to 26 January 1966.  Yet before this time, Curtin had deliberately cultivated a media image as an ordinary, friendly and patriotic Australian prime minister since 1941.  Thus a radio battle escalated between the two great political orators to win voters' trust in their wartime records of achievements.

## Curtin's press relations, 1941-1945

In contrast with Menzies' selective use of favoured journalists and editors, Curtin adopted an inclusive, open and direct approach towards the press gallery.  His journalism background as a former labour newspaper editor and the AJA's WA district president assisted him to gain reporters' support.  His appointment as prime minister seemed to transform many Australians from a mood of disillusionment to a sense of unified optimism, according to academic and public opinion surveys.  In a report published in August 1941, the anthropologist and sociologist, Professor A.P. Elkin, concluded that after he interviewed different age groups in NSW, Australians had lost confidence in the press.  According to Elkin, only 18 per cent of readers viewed the press war coverage as "fully reliable"; more than twice this percentage regarded it as "unreliable" and the rest were uncertain about its credibility. Furthermore, all of the surveyed age groups expressed "widespread distrust" in Australian political leaders two months before Curtin's appointment as the prime minister.[125]  One year after Elkin released his report, a new Australian Public Opinion Polls survey indicated that eight out of ten Australians were "satisfied or more than satisfied with Curtin's job as Prime Minister".  The opinion poll results were published under the headline, "Mr Curtin's Job Pleases People", in *The Courier-Mail* on 14 August 1942.[126]  Murdoch published this newspaper report, which stated that Curtin had received strong approval from a "cross-section of

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[125] Petersen, *News not views*, pp. 169-170.

[126] (Anon.),"Mr. Curtin's Job Pleases People", *The Courier-Mail,* Brisbane, 14 August 1942, p. 4.

electors" including non-Labor voters throughout Australia.  The 1941 and 1942 surveys suggested that after Curtin became prime minister, Australians were less likely to be cynical about their national leader.

Certainly the prevailing battlefront conditions could not account for this seemingly renewed mood of national optimism.  By August 1942, the Australian army had shifted its focus from fighting "a conventionally organised opponent" in Europe and North Africa to the new jungle warfare against Japan.  The Japanese army had advanced to New Guinea with "speed, ferocity and effectiveness".  Many Australian troops were "insufficiently trained" and "badly equipped" to fight in the rugged terrain and harsh climate of the territories, Papua and New Guinea.  Between July 1942 and January 1943, the Australian army mastered the Japanese forces and the jungle.[127]  During this period, Australian censors prevented the DOI cameraman, Parer, and the ABC radio correspondent, Chester Wilmot, from reporting on the British Commonwealth armed forces' lack of preparation for the new type of warfare in dense, tropical vegetation.[128]  The public opinion poll in August 1942 suggested that Curtin benefited from this type of censorship, which had been instituted at the beginning of the war.

Yet the mainstream press also witnessed a major transformation as they experimented with a broad range of innovations to keep pace with the tumultuous events in the 1940s.  Despite the censorship and rationing restrictions, the war created new opportunities for men and women journalists in Allied nations including Australia.  In April 1942, some 62 correspondents were accredited to Australian forces.  About one year later, there were 261 permanent and visiting Australian

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[127] Tim Moreman, "Remembering the war in New Guinea" [hereafter "New Guinea"], Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 2010, retrieved on 12 December 2010 at <http://ajrp.awm.gov.au/AJRP/remember.nsf/Web-Printer/CDB80BEBCB5BFCB2CA256AFB001AD079?OpenDocument>.
[128] ABC (producer), *Four Corners: The Men Who Saved Australia* (television program – transcript), Sydney, 27 April 1998, retrieved on 12 December 2010 at <http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/stories/s12899.htm>; Neil McDonald, "Getting it Right – Damien Parer, Osmar White and Chester Wilmot on the Kokoda Track", *The Sydney Papers*, vol. 14, no. 2, 2002, pp. 96-109; Moreman, "New Guinea".

correspondents.[129]  The US reported 1,646 accredited correspondents and the total worldwide number was estimated to be 10,000 during the war.[130]  Due to the impact of newspaper rationing, large features diminished in favour of "hard news", mainly international war bulletins.  The problem was not alleviated until April 1945, when the Federal Government granted a 45 per cent increase to publishers in the base year consumption for newsprint.[131]  Notwithstanding these editing limitations, banner headlines and copious illustrations became a permanent feature in some tabloid Australian newspapers during the latter part of the war.  All of the journalists faced the same pressures to write newsworthy, sellable stories that would pass the censors' penetrating gaze; however, they framed their articles differently to suit the varied styles and political preferences of press proprietors, as well as to meet the needs and aspirations of local populations.


**Curtin's distinctive newspaper strategies across Australia**

To identify the reasons for Curtin's success, this section will examine the interconnections between Australian wartime politics and journalists.  During most of his prime ministership, he shared top-secret information at his twice-daily media conferences and this was a significant departure from his predecessors' more authoritarian, formal press meetings.[132]  Chapter 5 contains a more detailed investigation of his interviews.  This section will begin with the WA press for these reasons: first, Curtin developed good relations with the local news media when visiting his Fremantle electorate; secondly, this thesis intends to contribute to filling gaps in our understanding of the WA media during this war.  Curtin strengthened his amicable relations with *The West Australian* editor, Lambert, on the day of his appointment as the prime minister in 1941.  Surprisingly, the editor seemed to approve the sudden overturning of the UAP-Country Party government in favour of a Labor majority, dependent upon the support of two independent MPs.  Lambert

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[129] Prue Torney Parlicki, *Somewhere in Asia: War, Journalism and Australia's Neighbours, 1941-75,* University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 2000, p. 33.
[130] I.C.B. Dear and M.R.D. Foot, *The Oxford Companion to World War II*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2001, retrieved on 21 January 2008 at <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1O129-warcorrespondents.html>.
[131] Kirkpatrick, "Australian press events".
[132] Alexander, "Alexander interview"; Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, p. 78.

affirmed the outcome was in "the public interest" because the conservative government's budget was "scarcely practical politics", as he wrote in a confidential letter to Curtin on 7 October 1941.  He also conveyed his hopes that Curtin would receive "fair and generous treatment" from the national press.[133]  Gradually *The West Australian* reflected a shift in editorial attitudes from "empire loyalty" to a national consciousness similar to the sense of Australian identity promoted by Curtin in his media statements.[134]  As the newspaper's editors promoted a consensual war effort, they allocated generous space to Curtin's announcements and this was significant because their daily editions were half of the size of their pre-war issues due to newsprint shortages.  *The West Australian* journalist, Ewing, spoke of Curtin's strategy to diminish parochialism and promote a sense of national unity.  In an interview, Ewing said Curtin led Australians in a new direction towards national self-determination because "the allegiance to Britain was secondary in his mind to the welfare of the country".  Furthermore, Ewing praised Curtin's development of a bilateral partnership with the US.[135]  Therefore war-related items dominated the news and by mid-August 1945, *The West Australian* editorials promoted a national consciousness and referred to Australians as "we".[136]

At *The Sunday Times* in Perth, the editorial management moved away from their previous secessionist, acerbic tone and, in like manner to their *West Australian* rivals, they began supporting Curtin's positive affirmation of Australian nationhood. During the war, *The Sunday Times* was owned by Victor Courtney and John J. Simons.  Although Courtney had been a Nationalist political candidate, he distanced

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[133] H.J. Lambert to John Curtin, JCPML, Bentley, N/C. acc. no. 003, 7 October 1941.

[134] Josephi, "West Australian", pp. 45, 56.

[135] Ewing, "Ewing interview".

[136] E.g. David Day, *John Curtin: A life* [hereafter *John Curtin*], HarperCollins*Publishers*, Sydney, 1999, p. 513; Griffen-Foley, "The Fairfax, Murdoch and Packer dynasties"; Josephi, "West Australian", p. 56; David Marsh, "Sports Reporting in WA During the Two World Wars" [hereafter "Sports reporting in WA"], in Cryle and Hillier, *Consent and consensus*, p. 83; Geoffrey Serle, *For Australia and Labor: Prime Minister John Curtin*, JCPML, Bentley, 1998, p. 35; R.M. Younger, *Keith Murdoch: Founder of a media empire,* HarperCollins*Publishers*, Pymble, 2003.

himself from his earlier conservative affiliations[137] and became Curtin's friend.[138] Also Simons and Curtin had been anti-conscription activists and prominent members of the WA Labor movement during World War I.[139]  As a prime minister, Curtin benefited from his well-established press relationships with *The Sunday Times* management.  In an interview, Frank Davidson, the wartime editor-in-chief of the Western Press company (including *The Sunday Times*)[140] spoke of the strong bonds between Curtin and WA journalists.  Davidson was also the officer-in-charge of the DOI in the state.  He said Curtin was highly regarded in WA because he was a "genuine" politician without "any personal touches of vanity", who "had a very good standing with the old *West Australian* group".[141]  When Curtin had been the AJA's WA district president and *Westralian Worker* editor, he developed friendships with Perth journalists from rival newspapers.[142]  Davidson observed:

> ... I think his standing in *The West Australian* was particularly good because he always gave you the impression that he intended to gain nothing from you personally.[143]

Davidson recalled borrowing the office's old Plymouth car to drive Curtin to the Perth railway station so that he would not miss the train bound for Canberra.  He commended Curtin's ability to transcend party politics and adopt a bipartisan approach to the WA voters whom he met in the Perth pubs where he spoke.

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[137] Grant, "James McCallum Smith"; Lyall Hunt, "Simons, John Joseph (Jack) (1882 – 1948)", *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, vol. 11, 1988, pp. 608-609, retrieved on 22 January 2009 at <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A110624b.htm>.

[138] Norman E. Lee, *John Curtin: Saviour of Australia,* Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1983, p. 129.

[139] When Curtin was *The Westralian Worker* editor, Simons had campaigned unsuccessfully in the 1917 federal election as a Labor candidate for Fremantle.  Black, *In his own words*, p. 20; Bobbie Oliver, *Unity is Strength: A History of the Australian Labor Party and the Trades and Labor Council in WA, 1899-1999* [hereafter *Unity is strength*]*,* API Network, Bentley, 2003, p. 61.

[140] The Western Press incorporated *The Sunday Times*, *The Mirror* and *The Call* newspapers in WA.  See Frank Davidson, interviewed by Isla Macphail [hereafter "Davidson interview"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00127/1, 24 January 1996, transcript np.

[141] See Davidson, "Davidson interview", my emphasis.

[142] Ron Davidson*,* "John Curtin: From Revolutionary Firebrand to Journalist in Spirit", JCPML, Bentley, 2000, retrieved on 2 May 2008 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/journalist>.

[143] Davidson, "Davidson interview", my emphasis.

Davidson said:

> He was able to hold the nation together – he was no longer a Labor Prime
> Minister he was the Prime Minister.  And that was I think the success of it,
> that whatever he did was done for Australia without any personal cheers at
> all.  He just was there to fight to win the war for Australia, that's all there is
> about it.[144]

The historical recollections conveyed that journalists from WA's two competitive newspapers, *The West Australian* and *The Sunday Times*, were united in their respect for him.

Similarly Curtin cultivated positive press relationships with reporters from other conservative newspapers including Murdoch's prosperous Herald & Weekly Times Ltd, which enjoyed the greatest profits among all of the major Melbourne newspaper publishers during the war.[145]  Alexander's unpublished diaries provided an insider's perspective of Curtin's foreign policies.[146]  For example, after the prime minister's declaration of war against Japan on 8 December 1941, Alexander wrote: "Curtin is doing a splendid job.  He is cool, determined and decisive."[147]  No previous researcher has published findings on the diaries as a source for Curtin's journalism strategies.  The diaries became a record of Alexander's great esteem for Curtin, untarnished by faulty memory – a potential challenge posed by oral history reminiscences – and free from the influence of hindsight about the Australian leader's legacy.

Although Packer was known to be a pro-Menzies powerbroker,[148] Curtin appointed him and his *Daily Telegraph* business partner, Theodore, to public service and this strengthened the Labor administration's relationships with the two proprietors.  Theodore had been the federal treasurer in the Scullin administration and might have influenced Curtin's decision to select the two *Daily Telegraph* owners for important government roles.  In 1942 Curtin seconded Theodore to be the

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[144] Davidson, "Davidson interview".
[145] Nolan, "The Age", pp. 3-5; Serle, "Geoffrey Syme".
[146] J.A. Alexander, "Papers 1833–1957" [hereafter "Papers"], NLA, Manuscript Collections, Canberra, NLA acc. no. MS 2389, transcript np.
[147] Alexander, "Papers", 11 December 1941.
[148] David McKnight, "Book Review: Bridget Griffen-Foley, Sir Frank Packer, The Young Master" (Bridget Griffen-Foley), *Labour History,* no. 82, November 2002, p. 235.

director-general and Packer to be the director of personnel of the Allied Works

Council, which provided funds for war-related projects.[149]  *The Daily Telegraph*

correspondent, Edgar Holt, recalled the two newspaper publishers' tactics to

influence Curtin.  Holt said Packer insisted that he write critical articles about the

Curtin Government's early days.  Holt's stories were published in the newspaper

under Theodore's byline.  Packer predicted this type of negative political coverage

would "make Curtin aware of Theodore's existence ... and offer him a job".  Yet

Holt's employers did not require him to make direct criticisms of Curtin.  Holt

admitted he was given a tough assignment because "after all the Government had

been doing a pretty good job".  Soon afterwards, according to Holt, Curtin made an

appointment to see Theodore; then the prime minister announced the press owner's

new position in the Allied Works Council.  Beyond the political machinations of *The

Daily Telegraph* newsroom, Curtin revealed himself to be "a terribly sensitive man"

to Holt, who decided to vote for Labor in 1943.  While Curtin seemed to succeed in

developing formal business relationships with the newspaper's publishers, as well as

friendly exchanges with the chief political correspondent, this episode suggested that

he was vulnerable to media owner pressure.

As well as placating the two Sydney tabloid publishers, Curtin established

good relationships with working journalists representing other newspapers in this

city.  *The Sun* correspondent, Reid, remembered that during the war, Curtin "had

virtually a honeymoon with the Australian Press" even though he estimated 98 per

cent of the newspaper organisations "would probably be anti-Labor".  Reid admired

Curtin for his dedication to winning the war, his sensitivity and honesty, as well as

his reading interests and "magnificent library".[150]  At least one journalist, *The Daily

Mirror* Canberra political correspondent, Allan Fraser, continued a tradition of

moving from news reporting to Labor politics.[151]  Fraser gained pre-selection as the

ALP candidate for the federal seat of Eden-Monaro in NSW in 1943.  As Reid

recalled, Eden-Monaro was a predominantly rural electorate that was expected to be

won by one of the conservative parties.[152]  Yet Fraser succeeded because of his

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[149] Griffen-Foley, "Frank Packer".
[150] Reid, "Reid interview".
[151] Between 1929 and 1940, about 10 per cent of the Federal Labor MPs had been journalists.
See Mayer, *The press*, p. 190.
[152] Reid, "Reid interview".

"vigorous personal electioneering" and the national swing towards Labor.[153]  Fraser seemed to be in a small minority of mainstream journalists because most did not have Labor affiliations before Curtin's prime ministership.[154]

Despite their traditionalist reputation, *The Sydney Morning Herald* also began supporting the Labor wartime administration.  The newspaper's most senior representatives were Fairfax and the general manager, Rupert Henderson.[155] Although the Fairfax group had shunned bold, page one headlines, they started to feature political stories on the newspaper front cover[156] and employed their first cartoonist, John Frith, in 1944.  In an oral history interview, Frith described Curtin as "a very fine man", who took the "generous action" of visiting his office desk, where they were "carrying on quite a conversation" with "the very delightful" Elsie Curtin.[157]  The Fairfax publishers were staunch advocates of Curtin during the 1943 federal election, as Alexander noted in his diaries.[158]  This stance was the least conservative political position that the editorial staff had ever taken in the newspaper's history.  *The Sydney Morning Herald's* shift towards the ALP did not harm sales among the city's affluent readership.  Indeed the group's high profit rates became a "wartime embarrassment" to the company.[159]  Chapters 6 to 9 examine the reasons for the newspaper group's unpredictably vocal enthusiasm for Curtin.

Likewise, Curtin developed sound relationships with press managers at Melbourne's *Argus* and *The Adelaide Advertiser*.  *The Argus* proprietor, Errol Knox, was a loyal UAP supporter as well as a highly experienced journalist.  Yet despite his conservative affiliation, Knox remained as the Federal Government's director general of public relations for the Australian Armed Services during the war.[160] Soon after the "no confidence" vote on Fadden's budget in 1941, *The Adelaide*

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[153] C. J. Lloyd, "Fraser, Allan Duncan (1902 – 1977)", *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, vol. 14, 1996, pp. 214-216, retrieved on 21 January 2009 at <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A140237b.htm>.
[154] Allan Fraser, interviewed by Mel Pratt, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00550, August 1972–January 1973.
[155] Souter, *The house of Fairfax,* pp. 44, 47.
[156] Kirkpatrick, *Sydney newspapers*, p. 14.
[157] Frith, "Frith interview".
[158] Alexander, "Papers", 20 August 1943.
[159] Souter, *The house of Fairfax,* pp. 46-47.
[160] Usher, *The Argus,* pp. 11, 30.

*Advertiser's* Dumas praised new Prime Minister Curtin for "the smoothness" of his distribution of new ALP budget material to the cities' media.  Dumas and his colleague asked the Murdoch company's reporter, Harold Cox, to convey "their warm appreciation" to Curtin.  In his letter, Cox noted his "personal obligation" to Curtin's press secretary, Don Rodgers, for the budget information.[161]  Yet months later, the SA Labor opposition leader, Robert Richards, wrote to Curtin that he was "perturbed" by the Murdoch press in his state and added, "to say it is unfair is to pay it a compliment".[162]  In his reply Curtin acknowledged, "it is unfortunate that we should have to contend with such a powerful influence, particularly when it is used unfairly, and that the public should be misled".  He did not make specific recommendations to redress the SA press comments, noting only: "I think it is better to let the matter stand for the present".[163]  Despite their conflicting views, Curtin acknowledged Dumas' stature as an influential media manager by asking him to report on his experiences after he led a group of Australian editors on a three-month visit of overseas war zones in 1943.  During the fact-finding tour, Dumas and other editors interviewed Roosevelt, Churchill, King George VI and Queen Elizabeth.  As a result, Dumas was in an informed position to discuss the British war effort with Curtin after the journey.[164]  The personal correspondence and subsequent news conference indicated Curtin did not hold a grudge against Dumas for his occasional adversarial editorial tone.

The Brisbane press was understandably concerned with Queensland's vulnerability to Axis attacks and in his speeches, Curtin emphasised that he shared these concerns.  While Menzies was the prime minister, Queensland journalists were writing that their state's defence weapons and personnel were inadequate.  For example, a *Brisbane Telegraph* writer commented wryly on 6 May 1939 that:

> It is well known that the attitude of big business interests in Melbourne and
> Sydney is directed towards securing by far the greatest part of defence

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[161] E.H. Cox to John Curtin, JCPML, Bentley, N/C. acc. no. 013, 31 October 1941.

[162] R.S. Richards to John Curtin, JCPML, Bentley, Pol/S. acc. no. 011, 26 May 1942, retrieved on 5 October 2008 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/letters/category/political/state/Pol–S.011.html>.

[163] John Curtin to R.S. Richards, JCPML, Bentley, Pol/S. acc. no. 012, 28 May 1942, retrieved on 5 October 2008 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/letters/category/political/state/Pol–S.012.html>.

[164] Gibbney, "Lloyd Dumas".

expenditure for the protection of Sydney and Melbourne.  The attitude of the Minister of Defence is that all Queensland needs is a few popguns.[165] After Japan entered the war, the federal DOI initiated a national media campaign including radio broadcasts, press advertisements and posters, which focused on Queensland's exposure to enemy attacks in March and April 1942.  Some prominent Australians, including Menzies, criticised this type of publicity for being "anti-Japanese".[166]  By this time, Curtin took the unprecedented step of directing journalists to remove references to "the White Australia issue" in a bid to improve the nation's global standing.[167]  While he urged advertisers to focus on "their urgent war job to-day",[168] he seemed to heed the criticisms about the DOI propaganda and directed media professionals to withdraw racist statements.[169]

Yet the sense of Queensland defencelessness escalated in the media during the 1943 election campaign.  After Japanese forces bombed Townsville in the state's north on 29 July 1942, the local newspaper reported that the town's "lone air raid 'casualty'" was a coconut tree.  Also the Queensland town of Mossman was bombed in late 1942 with little damage.  Australia's most northern Allied base, Horn Island, became the state's most attacked location, with about 500 bombs dropped in the region between March 1942 and July 1943.  Cairns' population of 15,700 people was diminished by almost half between 1941 and 1942 because thousands of women and children were evacuated.[170]  In early 1943, General MacArthur alluded publicly to the "Brisbane Line", a previous military proposal which would have left northern

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[165] Cited in Peter Spearritt and Michele Helmrich, "An enduring furphy" [hereafter "An enduring furphy"], *Griffith Review*, no. 9, spring 2005, pp. 25-32, retrieved on 25 January 2009 at <http://www3.griffith.edu.au/01/griffithreview>.

[166] Robert Crawford, "An informed citizenry? Advertising and propaganda in wartime Australia" [hereafter "An informed citizenry?"], in Sybil Nolan (ed.), *When Journalism Meets History 2003,* RMIT Publishing, Melbourne, 2004, retrieved on 27 June 2008 at <http://search.informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=818812381907979;res=E-LIBRARY>.

[167] Lloyd, *Parliament and the press*, p. 133; JCPML, "John Curtin's Legacy: Leading Australia from War to Peace" [hereafter "Curtin's legacy"], Bentley, 2005, retrieved on 19 December 2010 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/legacyex/aliens.html>.

[168] Cited in Crawford, "An informed citizenry".

[169] John Curtin to H.S. Mowell, JCPML, Bentley, R. acc. no. 005, 6 April 1942; Lloyd, *Parliament and the press*, pp. 131, 133; H.S. Mowell to John Curtin, JCPML, Bentley, R. acc. no. 004, 1 April 1942.

[170] Spearritt and Helmrich, "An enduring furphy", p. 32; Peter Spearritt, Michele Helmrich and Ross Serle, "Defending the North: Queensland in the Pacific war", University of Queensland, Brisbane, 2005, pp. 5, 13.

Australia undefended if the Japanese attacked the nation.[171]  During a radio broadcast in July 1943, Curtin said:

> … the Labor Government … rejected the concept that the little islands to the north of Australia would be taken, that upper Queensland and the Darwin area would be over-run by the enemy.[172]

Chapter 7 contains a more detailed account of the controversy.  Certainly, Curtin's oratory, which was crafted to negate the "Brisbane Line" strategy, might have helped to secure his triumph at the polls.  State newspapers reflected the population's natural pre-occupation with securing a strong defence.

Similarly to the Brisbane press, the perceived threat of Japanese invasion dominated the political coverage in Darwin's main metropolitan newspaper and raised concerns in WA.  The first issue of Darwin's *Army News*, established in October 1941, carried a prominent warning, urging readers to avoid leaking important information to the "enemy".  The city's *Northern Standard* offices closed after the Japanese bombing of Darwin on 19 February 1942; this was Australia's worst air raid and the first time since European settlement that a foreign enemy had attacked the mainland.  *The Army News* became the city's only newspaper during the war.[173]  Two weeks after the bombing in Darwin, Japanese air forces attacked the WA town of Broome on 3 March and killed 70 people.  Due to their state's location, many Western Australians felt "more isolated, vulnerable, and thus defence-conscious than other states".[174]  Curtin did not publicly refer to the fact that at least 243 Australians died in the Darwin air raid and he did not release a major statement about the Broome tragedy.  Chapters 6 to 9 will evaluate his combined use of stirring rhetoric in the media and censorship to increase public morale for a protracted war.

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[171] David Black, "1943 Election: the Context of the Election", JCPML, Bentley, 2008, retrieved on 21 January 2008 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/electionleader/1943/1943_context.html>; Day, *John Curtin*, p. 503; Ross, *A Curtin biography*, pp. 309-313.

[172] John Curtin, "General Election ALP Policy Statement", JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00421/2, 26 July 1943, transcript np.

[173] Barbara James, "Historical Introduction to Northern Territory Newspapers", Northern Territory Library, Darwin, 2007, retrieved on 30 January 2011 at <http://www.ntl.nt.gov.au/collections/historical_introduction_to_northern_territory_newspapers>; Northern Territory Government, "Northern Territory Newspapers", 2007, retrieved on 21 January 2009 at <http://www.ntl.nt.gov.au/collections/northern_territory_newspapers>.

[174] T.B. Millar, "The Defense of Australia", *Daedalus*, vol. 114, no. 1, winter 1985, p. 263.

While this analysis is confined to the major metropolitan newspapers, Curtin's mainly positive press interactions extended to regional publications, as evidenced in correspondence between him and William Robert Rolph, the Australian Provincial Press Association President.  Based in Launceston, Tasmania, Rolph published the *Launceston Examiner,* the *Weekly Courier* and the *Saturday Evening Express*.  In a letter to Curtin on 20 December 1943, Rolph wrote to "express our deep appreciation and thanks to you for your co-operation and support during the last difficult 12 months".[175]  Another respected, regional journalist, Frederick Thomas Smith, recorded detailed notes of Curtin's frequent, confidential press conferences.  Smith was the Canberra-based news chief of the Australian United Press, which serviced almost all of Australia's regional newspapers, and his notes became detailed transcripts of Curtin's interviews, without the intrusion of the journalist's personal opinions.  Yet his commentaries reflected press sympathy for Curtin's objective to modify the "Beat Hitler First" strategy and gain more Allied support to fight the Japanese war.[176]  "The senior roundsmen are convinced John Curtin is right about the Japanese danger in the north", Smith wrote shortly after a press conference on 4 February 1943.[177]  Curtin would emphasise the need for the press to self-censor top-secret military news in their reports.  At an interview on 25 November 1943, he said the war correspondents' role was to "glamourise" and "tell their stories", but the chiefs of staff should "simplify the communiqués".[178]  Almost one year later, he praised Australian journalists for providing "a far better picture of the global conflict" than the biased or "one-eyed" coverage in Canada, the UK and the US.[179]  The correspondence and annotations revealed a mutual respect between rural news organisations and the national leader.

So far, this section has mainly focused on Curtin's relationships with the male-dominated press.  While he was the prime minister, the mainstream dailies reflected a new sense of national identity, improved attitudes towards Labor and an

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[175] W.R. Rolph to John Curtin, JCPML, Bentley, N/C. acc. no. 014, 20 December 1943, retrieved on 22 January 2011 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/letters/category/newspapers/corresp/N-C.014.html>.

[176] Frederick Thomas Smith, cited in Clem Lloyd and Richard Hall (eds), *Backroom Briefings: John Curtin's war* [hereafter *Backroom briefings*], NLA, Canberra, 1997, pp. iv, 112, 122 and 179.

[177] Smith, cited in Lloyd and Hall, *Backroom briefings,* p. 138.

[178] Smith, cited in Lloyd and Hall, *Backroom briefings,* p. 184.

[179] Smith, cited in Lloyd and Hall, *Backroom briefings,* p. 208.

intense focus on military battles close to home.  John and Elsie Curtin also supported
more professional roles for women as the war brought new openings for female
journalists in Australia, as it did for their colleagues in Canada and the US.  While
female news correspondents were rare prior to World War I, a small number of
Australian women were prominent in this field of journalism before 1939.[180]  Female
participation in the nation's workforce had increased by 31 per cent between 1939
and 1943.  The expansion of new jobs did not only occur in war-related nursing
posts, industries and factories, but also in journalism.[181]  Elsie Curtin used press
conferences to encourage women to enter professional careers.[182]  For example,
some 20 female US journalists attended the news interview that she gave in
Washington DC during the Curtins' visit to the nation in 1944.[183]  Elsie Curtin
revealed her aspirations for more women to be active in public roles and to help
forge international peace agreements after the war.  In a US media statement, she
commended the "continuous agitation" of Australian women, who had achieved "a
great number" of social and economic reforms including maternity allowances and
child endowment.[184]  On 29 September 1943, Curtin paid tribute to the first women
MPs, the WA Labor Senator, Dorothy Tangney, and Enid Lyons, the late prime
minister's wife, who became a member of the House of Representatives for the UAP.
Curtin declared:

> That this great event in the development of Australian citizenship should
> occur during the greatest war that our country has ever waged is, I think, no
> mere accident; it occurs because women, as women, and men, as men, have
> come to look at problems as problems ... we all sit here as persons upon

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[180] ABC Radio National, "Louise Mack: Woman War Correspondent", 2004, retrieved on 21
January 2009 at <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/history/verbatim/stories/s1163883.htm>; US
Library of Congress, "Women Come to the Front: Journalists, Photographers, and
Broadcasters During World War II" [hereafter "Women Journalists"], Washington DC,
2006, retrieved on 21 January 2009 at <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/wcf/wcf0002.html>.
[181] Australian Women's Archives Project [hereafter AWAP], "Women Journalists in
Australian History" [hereafter "Australian women journalists"], Nowra, 2008, retrieved on
16 December 2010 at <http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/cal/intro.html>; Patricia
Grimshaw, Marilyn Lake, Ann McGrath and Marian Quartly, *Creating A Nation 1788-2007,*
API Network, Perth, 2006, p. 254.
[182] JCPML, "Curtin's legacy".
[183] David Black, "Biography of Elsie Curtin" [hereafter "Elsie Curtin"], JCPML, Bentley,
2008, retrieved on 21 January 2008 at
<http://john.curtin.edu.au/resources/biography/ecurtin.html>.
[184] Elsie Curtin, "Press Statement by Mrs Curtin", JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no.
00652/1/3, 26 April 1944.

whom our fellow citizens have imposed a duty by preferring us to others who offered at the polls.[185]

The statement conveyed his politically inclusive approach and his championing of social reforms.

Australian news organisations, perhaps partly influenced by the ALP government's progressive attitudes, appointed women reporters at an unprecedented level to report war news demanded by public audiences.  Although their numbers were still relatively small, the female correspondents fulfilled significant news assignments.  At *The Herald*, Murdoch employed Pat Jarrett as a writer in 1942; soon afterwards, she interviewed MacArthur on the first day of his arrival at his Melbourne command base on 21 March 1942.  The Federal Government appointed Jarrett to be a captain in the Australian Women's Army Service and she was commissioned to write promotional articles for the military organisation.  In 1945 Jarrett became the only woman to visit the battle zone in Burma.  As an accredited war correspondent, Lorraine Stumm was invited by MacArthur to report on the attack of Rabaul in 1943.  Packer sent Adele (Tilly) Shelton-Smith of *The Australian Women's Weekly* to cover the living conditions of Australian troops in Malaya in 1941.  He also hired Pat Holmes as a *Sun* photographer.  Norton selected Elizabeth Riddell to report in New York City for *The Daily Mirror*.[186]  The ABC hired its first, female radio announcer, Margaret Doyle, in 1940.  Two years later, the ABC female staff members included 19 announcers, sound effects officers, technicians and journalists.[187]  At the same time, *The Sydney Morning Herald* women's editor, Connie Robertson, did not receive accreditation to be a war correspondent because of her gender; the discrimination against her seemed to be exceptional.[188]

Generally the Australian Government adopted a more open-minded approach than British politicians and military officials, who did not approve of any women reporting in battle zones.  For example, General Montgomery refused to accept the

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[185] Cited in Black, *In his own words,* pp. 229-30.
[186] AWAP, "Australian women journalists".
[187] ABC, "Celebrating 100 years of radio, 12th December 1901-2001" [hereafter "Celebrating 100 years of radio"], 2008, retrieved on 31 December 2008 at <http://www.abc.net.au/radio/celebrate100/history.htm>.
[188] AWAP, "Australian women journalists".

accreditation of British female war correspondents.[189]  Yet British women entered other traditionally male occupations and they were legally conscripted into military service in December 1941.  By the middle of 1943, almost 90 per cent of single women and 80 per cent of married women were employed in essential work for the war effort.[190]  Although many British women writers did not enjoy the same opportunities as the Australian female reporters, Claire Hollingsworth was an English freelance journalist who became a war correspondent in Poland for London's *Daily Express*.[191]

In like manner to Curtin, the wartime North American leaders seemed to support professional roles for women journalists.  In the US, at least 127 women received official, military accreditation as war correspondents.  They were backed by Eleanor Roosevelt, who conducted 350 women-only press conferences during her residence in the White House.  On 6 March 1933, only two days after her husband's inauguration, Eleanor Roosevelt commenced a series of weekly interviews to force each US news organisation to employ at least one female journalist; these interviews continued until FDR's death in 1945.[192]  Canada's wartime Prime Minister, Dr William Lyon Mackenzie King, supported the national women's press association by attending a meeting with the journalist members that significantly raised their profile.  After the meeting, King wrote to the Canadian National Women's Press Club president, Dora Dibney, that:

> I would like you to know that we all feel that the recent newspaper women's conference in Ottawa has meant a real contribution to a fuller appreciation of the war effort of our country.[193]

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[189] Audrey Tate, *Fair Comment: The life of Pat Jarrett 1911-1990* [hereafter *Pat Jarrett*]*,* Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1996, p. 79.
[190] Carol Harris, "Women Under Fire in World War Two", *British Broadcasting Corporation*, 2009, retrieved on 14 July 2010 at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/britain_wwtwo/women_at_war_01.shtml>.
[191] Tate, *Pat Jarrett,* p. 79.
[192] Maurine H. Beasley, "Eleanor Roosevelt's Press Conferences: Case Study in Class, Gender, and Race", *The Social Science Journal*, vol. 37, no. 4, October 2000, pp. 517-528; US Library of Congress, "Women journalists".
[193] Cited in Marjory Lang, *Women Who Made the News: Female Journalists in Canada, 1880-1945* [hereafter *Women who made the news*]*,* McGill-Queen's University Press, Kingston, 1999,

As a result, specialist female reporters were seconded to Ottawa to become
government media writers and to advise women on how to help win the war.  Only
one woman, Margaret Aitken of *The Toronto Telegram*, covered the London
conference of the British Empire in 1944.  Canadian women did not become war
correspondents because the government discouraged them from travelling
internationally.[194]  The prospects of securing an overseas news assignment were
better for the Australian and US female journalists; they benefited from the strong
press statements and groundbreaking news conferences given by the national leaders'
wives, Elsie Curtin and Eleanor Roosevelt.  Their active involvement in "the
masculine, elite and exclusive world of the traditional public domain", as described
by media scholar John Hartley,[195] contributed to the creation of a new political
agenda for future generations of women.

## Cinema "signifiers"

Curtin's electoral success was not only due to high-level government policies,
decisions and organisations, but also because he articulated a powerful persona in
popular cultural symbols, including films, which resonated with many Australians.
The nation's motion picture profession started slowly[196] and in the 1930s, many
filmmakers were struggling financially, realising "there were going to be very few
films successfully made in Australia".[197]  Prime Minister Scullin became Australia's
first prime minister to appear in a "talkie",[198] when he used a British Movietone
News film to "speak to the people of Great Britain" about investment, manufacturing
and trade opportunities in 1929.[199]  Australia's Cinesound Productions and the rival
multinational, the US-based Fox Movietone, began screening the country's first

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p. 95.
[194] Lang, *Women who made the news,* p. 96.
[195] John Hartley, *Popular Reality: Journalism, Modernity, Popular Culture,* Arnold, London
and New York, 1996, p. 73.
[196] Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, p. 85.
[197] Niall Brennan, *Damien Parer: Cameraman* [hereafter *Cameraman*], Melbourne
University Press, Carlton, 1994, p. 34.
[198] British Movietone News (producer), *Movietone News Celebrates Its 35th* (newsreel)
[hereafter *Movietone news celebrates*], Australia, 10 October 1966.
[199] British Movietone News (producer), *The Hon. James H. Scullin* (newsreel) [hereafter
*Scullin*], Australia, 30 December 1929.

"talking" newsreels in 1931.[200]  In the 1930s, the filmmakers emphasised that "bright red Movietone wagons chased the news" to create the appearance of being independent reporters.[201]  By 1936, the nation had opened 1,334 sound cinemas.[202] Although Movietone occasionally showed direct addresses of Scullin,[203] Lyons[204] and Menzies,[205] Curtin became the first prime minister to develop extensively the film medium as a form of political communication.[206]  Due to the war, he sponsored the nation's film industry to turn short newsreels from "novelties" into "important information vehicles".[207]  Curtin presided over the creation of popular, narrative films, dramatic newsreels and carefully scripted, montage documentaries that articulated an Australian identity.[208]  Featuring distinctively Australian characters, the films were popular at home and also targeted a wide Allied audience;[209] this was a breakthrough considering that in the mid-1930s, the Warner Brothers' Hollywood

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[200] British Movietone News (producer), *Movietone news celebrates*; National Film and Sound Archive, "Cinesound Review" (newsreel) [hereafter "Cinesound review"], Acton, 2001, retrieved on 3 January 2010 at <http://dl.nfsa.gov.au/module/162>.
[201] British Movietone News, *Movietone news celebrates*.
[202] National Film and Sound Archive, "Key Event Timeline: 1930s", *Research and Academic Outreach, Education*, Acton, 7 January 2002, retrieved on 3 January 2010 at <http://fromwirelesstoweb.com.au>.
[203] British Movietone News (producer), *Australia Faced The Same Problem* (newsreel), Australia, 20 August 1930; British Movietone News (producer), *Australian Prime Minister Arrives For Conference* (newsreel), London, 29 September 1930; British Movietone News, *Scullin*.
[204] British Movietone News (producer), *Australia Is Led By New Prime Minister* (newsreel), Australia, 25 February 1932; Movietone News (producer), *Australia's Premier On First Visit To Great Britain* (newsreel), England, 28 March 1935.
[205] British Movietone News (producer), *Mr. Menzies On Eve Of Sailing Reviews War Situation* (newsreel), England, 8 May 1941; Movietone News (producer), *Mr. Menzies In New York* (newsreel), New York, 19 May 1941.
[206] National Film and Sound Archive, "Australian Prime Ministers", Acton, 2008, retrieved on 3 January 2010 at <http://screensound.gov.au/the_collection/collection_spotlights/apms/index.html>.
[207] Fallows, *War*, p. 8.
[208] Vincent O'Donnell, "World War II: Film and History; The Media's Australia (Book Review)" (John Whiteclay Chambers II, David Culbert and Hilary Ericksen), *Metro Magazine: Media & Education Magazine*, no. 113/114, 1998, p. 126.
[209] Brennan, *Cameraman*, pp. 126, 136-137.  The films included: Charles Chauvel (director and producer), *The Rats of Tobruk* (movie) [hereafter *Rats of Tobruk*], Chamun Productions, Australia, 1944; Charles Chauvel (director), Charles Chauvel and Charles Munro (producers), *The Fighting Rats of Tobruk* (movie) [hereafter *Fighting Rats of Tobruk*], America and Canada, 1945; Tom Gurr (director), Jack. S. Allan (producer), *Jungle Patrol* (newsreel) [hereafter *Jungle patrol*], Commonwealth Government of Australia, Ministry of Information, Australia, 1944; Ken G. Hall (producer), *Kokoda Front Line!*, (newsreel) [hereafter *Kokoda front line*], The Australian News & Information Bureau, Australia, 1942; Ken G. Hall (director and producer), *South-west Pacific* (newsreel) [hereafter *South-west Pacific*], Cinesound Productions, Australia, 1943.

movie studios had publicised their newly hired, Tasmanian-born actor, Errol Flynn, as being Irish because his home country was considered "too obscure" for US cinema fans.[210]  The films were popular with Australian moviegoers, as well as serving the government's purpose to build national morale.[211]  The local industry benefited from the innovative techniques of the 1930s British realist filmmakers and lively US action pictures, as well as the technological, international innovations that allowed for more artistic sophistication.  Rapid advances were made in camera equipment, film stocks, colour and sound recording; the new technology was introduced in response to the leaders' needs to disseminate war information easily.[212]

This war was unique in history because of the thoroughness with which it was recorded on film by the Allies and their Axis enemies; they created motion pictures for starkly different purposes.[213]  The totalitarian leaders attempted to exert their power and promote their style of *belle guerre,* or beautiful war, to vast film audiences.  Soon after German Fuehrer Adolf Hitler secured control in 1933, his propaganda minister, Joseph Goebbels, organised the movie industry to conform to the Nazi racial requirements.  Fictional, dramatic formats conveyed common themes: violent characterisations of Europe's Jewish communities; gross caricatures of British leaders; and the exaltation of German "heroes", including the nineteenth century Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, Luftwaffe pilots and U-boat personnel.  Italian films were designed to reflect the country's new image as an imperial, conquering power.  Under the rule of the Italian Fascist Party leader, Benito Mussolini, the vast Cinecittà movie studios were built outside Rome and a film school, Centro Sperimentale di Cinemato-grafia, was established.  Mussolini's son, Vittorio, pursued an active interest in the media, securing his name on film credits and on the masthead of a movie magazine.[214]  Japanese filmmakers also increased

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[210] Mark McGinness, "Biography: The Swashbuckler from Hobart", *Quadrant online*, vol. 53, no. 6, June 2009, retrieved on 10 June 2010 at <http://www.quadrant.org.au/magazine/issue/2009/6/the-swashbuckler-from-hobart>.

[211] Alan Osbiston, "Australian Films Overseas" [hereafter "Australian films"], *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Sydney, 18 July 1944, p. 2.

[212] David Robinson "Introduction", in Ann Lloyd and David Robinson (eds), *Movies of the Forties* [hereafter *Movies*], Orbis Publishing, London, 1982, p. 1.

[213] Jerome Kuel, "Documentary Footage", in Lloyd and Robinson, *Movies,* p. 45.

[214] Geoff Brown, "Europe at War", in Lloyd and Robinson, *Movies,* pp. 4-5; Jeffrey Richards, "Them and Us", in Lloyd and Robinson, *Movies*, p. 10.

their production of overtly propagandist films.  At the start of the international conflicts, Japanese movie companies were amalgamated and they produced 554 films until the country's defeat in August 1945.  North American censors judged 225 of the Japanese movies to be feudal or anti-democratic.[215]

Hitler and Mussolini used symbols, myths, rituals and cults to contribute to their political identities, means and goals.  For example, many movies foregrounded Nazi and Fascist salutes, reminiscent of the imperial signals used by powerful, ancient Romans, while recounting fabricated tales about glorious, military victories.[216]  Hitler – as a failed artist who did not graduate from high school – delegated and distributed power "within the very heart of the population", giving responsibilities to "a relatively large section" of "the masses" for conducting state functions including propaganda, repression, control and policing.[217]  Mussolini – a former daily newspaper owner dedicated to manipulating the media – liked to talk of his intentions to dominate "the masses" in the same way that a "sculptor" or "poet" would work at a craft, as he described to German journalist Emil Ludwig in 1932. "The masses" became an object to be moulded into a desired form through ideology and rhetoric.  Both dictators adopted a dramatic speaking style, as well as highly exaggerated facial expressions and gestures that mimicked the melodramatic, theatrical performances of an older era.[218]

For the purpose of countering the Axis media propaganda, Curtin publicised the heroism of the dedicated, hard-working and egalitarian Australian to the Allied world.  For example, Nazi radio propagandist, "Lord Haw Haw" (William Joyce), derisively labelled the Australian and British servicemen, who were besieged by

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[215] Richard Tucker, "Cinema of the Rising Sun", in Lloyd and Robinson, *Movies*, p. 98.
[216] Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi, "The Aesthetics of Politics: Symbol, Power and Narrative in Mussolini's Fascist Italy" [hereafter "The aesthetics of politics"], *Theory, Culture & Society*, vol. 9, no. 4, November 1992, pp. 77, 83.
[217] Michel Foucault, "Film and Popular Memory: An Interview with Michel Foucault", trans. Martin Jordan, *Radical Philosophy*, vol. 11, summer 1975, p. 27; Hannes Schuler (director), *Hitler's Museum: The Secret History of Art Theft During World War II* (documentary) [hereafter *Hitler's museum*], Kultur Video, United States and Canada, 2008.
[218] Falasca-Zamponi, "The aesthetics of politics", pp. 81-82, 91.

Rommel's forces, as "the rats of Tobruk" in 1941.[219]  During the siege, AIF members made "Tobruk Rat" medals from shell casings and other metal scraps to present these to servicemen for valiant acts.  As an *Argus* reporter explained on 30 December, the triangular medal featured a brass rat and the inscription, "Presented by Lord Haw Haw to the Tobruk Rats, 1941".[220]  Likewise, Curtin publicly turned the intended insult into a compliment during his radio broadcast to US audiences on 14 March 1942.  He reminded Americans that Australians "are the Anzac breed.  Our men stormed Gallipoli.  They swept though the Libyan Desert.  They were the 'rats of Tobruk'".[221]  His radio statements were published in *Time* and one of the magazine's writers likened Curtin's eloquent rhetoric to the words of the US Civil War poet, Walt Whitman.  As the *Time* reporter opined, Curtin's statements "should have roused the fight in the entire U.S. public".[222]  A large, news picture distributing organisation in New York, Interphoto News Pictures, sent a cable to *The Sydney Morning Herald,* affirming that "Curtin's speech made great impression".  The newspaper's general manager, Henderson, passed on the message to Curtin two days after his radio broadcast.[223]  As a result, the Nazis' constructed "rats" image was overturned by Curtin, who used the same word-picture to create a heroic, admirable vision of Australians.  This mental image, "the signified",[224] was legitimised by Allied filmmakers.


In 1944, the Australian film director, Charles Chauvel, used the phrase promoted by Curtin and released a movie about the battle siege, *The Rats of Tobruk*. Two Australian actors, Peter Finch and "Chips Rafferty" (John William Goffage),

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[219] Australian War Memorial, "Siege of Tobruk", Canberra, 2009, retrieved on 22 January 2009 at <http://www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/tobruk>.
[220] (Anon.), "Tobruk 'Rats' Award Own Medals", *The Argus*, Melbourne, 30 December 1941, p. 3.
[221] John Curtin, "Relations With America: Broadcast by Prime Minister", JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00434/1, 14 March 1942.
[222] (Anon.),"Last Bastion", *Time,* New York, 23 March 1942, p. 27.
[223] Rupert Henderson to John Curtin, JCPML, Bentley, N/C. acc. no. 011, 16 March 1942.
[224] Roland Barthes, *Mythologies,* trans. Annette Lavers, Paladin Grafton, London, 1973; Michel Foucault, "Orders of Discourse", trans. Rupert Swyer, *Social Science Information,* vol. 10, no. 2, April 1971, pp. 7-30; Niall Lucy and Steve Mickler, *The War on Democracy: Conservative Opinion in the Australian Press,* University of Western Australia Press, Crawley, 2006, pp. 21-22, 26; Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics,* trans. Roy Harris. Open Court, Chicago, 1995.

were granted official leave from their military responsibilities to perform in the movie's leading roles.  Goffage was a flying officer with the Royal Australian Air Force.  Finch had been a gunner in the AIF and after the film's release, he was promoted to the rank of sergeant.  The movie's leading characters were Milo, a dingo trapper (Goffage), Bluey, a tough drover (Grant Taylor) and Pete, an English "new chum" (Finch).[225]  Such films represented a unique blend of social realism and lyricism, factual news and patriotism.  The same movie was released in the US under the title, *The Fighting Rats of Tobruk.*[226]  The cinematic tribute to the servicemen's courage was justified.  Both Allied and enemy combatants testified that Australians were among the best troops fighting in the North African and Middle East regions in 1941 and 1942.[227]  While the Australian and Nazi movie industries shared the same objectives – to expose their enemies' weaknesses and inspire their audiences to greater efforts to win the war – Curtin responded to Hitler's messianic propaganda messages by forging partnerships with artistic filmmakers to create a national cinematic identity and a distinctive style celebrating austerity, egalitarianism and lyricism.

In contrast to the Axis dictators' projections of superiority, Curtin deliberately portrayed himself as an ordinary Australian in newsreels.[228]  Although there were significant differences between the propaganda techniques of Hitler and Curtin, both leaders cultivated a "man of the people" image.  Nazi newsreel images showed Hitler pausing to talk with groups of smiling, young schoolgirls, who presented him with flowers at military parades.[229]  It seems that these meetings were frequently staged and publicised globally as impromptu displays of affection for the Fuhrer.  For instance, General Motors Overseas Corporation circulated a multi-page cover story in its company house publication to state that Berlin's streets "were full

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[225] Chauvel, *Rats of Tobruk.*
[226] Chauvel and Munro, *Fighting Rats of Tobruk.*
[227] Mark Johnston, "The Hinge of Fate: Australians and Turning Points of World War II", *Tasmanian Historical Studies,* vol. 7, no. 2, 2001, p. 31.
[228] David Day, "Curtin as Hero" [hereafter "Curtin as hero"], *The Sydney Papers,* vol. 12, no. 2, autumn 2000, p. 65.
[229] According to British Pathé, this newsreel of Hitler, filmed at a Third Reich parade in Berlin, Germany, did not include any attached recorded details about the date or year. British Pathé, *Third Reich Parade* (newsreel), London, circa 1933-1945, retrieved on 13 December 2010 at <http://www.britishpathe.com/record.php?id=50250>. Also see Schuler, *Hitler's museum.*

of people waiting to see Herr Hitler go meet the children" at the beginning of a 1934 "May Day" festival.[230]  Through government-sanctioned documentaries, Curtin was portrayed to be an average, patriotic Australian, even though he worked tirelessly in his Canberra offices from 9am until midnight most days.  For example, Day referred to an official newsreel screened in an outdoor cinema near Darwin, showing an unpretentious Curtin strolling in his modest Cottesloe garden, an image which received spontaneous standing ovations from servicemen; this was evidence that he was "Australia personified" for many citizens.[231]  While Hitler's objective was to convey that the masses were subordinate to him,[232] Curtin seemed to approve of film images that showed he identified with the aspirations of working-class Australians.


Curtin's reputation as "a man of the people" was so popular to American audiences that US magazine companies used his image in their advertisements, according to a "cabled report" printed in *The Daily Mirror.*  The news article stated that magazine publishers sponsored posters in New York subway cars, which showed a photograph of Curtin reading in bed and an eye-catching headline with an inaccurate title: "Australia's Premier reads pulp fiction for exactly 1 hour in bed every night."  *The Daily Mirror* repeated a statement "described in Canberra today" that "like any other man, Mr Curtin reads a few of the better type wild-Western stories for relaxation".[233]  The US press also conveyed an endearing picture of Elsie Curtin; for example, *The Sun* quoted an article in America's *Look* magazine, which described her as "the sort of woman who should be chosen as a typical mother for Mother's Day".[234]  At her press conference in Washington DC, Elsie Curtin surprised American female reporters by acknowledging that she shopped for groceries and cooked her family's meals, rather than relying on domestic staff.[235]

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[230] Cited in Edwin Black, "Hitler's Carmaker", Jewish Virtual Library, 2010, retrieved on 13 December 2010 at <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/gm.html>.  The General Motors and Ford owners were opposed to Roosevelt's New Deal public work projects and their German subsidiaries manufactured cars in the Third Reich.
[231] Day, "Curtin as hero", p. 65.
[232] Lynette Finch, "The man in the street and Second World War propaganda" [hereafter "War propaganda"], *Journal of Australian Studies*, vol. 23, issue 60, 1999, p. 102.
[233] (Anon.), "Slick U.S. Magazines Use Curtin To Boost Sales", *The Daily Mirror*, Sydney cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 2**,** JCPML acc. no. 00297/2, 9 October 1942.
[234] (Anon.),"Miracle Man Curtin", *The Sun*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 2, 3 June 1942.
[235] Black, "Elsie Curtin".

The public statements belied Curtin's private interest in classical literature and Elsie Curtin's political activism.

Consistent with Curtin's media image, Australian films were low budget productions that featured "individual stories of the everyday and mundane" with the use of central characters representing "the man in the street".[236]  The DOI directed the content of film footage by distributing material to the country's two major companies, Cinesound and Movietone, which provided different perspectives of the battle scenes for their audiences.  As Movietone was part of the US 20th Century Fox company, the filmmakers interspersed Australian footage with international scenes from overseas filmmakers.  Since Cinesound was associated with Australia's Greater Union Cinemas, the company concentrated on the national war effort.[237]  Some 90 per cent of Cinesound's newsreel material focused on some aspect of the war by mid-1942.[238]  Apart from *The Rats of Tobruk*, which was released by a smaller company, Chamun Productions, the high-profile movies of this period included *Kokoda Front Line!* (1942),[239] *South-west Pacific* (1943)[240] and *Jungle Patrol* (1944);[241] all titles were sponsored by the DOI.  *South-west Pacific*, for example, focused on vignettes of characters, talking about their war contributions to Australian and US audiences.  Chips Rafferty played the role of a young naval serviceman, recently returned from New York to see his girlfriend, a munitions factory worker and former beauty parlour assistant (Muriel Steinbeck).  In another scene, a motor mechanic (Bert Baily) addressed the camera to explain that his job of helping to construct aircraft "puts a mark on a man, a democratic mark.  Something [that] we will all be proud of once this war is won".[242]  The newsreel's director, Ken G. Hall, used the technique of "back projection", which allowed scenes, normally needing to be shot on location, to be filmed inside a studio.  The staged story was intercut with

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[236] Finch, "War propaganda", p. 105.
[237] Fallows, *War*, p. 8; National Film and Sound Archive, "Cinesound review".
[238] Neil McDonald, "Damien Parer's Kokoda Front Line", The National Centre for History Education, Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training, 2002, retrieved on 22 January 2009 at
<http://hyperhistory.org/index.php?option=displaypage&Itemid=696&op=page>.
[239] Hall, *Kokoda front line.*
[240] Hall, *South-west Pacific.*
[241] Gurr and Allan, *Jungle patrol.*
[242] Hall, *South-west Pacific.*

grainy, actuality footage of Australian vessels including HMAS *Sydney*, which had
been sunk about two years earlier.[243]  Through these techniques, Hall cooperated
with Curtin's aims to create inexpensive newsreels that elicited audiences' empathy
and he became one of the country's most popular producers.[244]


Yet auteur theory, which focuses on only one person as generating the source
of meaning in a film, would be inadequate to represent the creative input of the casts
and production crews.[245]  Hall's Cinesound company, for example, quickly
acknowledged the success of the team effort to produce *Kokoda Front Line!*  This
documentary won an Academy Award in 1942, the first time that an Australian film
had been so honoured.  Parer filmed the scenes of young diggers in *Kokoda Front
Line!*  The film was distributed to the newsreel cinemas of major Allied cities and
audiences saw personalised, full shots of wounded, local men engaged in jungle
warfare in the Kokoda Track in New Guinea.[246]  Parer's powerful words were
equally as stirring as the *mise-en-scène* of a close battle, appealing to an Australian
sense of duty and self-sacrifice.  In a close-up shot, he emphasised:

> … if only everybody in Australia could recognise that this country is in peril,
> that the Japanese are a well-equipped and dangerous enemy, we might forget
> about the trivial things and go ahead with the job of licking them.[247]

The film conveyed the same messages as Curtin's media campaign that encouraged
austerity and rationing.[248]  Parer and other wartime filmmakers influenced the style
and the direction of their genre; they helped to initiate interest in *cinéma vérité*
during the late 1950s and 1960s.  Literally meaning "film truth", *cinéma vérité* was
characterised by the reliance upon unobtrusive, hand-held cameras and natural
sound, as well as the minimal use of props, artificial costumes, constructed scenery,

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[243] Poppy de Souza, "South-west Pacific 1943", National Film and Sound Archive, Acton,
2010, retrieved on 13 December 2010 at <http://aso.gov.au/titles/sponsored-films/south-
west-pacific/clip1>.
[244] Finch, "War propaganda", p. 97.
[245] John Hartley, *Communication, Cultural and Media Studies: The Key Concepts*,
Routledge, London, 2002, p. 15.
[246] Brennan, *Cameraman*, p. 126, 136-137; Neil McDonald, "Parer, Damien Peter (1912 –
1944)" [hereafter "Damien Parer"], *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne
University Press, vol. 15, 2000, pp. 566-567, retrieved on 22 January 2009 at
<http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A150658b.htm>.
[247] Hall, *Kokoda front line*.
[248] Black, *In his own words,* pp. 207-210, 231-233.

rehearsals and editing.[249]  By promoting Curtin's messages on the need for civic responsibility, teamwork and thrift, the film teams contributed to his popularity and strengthened public support for the war.

After Menzies had established the DOI "to mobilise the film medium" in 1939, Curtin greatly developed the prestige of the Australian film industry.  Despite the formidable challenges of rationing, conscription and the day-to-day battle for survival, Australia exported 3,378 standard-sized movies between 1939 and 1945, as recorded by government statisticians.  Eighty-six per cent of the 1939 film exports were distributed throughout the British Empire.  This percentage slightly decreased during the war, with 70 per cent of the 1944 movie exports sent to Britain.  Australia imported more North American movies, reflecting the increasing cultural links between the two countries.  The proportion of imported movies from the US increased from 34.8 per cent in 1939 to 55 per cent in 1944.  Altogether, Australian audiences watched 8,234 imported films throughout the war years and only 58 of these were rejected by the three-person Censorship Board, based in Sydney.[250] Australian cinemas imported films partly because of a shortage of skilled local technicians at the beginning of the war.[251]  About two weeks after becoming the prime minister, Curtin announced plans to produce Australian shorts for release through US film bureaus and transfer the National Publicity Association to New York; also he instigated the National Films Laboratory to process footage.[252].  The publicity association was renamed the Australian News and Information Bureau.  In February 1944, Curtin told reporters he would give "more assistance and more

[249] McDonald, "Damien Parer"; Julie Hubbert, "'Whatever Happened to Great Movie Music?': Cinéma Vérité and Hollywood Film Music of the Early 1970s", *American Music*, vol. 21, no. 2, summer 2003, pp. 184-187.
[250] These statistics were compiled from: S.R. Carver, *Official Year Book Of The Commonwealth Of Australia,* Canberra, Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, nos 33-35, 1940-1943; Roland Wilson, *Official Year Book Of The Commonwealth Of Australia, 1944 and 1945*, Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, Canberra, no. 36, 1947. During the war years, the nation might have produced more films that were not recorded by the government statisticians.
[251] Fallows, *War*, p. 8.
[252] (Anon.), "Publicity: Relations with America: Australia Expands", *The Canberra Times,* Canberra, 31 October 1941, p. 4; John Curtin, "Relations with America" [hereafter "American relations"], *Digest of Decisions and Announcements and Important Speeches by the Prime Minister (Right Hon. John Curtin)* [hereafter *DDA*], no. 3, JCPML acc. no. 00110/8, 30 October 1941, pp. 13-14.

money" to the bureau's head, David Bailey.[253]   These types of media strategies might

have contributed to the international success of such films as *Kokoda Front Line!* and

*The Fighting Rats of Tobruk.*  In 1944, the Australian Ministry of Information's

supervising editor of films for the liberated territories, Alan Osbiston, wrote in *The*

*Sydney Morning Herald* that pre-war short films had been "the bugbear of

exhibitors"; however, since then, "the immediate need is for shorts and a very serious

need it is".[254]  Curtin sponsored the 1945 foundation of the National Film Board to

be responsible for training Australian film technicians and preparing for an increased

production of documentaries.[255]  Through his initiatives, he expanded the local film

industry and its international stature.


**Radio news**

Along with his film strategies, one of Curtin's foremost media priorities was to enlist

the support of radio news broadcasters, particularly the traditionally conservative

ABC.  In June 1942, an ABC report concluded that world leaders viewed the nation

as "a vital centre of war" and in response, radio became "a major instrument of

national policy".[256]  The following section will briefly outline the development of

amateur radio operations into the intense, wartime broadcasts of the country's

professional journalists.


Although continuous radio news pervaded 1940s Australian society, it was

not a principal means of communicating government information to audiences during

World War I.  The nation's first radio station began operating in 1912, but the

progress of this medium was slow and it was often funded by newspaper proprietors.

Catering to public entertainment, regular broadcasting stations opened in Sydney in

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[253] Lloyd and Hall, *Backroom briefings*, p. 200.
[254] Osbiston, "Australian films", p. 2.
[255] Arthur Calwell, "Appointments", *DDA*, no. 101, 1 May 1945, pp. 35-36; Arthur Calwell,
"First Meeting", *DDA*, no. 104, 26 June 1945, p. 33.
[256] Cited in ABC, "Celebrating 100 years of radio".

1923.[257]  For the first time, Australian press journalists were confronted by the prospect of a rival, albeit much smaller, medium.  Technological developments were introduced as the principal media owners accumulated radio stations, which broadcast the main stories appearing in their newspapers.  By 1931, some 55 licensed stations operated nationwide, but the techniques of broadcasting had not changed markedly since its experimental stage.[258]  The next year, the Federal Parliament established the ABC, which immediately attracted a broad audience across the nation.[259]  Curtin early recognised a shift in the traditional mode of public address for Australian politicians.  Instead of devoting most of his public addresses to giving rousing, loud speeches in crowded, town halls and at beachside gatherings in the Fremantle electorate, he increasingly turned his oratory skills to the radio microphone in 1935.[260]  At the time, the number of commercial stations had expanded to 65 throughout the country and Murdoch owned stakes in 11 of these media outlets.[261]  Radio sets were found in two out of every three Australian homes by 1937, but the medium's growing popularity did not immediately produce an increased quantity of news reports, more original sources or a wider range of voices. The ABC was allocating more than half of its airtime to music before the war and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) was viewed as the model to be emulated by Australian broadcasters.[262]  Due to the new medium's gradual evolution, the press

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[257] Peter Mercer, "Getting the News", Mercury Newspapers in Education, Hobart, 2009, retrieved on 22 January 2009 at
<http://ink.iim.uts.edu.au/mercury/print_museum/gettingthenews.htm>.
[258] *Melbourne Observer*, "The 3AW Story – Part 1", Melbourne, 2005, retrieved on 23 January 2009 at <http://www.overnighters.com.au/3awstory_01.htm>; Radio Heritage Foundation, "Australian Radio Dial 1931", New Zealand, 2004-2008, retrieved on 23 January 2009 at <http://www.radioheritage.net/Story133.asp>.
[259] Petersen, *News not views*, p. 11.
[260] L.F. Crisp, *The Australian Federal Labour Party 1901-1951,* Hale & Iremonger, Sydney, 1978, pp. 78, 88; Ian Ward, "The early use of radio for political communication in Australia and Canada: John Henry Austral, Mr Sage and the Man from Mars", *Australian Journal of Politics and History,* vol. 45, no. 3, 1999, p. 322.
[261] Bruce Arnold, "Herald & Weekly Times: Overview", *Ketupa.net – A Media Industry Resource*, 2007, retrieved on 21 January 2009 at <http://www.ketupa.net/hwt.htm>.
[262] Fiona Crawford, "Beyond the bakelite box: a history of commercial radio in Australia", *Macquarie University News*, North Ryde, 2003, retrieved on 31 March 2008 at <http://www.pr.mq.edu.au/macnews/feb03/bakelite.htm>; Bridget Griffen-Foley, "Radio" [hereafter "Radio"], in Stuart Cunningham and Graeme Turner (eds), *The Media and Communications in Australia* [hereafter *The media*], Crows Nest, Allen & Unwin, second edition, 2006, pp. 133-153; Petersen, *News not views*, p. 153.

was preeminent in the sphere of information and enjoyed a "social monopoly" during the 1940s.[263]

With the acceleration of European battles, the ABC reporters began a shift from relying on BBC and press reports to collecting their own news.[264]  In 1939 Prime Minister Lyons directed the ABC to appoint its first Canberra news correspondent, Denning, because of his "dismay" over the Murdoch newspapers' withdrawal of support for him.[265]  In the previously mentioned academic media survey published in August 1941, Professor A.P. Elkin concluded that 70 per cent of all age groups listened to radio news and afterwards, the majority discussed the reports with other people.  Elkin noted listeners disliked "repetition" and "padding" in the war news and he found a lack of interest in many Australian commentators because they seemed distant from the significant overseas crises.[266]  Audiences preferred the BBC's immediate new style of war coverage.[267]   As a result, the ABC established a mobile recording unit in Gaza to report on the Middle Eastern and Greek battles.[268]  When Curtin was the opposition leader in April 1941, he proposed for the ABC to "provide an adequate and independent news service under its own control".[269]  As the prime minister, he backed the *Australian Broadcasting Act*, *1942*, which provided freedom for the ABC to decide when and in which circumstances political speeches should be broadcast.[270]  The ABC commissioners worked with Curtin and the DOI to minimise contentious news broadcasts, which might alert the enemy to confidential military plans; they developed policies to ensure the exclusion of unconfirmed overseas reports.[271]  Yet after the ABC established an "independent"

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[263] Rod Tiffen, "The press", in Cunningham and Turner, *The media*, p. 97.

[264] Petersen, *News not views*, pp. 11, 121-122.

[265] Petersen, *News not views*, p. 92.

[266] Petersen, *News not views*, p. 170.

[267] Siân Nicholas, "War Report (BBC 1944-5) and the Birth of the BBC War Correspondent", in Mark Connelly and David Welch (eds), *War and the Media: Reportage and Propaganda, 1900-2003,* I.B. Tauris and Co, London and New York, 2005, pp. 145, 156; Petersen, *News not views*, p. 170.

[268] ABC, "Celebrating 100 years of radio".

[269] John Curtin, *Commonwealth of Australia: Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 166, 2 April 1941, p. 579.

[270] ABC, "Celebrating 100 years of radio".

[271] ABC, "Celebrating 100 years of radio"; Petersen, *News not views,* p. 159.

service under the requirements of the 1942 Act, the organisation was able to increase eye-witness reports significantly.[272]

Curtin approved of the ABC's significant investment in domestic and foreign correspondents to relay crucial information almost instantly.  Some 20 per cent of the station's total program time was devoted to war-related news between June 1941 and June 1942.  Mobile recording units were established in Darwin in December 1941 and in New Guinea in 1942 to cover the Pacific battles.  At the ABC's national offices, more federal political reporters began working in the Sydney and Melbourne stations by January 1942.  In the same year, it was agreed that all commercial stations would broadcast the first part of the ABC federal news bulletins three times a day.  Moreover, the commission offered to provide overseas news to the commercial competitors at no charge.  To give more time to the expanded political coverage, the ABC reduced its sports reports while religious talks and cultural programs increased to boost public morale.[273] Increasingly domestic audiences were able to tune into news collected from original sources, which were recounted by Australian voices.  The ABC's expansion of national and Pacific regional radio operations reflected its close cooperation with Curtin's requirements to abandon its "heavy reliance" on BBC material, which was "overwhelmingly concerned with the war in Europe", and instead focus on the geographically closer war theatre.[274]

Curtin strengthened his reputation as an innovative, political communicator by initiating a number of groundbreaking radio broadcasts.  For example, he was the first Australian leader to make an independent declaration of war and gave a radio broadcast on 8 December 1941 to announce Japan's entry to the war.[275]  Also he was the first prime minister to broadcast speeches to North America from Canberra by

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[272] Petersen, *News not views*, p. 11.

[273] ABC, "Celebrating 100 years of radio"; Petersen, *News not views,* p. 152.

[274] Petersen, *News not views*, p. 153.

[275] John Curtin, "National Broadcast by Prime Minister", *DDA*, no. 10, 8 December 1941, pp. 19-22; Bobbie Oliver, "Shaping the Nation: John Curtin and Australia", JCPML, Bentley, 2001, retrieved on 4 June 2008 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/shapingthenation/index.htm>;

installing a new shortwave transmitting station.[276]  His addresses were positively portrayed in many of the nation's daily newspapers and this will be elucidated later in the thesis.  During the 1943 election campaign, Curtin became the first party leader to deliver an election manifesto from Canberra through a radio hook-up.[277]  Also the ALP made effective use of radio jingles, such as:

> Help Labor and John Curtin win
>
> And so make sure of our defence
>
> Against the foes without, within,
>
> His leadership gives confidence.

The advertisement emphasised Curtin's personal popularity and suggested his inspiring leadership would enhance national security; the two complementary political themes might have contributed to his election victory in 1943.[278]  After the election, the prime minister's sponsorship of more Australian-oriented radio news coverage was justified.  Ninety-one per cent of domestic radio listeners heard news relays regularly during the war.[279]  Similarly to films of the era, the stations produced a unifying effect on public audiences, with the ABC recognised as the nation's authoritative radio voice.  It was only after the war that radio would become a medium of major social fragmentation, subdividing listeners according to their ages, education, locations, class backgrounds and income levels.[280]  Curtin's ability to win the respect of the traditionally conservative ABC reporters was evidenced in an oral history provided by John Commins, a 1940s political news broadcaster, who described him as a "superb wartime leader".[281]  Curtin encouraged the expansion of radio political news coverage, as well as demonstrating his support for unique,

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[276] (Anon.),"Publicity: Relations with America: Australia Expands", *The Canberra Times,* Canberra, 31 October 1941, p. 4; JCPML, "Index to John Curtin's speeches in the Digest of Decisions and Announcements and Important Speeches by the Prime Minister, 1941-1945", Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01148/1, 2007.

[277] Black, *In his own words,* p. 226.

[278] Bobbie Oliver, *Unity is strength,* p. 167.

[279] Lloyd, *Parliament and the press,* p. 140.

[280] Griffen-Foley, "Radio", pp. 133-153; Graeme Turner, "The active audience: reception traditions", in Stuart Cunningham and Graeme Turner (eds), *The Media in Australia: Industries, Texts, Audiences*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, second edition, 1997, pp. 381-393.

[281] John Commins, interviewed by Mel Pratt, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01092/1, 22-26 May 1971, transcript np.

eyewitness broadcasts, and his public talks conveyed an assertive, Australian identity.

**Curtin and the mass media**

After an examination of the development of many of Australia's major, metropolitan, daily newspapers and electronic media, from their inception to World War II, the historical method revealed a strong tradition of interlinked relationships between the news editors and political leaders.  Although some press organisations adopted visually appealing, pictorial features, incisive, editorial cartoons and front page news, these creative advancements in layout techniques were slow among the principal, mainstream, metropolitan newspapers at the turn of the twentieth century.  Yet far from taking a monolithic view, the research revealed that as Australia advanced to help win the Pacific war, a high level of diversity was developing among press organisations in terms of their political affiliations, social cultures, target audiences and the extent to which they were receptive to fresh trends in large, banner headlines, visual images and page one news.  Although some proprietors, such as Murdoch, Packer and Norton, showcased newspapers with brash, modern formats – particularly in the highly competitive media markets of Melbourne and Sydney – other press owners adhered steadfastly to traditional layouts with their covers filled with classified advertisements, a dearth of photographs and absence of editorial cartoons. Such old-fashioned print appearances were manifested in Fairfax's *The Sydney Morning Herald,* Murdoch's *The West Australian*, Knox's *The Argus,* Shakespeare's *The Canberra Times* and Syme's *The Age*.  The press organisations were constrained by newsprint rationing, which forced owners to cut page numbers substantially and led to an emphasis on immediate, concise "hard news", rather than longer features and in-depth analyses.


Yet this study indicates the wartime newspapers cannot be divided into a simplistic, binary opposite of sensationalist, anti-establishment tabloids and serious, politically conservative broadsheets.  Strong variations and contrasting attitudes

emerged among different newspaper companies, as well as between some media owners and their employed journalists, and even within the press proprietors' newsrooms.  Metropolitan news articles evidenced local loyalties to their respective states.  This tone was exemplified in *The Brisbane Telegraph* lobbying to secure more defence weapons due to Queenslanders' sense of vulnerability to Japanese attacks, and the Northern Territory's *Army News* warnings to avoid conversing with inhabitants of an enemy nation that was geographically closer to Darwin than to other Australian capital cities.  Yet the print media, including the isolated *West Australian*, reflected a shift from parochialism to a collective national consciousness and a sense of shared identity during the war.

Many mainstream journalists shifted their support from Menzies to Curtin.  The remarkably different media strategies adopted by Menzies and Curtin significantly affected their relationships with political reporters.  The two leaders' strategies and attitudes towards journalists were evidenced in an innovative examination of primary sources including diaries, oral histories, press articles, radio and film transcripts.  Menzies' public persona as an honest, hard-working, pro-British Australian belied his complex press interactions.  Although journalists welcomed the UAP leader's 1939 declaration of war, and recognised him as the former barrister who had helped to improve their working conditions, they began to develop more ambivalent attitudes.  In oral histories, these journalists criticised Menzies for his perceived, disdainful treatment of the news media, for reducing interview times and favouring *The Sydney Morning Herald* correspondent, McLaughlin.  Also his appointment of Murdoch to lead his censorship program appeared to backfire because rival proprietors complained about seemingly authoritarian directives.  Menzies' diaries indicated his impatience with any reporter whom he deemed had misrepresented his Pacific strategy as "appeasement".  He quickly recognised the benefits of broadcasting, being the first prime minister to announce on radio that Australia would follow Britain to war and creating the DOI to produce films in 1939.  Yet he did not appear in newsreels nor use radio talks to a significant extent in Australia.  His press relationship problems were compounded by his divided UAP-Country Party Coalition, a forceful opposition and a series of Allied military setbacks.  After he resigned and was replaced by the Country Party's Arthur

Fadden on 28 August 1941, he turned to commercial radio in mid-1942 to advocate
for the so-called "forgotten" middle class, thus paving the way for a political battle
over the airwaves with Curtin, who had already begun his prime ministerial radio
talks.

As the AJA's former WA district president and labour press editor, Curtin
heralded a new era of optimism and a break from the previous public cynicism
towards politicians, according to a Sydney University survey and Australian Public
Opinion Polls.  To ascertain his success in generating positive news coverage about
his wartime strategies, this chapter examined the political attitudes manifested in the
media, from the highly experienced press owners, who were astute newsmen, to the
staff journalists.  First, he responded skilfully to the overtures of powerful newspaper
proprietors, such as Packer and Fairfax, who were aiming to establish closer ties with
him.  Five news insiders – Packer, his business partner Theodore, Alan Fraser of *The
Daily Mirror*, *The Argus* proprietor Errol Knox and *The Herald* journalist Pat Jarrett
– joined the Federal Government administration.  Curtin's second media strategy was
not to be vindictive towards Murdoch's right-wing company and he did not harbour
grudges after his resounding electoral victory on 21 August 1943.  Instead he
strengthened his amicable relationship with Murdoch's trusted staff member, Joseph
Alexander of *The Herald*.  Although Curtin was pressured by his ALP colleague,
Robert Richards, to be more outspoken in redressing conservative editorial
comments in SA's Murdoch media, he cultivated a professional relationship with *The
Adelaide Advertiser* editor, Lloyd Dumas.  After Dumas returned from a fact-finding
tour of Allied countries, he discussed wartime strategies with Curtin.  By cultivating
professional relationships with several press managers, appointing them to
government positions and refusing to engage in public arguments with them, he
helped to ameliorate mainstream news organisations.

Thirdly, Curtin treated newspaper staff respectfully and seemed to enjoy
talking with them, such as his discussion with editorial cartoonist John Frith from
*The Sydney Morning Herald*.  He shared confidential war information with reporters
at his twice-daily interviews and this will be examined in the next chapters.  Curtin

141

worked hard to maintain his friendships with WA newspapers, as evidenced in an oral history by Frank Davidson of *The Sunday Times.*  As the prime minister, he would travel by train from Canberra to visit his Fremantle electorate, speaking at Perth pubs, talking to local reporters, sometimes even riding in Davidson's old Plymouth car to return to the railway station.  This high level of trust, respect and accessibility extended to his informative briefings of the regional press and women journalists.  Fourth, Elsie Curtin's female press conferences enhanced the positive media image at home and in other Allied nations.  The primary sources revealed the Labor Party received editorial support from such diverse newspapers as *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Sunday Times* in Perth.  Even in the conservative Packer and Murdoch press, Curtin won the admiration of battle-hardened, Canberra-based correspondents.  The political news coverage will be investigated further from Chapters 6 to 9.

Curtin used popular cultural symbols to expand an Australian tradition of cinematic innovations and combat the Axis film propaganda.  Through a semiotic analysis, this study showed that he overturned the Nazis' "rats of Tobruk" insult by using the metaphor in his US radio talk and later it became the title of an internationally popular movie.  The "rats of Tobruk" became a noble symbol of the Anzac fighting spirit.  Fewer than one per cent of Australia's imported films was censored by government authorities during the war years, according to the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics.  Yet as he became the prime minister, Curtin announced initiatives to develop closer links between the Australian and US film markets.  These strategies included producing and releasing Australian "shorts" to US film bureaus and transferring the National Publicity Association to New York.  For this purpose of enlarging Australia's film industry, he instigated the National Films Laboratory to process footage and sponsored the foundation of the National Film Board to train local technicians and prepare for an increased production of documentaries.  Under Curtin's leadership, Australian teams made highly acclaimed documentaries, newsreels and other films that helped to inspire the *cinéma vérité* movement later.

Likewise, he led a number of groundbreaking changes to political radio broadcasting. The expansion of Australian radio programs seemed even more dramatic in comparison with the medium's slow progress before the war, partly because of press hostility to the emergence of an independent competitor. As a Labor politician in 1935, Curtin quickly recognised the importance of radio to influence voters. He became the first prime minister to broadcast an independent Australian declaration of war; a direct radio talk to North Americans from Canberra; and a national election campaign speech from the federal capital. By sponsoring new legislation, he provided more autonomy for the ABC to report independent news under the *Australian Broadcasting Act*, *1942*. Authentic Australian voices replaced British accents and the station promoted more federal news reporting and other local programs in response to Curtin's strategies. As a result of the ABC's heightened coverage of the Pacific war, more Australians were being alerted to Curtin's preeminent priority of fighting Japan. His radio strategies were justified because of the medium's popularity as a source of journalistic integrity and reliable news. His skilful management of radio earned the respect of ABC wartime political journalist, John Commins; this helped Labor to retain the government and created a legacy for federal political reporting,

Curtin, therefore, persuaded journalists to publicise his Pacific wartime strategies, both at home and abroad. By speaking directly to radio and film international audiences, he developed an affinity with many Allied supporters, creating a unifying effect at a time when electronic broadcasters had not yet fragmented into smaller, separate, demographic sub-cultures. Reputable national and overseas news organisations agreed with his assertions that Australia was a vital global war base to fight the Axis Japanese danger in the Pacific. His media image as a dedicated, forceful and commonsense Australian leader struck a popular chord with audiences. As a result of his success, his fellow ALP colleagues promoted him as a celebrity. As outlined in this chapter, many Americans were interested in his favourite books, Elsie's grocery shopping and the family meals; photographs of his face adorned New York subway posters and US magazine advertisements. *Time* likened his rhetoric to Walt Whitman's operatic poetry. With these conclusions established that pertain to Curtin's development and extensive use of confidential

news conferences, radio and wartime newsreels, the next chapter will compare the media strategies used by Churchill, Mackenzie King and Roosevelt.  Unique research will be conducted of primary and secondary sources relating to the Allied leaders and their propaganda campaigns to win domestic support for their foreign policies.  The investigation will include the role of press secretaries, media conferences, newspapers, radio reports, newsreels and censorship in Britain, Canada and the US.  This research study will provide an international context to evaluate the closeness of Curtin's relations with the press gallery.

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**Chapter 4**

**Allied World War II leaders and their mass media agendas, 1939-1941**

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Across the Allied nations of the world, war leaders mastered the use of rapidly
expanding, mass media technology in a bid to control propaganda.  While several
historians have focused on Curtin's international relations,[1] very little published
research is to be found comparing the extensive mass media strategies developed by
the Allied leaders in Australia, Britain, Canada and the United States.  The purpose
of such a global analysis would be to indicate whether aspects of Curtin's
communications policies were unique.  To achieve this aim, this chapter examines
the dominant British and US powers[2] as well as Canada because the latter was
another middle-ranking power, similar to Australia, with a federal parliamentary
democracy, an English political heritage and a strong tradition of press freedom.
Furthermore, a two-country comparative analysis of the journalism strategies of the
wartime Canadian and Australian governments would help to extend our knowledge
of the Canberra political sphere at this time.[3]  Therefore to understand Curtin's press
interactions in the context of the Allied 1940s milieu, this chapter will compare the
media relations of Churchill, Canada's Mackenzie King and Roosevelt.  Part of the
work of this chapter is a fresh investigation of primary sources relating to these three
leaders and their campaigns to win media support for their foreign policies.  While

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[1] E.g. David Black, *'Friendship is a sheltering tree': John Curtin's letters 1907 to 1945*
[hereafter *John Curtin's letters*], John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library [hereafter JCPML],
Perth, 2001; David Black, "The Art of the Possible: Creating an independent Australian
foreign policy 1941-1945" [hereafter "The art of the possible"], JCPML, Bentley, 2004,
retrieved on 4 June 2008 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/artofthepossible/printessay.html>;
Bobbie Oliver, "Shaping the Nation: John Curtin and Australia" [hereafter "Shaping the
nation"], JCPML, Bentley, 2001, retrieved on 4 June 2008 at
<http://john.curtin.edu.au/shapingthenation/index.htm>; Geoffrey Serle, *For Australia and
Labor*, JCPML, Bentley, 1998; Bob Wurth, *Saving Australia: Curtin's secret peace with
Japan* [hereafter *Saving Australia*]*,* Lothian Books, South Melbourne, 2006.
[2] In 1939 the British Empire and the US accounted for about 60 per cent of the world's
industrial production and controlled about three-quarters of its mineral wealth.  Yet the Axis
countries dominated a third of the global population and minerals by 1942.  See David
Reynolds, *From World War to Cold War: Churchill, Roosevelt, and the International
History of the 1940s*, Oxford University Press, New York and Oxford, 2006, p. 61.
[3] Paul Chantrill, "Social Policy Development in Australia and Canada: Historical and
Comparative Approaches", *Australian-Canadian Studies,* vol. 17, no. 1, 1999, pp. 41-58.

historians have noted that Churchill, King and Roosevelt were concerned chiefly with the European war – and the Pacific theatre was a lesser priority[4] – it will be shown that Australian security was a prominent subject at several of the leaders' press conferences, as detailed later in this chapter.  Furthermore, an assessment of King's diaries indicated that other Allied leaders respected Curtin's eloquent speeches and his rapport with journalists.  This investigation of primary and secondary materials included the role of press secretaries, media conferences, newspapers, radio reports, newsreels and censorship in Britain, Canada and the US.  This work provides an international context in which to evaluate the closeness of Curtin's relations with the Canberra Parliamentary Press Gallery.

**Press relationships**

Similarly to Curtin, the other three Allied leaders developed an early affiliation with the press and spent varying degrees of time as working journalists that later assisted their ability to develop media strategies as political leaders.  In contrast to Curtin, the British, Canadian and US leaders were from privileged family backgrounds and they attended prestigious education institutions.  Churchill was educated at Harrow and the Royal Military College at Sandhurst.  While a young British soldier in 1895, Churchill travelled with Spanish troops and wrote about Cuba's fight for independence, sending his news stories to London's *Daily Graphic*.  The following year, he despatched regular reports from India to another popular English newspaper, the *Daily Telegraph,* and provided direct accounts of the British re-conquest of the Sudan in 1898.  His political ambitions were supported by Alfred Harmsworth (later Baron Northcliffe), the owner of *The Times*, the *Sunday Times*, the *Observer*, the *Daily Mirror* and the *Daily Mail*.  During Churchill's first quest for a parliamentary seat, Harmsworth attempted to drive the aspiring Conservative Party candidate in a

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[4] See Advisory War Council, "Advisory War Council Minutes", JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00641/1, 19 June 1942; David Black, "Menzies and Curtin in World War Two: A comparative essay" [hereafter "Menzies and Curtin"], JCPML, Bentley, 2006, retrieved on 10 May 2008 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/ww2leaders>; Paul Hasluck, *Australia In The War Of 1939-1945: The Government And the People 1942-1945*, The Australian War Memorial, Canberra, vol. 2, 1970, pp. 153-154; Wurth, *Saving Australia,* p. 163.

new motor car to the Oldham constituency to conduct door-to-door campaigns in early 1899.  Harmsworth was forced to stop the journey after six tyre punctures, but continued to support Churchill in the *Daily Mail*, although he did not win the by-election.[5]  Instead Churchill developed a reputation as a skilful writer among London's editors.  The *Morning Post* hired him to cover South Africa's Boer War in 1899 and he became the highest-paid war correspondent in history to that point.  It is believed his early publications extended to other British newspapers.[6]

The youthful journalist forged alliances with conservative, London news executives until the rise of Nazism in Europe.  After winning the seat of Oldham in the 1900 general elections, Churchill remained friendly with Harmsworth's younger brother, Harold (Baron Rothermere), who took over the newspaper chain in 1922.  As the Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1926, Churchill edited eight issues of the government's news sheet, the *British Gazette*, during the general strike that included press workers, who refused to print regular newspapers.  Instilling his faith in the power of the *Gazette* to influence public audiences, Churchill used strike breakers to expand the print run from 232,000 copies to about two million news sheets for each issue until the industrial action ended on 12 May 1926.[7]  Two months after the Conservative Party's electoral defeat in May 1929, Churchill wrote to the US newspaper owner, William Randolph Hearst, that: "We must discuss the future of the world, even if we cannot decide it."[8]  Also he developed a strong friendship with Canadian-born press proprietor, Maxwell Aitken (Baron Beaverbrook), owner of

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[5] Paul Ferris, *The house of Northcliffe: A Biography of an Empire*, The World Publishing Company, New York, 1972, pp. 93-94.

[6] Paul Addison, *Churchill: The Unexpected Hero,* Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2005; Geoffrey Best, *Churchill and War,* Hambledon and London, London, 2005; Brenda Haugen, *Winston Churchill: British Soldier, Writer, Statesman,* Compass Point Books, Minneapolis, 2006 [hereafter *Winston Churchill*]; David Reynolds, *In Command of History: Churchill Fighting and Writing the Second World War,* Allen Lane, London, 2004; Simon Tait, "A war leader's love affair with the press" [hereafter "A war leader"], *The Times,* London, 8 March 2008, p. 80.

[7] Fred Farrow, "Churchill and the General Strike", *International Churchill Societies 1994-95*, London, 1995, retrieved on 19 Dec 2010 at <http://www.winstonchurchill.org/learn/biography/radical/churchill-and-the-general-strike>; Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *In 1926: Living At The Edge Of Time*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1998, p. 218; Chris Wrigley, *Winston Churchill: A Biographical Companion*, ABC-CLIO, Santa Barbara, 2002, pp. 188-189.

[8] Martin Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill: The Wilderness Years 1929-1935* [hereafter *Churchill*], Heinemann, London, vol. 5, companion part 2, 1981, p. 31.

London's widely read *Daily Express,* the *Sunday Express* and the *Evening Standard.* In a 1930 letter, Churchill addressed him as "my dear Max" and noted: "We both had to try very hard when we were young."[9]  Through these associations, he became a contracted columnist for several London newspapers during the 1930s and needed to employ a team of secretaries and assistants to help him to complete hundreds of articles.  Yet as the Nazis ascended in Germany, his anti-appeasement views led to disagreements with London newspaper owners.  Harold Harmsworth sympathised with Hitler and Mussolini; in 1938 Aitken predicted in the *Daily Express* that Britain would not be involved in a European war.  Although Aitken ended Churchill's *Evening Standard* contract in the same year due to their political differences, they remained friends.[10]

When Churchill became the prime minister on 10 May 1940, he did not bear a grudge against Aitken and this helped him to generate favourable news coverage in the conservative press.  In this respect, his press relations resembled Curtin's strategy of cultivating various sections of the press.[11]  Churchill appointed Aitken as the minister of aircraft production and later, the minister of supply during the war.  Another powerful news executive, Brendan Bracken, became minister of information from July 1941.  Bracken was the editor of the *Financial News, The Economist,* the *Investors Chronicle*, the *Liverpool Journal of Commerce* and *The Practitioner.*  In 1945, he was made First Lord of the Admiralty, but lost his Cabinet position with the Conservative Party's defeat on 27 July 1945.[12]  Churchill's powerful media contacts

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[9] Gilbert, *Churchill*, p. 183.

[10] Michael J. Cohen, "The Churchill-Gilbert Symbiosis: Myth and Reality, Martin Gilbert, Churchill and the Jews", *Modern Judaism: A Journal of Jewish Ideas and Experience,* vol. 28, no. 2, 2008, pp. 224-225, endnote 26, retrieved on 8 December 2008 at <http://mj.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/full/28/2/204>; Tait, "A war leader", p. 80.

[11] See for example, J.A. Alexander, "Papers 1833-1957" [hereafter "Papers"], National Library of Australia, Manuscript Collections, Canberra, NLA acc. no. MS 2389, August 1943, transcript np; Joseph A. Alexander, interviewed by Mel Pratt, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00551, 2 March 1971, transcript np.

[12] Charles Edward Lysaght, "Brendan Bracken: 'The Fantasist Whose Dreams Came True'" [hereafter "Bracken"], *Finest Hour,* The Churchill Centre, no. 113, winter 2001-2002, p. 18.

did not prevent the decisive victory of the Labour Party, whose promises of post-war economic prosperity appealed to many Britons.[13]

In Canada, Mackenzie King's family enjoyed a long-time association with the nation's press.  He was the grandson of the independent newspaperman and Toronto mayor, William Lyon Mackenzie, who had started the *Colonial Advocate* in 1826. He was sympathetic with the politically radical aims of his grandfather, who was a leader of the Upper Canada Rebellion of 1837 and 1838, seeking to overthrow British colonial authorities and conservative Tory groups.  Mackenzie King's father, a lawyer, drafted the nation's libel legislation and was accepted as an honorary member of the Canadian Press Association.[14]  Emulating his grandfather's career path, King was a newspaper reporter for the nation's leading daily newspaper, *The Globe and Mail,* while completing a bachelor of arts, a bachelor of laws and a master of arts at the University of Toronto, where he graduated in 1897.  Also he graduated with a MA in political economy and a doctorate at Harvard University, where Roosevelt had received a BA in history.  Later in a letter to Curtin, Roosevelt wrote he had been "close to Mackenzie King almost since we were boys".[15]  King published almost 400 articles between 1893 and 1906, mostly in newspapers such as *The Globe and Mail,* as well as *The Daily Mail and Empire.*[16]  Beginning in 1900, King edited the *Labour Gazette* in Canada's new Department of Labour, where he campaigned actively against child labour.  As part of his public service journalism, he prepared speeches for Canada's postmaster general, who then oversaw government labour matters.  The young writer became a friend of *The Globe and Mail* business manager J.F. Mackay, who assisted him to win a parliamentary seat as

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[13] Ashley Jackson, "Churchill: Warrior and Writer", *The Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs,* vol. 96, no. 2, 2007, pp. 193-199, retrieved on 8 December 2008 at <http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~content=a782905111~db=all~order=page>.
[14] William Lyon Mackenzie King,  "The Diaries of William Lyon Mackenzie King" [hereafter "Diaries"]*,* Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, 16 December 1944, retrieved on 8 December 2008 at <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/king/index-e.html>.
[15] Franklin D. Roosevelt to John Curtin, Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Barton, vol. 7, 3 January 1944, retrieved on 11 February 2010 at <http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf>.
[16] Library and Archives Canada, "The Political Man of Letters: Mackenzie King as Writer and Bookman", Ottawa, 2002, retrieved on 8 December 2008 at <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/king/023011-1010.02-e.html>.

a Liberal Party of Canada candidate in the 1908 election.  Mackay reminisced, "he took some small part at the time of his (King's) entrance into public life".[17]  King was also a close friend of J.E. Atkinson, owner of the *Toronto Star*.[18]

Despite this powerful press support, King lost his seat in the 1911 election and was appointed the director of the industrial relations department of the Rockefeller Foundation in the US.  Hallahan wrote of King's contributions to the development of modern public relations as a consultant to John D. Rockefeller Jnr. in the bitter aftermath of the Colorado coal strike during 1913 and 1914.[19]  In addition to advising Rockefeller, King was the editor of his Canadian political party's journal, *The Liberal Monthly*, which began publication in 1913.  In editorials, he focused on the need to reduce living costs, increase employment and abolish a reportedly "corrupt" alliance between the Conservative Party and big business interests.  Such persuasive editorials assisted him to win and retain the leadership of the Liberal Party from 1919 until he resigned in 1948.[20]  He was Canada's longest serving prime minister, holding this position intermittently for 22 years, from 1921 to 1930 and later from 1935 until his resignation.  As with Churchill, King seemed to make the transition easily from newspaper reporting to leading an Allied nation.

Roosevelt (or FDR) liked to view the White House Press Corps as his colleagues, often referring to his undergraduate experience as the managing editor and president of his university's newspaper, *The Harvard Crimson*.[21] During the

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[17] Henry Stanley Ferns, *The age of Mackenzie King: the rise of the leader* [hereafter *Mackenzie King*]*,* Heinemann, London, 1955, p. 95.
[18] Ferns, *Mackenzie King,* p. 182.
[19] K.W.L. Hallahan, "Mackenzie King: Rockefeller's 'other' public relations counsellor in Colorado", *Public Relations Review,* vol. 29, no. 4, November 2003, pp. 401-414.
[20] Ferns, *Mackenzie King,* p. 167.
[21] Henry F. Graff (ed.), "Presidents and the press" [hereafter "Presidents"], in *Presidents: A Reference History*, Macmillan Publishing Company, London, 1997, retrieved on 8 December 2008 at <http://www.presidentprofiles.com/General-Information/A-History-of-the-Presidency-Presidents-and-the-press.html>.

newspaper's seventieth anniversary in 1943, FDR said:

> I am sure that I voice the sentiment of all that company of happy men when I
> say that none of them would exchange his CRIMSON [sic] training for any
> other experience or association in college days.[22]

His good-natured relationship with working journalists was evidenced in the
transcripts of his White House press conferences.  For example, he joked with the
nation's newspaper financial editors at the beginning of an interview on 6 January
1942, when he said: "Of course, very few newspapermen know the difference
between a dollar and a dime, anyway.  But then, on the other hand, very few
Presidents do.  So we start even."[23]  During a White House press conference with
Churchill on 23 December 1941, FDR explained to correspondents:

> I had suggested to him (Churchill) this morning that if he came to this
> conference he would have to be prepared to meet the US press, who,
> compared with the British press –  as was my experience in the old days – are
> 'wolves' compared with the British press 'lambs'.[24]

The transcript did not indicate whether Churchill agreed with the light-hearted
description of his country's journalists as mild-mannered and the White House media
as aggressive.  Yet the US reporters developed a friendship with the president and
their goodwill extended to other Allied leaders, who were invited to his news
interviews.  During Madame Chiang Kai-shek's visit to a conference on 19 February
1943, Roosevelt announced that he and journalists "still talk to each other.  I think
we rather like each other."  His comments were greeted with laughter from the White
House press.[25]  Churchill, too, was fond of referring to his past press career at the

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[22] Philip M. Boffey, "Franklin Delano Roosevelt at Harvard", *The Harvard Crimson*,
Cambridge, 13 December 1957, retrieved on 8 December 2008 at
<http://www.thecrimson.com/article.aspx?ref=108910>.

[23] Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Extracts from the Press Conference" [hereafter "Press
conference"], in John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters (eds), *The American Presidency
Project* [hereafter *American presidency project*], Santa Barbara, 6 January 1942, retrieved on
8 December 2008 at
<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/news_conferences.php?year=1942&Submit=DISPLAY>.

[24] Roosevelt, "Press conference", 23 December 1941.

[25] Roosevelt, "Press conference", 19 February 1943.

conferences.  When journalists were covering an Allied meeting in Quebec, Canada, on 24 August 1943, Churchill told them:

> As an old reporter, newspaperman, war correspondent, when most of you were still unborn, I know the feelings of irritation which come when the trouble taken by the press does not seem to reap a proportionate reward. [26]

He described them as "probably the most distinguished body of great representatives that could be gathered together".  King was equally respectful towards the media in Quebec, saying, "how deeply we appreciate the very helpful cooperation that you have given to all of us during the period of the conference".[27]  All three Allied leaders referred to their previous journalism experiences to try to develop favourable media relations in a bid to gain positive news coverage.

**Media management**

Due to their early press associations, Churchill, King and Roosevelt recognised that one of their top wartime strategies was to invest in cultivating good media relations. Yet they did not grant interviews as frequently as Curtin's twice-daily conferences. When FDR was inaugurated for his first presidential term on 4 March 1933, mainstream US correspondents were adopting a new interpretive style of reporting. They were spurning factual, objective news in favour of investigative, analytical stories, which provided reasons for such national crises as the 1930s economic depression.[28]  Glamorous images were replaced with a gritty photojournalism, depicting the social problems of rising national joblessness.[29]  Generally news correspondents viewed their professional responsibility as interpreting not only the

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[26] Roosevelt, "Press conference", 24 August 1943.
[27] Roosevelt, "Press conference", 24 August 1943.
[28] Betty Houchin Winfield, *FDR and the News Media* [hereafter *FDR*], University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 1990, p. 53.
[29] K. S. Miller, "U.S. Public Relations History: Knowledge and Limitations", in M. E. Roloff (ed.), *Communication Yearbook 23,* Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, 2000, p. 385.

"cold, hard facts" but also "complex arguments and ideas" to public audiences.  As Mickler and Lucy note:

> It is part and parcel of a journalist's job to interpret for a popular readership the many branches of knowledge, each with its own particular jargon, which various experts use to comment on life and society.[30]

To explain his intricate "New Deal" government work projects to journalists, Roosevelt became the first president to employ a full-time press secretary, Stephen T. Early, who remained in the White House administration during the war.  Early's predecessors were involved in other presidential duties, extending beyond public relations.  Since he was an experienced reporter for the Associated Press, United Press and Paramount News, Early was given responsibility for coordinating the White House news conferences.[31]  The presidential interviews were not new.  FDR's distant cousin, Theodore Roosevelt, would chat with reporters while he was being shaved during morning interviews at the White House, beginning in 1902.  The meetings were formalised in 1913 by another one of FDR's predecessors, Woodrow Wilson, who expected correspondents to submit written questions in advance.  President Hoover continued Wilson's official press policies and answered prepared media questions during his term from 1929 to 1933.  According to FDR historian, Betty Houchin Winfield, most of the US presidents found it difficult to tolerate media independence and the democratic ideal of a free press.[32]

Roosevelt increased the frequency of the presidential press conferences by holding twice-weekly news interviews during his terms.  This amounted to 998 conferences during slightly more than 12 years, from 8 March 1933 to 5 April 1945.[33]  For the first time, reporters were allowed to attribute selected, news-

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[30] Niall Lucy and Steve Mickler, *The War On Democracy: Conservative Opinion in the Australian Press* [hereafter *The war on democracy*], University of Western Australia Press, Crawley, 2006, p. 89.
[31] Linda Lotridge Levin, *The Making of FDR: The Story of Stephen T. Early, America's First Modern Press Secretary,* Prometheus Books, New York, 2008; Diana Knott Martinelli and Jeff Mucciarone, "New deal public relations: A glimpse into FDR press secretary Stephen Early's work", *Public Relations Review,* vol. 33, no. 1, March 2007, pp. 49-57.
[32] Winfield, *FDR,* p. 2.
[33] Richard M. Perloff, *Political Communication: Politics, Press, and Public in America,* Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, New Jersey and London, 1998, p. 39.

breaking announcements to the president, when he announced them at the press conferences.  This practice continued after FDR's death on 12 April 1945.  Harry Truman, FDR's successor as president, also a Democrat, "read the rules" to journalists at his first White House media interview on 17 April.  The rules were "in keeping with the practice of President Roosevelt's news meetings with the press", Truman explained.  Off-the-record, confidential announcements "are to be kept secret by the newspapermen attending the conferences and not passed on by them to outsiders".  Background information "may be given to the press for its guidance and use" but "it cannot be attributed to the President".  News information might be attributed to the president, but he could not be quoted directly "unless he gives special permission".[34]  Occasionally FDR would agree to correspondents' requests to quote him directly at the interviews, thereby setting a precedent in White House media relations.[35]

The conference transcripts indicated that White House correspondents accepted FDR's strict rules of etiquette.  For example, they seemed to honour Roosevelt's "off-the-record" agreement and maintained confidentiality about his trip to see Churchill at Casablanca in January 1943.  Afterwards he thanked **"**the press and the radio of the United States for living up so very faithfully" to the privacy deal.[36]  In reality, editors "had the fidgets" during the news ban, according to *Time*, which printed the story about FDR's North African travels on 8 February 1943.  The *Time* writer added that many press headlines "hinted to the hilt" about the presidential journey immediately before the Casablanca meeting, causing public rumours and chaos.[37]  The nation's leading magazine reflected more sympathy for Roosevelt than for the reportedly impatient news executives from rival publications.

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[34] Harry Truman, "The President's News Conference", in Woolley and Peters, *American presidency project*, 17 April 1945.

[35] E.g. Roosevelt, "Press conference", 9 December 1941.

[36] Roosevelt, "Press conference", 2 February 1943.

[37] (Anon.), "Casablanca Story", *Time,* New York, 8 February 1943, retrieved on 9 December 2008 at <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,774228,00.html>.

Yet the press remained secretive about his struggle with paralysis during the war.[38] Due to the relaxation of Wilson's rules about submitting questions, reporters enjoyed the freedom to ask spontaneous questions during FDR's conferences; they decided to focus on his military strategies rather than his health.

On some occasions, the press chose to direct the interviews towards a discussion of Australia, particularly during Churchill's visits to the White House. Roosevelt's press conferences provided fresh insights on how he and Churchill managed Pacific news and relayed messages intended for Australian audiences.[39] On 23 December 1941, FDR introduced Churchill, who disdained the idea of "banning questions" and answered the first journalist's query, which related to Australia. "What about Singapore, Mr. Prime Minister?" the unidentified correspondent asked. "The people of Australia are terribly anxious about it. Would you say to be of good cheer?" Churchill replied:

> We are going to do our utmost to defend Singapore and its approaches until the situation becomes so favourable to us that the general offensive in the Pacific can be resumed.[40]

At another joint interview with Churchill on 25 May 1943, the first question focused on Australia. "Mr Prime Minister, in Australia there is a very great fear as to the Japanese threat in that area. What is your feeling about the matter?" the unnamed reporter asked. Churchill answered: "The threat is certainly, in our opinion, less serious than it was when I saw you last in this room [on] December 23, 1941." Later he added: "I am very anxious to increase the intensity of the war effort against

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[38] In 2003 health researchers debated whether FDR had polio or Guillain-Barre syndrome. (Anon.), "New Study Questions Roosevelt's Polio", *The New York Times,* New York, 1 November 2003, retrieved on 13 December 2008 at <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?sec=health&res=9C00EFD91230F932A35752 C1A9659C8B63>; Hugh Gallagher, "The Politics of Polio" [hereafter "Politics"], *Social Education,* vol. 60, no. 5, 1996, pp. 264-266.

[39] To my knowledge, no previous researcher has published findings on Roosevelt's answers to press queries about Australia.

[40] Roosevelt, "Press conference", 23 December 1941.

Japan".[41]  Another interviewer referred to the southern hemisphere at FDR's
conference on 24 April 1942.  The correspondent stated:

> Mr President, there is a great deal of disturbed feeling in Australia as
> reflected by dispatches by US correspondents from there, as to the authority
> that General MacArthur has, and as to what naval forces are at his disposal.[42]

Roosevelt responded that "a particular little group" of newspapers had "completely
falsified" his statement by reporting the "Pacific" would be under the command of
General MacArthur.  He corrected the reporters by stating "the phrase was Southwest
Pacific" for MacArthur's area of command.[43]  At each of the three interviews, the
leaders framed their media responses to send a message of support for Australia.

     The press exchanges indicated reporters gave a strong priority to Australian
security during the international news conferences.  After journalists asked about
Australia's safety during two of Roosevelt's joint media briefings with Churchill,[44]
the leaders' responses were favourably portrayed in major Australian newspaper
front pages.[45]  Their first joint conference on the Pacific war, held on 23 December
1941, attracted about 250 correspondents including representatives from the
Australian Associated Press (AAP), Melbourne's *Argus* and *The Sydney Morning
Herald.*[46]  Also the FDR interview transcripts suggested that Curtin faced
considerable challenges in his efforts to assert his nation's independence to Allied
leaders.  Roosevelt did not seem to share Curtin's views about Australian autonomy.
At a press conference on 6 February 1942, the president reminded correspondents
that, "London of course includes the British Empire people – Australia and New
Zealand – and it also includes the Dutch Government in London".[47]  By stating
directly that "London" represented the two southern hemisphere countries and
Holland, Roosevelt was not recognising Curtin's assertion of Australian

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[41] Roosevelt, "Press conference", 25 May 1943.
[42] Roosevelt, "Press conference", 24 April 1942.
[43] Roosevelt, "Press conference", 24 April 1942.
[44] Roosevelt, "Press conference", 23 December 1941, 25 May 1943.
[45] E.g. *The Argus* [hereafter *Argus*], Melbourne, 26 December 1941, p. 1, 27 May 1943, p. 1;
*The Canberra Times* [hereafter *Canberra*], Canberra, 25 December 1941, p. 1, 27 May 1943,
p. 1; *The Sydney Morning Herald* [hereafter *SMH*], Sydney, 25 December 1941, p. 1.
[46] *Argus*, 26 December 1941, p. 1; *SMH*, 25 December 1941, p. 1.
[47] Roosevelt, "Press conference", 6 February 1942.

sovereignty.[48]   Yet he was responsive to Curtin's requests for US assistance.   At another news interview four days later, Roosevelt noted it was important for Americans to resist their "complacency" about the Pacific during the war against Japan.   He told reporters that in the Pacific: "We are engaged in preventing breakthroughs and damaging or destroying as much of the personnel and material of the enemy as we possibly can".[49]   While the Allied leaders' top priority was beating Hitler, the transcripts suggested that Curtin promoted Australia's plight successfully to the international media.

Despite the "rules", Roosevelt cultivated an informal tone during the news interviews.   Visiting Quebec on 16 September 1944, he told the White House press that:

> … the Prime Minister of Canada asked me to address you in a formal manner, but we have never done a thing like that before in a press conference yet, and I hope I won't have to begin in Quebec.[50]

The good-natured rapport between FDR and working journalists was evidenced in the Australian journalist Joseph Alexander's diaries.   Alexander recalled his meeting with a *New York Times* correspondent in Canberra on 17 November 1941.   The US reporter "says he bet Roosevelt a new hat" that Nazi Germany would not attempt another invasion of England, Alexander wrote.[51]

While FDR developed good relations with the White House Press Corps, he complained about some media proprietors.   At a conference on 1 October 1942, he

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[48] David Black (ed.), *In His Own Words: John Curtin's Speeches and Writings,* Paradigm Books Curtin University, Bentley, 1995, p. 197; John Curtin, "The Task Ahead", *The Herald*, Melbourne, cited in JCPML, Bentley, 27 December 1941, retrieved on 25 January 2011 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/pmportal/text/00468.html>; Jeffrey Grey, *A Military History of Australia* [hereafter *Military history*], Cambridge University Press, Port Melbourne, third edition, 2008, p. 176.
[49] Roosevelt, "Press conference", 10 February 1942.
[50] Roosevelt, "Press conference", 16 September 1944.
[51] Alexander, "Papers".

talked about:

> … certain elements in press and radio that are hurting the war effort.  And we
> all know.  I don't have to particularize on it at all.  You people know even
> better than I do who the fellows are, who the owners of the papers are.[52]

In an undated letter to Churchill, FDR commented on "that delightful god, which we worship in common, called 'the freedom of the press'".  He surmised the news stories were generally "not so bad", but acknowledged both leaders were "menaced" by "a handful or two of gentlemen who cannot get politics out of their heads in the worst crisis".[53]  The president's pro-war policies were opposed by the "isolationist", conservative US newspaper owners, Hearst, Colonel Robert McCormick and Cissy Paterson.[54]  Moreover, Truman also enjoyed the informality and camaraderie of White House journalists, but he "despised press lords", according to his biographer, David McCulloch.[55]  Truman would give only three or four media conferences a month, a significantly smaller number than Roosevelt's wartime briefings.[56]

Both FDR and Truman attached great importance to public opinion polls, even though the reliability of such surveys seemed questionable by today's standards.  The historian, Hal Brands, wrote of serious flaws in 1940s surveys due to the pollsters' simplistic questions, which discouraged a range of nuanced, reasoned answers.[57]  Yet the Roosevelt and Truman administrations would use polls to ascertain US attitudes about a range of wartime issues, which would become the

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[52] Roosevelt, "Press conference", 1 October 1942.

[53] Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War: The Hinge of Fate,* Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1950, p. 200.

[54] Steven Casey, *Cautious Crusade: Franklin D. Roosevelt, American public opinion, and the war against Nazi Germany,* Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York, 2001, pp. 155, 215.

[55] David McCulloch, *Truman,* Simon & Schuster, New York, 1992, pp. 492-493, 818-819.

[56] William James Willis and Jim Willis, *The Media Effect: How the News Influences Politics and Government* [hereafter *The media effect*]*,* Greenwood Publishing Group, Westport, 2007, p. 108.

[57] Hal Brands, "Rhetoric, Public Opinion, and Policy in the American Debate over the Japanese emperor during World War II" [hereafter "World War II"], *Rhetoric & Public Affairs,* vol. 8, no. 3, 2005, p. 432.

basis of news stories and regular press columns.[58]  For example, Brands referred to a "flawed" survey conducted by Dr George Gallup's company, The American Institute of Public Opinion.  Respondents were asked about their views of the Japanese Emperor Hirohito in June 1945.  The questions were designed to inflame American animosity towards Hirohito, although some US political advisers were attempting to shift the blame from the emperor to the Japanese military.  The findings probably would have influenced Truman's perceptions of the level of anti-emperor sentiment in the US, according to Brands.[59]  As polls became more sophisticated and pervasive in domestic political news coverage, their accuracy was increasingly challenged by contemporary analysts.[60]

In contrast to the voluminous books about FDR's press interactions, there has been little investigation of Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King's diaries for the purpose of publishing an analysis of his media relationships.  King began keeping a diary as a University of Toronto undergraduate in 1893 and continued his handwritten entries for the next 41 years.  As the prime minister, he dictated his diaries to his principal secretary, Edouard Handy, who typed the entries.  Although King instructed several literary executors to destroy most of his diaries after his death, they decided to lodge this important historical source at the Library and

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[58] Stephen L. Vaughn, *Encyclopedia of American Journalism*, Routledge, New York, 2007, p. 406.

[59] Brands, "World War II", pp. 445-448.  As noted by Brands, the poll asked: "What do you think we should do with the Japanese Emperor after the war?"  The following choices were offered to respondents: "Execute him"; "Let court decide his fate"; "Keep him in prison the rest of his life"; "Exile him"; "Do nothing – he's only a figurehead for war lords"; "Use him as a puppet to run Japan".  Seventy per cent of the respondents chose one of the first four options; only seven per cent of people selected one of the latter two options.  Later, Allied leaders preferred for Hirohito to remain as the emperor, hoping he would be a stabilising influence in post-war Japan.

[60] Reed L. Welch, "Polls, Polls, and More Polls: An Evaluation of How Public Opinion Polls Are Reported in Newspapers", *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics,* vol. 7, no. 1, 2002, pp. 102-114.

Archives of Canada.[61]

Whereas Roosevelt invested in a press secretary, King was concerned about his lack of a "first-class modern journalist" to enhance his media image.[62]  It seemed he was not able to persuade the Liberal Party of Canada to employ such a staff member.  Soon after he became the prime minister in the 1921 election, he wrote in his diary that he intended "to keep the press at arm's length".  Although this statement might be viewed as indicating a disdain for journalists, in fact, he was noting privately his determination to maintain a degree of independence.  He believed the previous Conservative government had been too "cosy" with the media.[63]  Based on the 1930s diary entries, it appeared King relied on his principal adviser, Dr Oscar Douglas Skelton, to assist with writing draft copies and proof reading press statements.[64]  After Skelton's death in January 1941, King's diaries suggested his speeches were reviewed by another principal secretary, Arnold Heeney, as well as his assistant private secretary, Jack Pickersgill, who became the special assistant to the prime minister in 1945.  Although King's media advisers were highly educated, distinguished bureaucrats, he noted in his diary on 26 April 1939 that "it is little short of a crime that I have not, in connection with my office, a thoroughly trained publicity man to help in matters of this kind".[65]  The following day, King added: "What I need above everything else is a first-class modern journalist, full of vitality and colour, who would make my life and work known to the public".  As he dictated to Edouard Handy, King complained:

> … that men in the (public) Service think that once anything is on Hansard
> (the official report of Canadian parliamentary debates) that it serves the

[61] Canadian Broadcasting Corporation Digital Archives, "King diaries released" [hereafter "King diaries"], Toronto, 2006, retrieved on 9 December 2008 at <http://archives.cbc.ca/version_print.asp?page=1&IDLan=1&ID.C.lip=7244&IDDossier=0 &ID.C.at=335&ID.C.atPa=260>; Library and Archives Canada, "A Real Companion and Friend: The diary of William Lyon Mackenzie King" [hereafter "King's diary"], Ottawa, 2002, retrieved on 9 December 2008 at <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/king/001059-131.html>.

[62] King, "Diaries", 27 April 1939, p. 454.  The page numbers were cited from the online version and not from the original diary.

[63] Library and Archives Canada, "King's diary".

[64] Gordon C. Case, "The Lessons of Munich: Mackenzie King's Campaign to Prepare Canada for War" [hereafter "The lessons of Munich"], *Canadian Military Journal,* vol. 5, no. 4, 2004-2005, retrieved on 9 December 2008 at <http://www.journal.forces.gc.ca/vo5/no4/history-histoire-eng.asp>.

[65] King, "Diaries", 26 April 1939, p. 468.

purpose, whereas Hansard is of really no value in reaching the public.  The
only thing of value is the press reports.[66]

The diaries are a valuable source because they reveal his successful management of
sensitive news reports.  For example, in an entry on 26 April 1939, he described a
"contemptible" editorial in the *Ottawa Journal.*  The editorial writer had criticised
his preparations for the imminent visit of Great Britain's King George VI to Canada.
In the prime minister's words, the newspaper made the false accusation that the royal
reception was "being used for purposes of social prestige of Bigwigs".[67]  Overriding
Skelton's objections, Mackenzie King decided to prepare a media statement to "clear
my position ... from being attacked in the press very unjustly".[68]  Later it seemed the
Canadian reception of King George was judged to be a success by the media.  In
another diary entry, the prime minister reflected: "Coming out of the elevator
tonight, an Englishman journalist said: 'We all congratulate you on the exceptionally
fine reception today.  We have seen nothing better anywhere'."  It seemed he was
able to increase local press enthusiasm for the royal visit, too.[69]

During the beginning of the European war, Mackenzie King needed to
reconcile diverse media interests that were unique in the Allied world.  Canada's
English and French populations expressed conflicting wartime attitudes in their
representative newspapers.  In early 1939, many English Canadians shared an
emotional attachment to the British Empire and supported their nation's involvement
in a war if London were attacked.  Traditionally French Canadians mistrusted British
intentions and opposed overseas conscription.  On 1 April 1939, an editorial writer
for the Montreal newspaper, *Le Devoir*, asked readers: "Since When is Canada a
Country of Europe?"  In contrast, English Canadian journalists rushed to publish
premature reports of the nation's intervention in the conflict.  On 3 September 1939,
the day of Britain's declaration of war against Germany, the Canadian newspaper,
*The London Free Press*, published the inaccurate front-page headline: "Canada is
now at war.  France jumps in too".  *Toronto Daily Star* published a similarly

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[66] King, "Diaries", 27 April 1939, p. 454.
[67] King, "Diaries", 26 April 1939, p. 468.
[68] King, "Diaries", 27 April 1939, p. 454.
[69] King, "Diaries", 17 May 1939, p. 523.

misleading cover title: "War declared".  In fact, King preferred to refer crucial decisions to the Canadian Parliament to enable a democratic vote.  The parliamentary members took another week to make a decision and Canada entered the war on 10 September.[70]  King delayed introducing conscription after a 1940 plebiscite revealed that support for compulsory military service was divided along ethnic lines.  While most of English Canada agreed to follow Britain's lead, 72 per cent of Quebec voters were opposed.  After deliberate stalling, King announced on 22 November 1944 that conscription had become necessary.[71]  Throughout his prime ministerial terms, he managed the news in an attempt to prevent social fractures.

It seemed King earned the Canadian media's respect for his wartime strategies.  According to his diary entry of 16 December 1944, he devoted a large portion of his day to preparing a speech for a dinner ceremony that night, when he was presented with a life membership in the press gallery of the House of Commons.  Reflecting on his family's long association with the newspaper industry, he noted: "All of this gives me a close affiliation with journalists of our country."[72]  Yet Canada's media conferences appeared to be relatively formal because the evidence suggests that King did not answer spontaneous questions from journalists.[73]  FDR made these observations to the international news corps at the Quebec meeting on 16 September 1944.  Speaking to the US correspondents in the meeting, Roosevelt explained:

> This is a press conference, I am told, in the usual manner – limited as usual in Quebec, to the principal speakers, not to the correspondents.  In other words, no questions will be asked of us, which I think we are all agreed is rather nice for us.[74]

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[70] Case, "The lessons of Munich".

[71] About Canada Multimedia Study Guide Resources, "Conscription for Wartime Service", Mount Allison University, 2001, retrieved on 9 December 2008 at <http://www.mta.ca/about_canada/study_guide/debates/conscription.html>.

[72] King, "Diaries", 16 December 1944, p. 1441.

[73] (Anon.), "Canada At War", *Time*, New York, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01222/15, 12 June 1944, p. 16.

[74] Roosevelt, "Press conference", 16 September 1944.

The Canadian press gallery was characterised as upholding a media etiquette that prevented reporters from debating the prime minister's announcements during his interviews.

King's diary notes revealed his favourable opinion of Curtin's media and communication skills.[75]  Likewise, when Curtin was the *Westralian Worker* editor, he wrote positive newspaper articles about the Canadian politician's independence.[76] When Commonwealth leaders met at Churchill's office on 3 May 1944, King wrote approvingly of Curtin's speech.  "I confess I admired his (Curtin's) straightforward direct manner", King confided in his diary.  He added:

> "I equally admire Churchill's restraint in listening to the presentation as
> Curtin made it.  He had what he wished to say written out and read it quite
> emphatically, directing special attention to the point to which he wished
> consideration given ... He stated emphatically that he wanted Australia to be
> on the highest level, when it came to reaching decisions on peace ... Churchill
> admitted that the presentation had made a deep impression on him ... I felt he
> [Curtin] was well justified in making the presentation he did."[77]

The description conveyed the Australian prime minister's use of speech notes on this occasion to assist him to deliver an "emphatic" presentation, a departure from his usual practice of speaking "off the cuff".[78]

Later in London in May 1944, Mackenzie King listened to Curtin "speaking extemporaneously" and delivering "an excellent speech, without a note and without hesitating for a word.  It was well put together and well delivered".[79]  Moreover, Curtin accepted King's invitation to address the Canadian Parliament on 1 June 1944.  "His address was carefully prepared", King recalled in his diary.  Although

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[75] To my knowledge, previous research has not delved into the Canadian leader's diary regarding the nature of his relationship with Curtin.
[76] Oliver, "Shaping the Nation".
[77] King, "Diaries", 3 May 1944, p. 433.
[78] Clem Lloyd and Richard Hall (eds), *Backroom Briefings: John Curtin's war*, National Library of Australia, Canberra, 1997.
[79] King, "Diaries", 10 May 1944, p. 457.

Curtin spoke for more than 40 minutes, he did not need notes. "His diction was very good, and his memory remarkable. One felt, however, that he had memorized very carefully what he was saying."[80] Also King paid special attention to Curtin's press interactions upon his arrival at an Ottawa train station on 30 May. "Quite a number present. Same old business of photographs, microphones, etc. Curtin spoke very nicely over the microphone", he remarked in his diary.[81] "He seemed to attach great importance in the morning to the press interview", King continued on 1 June. "He came with material prepared for distribution, welcomed questions, etc." Curtin was focused "almost exclusively" on his nation's war effort and the need for a world organisation to maintain stability in peacetime.[82] King's descriptions provided some answers to the researcher investigating reasons for Curtin's reputation as a strong speech maker. When Curtin was seeking a greater role for the nation in making crucial wartime decisions, he prepared a written address and stated his main arguments "emphatically" to other Commonwealth leaders. He adopted a different approach when addressing the Canadian Parliament, rehearsing and memorising carefully a lengthy address so that he could speak passionately about Australia's war effort without the use of notes. Another key to his success was his focus on the international media during his overseas trips. He did not seem to hesitate to answer radio journalists' questions at an Ottawa train station and distributed prepared material to those attending his Canadian press conference. His ability to select the best communication strategy that suited the occasion – whether it was the need to memorise a lengthy speech or to emphasise the main arguments in a prepared address – as well as his careful preparations for media interviews demonstrated that he worked hard to be a forceful speaker.

Churchill and his closest assistants did not publish detailed memoirs that might have permitted insights into their relationships with journalists.[83] This lack of

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[80] King, "Diaries", 1 June 1944, p. 564-565.
[81] King, "Diaries", 30 May 1944, p. 561.
[82] King, "Diaries", 1 June 1944, p. 565.
[83] Although Churchill published multi-volume histories of England and World War II, as well as memoirs of his early years, he did not produce a book about the British press. The volumes include: Winston S. Churchill, *A History of the English-speaking Peoples,* Cassell, London, 4 vols, 1952-1956; Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 6 vols, 1948-1953.

archival material was exemplified by the secretive methods of his friend and Minister of Information Brendan Bracken, who systematically destroyed the bulk of his papers.  The remnant was burned by his faithful chauffeur after his death.[84]  Another Minister of Information, Duff Cooper – who served in the position briefly before Bracken was appointed to the role – wrote a diary that was published posthumously by his son.  The diary did not reveal major insights about Churchill's press interactions.[85]  An advisory role was held by Aitken, the press proprietor who held crucial ministerial portfolios, but he did not keep a diary.[86]  Scholarly post-war publications did not focus on any publicity officer in Churchill's administration.[87]  In 2008 a London museum identified Wendy Maxwell as his press secretary.[88]  In a brief oral history, Maxwell said she typed Churchill's speeches, but she did not indicate any public relations roles.  Instead she was a personal assistant to Sir Ian Jacobs, the military assistant secretary to the War Cabinet from 1939 to 1945.  Maxwell reminisced:

> Once Churchill was on the scene, he was our God; right from the word go ...
> he used to come along and look over one's shoulder (in the Cabinet war
> room) ...  I was absolutely in awe of him.[89]

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[84] Lysaght, "Bracken"; Cameron Hazlehurst, Sally Whitehead, Christine Woodland, *A Guide to the Papers of British Cabinet Ministers 1900-1964*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996, p. 62.

[85] Robert McCrum, "Dishing the dirt—about time too", *The Observer,* London, 23 October 2005, retrieved on 19 December 2008 at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2005/oct/23/biography.features>.

[86] Instead Aitken chose to publish books about World War I.  See Maxwell Aitken Beaverbrook, *Men and Power, 1917-1918*, Archon Books, London, 1968; and *Politicians and the War, 1914-1916*, Archon Books, London, 1969.  His biographers included A.J.P. Taylor*, Beaverbook*, London, Hamilton, 1972.  Taylor did not concentrate on media relations with Churchill.

[87] Churchill's Foreign Minister, Anthony Eden (later the prime minister from 1955 to 1957) published his memoirs and again, the media were not a central theme.  The memoirs extended to the following three books: *Full Circle: The Memoirs of Sir Anthony Eden*, Cassell, London, 1960; *Facing the Dictators: The Eden Memoirs*, Cassell, London, 1962; *Another World, 1897-1917,* Allen Lane, London, 1976.

[88] Richard Moss, "Curtain goes up on new £6 million Churchill museum" [hereafter "Churchill museum"], *Culture 24,* Brighton, 9 February 2005, retrieved on 9 December 2008 at <http://www.24hourmuseum.org.uk/nwh_gfx_en/ART26042.html>.

[89] Wendy Maxwell, interviewed by James Holland, *James Holland's Second World War Forum*, 2003, retrieved on 9 December 2008 at <http://www.secondworldwarforum.com/my-oral-history-archive/civilians/wendy-maxwell-british>.

Churchill's heroic stature was strengthened with the 1966 publication of the first volume of an official biography, produced by his son, Randolph, and historian Sir Martin Gilbert.[90]  One of the few primary sources publicly available was an edited volume of wartime letters exchanged between Churchill and his wife, Clementine. The volume, which was edited by their daughter, Mary Soames, enhanced Churchill's reputation as a great writer.[91]

Differing from his friendships with conservative press executives, Churchill was criticised by Labour-oriented newspapers, *The Daily Herald* and *The Daily Mirror*.[92]  Confronted by the challenge of the new medium of radio, the British press was struggling financially during the 1930s.  Moreover, the press reporters' reputation and morale were reduced to "tatters" by the early 1940s because of the overly optimistic predictions of conservative London newspapers, such as Aitken's *Daily Express,* that there would not be another European war.  According to a wartime British survey, 75 per cent of respondents said they had more faith in the accuracy of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) radio news than in newspaper stories.[93]  Although records are scarce, Lloyd has written that Churchill did not hold daily press conferences.[94]  According to the wartime AAP London-based deputy editor, Irvine Douglas, Churchill "didn't give press conferences". Douglas recalled on one occasion, Churchill summoned the Commonwealth news representatives to meet in his office in Number 10 Downing Street and, wearing a blue, open-necked British air force "boilersuit", he emphasised: "You have a very

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[90] Randolph S. Churchill and Martin Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill*, 8 vols, Heinemann, London, 1966-1981.

[91] Thomas Mallon, "Dear Cat, Dear Pig", *The New York Times*, New York, 9 May 1999, retrieved on 9 December 2008 at <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9900E1D8133DF93AA35756C0A96F958 260>.

[92] Adrian Smith, "The Fall and Fall of the Third Daily Herald" [hereafter "Daily herald"], in Peter Catterall, Colin Seymore-Ure and Adrian Smith (eds), *Northcliffe's legacy: aspects of the British popular press, 1896-1996* [hereafter *Northcliffe's legacy*]*,* St Martin's Press, London, Macmillan and New York, 2000, p. 178.

[93] Siân Nicholas, "All the News that's Fit to Broadcast": the Popular Press *versus* the BBC, 1922-45" [hereafter "The popular press"], in Catterall, Seymore-Ure and Smith, *Northcliffe's legacy*, p. 139.

[94] C.J. Lloyd, *Parliament And The Press: The Federal Parliamentary Press Gallery 1901-88*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1988, p. 126.

great duty to perform in maintaining the unity of the British Empire".[95]  Due to his customary distance from the working press, London's journalists never knew that he was on occasions ill and bedridden for up to a week during 1943 and 1944.[96]  Churchill complained the leftist *Daily Herald* war coverage was calculated to undermine the national army.[97]  Contrasting with its rivals, *The Daily Mirror* experienced a surge in circulation and its increased popularity was attributed to a trend away from war news in favour of more entertainment stories.[98]  While conservative newspapers, such as *The Times,* campaigned for Churchill in 1945,[99] *The Daily Mirror* opposed his bid for re-election.  *The Daily Mirror* advertising director was Cecil King, the nephew of Alfred Harmsworth.  Although Harmsworth had boosted young Churchill's first political campaign, Cecil King was a vocal Labour supporter.[100]  During the 1945 general election, the Labour newspapers accounted for 35 per cent of the national circulation and helped to secure Churchill's defeat.[101]

## Mass radio and film communications

These major Allied leaders understood the value of radio addresses to communicate directly to the public, without press interpretations or editorialising.  One of FDR's most outstanding media innovations was initiating the first informal, presidential radio broadcasts, known as the "fireside chats".  Many historians have written about Roosevelt's rhetoric and argue this new aural genre includes between 25 and 31 radio "chats".[102]  The editors of *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*

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[95] Irvine Douglas, interviewed by Mel Pratt, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01061/1, 15-19 June 1972, transcript np.
[96] Moss, "Churchill museum"; Jackie Storer, "Churchill's bunker revealed", *BBC News Online,* London, 8 April 2003, retrieved on 12 May 2008 at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/2929063.stm>; Tait, "A war leader", p. 80.
[97] Smith, "Daily herald", p. 177.
[98] Nicholas, "The popular press", p. 141.
[99] Harold Hobson, Phillip Knightley and Leonard Russell, *The Pearl of Days: An Intimate Memoir of The Sunday Times, 1822-1972,* Hamilton, London, 1972, p. 230.
[100] H. Ashley Redburn, "Churchill and Menzies: Partners or Rivals?", *Finest Hour*, The Churchill Centre, no. 59, spring 1988, pp. 10-12.
[101] Smith, "The herald", p. 180.
[102] Elvin T. Lim, "The Lion and the Lamb: De-mythologizing Franklin Roosevelt's 'Fireside Chats'" [hereafter "Fireside chats"], *Rhetoric & Public Affairs,* vol. 6, no. 3, 2003, p. 441.

concluded the president gave 27 "fireside chats" between 3 December 1933 and 6 December 1944 on a wide range of economic, military and political topics.[103]  While his press secretary, Early, was credited with the technical expertise to master the broadcasting equipment, media historians agreed the chats were only successful because of Roosevelt's ability to project a warm, fatherly persona to US audiences.[104]  When he was seeking relief from his health problems in rural Georgia, he lost a youthful "air of arrogant superiority" and developed "a genuine understanding" of the problems confronting poor farmers, small businesses and African-American sharecroppers.[105]  Distancing himself from his privileged background, FDR selected his words carefully to create an egalitarian atmosphere. Often, he would introduce the chats by greeting radio listeners as "my friends" or "my countrymen and my friends", as well as "my fellow Americans".[106]  As the "glamour boy of the radio", he spoke slowly, with a mean rate of 105 to 110 words per minute, allowing ample time for his listeners to absorb his meaning, according to Earnest Bradenburg and Waldo W. Braden.  When he wished to emphasise important passages, he talked at an even more leisurely pace and developed a technique of using dashes in his manuscript to symbolize pauses.[107]  Another scholar, Elvin T. Lim, stated that Roosevelt spoke an average of 117 words each minute during his "fireside chats".[108]  Bradenburg and Braden explained most of his sentences were short for a speaker, ranging from 16 to 27 words in length.[109]  In addition, a high percentage of the words fell within the limits of the 500 most commonly used words in Thorndike's influential *The Teacher's Word Book*, which was consulted frequently

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[103] Franklin D. Roosevelt and Samuel Irving Rosenman, *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt* [hereafter *Public papers*], Russell and Russell, New York, 13 vols, 1969.

[104] Thomas Bonner, *Our Recent Past,* Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, 1963, p. 213; Arthur S. Link, *American Epoch: A History of the United States Since the 1890's,* Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1955, p. 383; Daniel Scroop, "The Making of FDR: The Story of Stephen T. Early, America's First Modern Press Secretary", *Times Higher Education,* London, 21 November 2008, retrieved on 10 December 2008 at <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?storyCode=402574&sectioncode=26>.

[105] Gallagher, "Politics", p. 266.

[106] Roosevelt and Rosenman, *Public papers.*

[107] Earnest Bradenburg and Waldo W. Braden, "Franklin Delano Roosevelt" [hereafter "Roosevelt"], in Marie Kathryn Hochmuth (ed.), *History and Criticism of American Public Address,* Longmans, Green and Co., New York, vol. 3, 1958, pp. 520, 522.

[108] Lim, "Fireside chats", p. 446.

[109] Bradenburg and Braden, "Roosevelt", pp. 520, 522.

by educators and rhetoricians at the time.[110]  While the press agreed with the White House that FDR's handicap was not a "story",[111] American people admired him for battling illness and he "seemed to be almost a member of the family".[112]

FDR's speeches were usually the product of careful collaboration with his advisers.  His official speechwriter was Samuel Rosenman.  Historian and critic, John T. Flynn, asserted that Roosevelt "was one of those many public men who were willing to have their speeches written for them".[113] Although advisers did most of the writing of his speeches, he re-read the manuscripts so often that he almost memorised them.  Eleanor Roosevelt reminisced that often six to eight drafts were written before the speech met with approval.  As described by Eleanor and his early adviser, Raymond Moley, the regular speech writing process was a complex business.  First, the president decided on a subject and discussed major ideas with his advisers; then, the writers completed a draft copy and submitted it for approval; afterwards, the draft was discussed and revised until it was acceptable.[114]  More than half of the "fireside chats" were published on *The New York Times* front pages, with the full texts of the speeches continuing inside the issues.[115]  Such prominent news columns indicated press endorsement for FDR in his home state, as he was a former governor of New York.  Furthermore, when he mentioned "Australia" occasionally in his wartime radio "fireside chats",[116] his speech was often favourably promoted on Australian metropolitan newspaper front covers.[117]  Although a few conservative

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[110] Edward L. Thorndike, *The Teachers' Word Book*, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, 1921.  The book consisted of an alphabetical list of the 10,000 English words of most frequent occurrence in the reading material examined.  Thorndike compiled his book from 41 sources including children's literature, *The Holy Bible,* English classics, primary school textbooks, newspapers, books about cooking, sewing, farming and the trades, as well as correspondence.

[111] Gallagher, "Politics", p. 265.

[112] Gallagher, "Politics", p. 264.

[113] John T. Flynn, *Country Squire in the White House* [hereafter *White House*], Doubleday, Doran and Company Inc., New York, 1940, p. 57.

[114] Bradenburg and Braden, "Roosevelt", pp. 465-466.

[115] Lim, "Fireside chats", p. 452.

[116] Franklin Roosevelt, "Fireside chat", in Woolley and Peters, *American presidency project*, 23 February, 28 April, 7 September 1942.

[117] *Argus*, April 30 1942, p. 1; *Canberra*, 25 February 1942, p. 1, 9 September 1942, p 1.

newspaper publishers disagreed with his democratic ideology, he developed mainly mutually respectful, egalitarian relationships with news correspondents.[118]

Despite Roosevelt's preference for radio as the primary means of his public communications, he recognised the value of popular movies to boost war morale. During his 1930s "fireside chat" newsreels, he had sought to develop a close connection with film audiences of the depression era.  Universal Studios newsreel scenes showed him as he spoke directly to the camera at eye level, with his hands placed on the table before him to signify his straightforward manner.  Also he was framed in close-up and medium shots to convey a personal relationship with US moviegoers.[119]  In a 1934 scene, for example, he removed his spectacles and looked straight at the camera to criticise "a timid few people" opposed to his labour policies and to emphasise his words: "I believe in practical explanations and in practical politics".[120]  In June 1942, he established the propaganda agency, the Office of War Information, and it worked with America's five largest newsreel companies to create United Newsreel.  The film teams of United Newsreel followed voluntarily the Office of War Information guidelines and accepted direct censorship.  The mainstream Hollywood movie companies supported Roosevelt's wartime policies; for example, military news comprised 77 per cent of Paramount Pictures' film content in 1944.  United Newsreel disbanded on 15 December 1945 following the conclusions of the European and Pacific wars.[121]

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[118] Richard W. Steele, "News of the 'Good War': World II News Management", *Journalism Quarterly*, vol. 62, no. 4, winter 1985, pp 707-16, 783.
[119] Universal Studios (producer), *On the Currency Situation* (newsreel), United States of America, 1933, retrieved on 20 March 2010 at <http://www.archive.org/details/WorldHistoryFranklinD.Roosevelt-SixFiresideChats1933-1938>.  This was a filmed version of Roosevelt's "fireside chat" on 22 October 1933.  See also: Universal Studios (producer), *Review of the Achievements of the Seventy-third Congress* (newsreel) [hereafter *Review*], United States of America, 1934, retrieved on 20 March 2010 at <http://www.archive.org/details/WorldHistoryFranklinD.Roosevelt-SixFiresideChats1933-1938>.  This was a newsreel of the "fireside chat" on 28 June 1934.
[120] Universal Studios, *Review*.
[121] Steven Schoenherr, "History of the Newsreel", University of San Diego, San Diego, 2008, retrieved on 10 December 2008 at <http://history.sandiego.edu/gen/filmnotes/newsreel.html>.

Although few historians have focused on FDR's use of the film media, they refer to his determination to address wartime public audiences "despite his handicap". Film companies agreed to turn their cameras away from the president's leg braces. Often before a speech, he was carried and raised to a platform stage in the arms of men. Since the media did not mention his disability, Roosevelt could smooth down his hair nonchalantly and begin his speech as if nothing unusual had occurred.[122] While most reporters supported his activist presidency and were united in their desire to defeat Germany and Japan, a new generation of correspondents was more likely to be "aggressive and contentious" towards politicians because of a "profound change" in government-media relations during the 1960s and 1970s. The unsuccessful US role in the Vietnam War and the controversial Watergate scandal, involving Richard Nixon's presidency, caused more journalists to be suspicious of government motives.[123] Since then, the mass media expansion has accelerated competition among news networks, which have increasingly produced biased and sensational presidential reports to attract more public attention. According to the journalism scholar, Fredric T. Smoller, the commercial media environment meant that a modern president would receive mainly unfavourable coverage after the first six months in office.[124]

In like manner to Roosevelt, Mackenzie King's private wish was to keep the press "at arm's length" from his private life, but he was keen to use radio and film to counter Nazi propaganda.[125] His main objectives were to strengthen unity in multicultural Canada and to assert the nation's independence. By 1935, Canada's politicians were moving away from town hall addresses and entering fledgling radio stations. As national troops were dispatched overseas in 1939, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) followed them and the station's reporters were

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[122] Gallagher, "Politics", pp. 264-266; John T. Flynn, *The Roosevelt Myth,* The Devin-Adair Co., New York, 1948, p 11; Frances Perkins, *The Roosevelt I Knew,* The Viking Press, New York, 1946, p. 11.

[123] Fredric T. Smoller, *The Six O'Clock Presidency: A Theory of Presidential Press Relations in the Age of Television* [hereafter *Six o'clock presidency*]*,* Praeger, New York, Westport and London, 1990, p. 34.

[124] Smoller, *Six o'clock presidency*, pp. 3-4.

[125] Library and Archives Canada, "Mackenzie King on the Airwaves and the Silver Screen" [hereafter "Airwaves and the silver screen"], Ottawa, 2002, retrieved on 10 December 2008 at <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/king/023011-1070.09-e.html>.

based in the United Kingdom to provide war news to audiences at home.[126] Although King was "never a great communicator", he grappled with the new media, "working diligently to control his image and message".[127]  An *Ottawa Citizen* wartime correspondent, Betty Kennedy, reminisced in 1978 that King was "a charming person" but "when making speeches, [he] seemed rather austere and cold".[128]  Perhaps he lacked opportunities to make ardently patriotic, militaristic speeches because he was mindful of many French Canadians' strong opposition to conscription, although young Quebec men volunteered to fight overseas.  King's diaries indicated he rehearsed speeches carefully before live radio broadcasts to present a confident media image.  For example, he devoted an entire day to prepare a public address about how Canada must be "strong, secure and united" on 3 September 1939, when Britain declared war against Germany.  King wrote that this speech was "the largest broadcast" made from Canada at the time and reached listeners "worldwide".[129]  He came to regard radio speeches as vital for persuading French Canadians not to be influenced by Parisienne propaganda from the pro-Nazi Vichy regime.[130]

Similarly to the US movie companies, the film industry flourished in Canada during the war.  The Canadian Army Film and Photo Unit made 106 newsreels for distribution to the nation's army troops.  A typical newsreel report would show King chatting informally with army personnel at an unidentified military site.  The filmmakers followed censorship rules by removing the details of locations and army

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[126] Canadian Communications Foundation, "Timeline: The History of Canadian Broadcasting", Ontario, 2005, retrieved on 15 December 2008 at <http://www.broadcasting-history.ca/index2.html>.

[127] Library and Archives Canada, "Airwaves and the silver screen".

[128] Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (producer), *Front Page Challenge* (television broadcast) [hereafter *Front page challenge*], Toronto, 27 March 1978, retrieved on 10 December 2008 at <http://archives.cbc.ca/version_print.asp?page=1&IDLan=1&ID.C.lip=7244&IDDossier=0&IDCat=335&ID.C.atPa=260>.

[129] William Lyon Mackenzie King, "Speech", National Archives of Canada, IDCISN: 74651, Ottawa, 3 September 1939; King, "Diaries", 3 September 1939, pp. 923, 925.

[130] William Lyon Mackenzie King, "Speech", National Archives of Canada, IDCISN: 82447, Ottawa, 24 April 1942.

unit names.[131]   Associated Screen News Limited, a Montreal-based film production company, produced prominent war movies for national and overseas cinemas. Although King made a significant investment in the development of newsreels, he would express concerns about his appearance and voice.  It seemed he secured the industry's support and Associated Screen News filmed a "laudatory" tribute to him upon his retirement in 1948.[132]

Similarly to Roosevelt, Churchill relied predominantly upon the radio, rather than the printed word, to broadcast his powerful rhetoric and evocations.  The classically educated, British leader voiced "basic English" deliberately; his speeches were remarkable because of their studied simplicity.[133]  Churchill positioned his UK audiences as if they were the centre of the world, the star actors on a main stage.  As a journalist and historian, he knew how to craft a story.  His speeches were brutally honest, emphasising the hardships that Britons must endure before winning the war.[134]  For example, in his first speech as the prime minister, Churchill addressed the House of Commons on 13 May 1940 and announced:

> ... I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat ... You ask what is our aim?  I can answer in one word: Victory.  Victory at all costs.  Victory in spite of all terror.  Victory however long and hard the road may be.  For without victory there is no survival.[135]

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[131] Library and Archives of Canada, "Premier King Visits Armoured Troops, 1945", Ottawa, 2002, retrieved on 10 December 2008 at <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/king/053201/05320113020981_e.html>.

[132] Library and Archives Canada, "Highlights from the Parliamentary Life of the Right Honourable William Lyon Mackenzie King, 1948", Ottawa, 2002, retrieved on 10 December 2008 at <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/king/053201/05320113020984_e.html>.

[133] K.E. Garay, "Empires of the Mind? C.K. Ogden, Winston Churchill and Basic English", *Canadian Historical Association Historical Papers,* vol. 23, no.1, 1988, retrieved on 12 May 2008 at <http://www.winstonchurchill.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=527>.

[134] John Baldoni, *Great communication secrets of great leaders* [hereafter *Great leaders*], McGraw-Hill, New York, 2003, pp. 10-11.

[135] Winston Churchill, "Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat", The Churchill Centre, London, 13 May 1940, retrieved on 13 December 2008 at <http://www.winstonchurchill.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=391>.

Through this poetic rhythm, he stressed his themes on the need for "toil" before achieving "victory".  The speech, and subsequent radio broadcasts, instilled a sense of pride and patriotism in Britons: a belief that they could control their destinies.[136]

Churchill's broadcasts captivated an international audience, as noted by the Australian newspaper correspondent, Joseph Alexander.  On 2 December 1941, Alexander was alarmed by the Japanese threat in the Pacific and confided in his diary, "if faith in Churchill goes, there does not seem to be much left".[137]  His confidence was restored soon afterwards because he wrote favourably about the British leader's speech on 27 December 1941.  Based in Canberra, Alexander listened to a shortwave broadcast of Churchill's address to the US Congress.  "It was one of the greatest occasions in history", Alexander wrote in his diary. "The reception he was given was rapturous."[138]  As well as generating Australian press coverage, generally the texts of Churchill's speeches were reprinted in major US newspapers and magazines.[139]

Despite Churchill's wartime popularity with the conservative media, historians noted he clashed frequently with BBC director, John Reith.  The conflict was a "strange and somewhat sad chapter in British politics", noted the scholar, Ron Cynewulf Robbins.  Reith's diaries revealed he was envious of Churchill's eloquence and angered by his anti-appeasement stance during the 1930s, according to Robbins.[140]  Also D.L. LeMahieu agreed the diaries presented "an unflattering portrait of Reith's personality".[141]  This tense relationship lasted for nearly 30 years. To compound the problem, Churchill was suspicious of "left-wing" BBC journalists.

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[136] John Baldoni, *Great leaders,* pp. 10-11.

[137] Alexander, "Papers", 2 December 1941.

[138] Alexander, "Papers", 27 December 1941.

[139] Jonathan Sikorsky, "From British Cassandra to American Hero: The Churchill Legend in the World War II American Media" [hereafter "Churchill"], *Finest Hour*, The Churchill Centre, no. 108, autumn 2000, p. 30.

[140] Ron Cynewulf Robbins, "Great Contemporaries: Reith of the BBC" [hereafter "Reith"], *Finest Hour,* The Churchill Centre, no. 82, first quarter 1994, p. 20.  Robbins researched Reith's diaries, which became available after his death, and found "absurd" criticisms of Churchill.  Also see Charles Stuart (ed.), *The Reith Diaries*, Collins, London, 1975.

[141] D.L. LeMahieu, *A Culture for Democracy*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1988, p. 143.

In the six volumes of his wartime history, there were fewer than ten minor references to broadcasting or the BBC.[142]  Yet he recognised Reith's wartime contribution by awarding him with the Companion of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath (Military).[143]  Rather than concentrating solely on the BBC, Churchill made enthusiastic use of other media to promote his military strategies.

Due to his high regard for the power of the cinema to influence public opinions, Churchill directed Minister of Information Bracken to ensure that two US Army documentaries "should have the widest possible showing" because "they are the best propaganda films yet seen in this country".  Directed by Frank Capra, the two films, *Divide and Conquer* and *The Battle of Britain*, focused on the European conflict.  In a letter to Bracken on 19 July 1943, Churchill stated he would "ask for legislation if necessary" if the British cinemas refused to broadcast them.  He intended to make a screen appearance to introduce the films and praise "the attitude of the Americans" for supporting their UK ally.[144]  During the Blitz – the Nazi bombing campaign against British cities – local newsreels captured the energy of Churchill's leadership.  Movie camera operators followed his inspections of war-torn factories, shipyards and city ruins.  He would "canter" deliberately to portray himself to be in a hurry.  His walking sticks were not crutches, but "striking" devices, and his victory salutes were a sign of defiance.  The harsh realism of the British newsreels represented a departure from traditional US movie entertainment.  Before the war began, US theatre owners were convinced that entertainment and sports films were the best drawcards to attract audiences.  They believed most people watched movies because they wished to be distracted temporarily from tough economic conditions.  The film genre changed quickly with the US entry in the war.  By 1942, American cinemagoers were filling theatres to watch the latest military news, featuring Churchill.[145]

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[142] Christopher H. Sterling, "Face-Off: Churchill, Reith and the BBC", *Finest Hour*, The Churchill Centre, no. 128, 2005, p. 27.

[143] Robbins, "Reith".

[144] Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War: Closing the Ring,* Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1951, p. 655.

[145] Sikorsky, "Churchill", pp. 30-36.

**Journalists and censors**

The new wartime censors provoked mixed reactions from Allied reporters.  FDR established the Office of Censorship on 19 December 1941, immediately following the Pearl Harbour tragedy.  Early was surprised that radio and press journalists were cooperative; sometimes correspondents asked for censors to review their stories and editors offered to publish war-related advertisements without payments.[146]  One day after the US declaration of war against Japan on 8 December 1941, FDR announced new censorship rules at his press conference.  He said news reports would need to conform to two "obvious" conditions: accuracy and not giving "aid and comfort to the enemy".  In a persuasive manner, he added:

> What we want is to get the news out as soon as we can, subject to the two qualifications, and do it in the most convenient way.  In other words, our objectives are exactly alike.  It is going to work out all right.[147]

Yet the White House Press Corps did not express complete enthusiasm for the announcement.  One reporter questioned: "Will there eventually be a censor who we can get our teeth stuck into?"  Roosevelt replied: "It is awfully hard to answer it.  Talk to Steve [Early] about this".[148]  Ultimately journalists were willing to accept a voluntary system because it was preferable to punitive war secrets laws and they recognised the popular support for fighting Axis enemies.  Additionally the Office of Censorship's director was a longstanding newsman, Byron Price.  Roosevelt, Price and top military leaders were sympathetic to the principle of a free press.[149]


On the other side of the Atlantic, British journalists described the nation's new censorship system as shambolic.  The Ministry of Information was formed on 4 September 1939, a day after Britain's declaration of war, and it became responsible for press censorship as well as other publicity and propaganda.  Threatened by censorship, editors and reporters reacted angrily to government interference.  Four

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[146] Willis and Willis, *The media effect,* p. 122; Winfield, *FDR*, p. 174.
[147] Roosevelt, "Press conference", 9 December 1941.
[148] Roosevelt, "Press conference", 9 December 1941.
[149] William H. Hammond, "Book review: Secrets of Victory: The Office of Censorship and the US Press and Radio in World War II" (Michael S. Sweeney), *The Journal of Military History,* vol. 65, no. 3, 2001, pp. 840-841.

men headed the new ministry in quick succession between 1939 and 1941.  The first
minister was Lord Hugh Macmillan, who lacked a media background.  Reith, the
second minister, was the BBC director who did not work well with Churchill, as
described previously.  Duff Cooper, who replaced Reith, made radio speeches but did
not have journalism experience.  In July 1941, Churchill "conscripted" Bracken to
the position because he was a highly experienced editor of conservative London
newspapers, who was supported by the press.  Differing from Cooper, Bracken did
not make direct radio broadcasts and kept a distance from the day-to-day operations
of news offices.  After the initial clashes between censors and journalists, Bracken
continued to lead the ministry until victory was obvious.[150]


Most of Canada's newspapers accepted censorship rules at the start of the war
in 1939.  King was credited with making the successful decision to recruit journalists
as censors because they understood the temperament and demands of the news
industry.  During the first year of the war, he set up a Censorship Co-ordination
Committee, which was directed by Walter Thompson, the publicity chief for the
Canadian National Railways.[151]  Immediately King's former employer, the nation's
leading newspaper, *The Globe and Mail*, supported his censorship policies.  As a
*Globe and Mail* editorial writer stated in September 1939*:* "Freedom of speech must
be curtailed when the nation is at war.  What use of fighting an enemy without if the
enemies within are given a free hand?"[152]  Of more than 100 daily Canadian
newspapers, only one group was suspended from publication; the communist
Toronto *Clarion* correspondents were forced to cease printing in November 1939.
Most Canadian journalists decided to agree with the majority of their readers, who
seemed willing to accept temporary restrictions on their civil liberties, such as
curfews and rations.[153]

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[150] Lysaght, "Bracken"; The National Archives*,* "The Art of War", Surrey, 2005, retrieved on
11 December 2008 at <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/theartofwar/inf3.htm>.
[151] George D. Kerr, "Skirting the Minefield: Press Censorship, Politics and French Canada,
1940" [hereafter "Censorship"], *Canadian Journal of Communication*, vol. 8, no. 2, 1982,
pp. 47-48.
[152] (Anon.), *The Globe and Mail*, Toronto, 23 September 1939.  Cited in Kerr, "Censorship",
p. 46.
[153] Kerr, "Censorship", pp. 49, 51, 59.

**Media legacies**

Despite some censorship complaints, journalists helped to portray the Allied leaders as media celebrities.  Even FDR's black Scottish terrier, Murray the Outlaw of Falahill (nicknamed Fala), became a movie star.  Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer made a short film about wartime conditions, viewed from Fala's perspective, in 1943.[154] Roosevelt corrected journalists' misspelling of his pet's name at an interview on 27 July 1943, when he told amused reporters:

> I have a little dog who is called Fala — F-a-l-a.  But in the beginning, everybody got into their heads that his name was F-a-l-l-a, and you can't break them of the habit.[155]

He was not the first national leader to use a dog to enhance his media image.  Hoover distributed thousands of photographs of his Belgian police dog, King Tut, to voters during the 1928 election campaign.  The picture – depicting a grinning Hoover holding King Tut's front paws – softened the aspiring president's dour image and helped him to win the election.  Yet Roosevelt extended the public relations strategy; Fala accompanied him to wartime conferences around the world.[156]  Mackenzie King's pet dog, Pat, was well-known to the Ottawa Press Gallery.  When Pat died, the *Ottawa Journal* political correspondent, Richard Jackson, visited King's home to ask for an old photograph of the Irish terrier when in good health.  As a result, the *Ottawa Journal* published a picture of a younger, cheerful King, dressed in tweed plus fours, with Pat.[157]  In wartime London, Churchill was a "terrific showman" for the cameras when journalists accompanied him on his organised tours of city ruins.[158]  As the son of the British Chancellor of the Exchequer and a US millionaire heiress, Churchill was accustomed to dealing with media publicity.  His birth in 1874 was announced on page one of *The Times*.  As a 34-year-old politician, he married Clementine Hozier in "the society wedding of 1908", which was reported as a

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[154] The White House Historical Association, "White House Pets", Washington DC, 2008, retrieved on 11 December 2008 at <http://www.whitehousehistory.org/03/pets/04_best-friend.html>.

[155] Roosevelt, "Press conference", 27 July 1943.

[156] Peter Grier, "An Obama dog: for the kids ... and the country", *The Christian Science Monitor,* Boston, 21 November 2008, p. 1.

[157] Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, *Front page challenge.*

[158] Sikorsky, "Churchill", pp. 30-36.

pictorial story on the covers of the *Daily Graphic* and the *Daily Mirror*, sparking a demand for more personality-driven news.[159]  In all three countries, journalists cooperated with the national leaders' media strategies to present them as popular, although somewhat aristocratic, personalities.

Later, the media portrayed their legacies differently.  US leaders invoked Churchill's name as "an icon of idealised and inspirational 'toughness'".[160]  In the twenty-first century, US Republican leaders seemed more willing to praise Churchill than to commend Roosevelt's Democratic Party presidency.  Churchill became a role model to US President George W. Bush, who remarked in July 2001, "he wasn't afraid of public opinion polls ... he didn't need focus groups to tell him what was right".[161]  Bush and US Vice-President Dick Cheney increased the references to Churchill after the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001 in a bid to gather public support for the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.[162]  *The New York Times* correspondent, Edward Rothstein, agreed that Churchill had become an "inescapable presence" during these twenty-first century conflicts.[163]

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[159] Tait, "A war leader", p. 80; The Westminster Collection, "'Churchill and the Press' and the re-launch of the Harmsworth Room at the Churchill Museum and Cabinet War Rooms", Westminster, 2008, retrieved on 11 December 2008 at <http://www.thewestminstercollection.co.uk/news/churchill_press_re-launch_harmsworth_room_churchill_museum_cabinet_war_rooms.html>.

[160] Richard Toye, "The Churchill Syndrome: Reputational Entrepreneurship and the Rhetoric of Foreign Policy since 1945" [hereafter "Churchill"], *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations,* vol. 10, no. 3, 2008, pp. 364-378, retrieved on 11 December 2008 at <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/120125196/abstract?CRETRY=1&SRETRY=0>.

[161] George W. Bush, "President discusses European trip: Remarks by the president in acceptance of bust of Winston Churchill" [hereafter "Remarks by the president"], 16 July 2001, transcript np, retrieved on 16 December 2008 at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/07/20010716-3.html>.

[162] George W. Bush, "President Bush discusses importance of democracy in Middle East", 4 February 2004, retrieved on 16 December 2008 at <http://whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/02/20040204-4.html>; Richard Cheney, "Remarks by the vice president at Westminster College", 26 April 2004, retrieved on 16 December 2008 at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/04/20040426-8.html>; Toye, "Churchill".

[163] Edward Rothstein, "Churchill, Heroic Relic or Relevant Now?", *The New York Times,* New York, 29 March 2003, retrieved on 11 December 2008 at <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9505E6D71639F93AA15750C0A9659C8B63>.

Despite historical tributes, it remained uncertain whether Churchill's wartime legacy was fully understood by young Britons.  He won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1953 and was considered to be the greatest British prime minister of the twentieth century, according to a BBC survey of 20 prominent historians, politicians and commentators in 2000.[164]  Yet other surveys suggested some young British secondary school students and teenagers did not know about Churchill's leadership. According to a UKTV Gold poll, 20 per cent of 3,000 teenagers said in 2008 that Churchill was a mythical figure.  News editorial writers decried a lack of historical knowledge shown by the surveyed teenagers.[165]  In another study, academic researchers found that some eighth-grade students had not yet received twentieth-century history lessons because these were not included in the official curriculum for the lower and middle school levels in England.  While eighth-grade Americans had studied some major twentieth-century events, the English children recognised the significance of World War II because of information they had learned from

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[164] (Anon.), "Churchill 'greatest PM of 20th Century'", *BBC News World Edition*, London, 4 January 2000, retrieved on 26 May 2009 at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/575219.stm>.  Also in a BBC survey in 2002, Churchill won the title of "the greatest Briton of all time" among more than one million voters.  See (Anon.), "Churchill dropped from England's history syllabus" [hereafter "Churchill"], *Free Republic,* Fresno, 13 July 2007, retrieved on 11 December 2008 at <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1865231/posts>.

[165] Jonah Goldberg, "Western Civilization and Other Fairy Tales", *National Review Online,* New York, 6 February 2008, retrieved on 11 December 2008 at <http://article.nationalreview.com/?q=YTk1MmZiOTJkNmFlZjFhNjBmZGZjNjdmZjJhMD g3ZTg=>; Robert Hardman, "Winston Churchill's extraordinary relationship with the founding fathers of the Mail" [hereafter "Churchill"], *Daily Mail,* London, 8 February 2008, retrieved on 11 December 2008 at <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-512982/Winston-Churchills-extraordinary-relationship-founding-fathers-Mail.html>; Aislinn Simpson, "Winston Churchill didn't really exist, say teens", *The Telegraph*, London, 4 February 2008, retrieved on 11 December 2008 at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1577511/Winston-Churchill-didn%27t-really-exist%2C-say-teens.html>; David Wooding, "Two-finger salute to Churchill", *The Sun Online,* London, 13 July 2007, retrieved on 11 December 2008 at <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1865231/posts>.

"unofficial" sources including the media.[166]  Even so, Churchill's reputation as a gifted media communicator had endured.  For example, Hardman wrote in the *Daily Mail* that:

> … he didn't need spin doctors or focus groups.  He had an innate understanding of the relationship between the papers and the public, not least because he was a prolific journalist and writer throughout his life.[167]

The statement resembled Bush's 2001 remark that Churchill "wasn't afraid of public opinion polls" and "didn't need focus groups".[168]  These positive summations were exaggerated because Churchill relied on Minister of Information Bracken to manage wartime propaganda, media publicity and censorship from July 1941 to 1945.  Historians discovered little about Bracken's behind-the-scenes role because he destroyed his papers.  It appeared Churchill's closest advisers guarded his legacy carefully.

Many years after the war, high-profile Canadian journalists acknowledged that King had benefited from the prevailing media protocols during his lifetime.  *Ottawa Journal* wartime correspondent, Richard Jackson, was interviewed about King's diaries during a national current affairs television program in 1978.  Jackson admitted he was unaware of King's interest in spiritualism.  One of his interviewers was Pierre Berton, a Vancouver newspaper editor in the 1940s.  Berton questioned his colleague: "Is it not an indictment of the Ottawa press corps, of which you were a member, that these facts did not emerge in some form during King's lifetime?"

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[166] Elizabeth Anne Yeager, Stuart J. Foster and Jennifer Greer, "How Eight Graders in England and the United States View Historical Significance", *The Elementary School Journal*, vol. 103, no. 2, 2002, pp. 203, 213-214.  Also see Graeme Paton, "Conservative Part Conference: schoolchildren 'ignorant of the past', says Gove", *The Telegraph*, London, 5 October 2010, retrieved on 22 December 2010 at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationnews/8043872/Conservative-Part-Conference-schoolchildren-ignorant-of-the-past-says-Gove.html>; Mark Rice-Oxley, "British teach less Churchill, more global warming", *The Christian Science Monitor*, Boston, 24 July 2007, retrieved on 11 December 2008 at <http://www.csmonitor.com/2007/0724/p01s02-woeu.html>.
[167] Hardman, "Churchill".
[168] Bush, "Remarks by the president".

Jackson replied:

> You've got to remember, it was a different day and age.  The press gave the
> prime minister a lot more respect than it does now.  Now, they go after him
> [referring to Pierre Trudeau, Canada's leader in 1978] like a pack of howling
> dogs.[169]

It seemed the wartime reporters' news coverage of King was similar to the Australian
media's attitudes towards national politicians.  As Mickler and Lucy have
commented, Australian correspondents generally showed "a fairly good record when
it comes to respecting and protecting the privacy of public figures, especially
politicians".[170]  In the same televised Canadian interview, Jackson described King as
"less than a friend [and] a little more than an acquaintance.  I quarrel with the idea of
there being a dark side to the man".[171]  Although King was an astute manager of his
media image during his lifetime, journalists later scrutinised his diaries and this
affected the way that he was portrayed to more contemporary generations.[172]

Similarly to their Canadian colleagues, US reporters did not pry into the
private life of their nation's wartime leader.  The media remained protective about
Roosevelt's paralysis even after his death.  For example, the journalist and
playwright, Dore Schary, wrote to Eleanor Roosevelt to request her permission to
open a theatrical production about FDR's struggle with paralysis.  Eleanor granted
her approval and Schary's play, *Sunrise of Campobello*, opened successfully in
1958.[173]  The wartime media etiquette did not seem to generate debates among US

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[169] Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, *Front page challenge.*
[170] Lucy and Mickler, *The war on democracy*, p. 70.
[171] Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, *Front page challenge.*
[172] Canadian Broadcasting Corporation Digital Archives, "King diaries"; Library and
Archives Canada, "Saving a National Treasure: The Archival History of the Diary", Ottawa,
2002, retrieved on 11 December 2008 at <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/king/023011-
1030.01-e.html>.
[173] Willows Theatre Company, "Willows Theatre Company stages Tony award-winning
drama about President Franklin D. Roosevelt, May 5 – June 1, 2008", Martinez, April 2008,
retrieved 11 December 2008 at
<http://www.willowstheatre.com/PressRoom/2008_Season/Campobello/Campobello_Press_
1.htm>.

reporters in later decades, as it did for Canada's journalists following the posthumous publication of King's diaries in the 1970s.  FDR remained a popular historical leader as the White House Press Corps pursued a more interrogative approach towards presidents.[174]  He ranked as the best US president in annual surveys conducted by public opinion pollster, Zogby International, between 1997 and 2008.  In the final annual poll, Zogby surveyed 1,026 Americans and found that Roosevelt received the most votes (69 per cent) for being a "great" leader among the past 12 US presidents.[175]  News coverage of the nation's 2008 elections included references to FDR as a role model because of his communication skills.  Historians and media commentators compared him with 2008 President-elect, Barack Obama, because they contrasted the recent global economic crisis with the depression circumstances in 1932 and 1933.  In a televised *60 Minutes* interview on 16 November 2008, Obama mentioned he was reading about Roosevelt's inspiring leadership.  As he told the interviewer:

> And what you see in FDR that I hope my team can emulate is not always getting it right, but projecting a sense of confidence and a willingness to try things and experiment in order to get people working again.[176]

After his election victory, *Time* published a caricature of him in a pose reminiscent of Roosevelt.  On the magazine's cover of 24 November, he was shown using objects favoured by FDR: pince-nez glasses, a cigarette holder and an open convertible.[177]  According to Brands, Roosevelt's "fireside chats" remained significant because he made "an emotional appeal to the US people", saying that he needed their support, thereby making them a "part of his administration", which benefited from this media

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[174] Mark Feldstein, "Watergate Revisited", *American Journalism Review*, August/September 2004, retrieved on 11 December 2008 at <http://www.ajr.org/Article.asp?id=3735>.
[175] (Anon.), "Poll: FDR best modern president", *United Press International,* 2008, retrieved on 11 December 2008 at
<http://www.upi.com/Top_News/2008/02/28/Poll_FDR_best_modern_president/UPI-69301204252671>.
[176] Patrick T. Reardon, "FDR books on Obama's nightstand", *Chicago Tribune,* Chicago, 18 November 2008, retrieved on 11 December 2008 at
<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/politics/obama/chi-FDR-barack-obama-books-1118,0,4563603.story>.
[177] *Time,* New York, vol. 172, no. 21, 24 November 2008, front cover.

strategy.[178]  Certainly Obama's weekly internet addresses might be viewed as a modern-day version of the "fireside chats".  While in 2008, journalists frequently referred to FDR's economic policies to overcome the depression, they did not provide such a strong focus on his military strategies.  This favourable media portrayal of Roosevelt suggested that his wartime communication messages resonated with Americans, even after his death.

**Transforming journalism**

It appears that the accessibility of historical records had influenced the contemporary media's presentation of the Allied leaders and their achievements.  While King succeeded in maintaining a private life away from the media glare during his lifetime, his accomplishments became more controversial after the publication of his diaries.  Since their legacies were preserved carefully by their executors, Churchill and Roosevelt were portrayed as great communicators and role models in several 2008 news outlets.  Neither Churchill nor Roosevelt kept a diary that would become subject to media scrutiny later.  Evidence suggested recent British and US governments did not give a high priority to publicising the military accomplishments of the former leaders of their nations.  In the cited examples of speeches, US Republican Party leaders preferred to invoke the legacy of a conservative British politician – Churchill – rather than to promote Roosevelt and his rival Democratic Party.  Contemporary US media commentators seemed to focus more on FDR's work programs than his wartime strategies.  Recently the British Government has not required teachers to give history lessons about Churchill and twentieth-century events to children in year eight and in lower school levels.  A media survey suggested some British teenagers did not know that Churchill was a real person with a significant role in the recent history of Britain and the world.  While the survey size was limited, it became another news report to indicate that Churchill's legacy was not fully recognised by younger generations.

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[178] Public Broadcasting Service (producer), *The Online NewsHour* (television program – transcript),Washington DC, 27 November 2008, retrieved on 12 December 2008 at <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/white_house/july-dec08/historians_11-27.html>.

Each leader's news management style was the product of the unique political circumstances in his nation as he mastered the expanding mass media to persuade diverse audiences to accept his directions in another global war.  Churchill was the first wartime prime minister to use a combination of movies, recorded radio broadcasts and newspapers as a military strategy.  Benefiting from his extensive journalistic experience, he cultivated friendships with some media owners, who filled ministerial positions and then they tried to develop positive relations with a wide range of reporters.  Yet he was criticised by anti-censorship editors and labour-oriented media managers, who contributed to his 1945 election defeat.  Roosevelt set a series of public relations precedents, to be used by future US presidents: employing a full-time press secretary, "fireside chats", interactive news conferences, war documentary movies, successful mass media censorship and developing informal relationships with the White House correspondents.  Differing from several British media owners' patronage of Churchill, FDR did not enjoy such good friendships with some conservative US press proprietors, nor did his successor, Harry S. Truman, work well with the news executives.  Both FDR and Churchill developed formidable legacies but it seemed partisan politics influenced contemporary perceptions about them.

King adopted a subtler news tone because he needed to balance the competing views of his voters including the pro-conscription English Canadians and the majority of Quebecers, staunchly opposed to a compulsory military draft, although many were voluntary combatants.  His overriding priority of national unity probably precluded opportunities to give rousing, public addresses, akin to the militaristic style of Churchill and Roosevelt, thus earning him a reputation as being a more austere speech maker.  Yet he understood the value of the mass media and when Britain declared war against Germany, he devoted a day to prepare his radio talk, which was the first Canadian speech to have been broadcast to such a large, international audience at the time.  An investigation of King's diaries revealed he voiced an urgent need for a staff journalist to create a more vibrant media image, but this request was denied to him by his political benefactors.  Yet he cultivated friendly, albeit formal, relations with the Ottawa press corps and was the nation's first leader to appear in movies to inspire his multicultural constituency to support

the war.  Primary sources, such as King's diaries and FDR's media transcripts, showed Australia was a prominent story for international correspondents. Furthermore, this elite, close-knit circle of English-speaking leaders respected the Australian prime minister's communication skills.  Their media conferences were not as frequent as Curtin's twice-daily confidential briefings.  To gauge the unique qualities of Curtin's journalism associations within the Allied 1940s milieu, the next chapter will delve more deeply into the operations, processes, reforms, innovations, trends and developments of Australian newsrooms in the wartime era.  As this thesis will argue, Curtin stood alone among the Allied leaders in his ability to develop relationships of trust with journalists from opposite sides of the political spectrum. He won journalists' confidence across Australia, as well as when he visited the US, London and Ottawa.

## Chapter 5

## Traditions and innovations in Australian journalism: John Curtin and the Canberra Parliamentary Press Gallery, 1941-1945

So far this thesis, particularly from Chapters 2 to 4, has examined the concepts underlying journalists' relationships with wartime liberal democratic governments. It has been argued in Chapter 3 that close government-media interactions shaped the development of Australian journalism from the nineteenth century to World War II. As discussed in Chapter 4, the British, Canadian and United States leaders were former newspaper journalists, who cultivated press relationships and developed the use of the relatively new media of radio and newsreels from 1941 to 1945. As members of an elite society, Churchill, Mackenzie King and Roosevelt projected a somewhat patrician, yet reassuring, image in the media. They respected Curtin's communication skills that he had developed as an editor in labour-oriented newsrooms and as a fiery orator at town halls, beachside gatherings and street corner platforms. During the wartime era, the public sphere changed significantly and the modern media contained the visual, audio and press elements that allowed Curtin to communicate adeptly to mass audiences.

This chapter investigates the Australian journalism reforms, trends, innovations and developments that helped Curtin to develop positive relationships with the Canberra Parliamentary Press Gallery. Following the theories of Ericson et al, journalists have cooperated with political leaders to "visualise deviance" and campaign for "the need for more cooperation, repair, alteration, improvement, and resources".[1] As this chapter will assert, news correspondents assisted Curtin's aims to visualise deviance, predominantly in the form of Axis enemies, and enlist public support for defeating foreign foes. He actively developed the governmental function

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[1] Richard V. Ericson, Patricia M. Baranek and Janet B. L. Chan, *Visualizing Deviance: A Study of News Organizations* [hereafter *Visualizing deviance*], Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1987, p. 350.

of news by involving reporters in major decisions and expanded the democratic
scope of the public sphere by making extensive use of radio broadcasts and
newsreels to appeal directly to mass audiences, whom he regarded, in Hartley's
terms, as "active citizens of the media".[2]  Applying a news making approach of
journalism as a product of "institutional demands and processes",[3] this chapter will
investigate the day-to-day media routines that provided opportunities for Curtin to
generate favourable news about his foreign policies.

As more news correspondents reported on robust parliamentary debates in
Canberra (with a population of 13,000 people in 1941), the nation's young press
gallery was developing into a pivotal, global news centre.[4]  By 1939 Australia was
ranked seventh among the world's nations in teledensity, a measurement of
economic development including "voice grade" telephone lines, which were
significantly better than those of the United Kingdom and most of continental
Europe.[5]  As the Pacific war escalated, Australia became the command base for
General MacArthur, hosted a visit from Eleanor Roosevelt and was an increasingly
important destination for Allied news correspondents.[6]  While Australia's opposing
federal politicians exchanged heated remarks as they sat across from one another on
green leather benches, assembled on the "jarrah parquet floors" in the House of
Representatives,[7] the journalists needed to adjust to "sparsely furnished", "gruelling"
and "primitive" conditions in the Canberra Parliament House.  Officially inaugurated
by the Duke and Duchess of York in May 1927, the building was meant to be only
temporary after the transfer of the Australian Parliament from Melbourne to

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[2] John Hartley, *Popular Reality: Journalism, Modernity, Popular Culture* [hereafter *Popular
reality*], Arnold, London and New York, 1996, pp. 71, 72, 234.

[3] Rodney Tiffen, *News & Power* [hereafter *News*], Allen & Unwin, Sydney, Wellington,
London and Boston, 1989, p. 3.

[4] Don Whitington, *Strive to be Fair: An Unfinished Biography* [hereafter *Strive to be fair*],
Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1977, p. 68.

[5] Bruce Arnold, "Australasian Telecommunications: Beginnings [History]", *Caslon
Analytics*, Braddon, 2005, retrieved on 19 June 2009 at
<http://www.caslon.com.au/austelecomsprofile1.htm>.

[6] J.A. Alexander, "Papers 1833–1957", [hereafter "Papers"], National Library of Australia
[hereafter NLA], Manuscript Collections, Canberra, NLA MS acc. no. 2389, 17 November
1941, transcript np; R.M. Younger, *Keith Murdoch: Founder of a media empire* [hereafter
*Keith Murdoch*], HarperCollins*Publishers*, Pymble, 2003, p. 262.

[7] (Anon.), "The Great Game", *Time*, New York, John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library
[hereafter JCPML], Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01222/10, 5 July 1943, p. 5.

Canberra.  At first, newspaper representatives were accommodated in 12 small rooms
so bare that staff members helped to move chairs and tables into the press offices as
the bells announced the first sitting of parliament in September 1927.[8]  They watched
the parliamentary chamber proceedings from platforms slightly elevated to allow
them to report the speakers' rhetoric and gestures.  In the early 1930s, the permanent
press corps numbered only six or seven people, yet the group could expand to 23
members during parliamentary sessions.  Most members represented the Sydney and
Melbourne newspapers, but the Australian United Press agency writers sent stories to
other metropolitan and regional publications.  Back then, "the general tone of
political journalism was provincial, even parochial", Lloyd wrote.[9]  Before war
necessitated the expansion of commonwealth powers, state political reports were
more prominent than federal parliamentary coverage in city newspapers, as discussed
in Chapter 3.  As *The Daily Telegraph* Canberra bureau head, Don Whitington,
affirmed: "The war, and a Labor Government, were to bring Canberra and the
Federal Parliament to an eminence and importance they never lost again".[10]


Tenured newspaper bureau chiefs were regarded as part of a select elite,[11]
often socialising at the Hotel Canberra, which Whitington light-heartedly described
as the city's "only quality hotel" and "the hub of the Australian universe", when
many conservative parliamentarians stayed there during Menzies' prime ministership
in early 1941.[12]  Journalists visited the hotel lounge and deliberately "overheard" the
politicians' private conservations.[13]  Whitington emphasised the honesty of most
parliamentarians: "Federal politics was not and is not generally corrupt.  There is too
much at stake for members to risk their careers".[14]  Later the press frequented the
cheaper, non-licensed Hotel Kurrajong because Curtin regularly dined there as the
prime minister and became well-known for his dark suits, plain ties and stiff, white

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[8] C.J. Lloyd, *Parliament And The Press: The Federal Parliamentary Press Gallery 1901-88*
[hereafter *Parliament and the press*], Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1988, p. 78.
[9] Lloyd, *Parliament and the press*, pp. 73, 83, 80.
[10] Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, p. 67.
[11] Lloyd, *Parliament and the press*, p. 85.
[12] Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, p. 68.
[13] Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, p. 69.
[14] Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, p. 71.

collars, a symbol of support for his clothes rationing policies.[15]  Lloyd wrote the senior journalists held "prized jobs" because of their relatively high salaries and membership in social and sporting clubs, where they mingled with top-level public servants and diplomats.[16]  Yet *The Herald's* Joseph Alexander said the working "conditions left a lot to be desired" because reporters lacked research resources and recreational outlets during their lengthy news rounds,[17] which could extend to "all-nighters".[18]  As he recalled:

> There were no reading room facilities in the generally accepted sense, though one could read the interstate newspapers standing up in the [parliamentary] Library vestibule.  There were no [lending] library services for those who accepted this deprivation in a city with no public library.  I was not one of those.  There were no recreation facilities for men working at Parliament House for very long stretches.  Arrangements for meals were deplorable.[19]

Although they belonged to a select circle in Canberra, Alexander said the prime ministers before Curtin did not treat them with respect.

From the mid-1930s to 1940, the reporters met the prime minister for formal press conferences, as discussed in Chapter 3;[20] however, crucial insiders' information was often withheld from them because national leaders, such as Lyons and Menzies, preferred to communicate directly with press proprietors.  After his 1934 election victory, Lyons often travelled from Canberra to Melbourne to meet Murdoch in his *Herald* office.[21]  Alexander lamented the lack of open-ended, interactive press conferences at this time because they were "like angel's visits, few and far between".  He explained that Lyons and Menzies tried to avoid direct,

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[15] (Anon.), "Clothes would not worry Curtin", *The Sunday Sun,* Sydney, 14 June 1942, retrieved on 19 June 2009 at
<http://john.curtin.edu.au/behindthescenes/pms/text/curtin.html>; JCPML, "John Curtin: Fairest & Best: Man on the Tram", Bentley, 2006, retrieved on 5 August 2010 at
<http://john.curtin.edu.au/jcexhibition/index.html>; Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, p. 68.
[16] Lloyd, *Parliament and the press*, p. 85.
[17] Joseph A. Alexander, interviewed by Mel Pratt [hereafter "Alexander interview"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00551, 2 March 1971, transcript np.
[18] Whitington, *Strive to be fair,* p. 78.
[19] Alexander, "Alexander interview".
[20] Irvine Douglas, interviewed by Mel Pratt [hereafter "Douglas interview"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01061/1, 15-19 June 1972, transcript np; Lloyd, *Parliament and the press*, p. 125.
[21] Lloyd, *Parliament and the press*, p. 109.

informative, one-to-one talks with a press gallery member.  This type of
communication, "where it existed at all at top level, had been through social
functions, official dinners, private and club luncheons".  Alexander recalled that:

> Before Mr Curtin's time – for instance [sic], a Prime Minister would send a
> special man, one of his personal cronies, down to Melbourne to talk with the
> editors, and this was a very unsatisfactory way of doing things, both for the
> press and the Prime Minister – but Mr Curtin had no time or inclination for
> this method of doing business in wartime.[22]

Curtin's predecessors appeared to favour certain, selected newspaper representatives
while overlooking other press gallery correspondents.


In October 1941, the Canberra correspondents welcomed Curtin's innovative,
relaxed and open approach to news media relations.  Their morale and working lives
improved "immeasurably",[23] but not by materialistic measurements.  In the same
manner as other Canberra residents, they supported the hardships of wartime
rationing,[24] electricity bans and holiday cancellations.[25]  Yet they were heartened by
Curtin's respectful, hospitable treatment.  He created unique, off-the-record, twice-
daily news conferences, where he shared confidential war secrets with ten or 12
senior press gallery journalists, expecting them to convey the information to their
employers, whose business title was either "the managing editor", "editor-in-chief"
or "chief editorial executive".[26]  His frequent conferences were held partly to alert
journalists and editors to sensitive military manoeuvres that might be jeopardised if
the information was publicised.[27]  Murdoch received notes of the meetings, written
by Harold Cox of *The Sun News-Pictorial*.[28]  Cox's colleague, Frederick Thomas
Smith of the Australian United Press, preserved his conference notes, as stated in

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[22] Alexander, "Alexander interview".

[23] A. Alexander, "Alexander interview".

[24] Alexander wrote in his diary: "Curtin is going in for rationing of civilian consumption to
provide more funds, labour and materials for war".  Alexander, "Papers", 17 October 1941.

[25] Alexander privately noted of the Curtin Government's policy of "blackouts to be enforced
and holidays to be abolished ... thank God it is being done at last".  Alexander, "Papers", 11
December 1941.

[26] Alexander, "Alexander interview"; Lloyd, *Parliament and the press*, p.131; Donald
Kilgour Rodgers, interviewed by Mel Pratt [hereafter "Rodgers interview"], JCPML,
Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00497, 29 April 1971, transcript np.

[27] Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, p. 77.

[28] Harold Cox, "Typescript reports, 1944-1964" [hereafter "Typescript reports"], NLA,
Manuscript Collections, Canberra, NLA MS acc. no. 4554, 1944-1964, transcript np.

Chapter 3.[29]  As Alexander explained, Curtin "was a journalist himself and he trusted
journalists".  Alexander added this new style of prime ministerial meetings:

> … was an inward flow of ideas of great value to the government from men
> trained in the judgment of public opinion, and an outward flow from the
> government to these men of confidential war information of the highest
> importance.  At one stroke, Curtin created a two-way pipeline of information
> which he regarded as of vital importance in the conduct of the war.[30]

Although the journalists still worked extremely long hours and endured material
deprivations, Curtin elevated the Canberra press gallery to a more prestigious
position by involving them in top-secret decision making.

Whitington and his colleagues also credited Curtin as developing more
successful media relations than any other prime minister during the decades they
spent in the news profession.  Whitington wrote in his 1977 autobiography: "Curtin
had more faith in the integrity of the senior journalists at Canberra than any Prime
Minister since, and probably any of his predecessors."[31]  In his oral history in the
early 1970s, a wartime correspondent of *The Sun News-Pictorial*, Frank
Chamberlain, recalled Curtin "used to give us more information in one hour than we
get nowadays from political leaders in a week or even a month".[32]  Furthermore,
Irvine Douglas – a 1940s editor who had been Lyons' publicity officer and private
secretary – declared: "I think that history will probably show that Curtin was one of
the greatest, if not the greatest, Australian Prime Minister – that remains to be
seen."[33]  Moreover, a Canberra reporter for *The Daily Telegraph* in the early 1940s,
Edgar Holt, said Curtin "used his press conference more adroitly than any [other]
political leader I've known".[34]  Throughout his terms, Curtin kept discussing top-
secret news in twice-daily interviews when he was based in his Canberra suite, where
he would relax in his swivel chair, lean back and enjoy "thinking out loud", as he

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[29] Clem Lloyd and Richard Hall (eds), *Backroom Briefings: John Curtin's war* [hereafter
*Backroom briefings*], NLA, Canberra, 1997.
[30] Alexander, "Alexander interview".
[31] Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, p. 77.
[32] Frank Chamberlain, interviewed by Mel Pratt [hereafter "Chamberlain interview"],
JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00552, August 1972-January 1973, transcript np.
[33] Douglas, "Douglas interview".
[34] Edgar George Holt, interviewed by Mel Pratt [hereafter "Holt interview"], JCPML,
Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01059, 23 May 1978, transcript np.

explained.  Through these interviews, the select band of correspondents learned more
about the secret diplomatic and military machinations behind the battle scenes than
many MPs outside of the War Cabinet and Advisory War Council.[35]  His press
secretary, Don Rodgers, declared in a 1971 oral history interview: "I can say without
fear of contradiction that no Prime Minister ever gave as many news conferences as
Curtin did, before or since".[36]

It seemed that no other Allied leader shared confidences to such an extent as
did Curtin.  As mass audiences demanded war news, Curtin often privately discussed
policies with senior journalists before announcing his initiatives publicly.  The
evidence indicates that Canberra correspondents appreciated their new prestigious
positions as "information brokers"[37] and members of a "knowledge class".[38]
Therefore, they abided by the institutionalised censorship and did not breach their
verbal confidentiality agreements.  Despite the strictures of censorship, the war
created the suitable circumstances for Curtin to instigate this new style of prime
ministerial media conference.

**Striving to advance Australian journalism**

The war led to unprecedented social, professional and demographic changes within
the press gallery that benefited Curtin's relationships with journalists.  At the
beginning of the war, the Menzies government dealt "a notable humiliation" to the
AJA by excluding newspaper writers from the "reserved status" while other
occupations, including photographers and artists, received exemptions from military
service.  After the AJA's federal executive lodged an official complaint, the

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[35] Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, p. 77.
[36] Rodgers, "Rodgers interview".
[37] Ericson, Baranek and Chan, *Visualizing deviance*, p. 16; Stephen Brent Mickler,
Visualising Aboriginality: Image Campaigns and News Routines in the Western Australian
Media [hereafter Visualising Aboriginality], PhD thesis, Murdoch University, Murdoch,
1996, pp. 20-21.
[38] John Frow, *Cultural Studies & Cultural Value*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1995;
Hartley, *Popular reality,* p. 241; Andrew Milner, *Literature, culture and society*, Routledge,
London and New York, 2004, pp. 37-41; Joe Moran, *Interdisciplinarity*, Routledge, London
and New York, 2002, pp. 75-81.

government extended the reserved list to journalists more than 30 years old.[39]  The
conservative officials' initially harsh treatment of the senior writers might have
contributed to their positive attitude towards Curtin, when he became the new Labor
prime minister.  Moreover in 1942, the Curtin government announced the ABC
would be a protected undertaking and radio employees would not need to fight in
overseas battles.[40]  Military policies, voluntary enlistments and newsprint rationing
had led to downsizing within the entire media profession and in mid-1943, some
journalist staffs had been diminished by 60 per cent of their pre-war strength.[41]  The
federal press gallery, however, continued to expand to report on war-related news.
An official photograph of the 1945 Press Gallery featured 31 male and three female
news representatives as well as one female secretary.  The group had increased since
the 1933 press gallery with 21 male reporters, who predominantly represented
Melbourne and Sydney newspapers.[42]  The 1945 media corps photograph included
three ABC reporters and one Australian Associated Press (AAP) correspondent;
these organisations were relatively new to the gallery.[43]  This modernised media
public sphere provided more opportunities for Curtin to explain his foreign policies
to Australian and international audiences.


        Throughout the war, Curtin maintained a strong relationship with the AJA.
As discussed in Chapter 1, he had been an AJA district president, who had arranged
the nation's first university extension classes for journalists, held in 1919.[44]  As the
prime minister, he maintained identification with the union by wearing his AJA
badge on his coat.[45]  Thus the Federal Government and the labour movement

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[39] Clem Lloyd, *Profession: Journalist* [hereafter *Journalist*], Hale & Iremonger, Sydney,
1985, pp. 201-202.
[40] K.S. Inglis, *This is the ABC: The Australian Broadcasting Commission 1932-1983*
[hereafter *ABC*], Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1983, p. 104.
[41] Lloyd, *Journalist*, p. 208.
[42] Lloyd, *Parliament and the press,* page facing 88.
[43] Murdoch founded the AAP in 1935.  Prime Minister Lyons insisted the ABC employ the
first federal political journalist in 1939 to counter the Murdoch newspapers' negative news
about him.  See Lloyd, *Parliament and the press,* p. 243; Neville Petersen, *News Not Views:
The ABC, the Press, & Politics 1932-1947* [hereafter *News not views*], Hale & Iremonger,
Sydney, 1993, p. 92; The Herald & Weekly Times, *Keith Murdoch: Journalist* [hereafter
*Murdoch*], The Herald & Weekly Times Ltd., Melbourne, 1952, p. 31.
[44] Lloyd, *Journalist,* pp. 165-167.
[45] Rodgers, "Rodgers interview"; Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, p. 77.

welcomed the first AJA code of ethics, established in 1944, because this would assist
journalism union members to resist employers' demands to transgress "normal rules
of decent behaviour".[46]   Some non-Labor politicians, however, criticised the code as
"a rejection of the freedom of the press" and many newspaper proprietors did not
deem it to be necessary because they said that "their publications already accorded
with the highest ethical standards".[47]   The code comprised eight points including the
requirement to "report and interpret news with scrupulous accuracy" and the need for
a journalist to "respect all confidences received by him in the course of his calling".[48]
These progressive AJA initiatives in the areas of education and ethics, backed by
Curtin, did not result in an immediate transformation in the journalism profession.
Many wartime press gallery reporters had not undertaken a tertiary education.  The
code of ethics alone was not adequate to protect news reporters' rights if they needed
to defend themselves in a court of law.  Yet these fledgling initiatives demonstrated
Curtin's leadership and support for reforms to improve journalism standards.[49]

**Day-to-day media innovations**

News gathering was conducted at a faster pace for the press gallery because of
Curtin's personal commitment to releasing timely information.  He often made
important announcements on the ABC radio first, instead of relying on the next day's
press reports.[50]  Don Whitington recalled the ten or 12 selected correspondents began
firing questions at the prime minister's first daily press conference at about noon,
which suited the deadlines of evening papers such as *The Herald.*  Then Curtin
would candidly talk with journalists at the second daily conference at about 5pm or
6pm, which provided opportunities for the next morning's press to write fresh stories

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[46] Lloyd, *Journalist,* p. 229.

[47] Lloyd, *Journalist,* p. 229.

[48] Lloyd, *Journalist,* p. 208.  Also see Henry Mayer, *The Press in Australia* [hereafter *The press*], Lansdowne Press, Melbourne, 1968, p. 203.

[49] Lloyd, *Journalist,* p. 230.  Also in memoirs and oral histories, journalists discussed their educational backgrounds.  See Chamberlain, "Chamberlain interview"; Douglas, "Douglas interview"; Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, p. 24.

[50] (Anon.), "A Lesson To Be Learnt", *The Sun*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks compiled by the Prime Minister's office* [hereafter *Scrapbooks*]*,* no. 2, JCPML acc. no. 00297/2, 20 March 1942.

to outdo their evening competitors.[51]  The metropolitan printing presses produced a
series of different editions for a single daily newspaper, with the final versions of *The
Daily Telegraph* and other morning press "going to bed" by 3am or 4am.[52]  Due to
Curtin's accessibility, most Canberra news staffs were producing a page of "copy" or
articles a day for their papers, overturning the pre-eminence of state politics.[53]  The
ABC's first federal correspondent, Warren Denning, arrived in the press gallery in
1939.  "Mini-bulletins" of federal news, lasting 30 to 40 seconds, became a regular
feature in the ABC's relayed overseas reports by August 1941.[54]  The station's
Canberra office increased to 13 staff members in 1942.  They expanded their news
services to produce seven national broadcasts a day.[55]  These ABC journalists
prepared copy until the last bulletin at 11.20pm; then worked through the night to
update stories for the first morning report at 6.25am.[56]  At this time, Australia's only
all-night station was Melbourne 3AK, but it was not licensed for daytime broadcasts.
ABC updates were relayed by many commercial stations.[57]  When Curtin was
temporarily unavailable, the correspondents checked facts with Rodgers, the first
Australian prime ministerial full-time press secretary.[58]  While the press gallery
reluctantly accepted a growing volume of "handouts" or media releases, distributed
to their mail boxes due to wartime pressures and overworked ministers, they
maintained frequent personal contact with Curtin.[59]


Although they had been confined in Parliament House "for very long
stretches" without "recreation facilities", the Canberra press gallery entered a new
"exciting era" when Curtin initiated his conferences, providing the correspondents
with many travel opportunities and unprecedented insights into secret government

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[51] Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, p. 78.
[52] Lloyd, *Parliament and the press,* p. 118; Mayer, *The press*, pp. 102-104; Whitington,
*Strive to be fair*, p. 55.
[53] Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, pp. 62, 67, 97.
[54] Petersen, *News not views*, pp. 92, 124.
[55] Lloyd, *Parliament and the press,* p. 138.
[56] Lloyd, *Parliament and the press,* p. 146.
[57] Petersen, *News not views,* p. 144.
[58] For example, Joseph Alexander communicated with Don Rodgers during the Pearl
Harbour crisis in early October 1941, discussed in Chapter 6.  Alexander, "Papers", 5 and 8
December 1941.
[59] Lloyd, *Parliament and the press,* p. 153; Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, p. 67.

debates.[60]  The members of "Curtin's Circus" accompanied him to Melbourne for

regular meetings of the Advisory War Council, Australia's main decision-making

body on the conduct of the global conflict.[61]  The war councillors conferred at least

fortnightly, sometimes more often; Curtin and the "Circus" frequently departed from

Canberra on Sunday night to Melbourne, making a return trip at the end of the week.

Trains were used because aircraft was needed for the armed services.  The "press

entourage" was given special security passes to enter the Victoria Barracks in

Melbourne,[62] headquarters of the Advisory War Council, War Cabinet and Defence

Secretariat.[63]  By accompanying Curtin on these train journeys, the news

correspondents knew about the bombing raid on Pearl Harbour long before it was

revealed to the public.[64]  Curtin's journalism strategies during this 1941 crisis will be

discussed in Chapter 6.  Three years later, he supported one of the few Australian

Government-sponsored press missions to travel overseas, an infrequent occurrence at

the time.  At the Canadian Government's invitation, he selected three journalists to

cover the war effort in that part of the Allied world.  While he first chose Ross

Gollan of *The Sydney Morning Herald,* the newspaper's employers objected because

they wanted to make the appointment.  After Gollan's withdrawal, Whitington was

successfully nominated to represent *The Daily Telegraph* and other morning

newspapers.  Whitington was joined by Smith of the Australian United Press and

Allen Dawes from *The Herald,* standing for the evening press.[65]  When Curtin held

stirring media conferences in Britain, Canada and the US between April and June

1944, the main Australian newspapers saved money by not sending their federal

roundsmen and women; instead they published positive reports written by foreign

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[60] Alexander, "Alexander interview".

[61] Heather Campbell, "Doing the best for the country: War Cabinet and Advisory War
Council", JCPML, Bentley, 2004, retrieved on 19 June 2009 at
<http://john.curtin.edu.au/behindthescenes/cabinet/index.html>; Whitington, *Strive to be
fair*, p. 78.

[62] Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, p. 78.

[63] Australian Government Department of Defence, "History of Victoria Barracks,"
Southbank, 2008, retrieved on 15 June 2009 at
<http://www.defence.gov.au/ARMY/VBMSGTMESS/History.asp>.

[64] Alexander, "Alexander interview".

[65] Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, p. 92.

correspondents.[66]  His overseas media interactions will be examined in Chapter 8.

Certainly his warm welcome of Canberra's roving reporters provided them with

invaluable "scoops" about fresh developments in the theatres of war.


Curtin led technological innovations that transformed the way that an

Australia prime minister communicated with global media audiences, as well as

improving the delivery, breadth and depth of Australian war news coverage.  Some

of his groundbreaking media strategies were discussed in Chapter 3 and included his

direct radio broadcast from Canberra to North American audiences.[67]  His radio talks

will be examined in greater depth in Chapter 6.  In October 1941, he had announced

a government policy "to stimulate better understanding between the American and

the Australian peoples", which would allow for freer and faster international

communications.  The new initiatives included a powerful short wave transmitting

station to carry Australian radio broadcasts to US listeners.[68]  Shortwave

broadcasting was inaugurated by Menzies on 20 December 1939, with messages sent

in four languages to northern Australia, New Guinea and elsewhere in the Pacific to

improve Allied morale.  By mid-1943, some 16 daily shortwave broadcasts were

produced in seven languages, directed at Japanese-occupied countries, the US and

the South Pacific.[69]  Also Curtin capitalised on a cheaper rate of transmitting

Australian news telegrams to the US press.  At the beginning of the war, prices were

slashed from seven-and-a-half pennies per word to only a penny for one word.[70]  As

a result, Curtin said in October 1941 that the Department of Information (DOI) was

aiming to induce more US correspondents to report on the nation.  Furthermore, local

filmmakers were encouraged to produce "Australian shorts" to release to

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[66] The overseas news coverage included: (Anon.), "Australia Has British Mandate In The
Pacific", *The Canberra Times*, Canberra, 9 May 1944, p. 2; (Anon.), "Praise for Mr. Curtin",
*The Age*, Melbourne, 12 May 1944; (Anon.), "Substantial British Aid For Australia", *The
Sun*, Sydney, 25 May 1944.  The latter two articles were cited in *Scrapbooks,* no. 4, JCPML
acc. no. 00297/4, May 1944.

[67] (Anon.), "Dr Evatt's Mission To U.S.A.", *The Canberra Times,* Canberra, 16 March 1942,
p. 1; National and Film Sound Archive, "John Joseph Curtin" [hereafter "Curtin"], Acton,
2008, retrieved on 20 June 2009 at
<http://www.nfsa.gov.au/the_collection/collection_spotlights/apms/curtin.html>.

[68] (Anon.), "Publicity: Relations With America: Australia Expands" [hereafter "Publicity"],
*The Canberra Times*, Canberra, 31 October 1941, p. 4.

[69] Inglis, *ABC*, pp. 79, 97.

[70] (Anon.), "Publicity", p. 4; The Herald & Weekly Times, *Murdoch*, p. 31.

international movie bureaus; this new media strategy included the creation of the
National Films Laboratory to process film, along with the transfer of the Australian
National Publicity Association to New York.[71]  Such technological advancements
attracted visiting correspondents from high-quality US newspapers such as *The New
York Times*[72] and *The Christian Science Monitor*,[73] providing opportunities to swap
valuable information with the Canberra press gallery.  Yet there was much room for
improvement in Australian and other Allied telegraph carriers, as Curtin said at the
opening of the international Telegraph Conference, held in Canberra on 16
December 1942.  He explained government traffic had increased to "relatively
astronomical proportions", resulting in a "somewhat inferior" service for private
users.  Press traffic over the empire system had increased from 25 million words in
1928 to 92 million words in 1942.[74]  By this time press gallery reporters were
adjusting to their increasingly globalised profession.

Recent telecommunications inventions, installed before the war, equipped the
Canberra correspondents to send copy more speedily to editors.  Before the
industry's financial troubles, The Herald & Weekly Times group and the Fairfax
family's *Sydney Morning Herald* were relocated to large, new premises with fast
electric presses in the 1920s.[75]  Even during the economic depression, the most
powerful proprietors were investing in telecommunications.  At *The Herald*,
Murdoch pioneered Australian picturegram services in 1933; the next year, he
published the first photograph sent by overseas radio networks to Australia.  His
press headquarters in Flinders Street, Melbourne, were installed with the nation's
first printing machinery that could produce 50,000 newspaper copies an hour in
1934.[76]  Although wartime restrictions on newsprint imports significantly reduced
newspaper sizes, a Tasmanian milling project began operating in 1940 to produce
local paper.  The profitable Australian Newsprint Mills were jointly owned by the

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[71] (Anon.), "Publicity", p. 4.
[72] Alexander, "Papers", 17 November 1941.
[73] Younger, *Keith Murdoch*, p. 262.
[74] (Anon.), "Faster Cable Service: Conference Hopes to Aid Press", *Sydney Morning Herald*,
Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 3, JCPML acc. no. 00297/3, 16 December 1942.
[75] Sybil Nolan, "Half a Century of Obscurity: The Age, 1908-64" [hereafter "The Age"],
*ejournalist*, vol. 1, no. 2, 2001, p. 4.
[76] The Herald & Weekly Times, *Murdoch*, p. 11.

Herald & Weekly Times and John Fairfax & Sons.  Although the plant at Boyer used
200 square miles of forest country, the joint venture provided "some relief", helping
to reduce reliance on overseas paper.[77]  Furthermore bakelite telephones, with their
"trend-setting" design, improved microphones and metal rotary dials, were
introduced in the press gallery in the early 1930s to improve conversational speech
quality and news-gathering capacities.[78]  Due to the rapidly rising efficiency of press
operations, news organisations were prepared to deliver the latest war reports from
home and abroad.

Lloyd has detailed a number of ways that the press gallery used a wide range
of the latest telecommunications equipment to report the news as a result of the
government-sponsored innovations, publishers' investments and the wartime demand
for information.  Journalists dictated urgent stories to telephone operators in
newspaper headquarters.  For example, evening paper correspondents "phoned
stories" immediately after a newsworthy, afternoon "question time" in the
parliament.[79]  Whitington recalled that when he was reporting on a riot by bored AIF
troops in Brisbane in 1940, he "rushed into the post office" several times to write and
"dash off" a series of "urgent telegrams" for *The Daily Telegraph.*[80]  In Canberra,
press gallery journalists dispatched their news cables by parliamentary pneumatic
tubes to be sent to the post office.[81]  ABC's Canberra reporters telegraphed small
news items to other state studios.[82]  To save money, *The Herald* correspondents
drove hastily to the Canberra railway station to lodge their stories inside the last daily
train leaving for Melbourne, which departed at 9pm.[83]  Late in the war, Australian
reporters began to benefit from the new development of teleprinter networks, another
form of instantaneous communication that began in Germany in 1932 and was

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[77] W. Sprague Holden, *Australia Goes To Press* [hereafter *Press*], Greenwood Press,
Westport, 1961, pp. 24-25; Lloyd, *Journalist,* p. 206.
[78] Lloyd, *Parliament and the press,* p. 86; K. V. Tahvanainen, "The innovative bakelite
telephone", The History of Ericsson: Centre for Business History, Stockholm, 2007,
retrieved on 14 June 2009 at
<http://www.ericssonhistory.com/templates/Ericsson/Article.aspx?id=2095&ArticleID=1366
&CatID=360&epslanguage=EN>.
[79] Lloyd, *Parliament and the press,* p. 86.
[80] Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, p. 65.
[81] Lloyd, *Parliament and the press*, p. 85.
[82] Petersen, *News not views*, p. 123.
[83] Lloyd, *Parliament and the press*, p. 86.

limited to only a few countries before the global conflict.[84]  Thus the improved

technological transmission of news enabled greater speed in dispatching short

bulletins and emphasised the need for brevity.


After sub-editors received the journalists' reports, they ensured that the news

conformed to two types of vetting systems: the media organisation's internal

censorship and the government practice of "blue-pencilling".  With regard to the

former convention, the news managers developed editorial policies and unwritten

guidelines for staff members about which news they should emphasise and minimise.

The chief of staff (the "Cos"), sub-editors ("subs"), chief sub-editor and managing

editor often altered newspaper copy to make it harmonise with the organisation's

political stance.  For example, Whitington recalled that after reporting the 1940

election results for *The Courier-Mail*, the editor, Jack Williams, rewrote the "intro"

and "proof page" to emphasise Menzies' victory and try to downplay the ALP's net

gain of four parliamentary seats.[85]  At *The Herald*, Murdoch was directly involved in

two daily editorial conferences to influence news coverage.  During the first meeting

at 8.30am, he brought "his personal views of display, to give color [sic] and

emphasis to the news".[86]  A leader-writer (editorial columnist) and cartoonist

attended the second discussion:

> Often Murdoch would be so clear in his own mind about the subject of the
>
> leader [editorial] that his outline of its contents could be taken down in
>
> shorthand by the leader-writer and used almost verbatim.[87]

For an evening paper like *The Herald*, the editorial board made extensive changes for

the purpose of "popularization", making news more appealing to general readers, as

well as updating each edition.  Sub-editors created the headlines, crossheads, kickers,

photo captions and other layout designs.[88]  *The Daily Telegraph* employed an

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[84] Anton A. Huurdeman, *The Worldwide History of Telecommunications*, John Wiley &
Sons, Hoboken, 2003, p. 300; Lloyd, *Parliament and the press*, p. 86.
[85] David Black, "Curtin As An Election Leader", JCPML, Bentley, 2008, retrieved on 20
June 2009 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/electionleader/index.html>; Whitington, *Strive to be
fair*, pp. 63-64.
[86] The Herald & Weekly Times, *Murdoch*, p. 19.
[87] The Herald & Weekly Times, *Murdoch*, p. 20.
[88] Holden, *Press*, p. 271; Mayer, *The press*, pp. 102-104.

interpreter and translator to monitor closely foreign language broadcasts.[89]  This
analysis of newspaper editing processes suggested that the press owners' blatant
manipulation of public opinion had become an accepted routine before Curtin's
prime ministership.

Although Curtin's confidential briefings made journalism "exciting" for press
gallery correspondents,[90] the newsrooms were often dreary for the sub-editors,
responsible for submitting potentially controversial copy to censors.[91]  One of *The
Age* journalists, Greg Taylor, described conditions in 1949*:*

> In the reporters' room there was just one typewriter, the lighting was poor,
> and of course there was no proper heating or cooling.  There wasn't much
> furniture either, because the sub-editorial staff had used it to feed the fire
> during the war years when there were restrictions on kerosene for heating.[92]

This scene was probably comparable with the offices of some other city dailies.[93]
Finally after the arduous editing process, the copy was set, page one was made up
and ready to "go to stereo", the final stage before printing.[94]  Press organisations still
depended on skilled workers for the production process; they had not yet installed
labour-reducing, automatic, printing and copy handling systems.[95]  After the daily
vetting system, "newsboys" contributed to this construction of the news by shouting
the headlines to alert pedestrians and rushing into a factory to announce a "late
breaking" war development to workers.[96]

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[89] Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, pp. 58-59.
[90] Alexander, "Alexander interview".
[91] Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, pp. 66-67.
[92] Cited in Nolan, "The Age", p. 3.
[93] Nolan, "The Age", p. 3.
[94] Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, p. 64.
[95] Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, p. 101.
[96] A scene of a newsboy inside a factory was shown in a 1943 Australian newsreel, *South-west Pacific*.  Ken G. Hall (director and producer), *South-west Pacific* (newsreel) [hereafter *South-west Pacific*], Cinesound Productions, Australia, 1943.

**Newsroom protests against censorship**

During the war, it became a "normal procedure" for sub-editors to decide when to send sensitive articles to censors.[97]  According to Edgar Holt of *The Daily Telegraph*, the press accepted "a voluntary censorship" during most of the war.  Holt explained, "if one wrote an article that involved [military] security, it was automatically sent to the censors and they either O.K.'d [sic] it or made cuts or approved [it]".[98]  Yet as discussed in Chapter 3, during the Nazi offensives from 1939 to 1941, newspaper owners sometimes expressed their dismay over harsh government regulations.  For example, many press owners strenuously objected to Menzies' appointment of Murdoch as the director-general of information in June 1940, leading to his resignation after six months;[99] also the Fairfax group published a *Sydney Morning Herald* editorial to criticise perceived inequities in the conservative government's application of newsprint rationing rules.[100]  Two months after he became the prime minister, Curtin transferred the chief publicity censor, Edmund Bonney, who had been *The Argus* editor, from Victoria to Canberra.[101]  Alexander's family invited Bonney to stay at their house during Christmas 1941, indicating that he enjoyed a friendship with the chief censor.[102]  During the first years of Curtin's prime ministership, journalists upheld censorship rules because they wanted his confidential briefings to continue and they would try not to jeopardise military security, when Japanese forces were advancing towards Australia.  Whitington wrote: "It must been only the respect [that] working journalists had for Curtin, and the enormity of breaching the confidence he had reposed in them, that

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[97] Holt, "Holt interview"; Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, p. 66.

[98] Holt, "Holt interview".

[99] Bridget Griffen-Foley, "Political opinion polling and the professionalization of public relations: Keith Murdoch, Robert Menzies, and the Liberal Party of Australia" [hereafter "Political opinion polling"], *Australian Journalism Review,* vol. 24, no. 1, 2002, p. 43; Geoffrey Serle, "Murdoch, Sir Keith Arthur (1885 – 1952)", *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, vol. 10, 1986, pp. 622-627, retrieved on 18 May 2009 at <http://adbonline.anu.edu.au/biogs/A100610b.htm>.

[100] (Anon.), "Pruning Non-Essentials", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Sydney, 19 February 1941, p. 10.

[101] John Hilvert, "Bonney, Edmund Garnet (1883 – 1959)" [hereafter "Bonney"], *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, vol. 13, 1993, p. 215, retrieved on 29 December 2010 at <http://adbonline.anu.edu.au/biogs/A130247b.htm>.

[102] Alexander, "Papers", 21 December 1941.

prevented some member of the Circus from indiscreetly dropping a security
secret."[103]

When the Axis threats were receding, however, newspaper owners –
particularly Packer – became more combative towards the censorship system.  In
1943 Bonney was made the director-general of an expanded DOI and Curtin gave the
difficult portfolio of censorship responsibilities to the new Minister of Information,
Arthur Calwell.  "[T]he appointment ensured that the proprietors would direct their
anger towards Calwell and not Curtin", the media historian, Ron Davidson, wrote.[104]
Although this seemed to be an astute move for Curtin because he would not be
directly involved in the controversies, press owners increasingly argued that Calwell
and Bonney were "unduly severe" in suppressing political commentaries.[105]  During
Curtin's absence overseas in April 1944, the proprietors decided to publish blank
spaces, where the prepared leader columns had been removed by censors.
Confronted by a defiant Packer, Calwell sent commonwealth police officers to *The
Daily Telegraph* printing presses.  Newspaper staff members threw copies of the
current edition out of the office windows until police pulled out their guns to stop
afternoon deliveries.  Holt recalled: "There were all sorts of fun and games, pistol
point, 'You can't do it', and a few little brawls here and there".[106]  On 16 April, the
High Court of Australia issued an injunction against the Commonwealth
Government.  Under the direction of Attorney-General Herbert (Bert) Vere Evatt,
new censorship regulations were written and they were ratified by the principal
media groups by 19 May.[107]  If he had the benefit of hindsight, Curtin might have
tried to forestall this dispute by appointing a more diplomatic Minister of
Information.

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[103] Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, p. 77
[104] Ron Davidson, "John Curtin: From Revolutionary Firebrand to Journalist in Spirit",
JCPML, Bentley, 2000, retrieved on 19 June 2009 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/journalist>.
[105] Hilvert, "Bonney", p. 215.
[106] Holt, "Holt interview".
[107] Hilvert, "Bonney", p. 215.

Radio censorship restrictions were even tighter than those imposed on the press due to government concerns over the immediate impact of far-ranging, shortwave broadcasting.[108]  On 8 January 1941, the Menzies government suspended transmissions of four radio stations operated by Jehovah's Witnesses, who were conscientious objectors to military service; this ban might have been intended as a warning to other broadcasters.  Military officials alleged that the religious organisation's 5KA Adelaide station made "indirect references" to the departure of a troop ship from the city's port.[109]  Later Curtin issued "complete blanket censorship" on news relating to the sinking of the HMAS *Sydney* on 19 November 1941 with all 645 crew members lost after a battle with the German auxiliary cruiser, HSK *Kormoran*.[110]  A third of all Australian sailors lost during this war died in this battle.  Still hoping to find the *Sydney* and survivors, Curtin talked about this tragedy at a press conference on 25 November; however, the news was so serious that Alexander made only a brief allusion to it, writing that journalists "were forbidden to discuss" it "with anyone excepting our editors".  Alexander added the news "will be a great sensation once it becomes known".[111]  He recognised the need to maintain secrecy while officials notified the next of kin that personnel were missing.[112]  The government announced the *Sydney* and its crew were "presumed lost" on 30 November.[113]  Alexander added: "Curtin is showing a fine fighting spirit".[114] Censors allowed only the press to report the news in the next day's editions. Unaware of the continuing radio ban, Melbourne 3AR broadcast a school ceremony including a teacher's tribute about the disaster.  As a result, the postmaster-general took 3AR off the airwaves for a day.[115]  The *Sydney* and *Kormoran* wrecks were

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[108] Inglis, *ABC*, pp. 78-79.

[109] With the use of the National Security (Subversive Associations) Regulations, the Menzies government declared the Jehovah's Witnesses to be members of an unlawful association.  In June 1943, the High Court ruled the regulations were invalid and the ban was removed for Jehovah's Witnesses organisations.  See Bobbie Oliver, *Peacemongers: Conscientious objectors to military service in Australia, 1911-1945*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, South Fremantle, 1997, pp. 88-89, 158; Jayne Persian, "'A National Nuisance': The Banning of Jehovah's Witnesses in Australia in 1941", *The Flinders Journal of History & Politics*, vol. 25, 2008, pp. 4-16.

[110] HSK *Kormoran* was disguised as a merchant ship with hidden guns and concealed torpedo tubes.  See Alexander, "Papers", 27 November 1941.

[111] Alexander, "Papers", 25 November 1941.

[112] Alexander, "Papers", 27 November 1941.

[113] Alexander, "Papers", 30 November 1941.

[114] Alexander, "Papers", 1 December 1941.

[115] Inglis, *ABC*, pp. 78-79.

finally discovered in March 2008 about 112 nautical miles off Steep Point in the
Shire of Shark Bay, northern WA.[116]  Censors continued to vet shortwave broadcast
scripts during the war.[117]

Yet as the tide of war turned in favour of the Allies, Curtin oversaw the
DOI's shift in focus from censorship to publicising Australia's war effort.  Through
his strategies to emphasise the Pacific front, Curtin increasingly urged the ABC to
promote more positive Australian news, dramas and music while the DOI supplied
wartime commentaries on vinyl records to the station's "talks department".[118]  By the
end of 1944, the Curtin administration appointed censors who were largely
journalists because it was believed that they understood how to promote Australia to
the rest of the world.  The historian, John Hilvert, wrote that the DOI "was really a
department of journalists" and "[t]he suppressors became the expressors"[119] as the
organisation expanded the local film industry and produced "shorts" about the nation
to international cinema audiences.[120]  Perhaps Curtin was heeding the earlier
mistakes made by the Churchill administration, which was preoccupied with secrecy
at the expense of publicity during the first years of the war.  Although journalists
were employed in the British Ministry of Information, they did not hold significant
decision-making roles and the organisation was closed after the war.[121]  Due to the
improved battle conditions, Curtin was able to ease censorship restrictions and avoid
a re-occurrence of the government's dispute with Packer at *The Daily Telegraph*.  He
successfully directed the DOI's initiatives in media publicity and the organisation

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[116] The *Kormoran* sank at 12.30am on 20 November 1941 soon after firing on the *Sydney*.
The estimated number of *Kormoran* survivors ranged from 315 to 317 Germans and another
three Chinese sailors, who had been held captive in the ship.
[117] Inglis, *ABC*, pp. 78-79.
[118] Inglis, *ABC*, pp. 96, 99, 110-112, 117.
[119] John Hilvert, *Blue Pencil Warriors: Censorship and Propaganda in World War II*
[hereafter *Blue pencil warriors*]*,* University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, 1984, p. 198.
[120] Arthur Calwell, "Appointments", *Digest of Decisions and Announcements and Important
Speeches by the Prime Minister (Right Hon. John Curtin)* [hereafter *DDA*], no. 101, 1 May
1945, pp. 35-36; Arthur Calwell, "First Meeting", *DDA*, no. 104, 26 June 1945, p. 33; Alan
Osbiston, "Australian Films Overseas", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Sydney, 18 July 1944,
p. 2.
[121] Hilvert, *Blue pencil warriors*, pp. 6, 92, 123; Philip M. Taylor, "Book review" (John M.
MacKenzie and John Hilvert), *Journal of Modern History*, vol. 58, no. 4, December 1996,
pp. 923-926.

promoted Australia as an attractive destination, in accordance with the federal
government's post-war immigration policies.[122]

During the Allied advance in Europe and the Pacific, a major industrial
struggle erupted between Australian news management and reporters in October
1944.  Some AJA journalists walked out on strike for the first time since 1912,
revealing "serious cracks in the uneasy industrial truce within the newspaper
industry".[123]  Due to increasing tensions between the Sydney *Sun* management and
printers, the Printing Industry Employees Union called all of its members from this
newspaper out on strike on 7 October.  Industrial action was taken because the *Sun*
proprietors rejected printers' claims for a five-day, 40-hour working week and four
weeks' annual leave.[124]  The Sydney union printers were quickly supported by the
AJA's Canberra and New South Wales Districts.[125]  Perhaps Canberra and Sydney
newspaper journalists were prepared to show a "spirit of solidarity" with the printers'
protest for better working conditions because the Allies were winning the war by late
1944.[126]  More unions became involved in the dispute, which stopped production of
all Sydney daily and Sunday newspapers.[127]  As Whitington recalled, the city's press
proprietors decided to produce one composite paper, displaying the mastheads of all
four daily newspapers, with the assistance of union "bludgers", including members
who privately worked at home for the employers and those who decided "to scab
publicly".[128]  Whitington became the chief of staff of the union's opposing
composite newspaper, *The News*, which was produced with the help of printers at the
Communist Party's premises.[129]  The strike ended on 19 October after the proprietors
reached an agreement with the printers.[130]  One of the terms of settlement was the
establishment of the Australian Newspaper Board to strive for "harmonious

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[122] The DOI continued until 1950.  Hilvert, *Blue pencil warriors*, p. 3.
[123] Lloyd, *Journalist*, p. 225.
[124] Lloyd, *Journalist*, p. 239.
[125] Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, pp. 96-97.
[126] Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, p. 98.
[127] Lloyd, *Journalist*, p. 239.
[128] Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, p. 99.
[129] Lloyd, *Journalist*, p. 239; Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, p. 98.
[130] Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, pp. 96-101.

relations" between press workers and proprietors.[131]   Yet the crisis ended poorly for
some journalist union members including Whitington, who was demoted from his
daily Canberra editorial position and transferred by Packer to *The Sunday Telegraph*
in Sydney.  Whitington reminisced: "The journalists certainly gained little".[132]
While Curtin made several statements to oppose coal miners' strikes in 1944,
appealing to workers to stand firmly against foreign enemies, he continued to
endorse the AJA and respected working reporters, helping to calm tensions.[133]

## Media trends

Journalists reported on Curtin's media messages to a largely literate nation of "eager
newspaper readers".[134]   The nation was already highly urbanised by 1941, with 50.8
per cent of Australians living in metropolitan areas.  Many city people bought daily
morning, evening, Saturday and Sunday newspapers each week.  According to a
study by Henry Mayer, 85.2 per cent of metropolitan residents read evening papers in
1941.  Some 64.1 per cent of city people chose to buy the morning dailies, while 66.4
per cent of these residents purchased Saturday and Sunday papers.  Readership
figures varied significantly among the press competitors, as shown in Appendix 9.[135]
The highest circulating daily was Murdoch's Melbourne morning tabloid, *The Sun
News-Pictorial.*  Perth's main afternoon and evening newspaper, the *Daily News,*
recorded the lowest sales because of the city's relatively smaller population.[136]   Even
though a liberal-minded broadsheet like *The Age* was struggling financially, such
dailies were read by influential parliamentary members.  Daily newspapers were
transported by trains to Canberra, where they "were awaited with keen anticipation

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[131] Lloyd, *Journalist*, pp. 225-226.

[132] Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, pp. 101-103.

[133] Heather Campbell, "Diary of a Labour Man" for April 1944, JCPML, Bentley, 2008,
retrieved on 11 February 2010 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/diary/primeminister/1944.html>.

[134] Mayer, *The press*, p. 32.

[135] Mayer, *The press*, pp. 34, 40.

[136] Mayer, *The press*, p. 40; State Library of Western Australia, "Metropolitan Newspapers",
Perth, 2008, retrieved on 20 June 2009 at
<http://www.slwa.wa.gov.au/find/western_australian/wa_newspapers/wa_metropolitan_new
spapers>.

by isolated politicians", Lloyd explained.[137]   Despite the increasing concentration of

mass media over the next two decades, Australia was still one of the top 10 nations

with the highest daily newspaper reading populations in 1959.  Australia was fifth

among the world's countries for reading the most non-daily newspapers, those

published three days a week or less frequently.[138]   Circulation statistics were not the

only measurement to gauge a newspaper's success; although a serious broadsheet,

such as *The Age*, might not have been as popular as an illustrative tabloid, the

newspaper's editorial staff might still exert an influential role in politics.


Due to Murdoch's sponsorship of public opinion surveys, Roy Morgan

Research was founded in 1941 to produce unique insights into the world of

Australian newspaper readers.[139]   Polls were conducted for Murdoch's press as well

as other news organisations, such as *The Sun* in Sydney.  While every customer was

interested in the main front page headline, the majority of readers also looked for

photographs and smaller, local news articles, according to research findings of 1945

and 1946 *Sun* issues.  Cartoons and letters to the editor were highly popular among

male and female blue collar workers.[140]   Murdoch's commitment to an appealing

letters section was evident in his staff memorandum: "I hope earnestly that effort will

be made with the letter column.  It is the rag bag of the paper, instead of being one of

its strong features."[141]   These opinion polls were limited to Sydney; the findings

might have varied if the study sample had been expanded to include different state

newspapers.  Yet through one proprietor's personal commitment to discovering

readership interests, early research indicated the newspaper preferences of different

social classes and genders.  This type of polling faded with Murdoch's death in 1952;

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[137] Lloyd, *Parliament and the press*, p. 86.
[138] Mayer, *The press*, pp. 32, 44.
[139] Several Roy Morgan Research findings were cited as "Australian Public Opinion Polls" in *The Courier-Mail* on 14 August 1942, as stated in Chapter 3.  (Anon.), "Mr Curtin's Job Pleases People", *The Courier-Mail,* Brisbane, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 2, 14 August 1942.
[140] Michele Levine and Gary Morgan, "The Power of Newspaper Editorial & Advertising" [hereafter "Newspaper editorial"], *Country Press Association 106th Annual Conference*, Sydney, 2006, retrieved on 20 June 2009 at <www.roymorgan.com>.
[141] The Herald & Weekly Times, *Murdoch*, p. 26.

market research was redirected to focus on sales and advertising, as noted by Roy's
son, Gary Morgan.[142]

The electronic news media were attracting large audiences because the
growing emphasis on the nation's involvement in the Pacific war spurred half of the
population to listen more often to radio in 1942 than they had the previous year.
Listeners indicated they mainly tuned into the war news.[143]  Likewise, many
Australians were keen to watch the first public release of the nine-minute "short"
*Kokoda Front Line!* on 18 September 1942; outside the cinema screenings, filmgoers
queued in lines that stretched up to three blocks.  After quietly watching his Kokoda
film in a Sydney cinema, Parer was greeted with "a sustained burst of spontaneous
cheering and applause" from soldiers and members of the public.[144]  Similarly a
Curtin newsreel provoked standing ovations from servicemen in the Northern
Territory.[145]  Although movie audience statistics were not available, anecdotal
evidence indicated such documentaries were viewed as authentic and became
popular among wartime Australians.

In his parliamentary suite, Curtin was accustomed to camera crews, who
helped to create a vast film record of his leadership.[146]  Although "an austere,
reserved man", he knew how "to say the right things" and have "the right pictures"
taken during his newsreel scenes, according to Rodgers.[147]  Australian wartime
newsreels were produced by two fiercely competitive companies, Cinesound and

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[142] Levine and Morgan, "Newspaper editorial".
[143] Inglis, *ABC*, p. 98.
[144] Niall Brennan, *Damien Parer: Cameraman* [hereafter *Cameraman*], Melbourne
University Press, Carlton, 1994, pp. 125-126, 145-146.
[145] David Day, "Curtin as Hero", *The Sydney Papers,* vol. 12, no. 2, autumn 2000, p. 65.
[146] National Film and Sound Archive [hereafter NFSA], "Australian Prime Ministers" (fact
sheet on John Joseph Curtin – hereafter "Curtin"), Acton, 2008, retrieved on 29 December
2010 at <http://screensound.gov.au/the_collection/collection_spotlights/apms/curtin.html>.
[147] Rodgers, "Rodgers interview".

Movietone, which ceased feature film production to concentrate on documentary
footage in cooperation with the DOI.[148]  The government films included
groundbreaking, eye-witness images of battles and the destruction of Axis forces,
which were taken by Australian camera crews sent by the DOI.[149]  This dangerous
task was made even riskier by the cumbersome technical gear.  While walking with
local troops in the wet, muddy jungle of the Owen Stanley Ranges, DOI-accredited
Australian newsreel cameraman, Damien Parer, lugged 68 kilograms of equipment
that included his movie camera, tripod, carrying case, cans of 35 millimetre film
stock (which lasted for only one minute at a time), a "grotesquely large" still camera
and various filters and parts.  Osmar White of *The Sun* and the ABC correspondent,
Chester Wilmot, helped to carry Parer's equipment.  Gradually most of the baggage
was voluntarily shed along the track until Parer was left with his cine-camera and
rolls of film.[150]  The result was the 1942 Academy Award-winning *Kokoda Front
Line!*[151]  Although the scripts were vetted, the DOI permitted producers to assert
creative control over the films made for the government.[152]  Camera teams processed
their own pictures in the closest overseas darkrooms they could find and then sent the
film products to the DOI.  "This was a prompt, speedy and co-ordinated way of
getting pictures of Australian soldiers on screen throughout the world", Parer's
biographer, Niall Brennan, wrote.[153]  Parer prepared elaborate "dope sheets", with
detailed suggestions about possible commentary and narrative structures, which
influenced the editing of his footage.[154]  Films became increasingly important as
propaganda and the DOI generally did not intervene in the work of Cinesound
producer and director, Ken G. Hall.  He made, for example, a scripted scene of
Australian and American fighter pilots, who were good-naturedly teasing one

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[148] Poppy de Souza, "Road to Kokoda (1942)", NFSA, Acton, 2009, retrieved on 20 June
2009 at <http://australianscreen.com.au/titles/road-to-kokoda>; Poppy de Souza, "South-
west Pacific (1943)" [hereafter "South-west Pacific"], NFSA, 2009, retrieved on 19 June
2009 at <http://australianscreen.com.au/titles/south-west-pacific>.
[149] Brennan, *Cameraman*, p. 75; Cinesound Productions (producer), *Bismarck Convey
Smashed!* (newsreel) [hereafter *Bismarck convey smashed*], Australia, 1943; NFSA,
"Curtin".
[150] Brennan, *Cameraman*, pp. 119-121; de Souza, "South-west Pacific".
[151] Ken G. Hall (producer), *Kokoda Front Line!* (newsreel), The Australian News &
Information Bureau, Australia, 1942.
[152] de Souza, "South-west Pacific".
[153] Brennan, *Cameraman*, pp. 77, 131.
[154] Neil McDonald, "The Making of Cinesound's 'Assault on Salamaua'", Murdoch
University, Murdoch, 1987, retrieved on 20 June 2009 at
<http://wwwmcc.murdoch.edu.au/ReadingRoom/hfilm/SALAMAUA.html>.

another, and cooperated with US army filmmakers to shoot footage of Pacific battle scenes.  Reflecting Curtin's media strategies, numerous newsreels were made for international audiences to portray Australia as the last bastion of democracy in the region.[155]

## Curtin forged a unique style

The wartime public sphere included the visual, audio and press elements that allowed Curtin to use the media adeptly.  These relatively modern media forms had already been founded by the time that Curtin was the prime minister.  Australians were largely literate consumers of the news and they were accessing radio and films more fully during the war.  John Hartley's theory on active "citizens of the media" helps us to interpret the wartime citizens' keen interest in the news.[156]  With the advent of radio and newsreels, a new type of politics emerged that was remarkably different from governments' relations with the dominant press during the 1930s.  Expanding the concept of the public sphere by reducing the distance between the government and the governed,[157] Curtin gave direct addresses that he aimed at every citizen to create the perception that he was one of the people.  Through this simulated one-to-one communication, he bypassed the authority of press editors, who were losing their positions as gatekeepers of information.  Although his direct communication seemed unmediated, film teams carefully produced newsreels to ensure that "the right pictures" were taken.[158]

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[155] Australian Government Department of Information and US Army Signal Corps (producers), "Allies Thrash Japs At Attape", in *At The Front*: *1939-1945: Australia's WWII Newsreels* (newsreel) [hereafter *At the front*], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00441/2, circa 1944; Cinesound Productions (producer), *Bismarck convey smashed*; de Souza, "South-west Pacific"; Hall, *South-west Pacific*; US Army Signal Corps (producer), "MacArthur Returns!" (newsreel), in *At the front*, 1944.

[156] Hartley, *Popular reality*, pp. 71, 72, 234.

[157] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1989, p. 184; Hartley, *Popular reality*, pp. 71, 72, 234; Ian Ward, "The Press, Television and the Public Sphere", in Ian Ward (ed.), *Politics of the media,* Macmillan, South Melbourne, 1995, p. 12.

[158] Rodgers, "Rodgers interview".

Benefiting from his working knowledge of journalism practices, Curtin
became skilful in managing and negotiating the news and public opinion.  As he
understood the journalistic convention of news deadlines and competition, he
instituted his twice-daily, confidential briefings at regular timeslots to benefit both
morning and evening newspaper companies.  The HMAS *Sydney* tragedy provided
Curtin with one of his first opportunities to share significant secret news with
reporters; he continued the conferences because journalists and editors upheld the
unwritten agreement about this ship disaster.  Later this innovative practice was
enshrined in the AJA's new code of ethics, established in 1944, which affirmed that
journalists were obligated to respect confidences.  Although a censorship dispute and
a journalists' strike occurred in 1944, when the Axis threats were receding, reporters
and editors largely cooperated with and supported Curtin's system of news briefings
and government blue-pencilling.  Censorship became another media tactic to ensure
journalists were onside with the government to publicise Australia's foreign policies
positively.  As part of Curtin's strategies, the DOI gradually shifted from being
"suppressors" to "expressors" to promote Australia in films and radio programs.[159]
Since he elevated the role of federal reporters to a privileged, elite position, they
enjoyed being "knowledge linkers" - explaining and interpreting matters of
governance to public audiences in accordance with the Ericson et al description of
the governmental function of news in an administered society.[160]


This chapter has demonstrated that Curtin's innovative media strategies
appeared to resemble Roosevelt's close relationships with journalists. Certainly,
Curtin did not follow the lead of Churchill, who did not hold regular press
conferences, nor did he share the plight of Canada's Mackenzie King, whose
government would not support paying for a full-time press secretary.  Similarly to
Roosevelt, Curtin employed the nation's first, full-time press secretary and
developed a wide range of strategies to broadcast his messages by using the latest
media communications.  He actively developed the governmental function of news
by involving reporters in major decisions; and through his direct media talks to

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[159] Hilvert, *Blue pencil warriors,* p. 926.
[160] Ericson, Baranek and Chan, *Visualizing deviance*, p. 16; Mickler, Visualising
Aboriginality, 1996, pp. 20-21.

citizens, he expanded the democratic scope of the public sphere by reducing the distance between the government and governed.  As discussed in Chapter 3, he became the first Australian prime minister to introduce a number of news initiatives including the following: releasing important announcements on the radio, rather than in the press; broadcasting radio talks directly from Canberra to US audiences; insisting the ABC should adopt more Australian-oriented programs; funding a film-processing laboratory and opening a publicity association in New York to promote more local films to overseas audiences.  Indeed, Curtin cultivated media relations more intensely than FDR; no other Allied leader gave such confidential, twice-daily media briefings and later Australian prime ministers discontinued this extensive method of communicating to journalists.  His unique editorial experiences helped him to engage with press gallery reporters.  As a former AJA WA district president and labour newspaper editor, he was instrumental in improving news media standards by helping to create the nation's first university courses for professional journalists.  He supported the AJA's 1944 code of ethics, relished displaying his old union badge on his coat each day, and addressed journalists as his colleagues.  Curtin led important technological advancements in film, radio and the press, which enhanced the status of federal politics in media broadcasts.  It was an era when major forces converged, as Hartley reminds us.[161]  Journalists used improved media services – encompassing mass, electric printing presses, shortwave radio, picturegrams, film processing, cheaper telegrams and teleprinters – to portray vividly the new global war.  They articulated the skilful communication strategies of a Labor prime minister, who revealed the necessary conciliatory attitudes and political determination to help resolve rare industrial and censorship disputes.  The next chapter will investigate Curtin's mass communication strategies to identify the reasons for his ability to win reporters' confidence in his leadership during the Axis attacks in 1941 and 1942.

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[161] Hartley, *Popular reality.*

**Part II: Mass news media and political-agenda setting: a case study of John Curtin,**

**1941-1945**

<div align="center">**Chapter 6**</div>

<div align="center">**The war comes home to Australia and the performance of "Curtin's Circus",**</div>

<div align="center">**1941-1942**</div>

Curtin was appointed prime minister on 7 October 1941 and in this role, he led Australia's new Pacific war that resulted in an increasingly assertive, independent foreign policy and a bilateral alliance with the United States.  Also the nation experienced "Australia's greatest hour",[1] when Japan's bombing of Darwin on 19 February 1942 strengthened citizens' resolve to help defeat Axis powers.  Along with the severe, external challenges, Curtin was confronted with internal ALP dissension over the military conscription question.  This chapter will approach certain questions, such as Curtin's capacity to manage the news and how the Canberra media "circus" publicised his messages, with reference to Ericson, Baranek and Chan's concept of administered society and Foucault's theories on governance.  Ericson et al characterise journalists as working with political leaders and "playing a key role in constituting visions of order, stability and change".[2]  Likewise, Foucault's model of power connects with the Ericson et al model of news in an administered society. According to Foucault, successful government leaders in western liberal democracies use relatively modern technologies, including the media, to promote the optimal development of populations and enable the management of the nation.[3]  Foucault's concept is useful to analyse the close relations between Curtin and the press gallery. These insights help us to understand how journalists and other media professionals joined with Curtin to define "deviance", predominantly Axis enemies, and to

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[1] (Anon.), "Into The Front Line", *The West Australian*, Perth, 20 February 1942, p. 4.
[2] Richard V. Ericson, Patricia M. Baranek and Janet B. L. Chan, *Visualizing Deviance: A Study of News Organizations* [hereafter *Visualizing deviance*], Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1987, p. 1; John Hartley, *The Politics of Pictures: The Creation Of The Public In the Age Of Popular Media*, Routledge, Abingdon and New York, 1992, p. 141.
[3] Michel Foucault, "Governmentality" [hereafter "Governmentality"], in Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller (eds), *The Foucault Effect: Studies In Governmentality: With Two Lectures By And An Interview With Michel Foucault,* The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1991, pp. 102-103; Michel Foucault, "Technologies of the Self", in L.H. Martin, H. Gutman and P.H. Hutton (eds), *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault,* Tavistock Publications, London, 1988, p. 18.

articulate the "proper bounds of behaviour".[4]  As he declared in a Cinesound newsreel released shortly before the 1941 Christmas holiday season, all citizens should help "keep the workshops active" to support "our gallant fighting forces".[5]

This chapter will first examine the positive press reaction to the announcement of a new Labor prime minister.  Then it will analyse a selected sample of Curtin's public and private communications to identify his successful media strategies to persuade journalists to accept his foreign policies.  Six documents will be analysed in this chapter, beginning with Curtin's declaration of war against Japan on 8 December 1941[6] and concluding with his parliamentary address about the Kokoda Track battles.[7]  These documents covered a wide range of communications, including the following: radio broadcasts to Australians and international audiences;[8] a newspaper editorial about the nation's foreign policy;[9] and parliamentary speeches about the Battle of the Coral Sea[10] as well as the Kokoda Track conflict.[11] Furthermore, a comparison will be made between the public addresses and the resulting media coverage in the press, cinemas and radio news.  This analysis will be substantiated by an examination of primary sources including confidential government minutes, Allied cable correspondence and private journalists' notes.  On this basis, the Curtin administration's private discussions will be contrasted with the prime minister's public image, as revealed in film appearances and press statements. This will result in an assessment of his ability to minimise negative reports and

[4] Ericson, Baranek and Chan, *Visualizing deviance,* p. 1.

[5] Cinesound Productions (producer), *War in Pacific!* (newsreel) [hereafter *War in Pacific*], 1941, John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library [hereafter JCPML], Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01021/1.

[6] John Curtin, "National Broadcast by Prime Minister" [hereafter "National broadcast"], *Digest of Decisions and Announcements and Important Speeches by the Prime Minister (Right Hon. John Curtin)* [hereafter *DDA*], no. 10, 8 December 1941, pp. 19-22.

[7] John Curtin, "State Of The War" [hereafter "State of the war"], *DDA*, no. 47, 10 December 1942, pp. 17-24.

[8] Curtin, "National broadcast", pp. 19-22; John Curtin, "Radio broadcast to the United States" [hereafter "US radio broadcast"], *DDA*, no. 22, 14 March 1942, pp. 9-13.

[9] John Curtin, "The Task Ahead" [hereafter "The task ahead"], *The Herald*, Melbourne, 27 December 1941, p. 1, cited in JCPML, Bentley, retrieved on 6 August 2010 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/pmportal/text/00468.html>.

[10] John Curtin, "Naval Engagement – Coral Sea" [hereafter "Coral Sea"], *DDA,* no. 28, 8 May 1942, pp. 4-5.

[11] Curtin, "State of the war", pp. 17-24.

promote positive coverage of his Pacific war strategies.[12]  This chapter argues that over the course of one year from 1941 to 1942, he developed and implemented successful media strategies, extending to rhetorical devices, a creative use of broadcast media and informal press relationships.  These strategies included the following: delivering clear, accessible national and international radio broadcasts; appealing to ideals of liberty and freedom in his radio talks and newsreel addresses, as well as emphasising responsibility and austerity; using a full-time press secretary; providing detailed background news briefings about the development of a new war; and persuading the press to report on his public messages and to withhold confidential information.

**Curtin "fitted for task", October 1941**

After federal reporters witnessed the tumultuous parliamentary events of October 1941, leading to conservative Prime Minister Fadden's sudden resignation and Curtin's unexpected ascendancy to the prime ministership, press owners welcomed the news of a resolution of the political crisis.[13]  The UAP administration capitulated when two independent parliamentarians, Arthur Coles and Alexander Wilson, crossed the floor to vote for the Labor opposition's no-confidence motion on the Fadden Government's budget proposals, which were defeated by a vote of 36 to 33

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[12] For my content analysis coding sheets, see Appendices 5-7.  As mentioned in Chapter 1, the analysis of relevant press coverage was based on the Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism formula that a news article was deemed "positive" if two-thirds of the statements appeared to support a national leader.  See Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism, "Winning The Media Campaign: Methodology", *Journalism.org*, Washington DC, 2008, retrieved on 26 September 2009 at <http://www.journalism.org/node/13314>; Public Broadcasting Service (producer), *The Online NewsHour* (television program – transcript), Washington DC, 24 June 2009, retrieved on 26 September 2009 at <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/media/jan-june09/obama_06-24.html>.

[13] Supportive press editorials were published to announce Curtin's prime ministerial appointment in Australian metropolitan dailies including the following: *The Advertiser*, *The Age*, *The Argus*, *The Brisbane Telegraph*, *The Canberra Times*, *The Courier-Mail*, *The Daily Mirror*, *The Herald*, *The Mercury*, *The Sun*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The West Australian*.  See *Scrapbooks compiled by the Prime Minister's office* [hereafter *Scrapbooks*], JCPML, Bentley, no. 1, JCPML acc. no. 00297/1, 4-9 October 1941.

on 3 October.[14]  *The Sun News-Pictorial's* Harold Cox recalled that Curtin did not deliberately seek to destabilise the Fadden administration.  This view was corroborated by Allan Dawes, who reported in *The Herald* that as the Federal Labor Opposition leader, Curtin had "not been much in the limelight" and was not a controversial personality between 1935 and early 1941.[15]  According to Cox, in the early morning on 3 October, only hours before the conservatives' defeat, Curtin stopped him in the parliamentary "Labor lobbies" to give the news tip that both independent parliamentarians might vote against the government.  Curtin reportedly said:

> Harold, I wouldn't have thought this possible ... You know I've not sought it. You know I was anxious to give these people [the conservative parties] every possible run.[16]

During a time of political upheavals, Nazi conquests in Europe and Axis battles in the Middle East and North Africa, press owners approved the swift formation of a new Labor Cabinet.  They published decidedly pro-government coverage of Curtin's swearing-in ceremony with Governor-General, Lord Alexander Gowrie, on 7 October.[17]

Curtin's appointment was reported positively in twelve broadsheets and tabloids across Australia.[18]  Characterising Australian people's attitudes towards the new prime minister, newspaper articles included expressions of "loyalty",[19] "support

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[14] David Black, "Biography of John Curtin", JCPML, Bentley, 2009, retrieved on 26 September 2009 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/resources/biography/details.html>; Bobbie Oliver, *Unity is Strength: A History of the Australian Labor Party and the Trades and Labor Council in Western Australia, 1899-1999* [hereafter *Unity is strength*]*,* API Network, Bentley, 2003, p. 160.

[15] Allan W. Dawes, "Men You Should Know About" [hereafter "Men you should know about"], *The Herald*, Melbourne, cited in *Scrapbooks,* no. 1, 6 October 1941.

[16] Harold Cox, interviewed by Mel Pratt [hereafter "Cox interview"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01060/1, 6 April 1973, transcript np.

[17] *Scrapbooks*, no. 1, 8 October 1941.

[18] See footnote 13.

[19] (Anon.), "Labor's Chance", *The Advertiser*, Adelaide, 4 October 1941; (Anon.), "Labor Takes The Helm", *The Age* [hereafter *Age*], Melbourne, 4 October 1941; (Anon.), "John Curtin Fitted For Task", *The Brisbane Telegraph*, Brisbane, 4 October 1941.  Press articles cited from *Scrapbooks*, no. 1, 4 October 1941.

and cooperation",[20] "trust",[21] "respect and esteem",[22] as well as "good wishes"[23] and the affirmation that it was "Labour's [sic] right to govern".[24]  Press writers emphasised Curtin was a "journalist by profession",[25] known for his "graceful" sentences and "suave" manner,[26] indicating they viewed him as a colleague.  *The Brisbane Telegraph* headline writer announced: "John Curtin Fitted for Task".[27]  As they promoted favourable press images of the new prime minister seated next to the governor-general, the newspaper owners emphasised the need for stability, propriety and cooperation in Australia during the escalating global war.

Thus the press photographs conveyed a positive portrayal of the new leader.  In accordance with Berger's semiotic conventions, 16 relevant newspaper photographs have been analysed. [28]  These visual images appeared in eight metropolitan dailies between 4 October and 8 October 1941.  In each image, Curtin appeared at an eye-level distance from the photographer, creating the visual effect that he appeared to be a down-to-earth leader, who would speak honestly with Australian people.  His level-headed image was reinforced by *The Courier-Mail*

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[20] (Anon.), "Fall Of The Government", *The West Australian* [hereafter *West*], Perth, 4 October 1941; (Anon.), "Labor Takes The Helm", *Age*, 4 October 1941.  Press articles cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 1.

[21] (Anon.), "We Must Get Swift Action", *The Courier-Mail*, Brisbane, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 1, 10 October 1941.

[22] (Anon.), "Federal Labour's [sic] Great Chance", *The Mercury*, Hobart, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 1, 6 October 1941.

[23] (Anon.), "New Lamps For Old", *The Herald*, Melbourne, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 1, 4 October 1941.

[24] (Anon.), "Labour's [sic] Right", *The Argus*, Melbourne, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no.1, 7 October 1941.

[25] For example, (Anon.), "The New Prime Minister", *Age*, 4 October 1941; (Anon.), "5th Labour [sic] Prime Minister", *The Argus*, Melbourne, 4 October 1941; (Anon.), "John Curtin Is An Intellectual", *The Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 4 October 1941; (Anon.), "Mr. Curtin's Notable Political Career", *The Sun News-Pictorial*, Melbourne, 4 October 1941.  Press articles cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 1.

[26] Dawes, "Men you should know about".

[27] (Anon.), "John Curtin Fitted for Task", *The Brisbane Telegraph*, Brisbane, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 1, 4 October 1942.

[28] Arthur Asa Berger, *Media Analysis Techniques*, Sage Publications, Beverly Hills, London and New Delhi, 1982, pp. 38-39; Anders Hansen, Simon Cottle, Ralph Negrine and Chris Newbold, *Mass Communication Research Methods,* Macmillan Press, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and London, 1998, p. 117.  For more information on this semiotic analysis, see Appendix 4.

journalist's description of him as "speaking straight from the shoulder".[29]  The

sample included six close-up images of Curtin either pictured alone or surrounded by

his wife and two adult children,[30] which indicated a close, intimate relationship

between him and newspaper readers in different states.  The remaining ten medium

and long distance images revealed Curtin's informal and formal relationships in a

variety of settings.  He was pictured jovially shaking hands with previous ALP Prime

Minister Scullin; talking good-naturedly to Fadden and Menzies, and seated with his

family again (see Figures 1-5).[31]


From his swearing-in ceremony to his last year, press and film images

frequently showed Curtin in similar attire – including a stiff, white collar, plain tie,

dark waistcoat, matching jacket and at times, a heavy overcoat.  His style was noted

by *The Sunday Sun* "FACT'S Canberra Correspondent", who wrote light-heartedly in

1942 that Curtin would not be concerned about wartime clothes rationing because he

had "never been a fancy dresser".[32]  As Curtin's press secretary, Rodgers, observed

later, the prime minister "deliberately had his suits cut very conservatively" to evoke

"a very serious appearance".  Since Curtin had been an experienced orator before

amplifiers were invented, "his idea was that if you wore a stiff collar, it kept your

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[29] (Anon.), "Straight From The Shoulder", *The Courier-Mail*, Brisbane, cited in *Scrapbooks,* no. 1, 17 October 1941.

[30] Figure 1 was published with this newspaper article: (Anon.), "Street Corner Speaker to Prime Minister", *The Herald*, Melbourne, 4 October 1941.  For Figure 2: Dawes, "Men you should know about".  The other four close-up photographs were published in: (Anon.), "The New Prime Minister", *Age*, 4 October 1941; "John Curtin Fitted For Task", *The Brisbane Telegraph*, Brisbane, 4 October 1941; "Prime Minister-Elect", *West*, 4 October 1941; "Leader and Ministers of New Federal Government", *The Sydney Morning Herald* [hereafter *SMH*], Sydney, 7 October 1941.  The anonymously taken photographs were cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 1.

[31] Figure 3 was cited in: (Anon.), "Smiles", *The Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 4 October 1941.  For Figure 4: "Three Prime Ministers within 2 Months", *The Argus*, Melbourne, 4 October 1941.  For Figure 5: "Wife Of Labor's Leader", *The Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 4 October 1941.  The other seven medium and long shots appeared in the following newspapers: "Victory", *The Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 4 October 1941; "New Federal Ministry Sworn-In At Government House", *SMH*, 8 October 1941; "Prime Minister Launches War Loan In Town Hall", *SMH*, 8 October 1941; "Caucus Meeting Which Selected Cabinet", *SMH*, 7 October 1941; "Labor Cabinet Holds First Session", *The Sun*, Sydney, 8 October 1941.  The anonymously taken photographs were cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 1.

[32] (Anon.), "Clothes would not worry Curtin", *The Sunday Sun*, Sydney, 14 June 1942, retrieved on 26 September 2009 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/behindthescenes/pms/text/curtin.html>.

Figures 1 (top left), Figure 2 (top right) and Figure 3 (below)

THREE PRIME MINISTERS WITHIN 2 MONTHS: Mr. Curtin, Labour (left), who will become Prime Minister with the defeat of the Government in succession to Mr. Fadden, CP (centre), who succeeded Mr. Menzies, UAP (right), when Mr. Menzies resigned late in August.

Figures 4 (top) and Figure 5 (below)



PRIME MINISTER-ELECT, Mr. John Curtin, and Mrs. Curtin, with their daughter, Elsie, and son, John, photographed at their home in Cottesloe, Perth. Mrs. Curtin will celebrate her birthday today at a party arranged by her daughter.
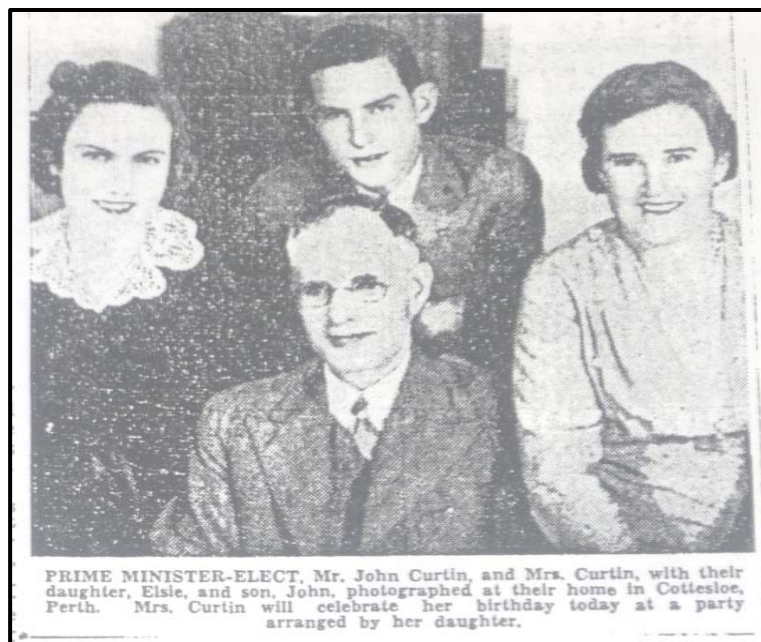
chin up and you threw your voice to the back of the hall', Rodgers remarked. [33]
While emphasising the need for sacrifice and civic responsibility, Curtin practised a
personal form of austerity that seemed endearing to *The Sunday Sun* correspondent.
At the beginning of his term, his appearance was likened by *The Bulletin* cartoonist,
John Frith, to an energetic, new business owner who had taken over a figurative,
busy store named "Australia & Co".  As the illustration depicted, the Curtin cartoon
figure strode purposefully to the shop front door while raising his right hand in a
victory salute to his predecessors, Menzies and Fadden, standing on the entrance



Figure 6

"welcome mat".  Curtin was shown in a workman's apron and his shirt sleeves were
rolled up to indicate his willingness to assume new responsibilities, as well as his
working class origins.  Also the signs announced the newspaper's optimism about his
new prime ministership. [34]  Frith later described Curtin as a "very fine man"[35] and his

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[33] Donald Kilgour Rodgers, interviewed by Mel Pratt [hereafter "Rodgers interview"],
JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00497, 29 April 1971, transcript np.
[34] John Frith, "Taken Over", *The Bulletin*, cited in *Scrapbooks,* no. 1, 8 October 1941.
[35] John Frith, interviewed by Shirley McKechnie [hereafter "Frith interview"], JCPML,
Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01064/1, 30 April-1 May 1994, transcript np.

cartoon conveyed *The Bulletin* editorial views that the early days of Curtin's administration were already inspiring. In a similar manner to other Allied war leaders, he was portrayed as a celebrity in leader pages, broadsheet reports and tabloid features. His shift from relative obscurity to popularity was satirised by *The Sunday Sun* cartoonist in two illustrations in November. In the smaller picture, "Plain John" Curtin "shivered on the brink" of the political stage as the opposition leader from 1935 to 1941. The main illustration conveyed *The Sunday Sun's* approval of Curtin's national leadership.[36] The upbeat news extended to a report that
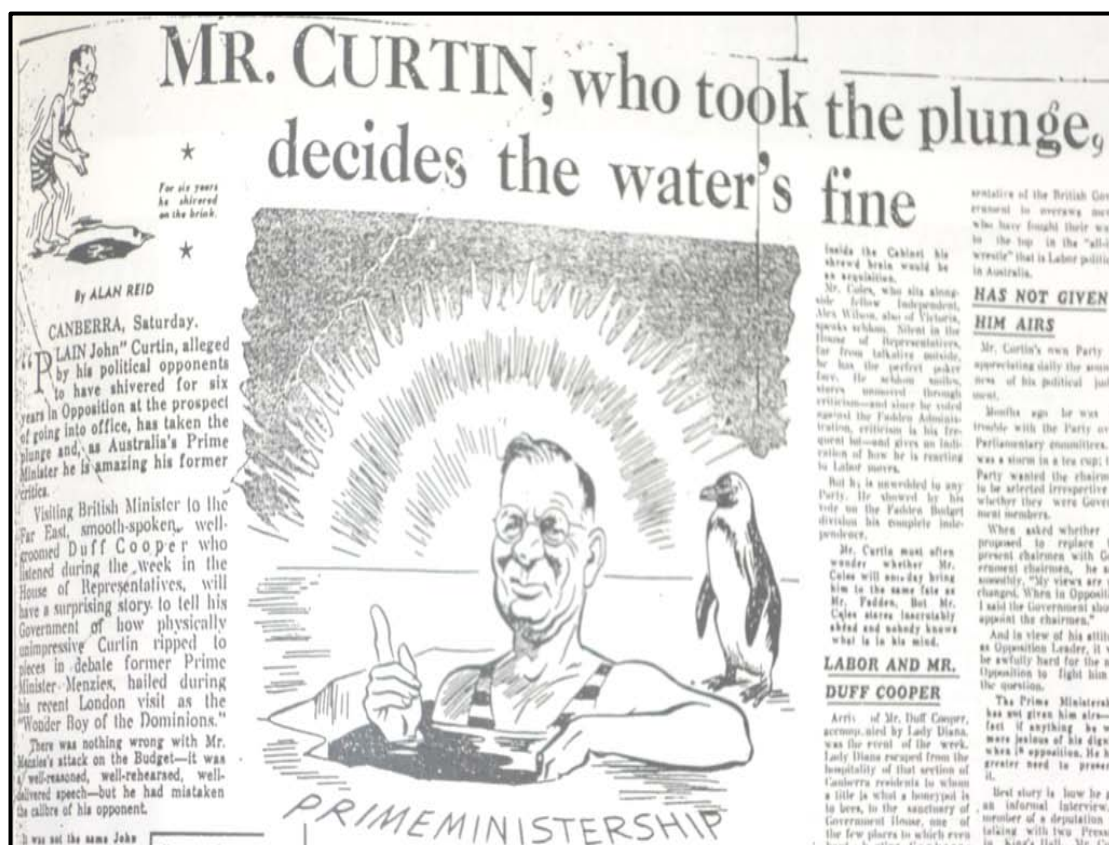


Figure 7

his four-year-old black kelpie dog, Kip, would forego the Lodge's "imposing" and "costly" kennel to remain with his daughter in Perth.[37] His cultivated image as a common man contrasted with international media images of Roosevelt's aristocratic pince-nez glasses, Churchill's flamboyant cigar and Mackenzie King's sporty plus fours.

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[36] Figure 7 appeared with the following newspaper article: Alan Reid, "Mr. Curtin, who took the plunge, decides the water's fine", *The Sunday Sun*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 1, 9 November 1941.

[37] (Anon.), "Curtin's Dog Not To Use Costly Kennel", *The Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 1, 7 October 1941.

In their newsreels, filmmakers interwove formal commentaries, close ups and informal long shots to portray Curtin as a strong leader.  A Cinesound Productions crew focused on his face as he declared to "Australians in the Commonwealth and overseas" that his government accepted the "sacred responsibility" of "coordinating the war".  During his stand-up (while addressing the camera), he set the tone for his new administration by emphasising the keywords of fighting for "the empire ... wherever freedom and liberty are in danger". [38]  Curtin's forceful, direct gaze into the camera contrasted with a newsreel of Menzies in 1939.  Archival research suggested that unlike Curtin, Menzies did not make a separate public newsreel about his prime ministerial declaration of war, but was filmed as he mainly read from a script when he announced Australia's new battle with Germany in 1939.[39]  A Movietone newsreel, titled "Personalities Living at the Federal Capital", featured Curtin in the relaxed atmosphere of the Lodge gardens while he chatted with his wife, Elsie.  Through a voice-over, the audience was informed he was setting out for his "daily walk to work to show how to be healthy and petrol-wise".[40]  While film teams presented a powerful cinematic image of Curtin, he established to audiences that he represented ordinary Australians and this inclusive approach was also reflected in press coverage throughout the nation.

**"Real leadership" in Pacific war, December 1941**

Curtin's determination to involve Australian audiences in foreign policy discussions was evidenced by his radio broadcast to declare war against Japan on 8 December 1941.  He spoke one day after Japanese forces bombed the Hawaiian naval base,

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[38] Cinesound Productions (producer), "John Curtin is Australia's Prime Minister: Cabinet sworn in" [hereafter "Curtin Cabinet sworn in"], in *Compiled speeches of John Curtin, 1941 – 1945* (newsreel), JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00130/1, 1941.

[39] The Menzies newsreel was featured in: Cinesound Productions (producer), "Prime Minister Addresses Nation", in *At The Front*: *1939-1945: Australia's WWII Newsreels* (newsreel)*,* JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00441/2, 1939.  Other film records related to Menzies' home movies and his later terms as the prime minister from 1949 to 1966.  Cited in National Film and Sound Archive, "Prime Ministers of Australia" (fact sheets on Sir Arthur William Fadden and Sir Robert Gordon Menzies), Acton, 2008, retrieved on 29 November 2009 at <http://www.nfsa.gov.au/the_collection/collection_spotlights/apms/index.html>.

[40]Movietone News (producer), *Personalities Living At The Federal Capital* (newsreel), JCPML, JCPML acc. no. 00876/2, Bentley, 1941.

Pearl Harbour, and simultaneously invaded Malaya and Thailand.  Curtin's vision of

the public sphere was inclusive, egalitarian and based on a well-informed news

media.  He made Australia's first independent declaration of war when he officially

announced the full-scale battle on Japan to national radio audiences.[41]  Australian

newspaper publishers favourably portrayed and extensively reproduced his speech in

their next day's editions.  They did not publicise the time of the evening broadcast or

the radio station, the ABC, perhaps because they wanted Australians to buy their

newspapers and read their reports.[42]  Through a computer-aided, quantitative

analysis, this study calculated the reading ease and key terms of a selected sample of

Curtin's public communications, beginning with the radio talk.  The purposes of this

analysis were twofold: to find patterns of his keywords that were reflected in the

media; and to identify whether he adjusted the simplicity and accessibility of a public

address to suit his audience.  As discussed in Chapter 1, the Flesch readability score

was recorded for the selected texts.[43]  Curtin's radio address registered a Flesch

readability score of 57.4, close to the recommended standard of 60 to 70.

Roosevelt's 27 broadcasts, known as the "fireside chats", were calculated to be an

average of 57.5 on the Flesch readability scale.  FDR's other public addresses were

an average of 59.4.[44]  Therefore Curtin's declaration of war was very similar to

FDR's public rhetoric in terms of accessibility and reading ease.

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[41] Curtin, "National broadcast", pp. 19-22; Bobbie Oliver, "Shaping the Nation: John Curtin and Australia" [hereafter "Shaping the nation"], JCPML, Bentley, 2001, retrieved on 4 June 2008 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/shapingthenation/index.htm>.

[42] *Army News*, Darwin, 8 and 11 December 1941; *The Argus*, Melbourne, 8 and 9 December 1941; *The Canberra Times* [hereafter *Canberra*], Canberra, 8 and 9 December 1941; *The Courier-Mail*, Brisbane, 8 and 9 December 1941; *SMH*, 8 and 9 December 1941.

[43] The Flesch readability score spanned a hundred-point scale.  A higher score indicated the speech included simple language.  A lower score implied the document was more complex. The standard recommended writing score was 60 to 70.  See Elvin T. Lim, "The Lion and the Lamb: De-mythologising Franklin Roosevelt's Fireside Chats" [hereafter "Fireside chats"], *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*, vol. 6, no. 3, 2003, pp. 445-446.

[44] Lim, "Fireside chats", pp. 445-446.

This quantitative analysis was expanded to include the Flesch-Kincaid score of Curtin's radio talk.[45]  The broadcast text was calculated to be 9.4, meaning it would be appropriate for ninth graders.  Although the speech was slightly more complicated than the recommended Flesch-Kincaid standard of eight, it was aimed at the right level given Australia's compulsory education system at the time.  On average, Australians born before 1930 achieved 9.3 years of education.[46]  In each Australian state in 1941, the statutory leaving age was 14 years.[47]  This quantitative analysis demonstrated Curtin deliberately aimed his address at working men and women.

Both Allied war leaders knew how to deliver their oratory at the right pace for their target audiences.  During his broadcast, Curtin spoke 119.4 words per minute, which some scholars would consider to be an acceptable pace.[48]  His speech rate in the 13-minute talk was comparable with that of the "fireside chats" that were between 105 and 117 words per minute.[49]  After developing a reputation as a "street

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[45] As stated in Chapter 1, the Flesch-Kincaid score ranked documents on a school grade level.  The recommended Flesch-Kincaid score for most public documents was about eight. See Trevor Day, "Twelve Writing Tips for Administrative Staff", University of Bath, Bath, 2008, retrieved on 27 September 2009 at <www.bath.ac.uk/learningandteaching/resources/TwelveWritingTipsRevisedTD.pdf>.

[46] Jonathan Kelley and M.D.R. Evans, "Trends In Educational Attainment In Australia", *WwA: Worldwide Attitudes*, 26 August 1996, pp. 1-8, retrieved on 27 September 2009 at <http://www.international-survey.org/wwa_pub/articles/hst-ed5.htm>.

[47] S.R. Carver, *Official Year Book Of The Commonwealth Of Australia, 1941*, Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, Canberra, no. 34, 1942.

[48] Curtin, "National broadcast", pp. 19-22.  As mentioned in Chapter 1, recommendations varied on this matter of public speech, with different scholars advising between 100 and 125 words per minute.  See Lim, "Fireside chats", p. 446, endnote 42, 458; Peter Kenny, *A Handbook of Public Speaking for Scientists & Engineers*, IOP Publishing Ltd [Institute of Physics Publishing], London, 1988, p. 20; Cynthia J. Pasquale, "Talking at the speed of confound", *The Denver Post*, Denver, 29 June 2006, retrieved on 10 September 2009 at <http://www.denverpost.com/ci_3991442?source=rss>; Public Broadcasting Service, "All About Public Speaking", Falls Church, 2009, retrieved on 27 September 2009 at <http://www.pbs.org/standarddeviantstv/transcript_public.html>.

[49] Earnest Bradenburg and Waldo W. Braden, "Franklin Delano Roosevelt" [hereafter "Roosevelt"], in Marie Kathryn Hochmuth (ed.), *History and Criticism of American Public Address,* Longmans, Green and Co., New York, vol. 3, 1958, pp. 520, 522; Lim, "Fireside chats", p. 446.

corner speaker" in his youth,[50] when he was actually a very fast speaker,[51] Curtin talked calmly with Australians in a like manner to Roosevelt's reassurance to a joint session of the US Congress and radio listeners that the invasion of Pearl Harbour was "a date which will live in infamy", also broadcast on 8 December.[52]

A content analysis of the text was made to identify keywords used by Curtin. He appealed to a sense of national identity, greeting his listeners by saying: "Men and women of Australia".[53] Along with his references to the country, he repeated the keywords of democracy, freedom and liberty[54] that were familiar in his newsreels two months earlier.[55] It was clear that he was talking to "the people" – rather than to politicians or the monarchy – and frequently used "we", "us" and "our" that supported his inclusive approach.[56] This strategy resembled the approach taken by Roosevelt in his "fireside chats", which always began with some variant of a greeting to "My Friends".[57] Also Curtin appeared to take care to make impersonal references to "Japan", "the enemy" and the war, consistent with US official propaganda policy.[58] It was necessary to avoid verbal "assaults" on Japan's revered Emperor Hirohito, according to the US State Department and Office of War Information. As early as January 1942, they attempted to remove official anti-emperor statements that might consolidate Japanese people's support for their military government and could

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[50] (Anon.), "Street Corner Speaker to Prime Minister", *The Herald*, Melbourne, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 1, 4 October 1941.

[51] In 1916, *The West Australian* reported: "Curtin was a very fast speaker indeed, sometimes speaking at the rate of 180 to 190 words per minute", cited in Oliver, *Unity is strength*, p. 66.

[52] The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, "Teaching with Documents: A Date Which Will Live in Infamy" [hereafter "A date which will live in infamy"], College Park, 2009, retrieved on 11 September 2009 at <http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/day-of-infamy>; Franklin D. Roosevelt, "A Date Which Will Live in Infamy", Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, Hyde Park, 8 December 1941, retrieved on 11 September 2009 at <http://www.FDRlibrary.marist.edu/archives/collections/avclips.html>.

[53] Curtin, "National broadcast", p. 19.

[54] During the broadcast, Curtin mentioned "Australia", "country" and "nationhood" 23 times. He made 17 references to democracy, freedom and liberty. See Curtin, "National broadcast", pp. 19-22.

[55] Cinesound Productions, "Curtin Cabinet sworn in"; Cinesound Productions, *War in Pacific*.

[56] Curtin used keywords of "we", "us" and "people" 10 times during the speech. See Curtin, "National broadcast", pp. 19-22.

[57] Lim, "Fireside Chats", p. 453.

[58] Curtin used "war" and "enemy" keywords 19 times and in 20 instances respectively. See Curtin, "National broadcast", pp. 19-22.

become counterproductive to Allied efforts in the Pacific.[59]  While Roosevelt exclusively addressed Americans during his "day of infamy" speech, Curtin stressed Australia's imperial relationship in his radio broadcast by declaring: "We shall hold this country and keep it as a citadel for the British-speaking race and as a place where civilization will persist."  Both leaders sought to portray themselves as united with "free men and free women" against a "ruthless and wanton" aggressor.[60]

Curtin often used language about a "British race" in his public talks because this was common parlance in Australia at the time.  A 1933 government census had identified 99.1 per cent of the population as being of a "British" nationality, not recognising Australians as a separate citizenship.[61]  The commonwealth statistician, Dr Roland Wilson, reported: "The non-indigenous population of Australia is fundamentally British in race and nationality."[62]  Curtin used this mode of expression to emphasise "the imperial connection and the crimson thread of kinship time and time again" in his broadcasts.[63]  Yet he pursued an independent foreign policy and his international outlook seemed similar to the democratic views of Roosevelt, who became convinced that "imperialistic policies were no longer admissible on the part of any Power".[64]  Towards the end of 1942, the Curtin government ratified the Statute of Westminster to declare that Australia would be free from any British control and able to form its own defence and foreign policies.[65]  In his newsreels and

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[59] Hal Brands, "Rhetoric, Public Opinion, and Policy in the American Debate over the Japanese Emperor during World War II", *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*, vol. 8, no. 3, 2005, p. 434.

[60] Curtin, "National broadcast", pp. 19-22.

[61] Indigenous Australians were not included in the census.  See Roland Wilson, *Official Year Book Of The Commonwealth Of Australia, 1939* [hereafter *Year book 1939*], Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, Canberra, no. 32, 1939, pp. 383-384.

[62] Wilson, *Year book 1939*, p. 384.

[63] David Black (ed.), *In His Own Words: John Curtin's Speeches and Writings* [hereafter *In his own words*], Paradigm Books Curtin University, Bentley, 1995, p. 200.

[64] Foster Rhea Dulles and Gerald E. Ridinger, "The Anti-Colonial Policies Of Franklin D. Roosevelt", *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 70, no. 1, March 1955, p. 18.

[65] The Statute was a 1931 Act of the British Parliament to declare that the self-governing dominions of the British Empire were fully independent states.  South Africa, Canada and the Irish Free State adopted the statute in 1931.  Yet Australia did not immediately adopt this in the interest of maintaining British defence support.  The Curtin government enacted the Statute of Westminster Adoption Act in October 1942.  See Oliver, "Shaping the nation".

radio talks, he continued to declare the nation's loyalty to Britain to convey the impression that he identified with the majority of his Australian audiences.[66]


Both Curtin and Roosevelt made last-minute, personal amendments to their radio speeches that resonated with national audiences during the aftermath of the Pearl Harbour attacks.  As the first prime ministerial press secretary, Rodgers wrote media statements, articles and radio talks.[67]  While Curtin often appealed to British sentiment, he decided to quote from the radical republican and Victorian English poet Algernon Charles Swinburne's "The Eve Of Revolution".  The citation concluded his broadcast and "caused great interest among his friends", noted an unnamed *Herald* reporter, possibly the newspaper's Canberra bureau chief, Joseph Alexander, whose account was published under a headline in bold, uppercase type: "Mr. Curtin's Quotation".  In the same way as Swinburne attempted to use his lyrics "to rouse a sleeping people",[68] Curtin believed in the persuasive power of poetry to stir Australian people to accelerate wartime production in defence of their country. The prime minister "wrote the quotation from memory a few minutes before his broadcast began, because he thought it peculiarly appropriate as an invocation to the Australian people", according to the anonymous *Herald* journalist.  In the article, Curtin was praised for "his stirring appeal" and for choosing Swinburne's five lines because of their "remarkable application to modern aerial warfare".[69]   The selected excerpt was:

> Come forth, be born and live,
>
> Thou that hast help to give
>
> And light to make man's day of manhood fair:
>
> With flight outflying the spherèd sun,
>
> Hasten thine hour and halt not, till thy work be done.[70]

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[66] Black, *In his own words*, pp. 200, 243.

[67] Richard Hall, "Spin Doctor: The fine art of the parliamentary press secretary" [hereafter "Spin doctor"], *National Library of Australia News*, February 1998, vol. 7, no. 5, p. 5.

[68] Stephanie Kuduk, "'A Sword of a Song': Swinburne's Republican Aesthetics in Songs before Sunrise", *Victorian Studies*, vol. 43, no. 2, 2001, p. 257.

[69] (Anon.), "Mr. Curtin's Quotation", *The Herald*, Melbourne, cited in *Scrapbooks,* no. 1, 9 December 1941.

[70] Algernon Charles Swinburne, "The Eve Of Revolution", *Songs Before Sunrise*, William Heinemann, London, 1917, p. 26.

On the same day as the Australian broadcast, Roosevelt delivered his radio address in
the US Congress at 12.30 pm, using his "reading copy" of a typewritten draft that
included his amendments.[71]  FDR's speeches were usually the product of careful
collaboration with his advisers.[72]  He made a significant change to the critical first
line about the bombings, replacing the phrase, "a date which will live in world
history", with the stronger phrase, "a date which will live in infamy", to intensify the
sense of Allied outrage at the actions of Japan's military government.[73]  While
historians have recognised the important role of speechwriters to enhance the two
leaders' popularity,[74] Curtin and Roosevelt developed reputations for their quick
intelligence and eloquent, original writing styles when preparing citizens for the
Pacific war.


        Curtin's film oratory emphasised the same keywords as his radio broadcast.
Cinesound commentator, Peter Bathurst, told movie audiences: "Right up to the
outbreak of this colossal war, too many of our experts of our time depreciated the
value of air power".  The hero was Curtin, who indicated his open, honest manner by
raising his hands and placing them on the table where he was seated before he
announced, "we are face to face with the struggle for sheer existence".  To strengthen
the impact of his words, the camera crew moved to a close-up while he declared the
upcoming Christmas "will be a period of a stern, ruthless war" that did not allow
"holiday making".  In contrast to the previous "depreciated" war effort commentary,
Curtin persuasively addressed "men and women here in the homeland" as his
colleagues and asked them to:

> … keep the workshops active, to maintain the stream of munitions to our
> gallant fighting forces.  I say to you: "You must not waste one single hour or

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[71] The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, "A date which will live in
infamy".
[72] Bradenburg and Braden, "Roosevelt", pp. 465-466; John T. Flynn, *Country Squire in the
White House* [hereafter *White House*], Doubleday, Doran and Company Inc., New York,
1940, p. 57;
[73] The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, "A date which will live in
infamy".
[74] For example, Bradenburg and Braden, "Roosevelt", pp. 465-466; Flynn, *White House*, p.
57; Hall, "Spin doctor", p. 5.

even one single minute".[75]

As the camera returned to a medium shot, he again emphasised his objective to maintain Australia as "a free citadel for the people of the British race" and "an outpost for civilisation".  He vowed the government would uphold the "tradition" of the country's forebears to protect "free men and free women in a free world".[76]  In the 1941 newsreels, the filmmakers started a pattern of intimate, close-up scenes that signified Curtin was levelling with the public.


Behind the scenes, the Australian Government was striving for more involvement in the high-level Allied planning of the Pacific war.  In top-secret negotiations of the bipartisan Advisory War Council (AWC) in Melbourne, Curtin was discussing options of bringing home the nation's military servicemen who were fighting alongside their British counterparts in overseas battles.  Curtin "thought we should shortly have to consider whether we should not hold our manpower for the defence of Australia", Secretary of the Department of Defence Co-ordination, Frederick Shedden, recorded in the AWC meeting minutes on 9 December.[77]  Also the AWC agreed the British Government should be advised that "some steps should ultimately be taken to ensure closer collaboration between allied countries in the higher direction of the war".[78]  While his mass media strategies were crafted to affirm empire loyalties in public, Curtin's pragmatic determination was evidenced in the AWC minutes that showed he was reassessing Australian wartime priorities from Britain's battles to the new Pacific theatre of war.


Along with the official AWC minutes, Alexander's private diaries revealed aspects of the inner machinations of the Curtin administration during the Pearl

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[75] Cinesound Productions, *War in Pacific*.

[76] Cinesound Productions, *War in Pacific*.

[77] Frederick Geoffrey Shedden, "Advisory War Council Minutes, Records of Frederick Shedden" [hereafter "AWC minutes"], JCPML, Bentley, vol. 3, JCPML acc. no. 00928/4, 9 December 1941, p. 4.  Sir Frederick Shedden was the Secretary of Defence and oversaw the War Cabinet Secretariat.

[78] Shedden, "AWC minutes", vol. 3, 9 December 1941, p. 3.

Harbour crisis.[79]  Several military historians have questioned whether the Japanese-American war was an avoidable tragedy and if Roosevelt and his inner circle received warnings of an impending attack.[80]  Alexander's diaries indicated that in the early days of December 1941, Curtin was alert to an imminent Japanese assault. Moreover, he confidentially briefed journalists about these developments and as a result, they were ready to report immediately on the news of the Pearl Harbour disaster. [81]  In contrast to the media's portrayal of the Honolulu air and naval authorities as having been "caught napping" and "taken by surprise" during the raid,[82] Curtin presented a confident image of being prepared for the Pacific war.[83]

Two days before the Pearl Harbour tragedy, Alexander wrote he was planning to accompany Curtin on a train journey from Melbourne to Canberra on 5 December. Immediately before the train's departure, Curtin was delayed by Shedden, his principal adviser, and the prime minister recalled Alexander from the train to meet Rodgers at the Victoria Barracks, Melbourne.  Rodgers also talked with the other members of "Curtin's Circus".  Alexander noted confidentially, "Rodgers warned us to be ready for the gravest development" because the prime minister had received "grave news from America".[84]  He affirmed, "we are on the brink of war with Japan" and he needed to work "on call over the whole weekend".  He added: "The Ministers are all very anxious but not fearful.  There is an atmosphere of great strain and of

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[79] J.A. Alexander, "Papers 1833-1957" [hereafter "Papers"], National Library of Australia [hereafter NLA], Manuscript Collections, Canberra, NLA acc. no. MS 2389, transcript np; Joseph A. Alexander, interviewed by Mel Pratt [hereafter "Alexander interview"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00551, 2 March 1971, transcript np.

[80] For example, Russell D. Buhite, "Book review" (John Toland and Gordon W. Prange), *The American Historical Review*, vol. 88, no. 2, April 1983, pp. 496–498; David Day, *The great betrayal: Britain, Australia and the onset of the Pacific War, 1939-42*, Angus & Robertson, North Ryde and London, 1988, pp. 197-203; Gordon W. Prange, *At Dawn We Slept: The Untold Story of Pearl Harbor*, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1981; John Toland, *Infamy: Pearl Harbor and Its Aftermath*, Doubleday, New York, 1982.

[81] Alexander, "Papers", 2-8 December 1941.

[82] (Anon.), "Australia Not To Be Caught Napping", *Canberra*, 11 December 1942, p. 2; Richard Fleischer and Akira Kurosawa (directors), Elmo Williams (producer), *Tora! Tora! Tora!*, 20th Century Fox, USA, 1970.

[83] (Anon.), "Australia Not To Be Caught Napping", *Canberra*, 11 December 1942, p. 2.

[84] Alexander, "Papers", 5 December 1941.  Brief excerpts of Alexander's diary entries about the Pearl Harbour disaster were published in: Bob Wurth, *Saving Australia: Curtin's secret peace with Japan* [hereafter *Saving Australia*], Lothian Books, South Melbourne, 2006, pp. 146, 158-59.

sleepless nights but all are cheerful while awaiting the deadline."[85]  According to Harold Cox of *The Sun News-Pictorial*, journalists decided to remain in Melbourne with Curtin.  While the prime minister stayed at the inexpensive, austere and non-licensed hotel, the Victoria Palace in Little Collins Street, the "Circus" spent "a very dreary week-end" at the old Oriental Hotel.[86]

The tense atmosphere had eased because of Roosevelt's "personal appeal" to Hirohito and "the feeling is that nothing will happen until the message is received but the Japanese attitude continues to be bad", Alexander noted in his diary.[87]  Throughout Sunday night, world radio news "flashes" were relayed to the "Listening Post" of the Department of Information and then forwarded to the hotel where Curtin was staying.  On Monday at 5.30am, a monitor picked up the "flash" that "[t]he Japanese … have now attacked Pearl Harbour, in addition to the bombing of Manilla reported a few minutes ago".  The Melbourne time zone was about 20 hours ahead of Hawaii local time.  Immediately the news was repeated to a prime ministerial staff member in another hotel room near Curtin.  He and his typist began a long series of telephone calls.  By 6.30am, Alexander received a message from Rodgers about the bombing.  Other journalists were informed of the tragedy by 7.30am.[88]  Alexander's diaries showed his support for Australia's right to make an independent declaration of war against Japan.  He wrote:

> May it make us a better people or may it reawaken that sense of spiritual
> values, dead or dormant, without which this country can never survive ...
> There is a general sense of relief in one sense, in that we know where we
> stand with Japan.  I hear it everywhere ... what most felt to be inevitable.[89]

It appeared "Curtin's Circus" honoured the "off-the-record" agreement[90] and the

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[85] Alexander, "Papers", 6 December 1941.
[86] Cox, "Cox interview".
[87] Alexander, "Papers", 7 December 1941.
[88] (Anon.), "War With Japan Is Just One Year Old", *Truth*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 1, 6 December 1942.
[89] Alexander, "Papers", 8 December 1941.
[90] For example, Alexander, "Alexander interview"; C.J. Lloyd, *Parliament And The Press: The Federal Parliamentary Press Gallery 1901-88* [hereafter *Parliament and the press*], Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1988, p. 131; Don Whitington, *Strive to be Fair: An Unfinished Biography* [hereafter *Strive to be fair*]*,* Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1977, p. 77.

disaster was reported as a "surprise attack" by reputable international media.[91]
Alexander noted:

> … the US has been taken horribly by surprise at Pearl Harbour. That such an
> attack should be possible on this base is a horrible reflection on the
> preparedness of the naval and air forces there.[92]

In Australia, Curtin continuously communicated with journalists about the crisis.


Similarly to the press gallery, Murdoch upheld the confidentiality deal
although he alluded to the vital government negotiations in his newspapers.  His
company's photographers snapped pictures of Curtin as he left top-secret meetings in
the Victoria Barracks between 6 and 9 December.  *The Herald* headline writer chose
to portray the prime minister as the "Central Figure in Crisis" (see Figure 8).  In the
newspaper's accompanying photo caption, it was noted obliquely that he was
involved in "important discussions on the Pacific crisis".  Although it was the
beginning of summer, Curtin's dark, long overcoat and hat contributed to the
atmosphere of enigma.[93]  By 10 December, he was photographed in a thoughtful,
serious and calm mood as he read silently the formal proclamation being signed by
Gowrie, seated next to him in the Victoria Barracks (see Figure 9).  The document
was the official announcement of Australia's war with Japan.[94]  Thus visual imagery
contributed to Curtin's media image as an agenda setter who was defining the
nation's role in the Pacific conflict.

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[91] For example,. (Anon.), "Japanese planes bomb Pearl Harbor", *BBC News*, London, 7
December 1941, retrieved on 28 January 2009 at
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/december/7/newsid_3494000/3494108.stm>;
Christian Toto, ''Legacy of Attack' brings Pearl Harbour to life', *The Washington Times*,
Washington DC, 26 May 2001, retrieved on 28 January 2009 at
<http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-75056331.html>.

[92] Alexander, "Papers", 9 December 1941.

[93] Figure 8 appeared in (Anon.), "Central Figure In Crisis", *The Herald*, Melbourne, 6
December 1941; Also see (Anon.), untitled photograph, *The Sun News-Pictorial*, Melbourne,
6 December 1941, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 1.

[94] Figure 9 appeared in (Anon.), untitled photograph, *Age*; Also see (Anon.), "Australia
Declares State of War with Japan", *The Sun News-Pictorial*, Melbourne.  Both articles cited
in *Scrapbooks*, no. 2, JCPML acc. no. 00297/2, 10 December 1941.

CENTRAL FIGURE IN CRISIS

*Australia's Prime Minister (Mr Curtin) leaving Victoria Barracks after important discussions on the Pacific crisis today.*

Figure 8 (top) and Figure 9 (below)



The Governor-General (Lord Gowrie) reading the proclamation announcing Australia's declaration of war with Japan. From Left: The Minister of the Army (Mr. Forde), the Prime Minister (Mr. Curtin) and Lord Gowrie.—(Dept. of Information photo.)

Other powerful news editors besides Murdoch emphasised the significance of Curtin's broadcast in their daily editions on 9 December.  A limited content analysis was made of press coverage in *The Age*, *The Canberra Times*, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The West Australian*.  Curtin's radio talk was publicised as "vital" on page one of *The Sydney Morning Herald*;[95] as "important" on the cover of *The Age;*[96] as well as announcing "[d]rastic plans" and "a total war footing" in *The Canberra Times.*[97]  Next to the tightly packed, front-page news summaries, the Fairfax and the Syme families continued their tradition of allocating multiple columns of classified advertisements to the front covers.[98]  *The West Australian* company published news coverage of Curtin in the inside pages because advertisements dominated the front cover during 1941 and 1942.[99]  Despite the adherence to conservative news formats, Curtin's speech was copied almost verbatim in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, with 49 sentences reported as direct quotations.[100]  Likewise, a substantial portion of the keywords were repeated in *The Age*,[101] *The Canberra Times*[102] and *The West Australian*.[103]

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[95] (Anon.), "Home News", *SMH*, 9 December 1941, p. 1.

[96] (Anon.), "Australia And Japan", *Age*, 9 December 1941, p. 1.

[97] (Anon.), "Australia Placed on Full War Basis", *Canberra*, 9 December 1942, p. 1.

[98] (Anon.), "The Age of responsibility and trust", *Age*, 17 October 2004, retrieved on 15 September 2009 at <http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2004/10/16/1097784094350.html?from=storylhs>; Rod Kirkpatrick, "War and lasting change: The battle for survival on the provincial newspaper front", *ejournalist*, vol. 1, no. 2, 2002, p. 10.

[99] See *The West Australian* front pages on the following dates: 9 December 1941; 31 December 1941; 19-21 January 1942; 20 February 1942; 14 March 1942; 16 March 1942; 9 May 1942; 11 December 1942.

[100] (Anon.), "Declaration To-day", *SMH*, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 2, 9 December 1941.

[101] Twenty-five sentences of Curtin's radio talk were repeated in the following article: (Anon.), "Australia In The New War", *Age*, 9 December 1941, p. 6.

[102] Six sentences from the broadcast were cited in (Anon.), "Australia On War Footing", *Canberra*, 9 December 1942, p. 2.

[103] Three references were made to the broadcast in (Anon.), "Australia Ready", *West*, 9 December 1941, p. 6.

All four newspapers included supportive leader pages,[104] headlines[105] and smaller articles related to the broadcast.[106]  "The Prime Minister knows how and where Australian interests have to be protected", *The Canberra Times* leader writer stated on 9 December.[107]  He "has developed the qualities of real leadership" by "acting with promptitude and energy", *The Sydney Morning Herald* editorial writer commented.[108]  In his press editorials, *The Canberra Times* publisher, Arthur Shakespeare, recognised the country was involved in a new war, a new world order – another key term in Curtin's radio speech – that needed the support of "everyone" in the nation.[109]  Such sentiments were echoed in *The West Australian* coverage of Curtin's address to the Melbourne Town Hall.  He was raising money to replace the *HMAS Sydney*, which had been sunk on 19 November.  In the article, Curtin was quoted directly in 35 sentences and indirectly in one statement, interspersed with references to "a cheering crowd" and "applause".[110]  At *The Canberra Times*, a writer contrasted the government's readiness "for unpleasant surprises" with the US military, which was reportedly "caught napping" in Honolulu shortly before the Pearl Harbour naval base was bombed.[111]  Reporters approvingly referred to Curtin's announcements of a more stringent rationing of goods, electricity and other public services as well as his cancellation of employees' holiday leave.[112]  Positive editorials appeared in another six mainstream newspapers across Australia.[113]  In *The Bulletin*, however, it was satirically noted that "Jack" was "out of step" with the

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[104] (Anon.), "A New And Treacherous Foe", *Age*, 9 December 1941, p. 6; (Anon.), "The World At War*", Canberra*, 9 December 1941, p. 2; (Anon.), "The Gravest Hour Of Our History", *SMH*, 9 December 1941, p. 6; (Anon.), "Japan Strikes", *West*, 9 December 1941, p. 4.

[105] . a subhead referred to "Mr. Curtin's Broadcast" in (Anon.), "Grave New Menace To Australia", *SMH,* 9 December 1941, p. 7.  Another subhead was "Mr. Curtin Appeals To Nation" in (Anon.), "Australia Ready", *West*, 9 December 1941, p. 6.

[106] E.g. (Anon.), "Clarion Call To Nation", *Age*, 9 December 1941, p. 6; (Anon.), "Mr. Curtin Demands 'All-In' War Effort", *SMH,* 9 December 1941, p. 5.

[107] (Anon.), "The World At War*", Canberra*, 9 December 1941, p. 2.

[108] (Anon.), "The Gravest Hour Of Our History", *SMH*, 9 December 1941, p. 6.

[109] (Anon.), "Australia Placed on Full War Basis", *Canberra*, 9 December 1941, p. 1; (Anon.), "New World Order For Australia", *Canberra*, 12 December 1941, p. 1.

[110] (Anon.), "Australia Ready", *West*, 9 December 1941, p. 6.

[111] (Anon.), "Australia Not To Be Caught Napping", *Canberra*, 11 December 1941, p. 2.

[112] For example, (Anon.), "Australia In The New War", *Age*, 9 December 1941, p. 6; (Anon.), "Australia Placed on Full War Basis", *Canberra*, 9 December 1942, p. 1; (Anon.), "Australia Ready", *West*, 9 December 1941, p. 6; (Anon.), "Grave New Menace To Australia", *SMH,* 9 December 1941, p. 7.

[113] The positive editorials appeared in *The Argus*, *The Courier-Mail*, *The Daily Mirror*, *The Herald*, *The Mercury* and *The Sun*, cited in *Scrapbooks*, nos 1 and 2, 9 December 1941.

extended conscription strategies of Churchill, FDR and Stalin.[114]  Towards the end of 1941, Curtin had managed to gain the support of virtually all of the mainstream media for his foreign policies.  His journalism and mass communication strategies contributed to his success.  These strategies included: confidential, frequent and informal news briefings; developing a mutual understanding that he and journalists would cooperate with one another; delivering a direct, accessible radio broadcast to make Australia's first independent declaration of war; giving numerous newsreel addresses; using language that established a sense of kinship with Australians, emphasising a common heritage and shared ideals of liberty, freedom and democracy, and making an impersonal characterisation of foreign enemies to avoid a tone of vengeance.  Conservative media owners seemed to appreciate his informative news tips and they endorsed his national leadership by reproducing his key messages positively in their newspapers.

**"Immense sensation": New Year message, December 1941 to January 1942**

Continuing with this chapter's analysis of selected Curtin addresses, this section will examine his *Herald* editorial and the resultant media coverage about his assertion that Australia should establish a stronger alliance with the US.  His vision of the public sphere as a site of "universal, democratic and informed politics"[115] was exemplified when he agreed to Alexander's request to write "a special article for the Herald dealing with the outlook for 1942" for the newspaper's Saturday magazine section.[116]  Curtin wrote candidly for *The Herald* that:

> Without any inhibitions of any kind, I make it quite clear that Australia looks to America, free of any pangs as to our traditional links or kinship with the United Kingdom.[117]

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[114] Cited in Black, *In his own words*, p. 215.

[115] Ian Ward, "The Press, Television and the Public Sphere" [hereafter "The public sphere"], in Ian Ward (ed.), *Politics of the media,* Macmillan, South Melbourne, 1995, p. 12.

[116] Alexander, "Papers", 28 December 1941.

[117] Curtin, "The task ahead".

Alexander privately remarked that Curtin was appealing for US military aid because
he was indignant that Australia had been "deceived or deluded" about the "lack" of
air defences in Singapore, which was the major British base in the Pacific.[118]  On 14
December, Alexander had commented in his diary:

> There is a great deal of chagrin here at the news from Singapore that there is
> a shortage of fighter planes.  Imagine this after the long period of
> preparedness [since the war began in September 1939] and the repeated
> statements of great air strength.[119]

In early 1941, Prime Minister Menzies had visited Churchill to discuss "British
neglect"[120] of Singapore's "alarming position",[121] but London was focused on
preventing a German invasion of Britain.  It seemed that Alexander and other
journalists did not know of Australian officials' concerns over the "grave
deficiencies"[122] in Singapore's naval and air strength until Curtin discussed this
confidential news with them.[123]  Likewise at the end of December 1941, the war
councillors remained apprehensive about the Nazis' military strength, privately
stating, "[t]he German tanks were superior to those of the Allied forces".[124]  As
Churchill recalled in his wartime history, when the Japanese conquered Singapore
with comparative ease on 15 February 1942, this was "the worst disaster and largest
capitulation of British history".[125]  Thus Curtin's prognosis in his *Herald* editorial
that "the Year 1942 will impose supreme tests" was apt.

When Curtin submitted his editorial to *The Herald*, Murdoch was away in
London and did not recognise the "tremendous importance" of the article, which was

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[118] Alexander, "Papers", 28 December 1941.
[119] Alexander, "Papers", 14 December 1941.
[120] A.W. Martin and Patsy Hardy (eds), *Dark and Hurrying Days: Menzies' 1941 Diary*
[hereafter *Dark and hurrying days*], NLA, Canberra, 1993, p. 10.
[121] A.W. Martin and Patsy Hardy, *Dark and hurrying days,* p. 11.
[122] A.W. Martin and Patsy Hardy, *Dark and hurrying days,* p. 10.
[123] E.g. Alexander, "Papers", 14-15, 18, 22-23 and 28 December 1941.
[124] Shedden, "AWC minutes", vol. 4, JCMPL acc. no. 00928/5, 31 December 1941, p. 399.
[125] Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War: The Hinge of Fate* [hereafter *The hinge of
fate*], Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1950, p. 92.

"held for a couple of weeks before publication".[126]  To my knowledge, no-one has written an account to explain why Murdoch decided to feature the article, originally intended for the magazine section, on *The Herald* front page on Saturday, 27 December.[127]  Curtin's statements led with more lyrical quotations – this time from Bernard O'Dowd, a respected Australian poet known for his nationalism and opposition to the White Australia policy.[128]  Although it was not the customary front-page lead of a conservative newspaper – and perhaps contributed to Murdoch's decision to delay publication – it was appropriate for Curtin to cite O'Dowd, who had been a close friend of his father-in-law, Abraham Needham.[129]  A big, bold headline, "The Task Ahead", was displayed on the cover with an accompanying photograph of Curtin writing at a desk to emphasise his "intellectual" orientation[130] and "extensive vocabulary"[131] (see Figure 10).  Murdoch did not predict "[t]he stir over Curtin's special in The Herald", as Alexander recounted in his diary.[132]

When Sydney's *Sunday Telegraph* editor, Cyril Pearl, read the freshly arrived Melbourne *Herald* on Saturday, he reportedly said that Murdoch had "missed" a major news opportunity because the leading article was published "without commentary or elaboration".[133]  Immediately Pearl directed his staff to prepare a front-page story about Curtin's editorial for the next day's *Sunday Telegraph* and it was published under the eye-catching headline: "Australia Looks First To US".  Alexander noted in his diary: "The Sunday Telegraph pinched it [the editorial] and

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[126] Allan Fraser, interviewed by Mel Pratt [hereafter "Allan Fraser interview"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00550, August 1972-January 1973, transcript np.

[127] David Black, "Menzies and Curtin in World War Two: A comparative essay", [hereafter "Menzies and Curtin"], JCPML, Bentley, 2006, retrieved on 10 May 2008 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/ww2leaders>; Graham Freudenberg, *Churchill and Australia* [hereafter *Churchill*], Pan Macmillan Australia, Sydney, 2008, pp. 340-342.

[128] Frank Bongiorno, "Aboriginality and historical consciousness: Bernard O'Dowd and the creation of an Australian national imaginary", *Aboriginal History*, vol. 24, 2000, pp. 39-61.

[129] Irene Greenwood, "Proposed script of ABC broadcast by Irene Greenwood, 'Mrs John Curtin – a personal sketch'", JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00398/74, 27 July 1945.

[130] (Anon.), "John Curtin Is An Intellectual", *The Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 1, 4 October 1941.

[131] Dawes, "Men you should know about".

[132] Alexander, "Papers", 30 December 1941.

[133] Claire Harvey, "Looking back over 70 years at The Sunday Telegraph", *The Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 20 November 2009, retrieved on 30 December 2010 at <http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/indepth/looking-back-over-70-years-at-the-sunday-telegraph/story-fn4hieht-1225800182102>.

had it today.  Other Sunday papers gave it great publicity and it is being widely in England ... KM [Keith Murdoch] is very amazed about it".[134]  When Murdoch, still in London, saw *The Sunday Telegraph* front cover, he hastily wrote articles for England's conservative *Daily Mail* and *The Times* to criticise Curtin's stance and urge for a national, bipartisan government in Australia.[135]  Later, Ethel (Maie) Casey,



Figure 10[136]

the wife of the Australian minister to the United States of America, recalled that Roosevelt had privately discussed Curtin's editorial with her husband, Richard

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[134] Alexander, "Papers", 28 December 1941 and 30 December 1941.
[135] Alexander, "Papers", 28 December.
[136] Figure 10 appeared in Curtin, "The task ahead", p. 1.

Casey.[137]   As the UAP member for the Victorian seat of Corio, Casey had stood unsuccessfully for his party's leadership in 1939; the next year, Menzies had appointed him to establish Australia's first diplomatic post in Washington DC.[138]   As Maie Casey reflected in her autobiography, Roosevelt had commented to her husband that the editorial "tasted of panic and disloyalty".   Also, "The President insisted that his remarks were to be regarded as personal and were not to be reportedly officially".[139]   Archival research did not yield evidence of any Roosevelt correspondence to support this reminiscence.[140]   Moreover, in a cable to Curtin on 2 January 1942, Roosevelt wrote that he and Churchill "are deeply conscious of the magnificent contribution which Australia has made and is making to common effort".   As a result, military advisers were giving "urgent consideration to the matter of despatching reinforcement at earliest possible moment".[141]   Although Churchill later wrote that Curtin's signed article "was flaunted around the world by our enemies",[142] Curtin encouraged discussions of his 1942 outlook, both in media conferences and press columns.   Since neither Curtin nor Murdoch predicted the "immense" public "sensation" that the editorial would create around the world,[143] the next section will analyse the text of the editorial and press commentaries.

While Rodgers claimed to have written the editorial, the historian, Graham Freudenberg, later disputed this, saying the original document was "authentically Curtin's".[144]   The press article registered on the Flesch-Kincaid scale as being aimed at an audience with a reading level slightly above the eleventh grade.[145]   The Flesch-Kincaid and Flesch readability scores indicated this article was slightly more

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[137] Maie Casey, *Tides and Eddies* [hereafter *Tides and eddies*], Michael Joseph, London, 1966, p. 83.

[138] W. J. Hudson, "Casey, Richard Gavin Gardiner [Baron Casey] (1890 - 1976)", *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, vol. 13, 1993, pp. 381-385.

[139] Casey, *Tides and eddies*, p. 83.

[140] R.G. Casey to Department of External Affairs (hereafter "Casey letter"), Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Barton, vol. 5, 2 January 1942, retrieved on 24 November 2010 at <http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/vVolume/AD5281E1E28FA0A4C A256B7E001438E7>.

[141] Cited in Casey, "Casey letter".

[142] Churchill, *The hinge of fate,* p. 8.

[143] Alexander, "Papers", 28 December 1941.

[144] Freudenberg, *Churchill*, p. 340.

[145] Curtin, "The task ahead".

complicated than Curtin's radio broadcast to declare war against Japan.  Curtin's 95 "war" references[146] overshadowed his previous keywords about "freedom" and "liberty",[147] which were not included in his *Herald* statement.  Three days after *The Herald* special, Curtin confidentially told the press gallery that Churchill had cabled him to advise the US navy would undertake defence of the Pacific area including Australasia.  In his diary, Alexander noted: "This is grand news and this ... transformed the whole position".[148]  The AWC "fully endorsed" the establishment of a "unified command in the South Western Pacific", which would be led by the US.[149] The secret negotiations were a testament to the success of Curtin's appeal to the US Government.

Many mainstream, daily Australian newspaper publishers endorsed Curtin's assertive policy by emphasising his statements in related leader pages and the kicker.[150]  Positive press reports, backing his "realism", appeared in *The Age, The Argus, The Brisbane Telegraph, The Canberra Times, The Daily Telegraph, The Herald*, *The Mirror* and *The Sun*.[151]  For example, Curtin became a front-page personality in *The Canberra Times* when Shakespeare decided to publish 20 sentences of *The Herald* article on his broadsheet cover on 29 December.[152]  It was highly unusual for a publisher to print an article that had appeared two days earlier in another state's newspaper under a different proprietor.  Curtin's warnings of a new war, the need for the "revolutionising of the Australian way of life" and particularly his appeal for US assistance produced a powerful impact on the press publishers.[153] *The Canberra Times* leader writer enthused:

> At last an Australian Government has told Whitehall where it stands ... the
>
> pity has been that Australian Governments have not had the backbone to

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[146] Curtin, "The task ahead".

[147] For example,. Cinesound Productions, "Curtin Cabinet sworn in"; Curtin, "National broadcast", pp. 19-22.

[148] Alexander, "Papers", 30 December 1941.

[149] Shedden, "AWC minutes", vol. 4, 31 December 1941, p. 399.

[150] For example, *The Age* kicker was "Leading Article" above the main editorial defending Curtin.  See (Anon.), "The Real Task In The Pacific", *Age*, 30 December 1941, p. 2.

[151] Cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 2, 27 December 1941-1 January 1942.

[152] (Anon.), "Battle For The Pacific Comes First", *Canberra*, 29 December 1941, pp. 1-2.

[153] Curtin, "The task ahead", p. 1.

assume the lead in Pacific affairs ... We have no doubt that once Whitehall

has recovered from the shock of an Australian Government stating its

position without apology or qualification, the reaction will be to accept the

Australian viewpoint as a domestic consideration.[154]

Also metropolitan journalists reported their colleagues' reactions overseas.  Under

the sub-heading "Washington impressed" in *The Canberra Times*, it was noted

Curtin's article had been published on the front page of the *New York Sun*.[155]

Likewise, *The Age* featured the page one headline, "Australia's Loyalty Stressed by

Mr. Curtin".[156]  The broadsheet's readers were told London's *The Times* had

endorsed his outlook.  A *Times* journalist was quoted as praising the statements for

their "timeliness" and "realism", as well as for being "outspokenly and eloquently"

expressed by Curtin.[157]  Reporters noted that at a subsequent press conference, he

said his statement did not imply any weakening of Australia's relations with

Britain.[158]  The clarification seemed to allay *The Sun* editorial concerns.  The

newspaper's leader writer suggested Curtin's words were "misconstrued";[159] the next

day, however, readers were informed, "seven million Australians stand behind Mr.

Curtin's statement" that the country should remain in the British Commonwealth.[160]

Many journalists followed his lead and favourably presented his determination for a

greater Australian role in the Pacific.

Affirming their traditional empire loyalties, a small minority of press editors

initially disapproved the "New Year message"; however, soon afterwards journalists

acknowledged the US Government's deployment of troops to Australia "vindicated"

Curtin's Pacific war strategies.  Criticisms appeared in Fairfax's *Sydney Morning*

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[154] (Anon.), "Australia Stakes Her Claim", *Canberra*, 29 December 1941, p. 2.

[155] (Anon.), "Battle For The Pacific Comes First", *Canberra*, 29 December 1941, p. 2.

[156] (Anon.), "Australia's Loyalty Stressed by Mr. Curtin", *Age*, 30 December 1941, p. 1.

[157] (Anon.), "The Pacific Crisis", *Age*, 30 December 1941, p. 2.

[158] For example,. (Anon.), "Australia and America", *West*, 31 December 1941, p. 4; (Anon.), "Battle For The Pacific Comes First", *Canberra*, Canberra, 29 December 1941, p. 1.

[159] (Anon.), "Australia's Part In Pacific Strategy", *The Sun*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks,* no. 2, 29 December 1941.

[160] (Anon.), "Our Voice Must Be Heard", *The Sun*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 2, 30 December 1941.

*Herald*[161] and Murdoch's *Courier-Mail*.[162]  The two countries' relations were satirised by Frank Packer's *Daily Telegraph* cartoonist, William Mahony, on 31 December (see Figure 11).  Curtin was shown as eager to catch a pistol thrown by a grim "Uncle Sam" figure, indicating some meagre support.[163]  A *Sydney Morning Herald* leader writer on 29 December disagreed with Curtin's views that the Pacific
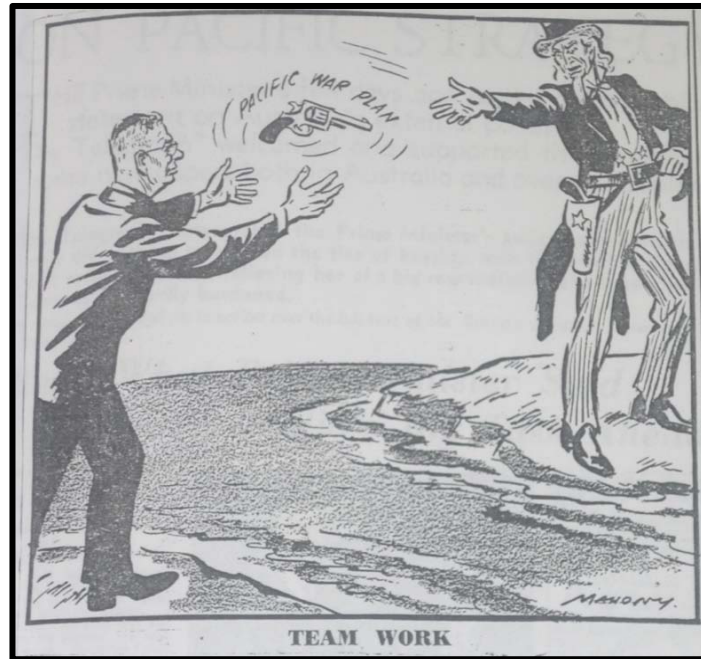


Figure 11

front should be treated as a "new war".[164]  Curtin's appeal was shortly to be justified, however.  An Australian-US military alliance was formed at the end of 1941.  As a result, about 90,000 US servicemen were in Australia by August 1942.  They were either stationed in Australian bases or they were in transit to New Guinea in accordance with Curtin's objective to secure US military assistance.[165]  A week after their criticisms, Packer and Fairfax were supporting him again.  His foreign policy was "a triumph for sheer realism" and for the power of his words, which "a lot of

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[161] (Anon.), "One War Against The Axis", *SMH*, 29 December 1941, p. 6.

[162] (Anon.), "Looking to America", *The Courier-Mail*, Brisbane, cited in *Scrapbooks,* no. 2, 30 December 1941.

[163] Figure 11 appeared in William Mahony, "Team Work", *The Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks,* no. 2, 31 December 1941.

[164] (Anon.), "One War Against The Axis", *SMH*, 29 December 1941, p. 6.

[165] Kay Saunders and Helen Taylor, "The Reception of Black American Servicemen in Australia During World War II", *Journal of Black Studies*, vol. 25, no. 3, January 1995, p. 334.

unthinking people called un-British sentiment", *The Daily Telegraph* Canberra political correspondent, Don Whitington, wrote.[166]  At the same time *The Sydney Morning Herald* included the crosshead, "Australia Vindicated", with reports of US naval units about to begin operating in Australasia.[167]  The Murdoch-controlled press exhibited a diversity of independent opinions.  Although he led a Melbourne syndicate that bought *The West Australian* in 1926, Murdoch was described as being "hypercritical" by the newspaper's leader writer on 31 December, defending Curtin.[168]  At the beginning of 1942, *The Herald* – with Murdoch as managing editor – included leader comments that, "Mr. Curtin has now been justified for the realism and urgency of his representations" because he had developed "a definite defensive plan" and gained support for his economic policies.[169]

The Allied Governments' tense diplomacy was not conveyed in a Curtin newsreel produced by the UK film company, British Movietone News.  Although he was "rallying his own land and looking to America for aid in the hour of crisis", he still gave "full tribute to the old country", the English narrator assured international audiences in March 1942.[170]  Again filmmakers used informal, long shots of John and Elsie Curtin in the Lodge gardens.  The narrator praised the government and Australian people for their "energy", as well as their "urgent organisation of total defence with accent on *attack* whenever possible".  Cinemagoers were told, "the war has stormed right up to the shores of their country".  In this official newsreel, the people of "the old country" were shown to support Curtin's national leadership.[171]  The film images were consistent with the memoirs of wartime press gallery correspondent, Tom Mead, who wrote that British comment was "sympathetic" to

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[166] Don Whitington, "Facts behind our 'sheer realism'", *The Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks,* no. 2, 5 January 1942.

[167] (Anon.), "U.S. Warships For Australasia", *SMH*, cited in *Scrapbooks,* no. 2, 5 January 1942.

[168] (Anon.), "Australia and America", *West*, 31 December 1941, p. 4.

[169] (Anon.), "The Task For 1942", *The Herald*, Melbourne, cited in *Scrapbooks,* no. 2, 1 January 1942.

[170] See British Movietone News (producer), "Australia's Leader At Canberra" [hereafter "Australia's leader], in *Newsreels of Curtin, 1942-1945* (newsreel) [hereafter *Curtin Newsreels*], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00734/1, 1942.  According to the British Movietone Digital Archive, this newsreel was made on 19 March 1942.

[171] British Movietone News, "Australia's leader".

Australia's plight.[172]   Through Curtin's press statement, media conferences and newsreel images, he encouraged a vigorous, democratic and informed debate of his strategies in the public sphere.

## "Australia's greatest hour": Japan's bombing of Darwin, February 1942

When Australia's mainland was bombed by foreign foes for the first time, news publishers, editors and reporters cooperated with the government's strategies for portraying the attacks to the public.   *The Age* and *The Canberra Times* publishers gave front-page status to Curtin's statements.[173]   Through bold, block letter headlines, they emphasised his announcement that 93 Japanese bombers had made two air raids on Darwin on 19 February 1942.[174]   It was the middle of the twelfth week of Australia's Pacific war.   In their desire to report a patriotic victory, newspaper editors approved subheads that were variations of: "Four Enemy Planes Brought Down".[175]   Also journalists stated the city had sustained considerable damage with unspecified casualties.[176]   In fact, the two bombing raids killed at least 243 Australians and injured many more people in Darwin and the surrounding areas.[177]   Curtin publicised the news of the attack to mobilise Australians to support his strategies;[178] however, he did not release fatality figures as part of the Allied

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[172] Tom Mead, *Breaking The News: The events which changed life in Australia through the eyes of a man who worked at the front line of journalism and politics,* Dolphin Books, Sydney, 1998, p. 58.

[173] (Anon.), "Heavy Japanese Blows On Darwin", *Canberra*, 20 February 1942, p. 1; (Anon.), "Two Air Raids On Darwin", *Age*, 20 February 1942, p. 1.

[174] John Curtin, "Attack On Darwin" [hereafter "Attack on Darwin"], *DDA*, no. 19, 19 February 1942, pp. 8-9.

[175] (Anon.), "Two Air Raids On Darwin", *Age*, 20 February 1942, p. 1; (Anon.), "Two Big Air Raids On Darwin", *SMH*, 20 February 1942, p. 5; (Anon.), "Darwin Bombed", *West*, 20 February 1942, p. 5.

[176] E.g. (Anon.), "Heavy Japanese Blows On Darwin", *Canberra*, 20 February 1942, p. 1; "Two Air Raids On Darwin", *Age*, 20 February 1942, p. 1.

[177] Bobbie Oliver, *Peacemongers: Conscientious objectors to military service in Australia, 1911-1945* [hereafter *Peacemongers*], Fremantle Arts Centre Press, South Fremantle, 1997, p. 83; Peter Stanley, "Remembering 1942 – The bombing of Darwin, 19 February 1942", Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 2002, retrieved on 2 April 2009 at <http://www.awm.gov.au/atwar/remembering1942/darwin/transcript.asp>.

[178] Curtin, "Attack On Darwin", pp. 8-9.

procedure of withholding information that might hurt public morale and aid the
enemy.[179]

Due to the impact, accessibility and brevity of the prime ministerial
announcement, it received prominent, positive coverage in newspapers across
Australia the next day.  Although Curtin was absent due to illness, his statement was
read to the Federal Parliament on 19 February.  The speech consisted of two sections:
first, it was announced "a number of bombs ... were dropped on Darwin"; and later at
10.43 pm, details of "a second raid" were released.[180]  Altogether the average Flesch
readability score was 61.5, well within the prescribed range, and the Flesch-Kincaid
grade was 8.5, appropriate for a simple speech.  Newspaper publishers directly
quoted many of Curtin's statements and emphasised the event's significance to their
readers.[181]   Relevancy is a central news value, as Chapter 2 has discussed.  *The Age*
leader headline was: "War Comes Home To Australia".[182]  As *The Canberra Times*
leader writer suggested: "What has happened at Darwin could happen at many ports
in our Northern regions".[183]  This event was "Australia's greatest hour", according to
*The West Australian*.  This newspaper reported that Darwin was important for
Western Australians as a main route of transporting supplies and communications.[184]
Reflecting press concerns, keywords about an enemy "attack" significantly
outweighed references to "defence" in newspaper reports.[185]  For example, while

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[179] Cox, "Cox interview"; Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Extracts from the Press Conference", in
John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters (eds), *The American Presidency Project*, Santa Barbara,
9 December 1941, retrieved on 4 January 2011 at
<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=16054>.
[180] (Anon.), "Heavy Japanese Blows On Darwin", *Canberra*, 20 February 1942, p. 1.
[181] In the issues of 20 February 1942, Curtin's Darwin announcement was repeated in 21
sentences in *The West Australian*; 16 sentences in *The Sydney Morning Herald*; 14 sentences
in *The Age*; and 13 sentences in *The Canberra Times*.  The citations included direct
quotations and paraphrasing of Curtin's words.
[182] (Anon.), "War Comes Home To Australia", *Age*, 20 February 1942, p. 2.
[183] (Anon.), "Australia Can Take It", *Canberra*, 20 February 1942, p. 4.
[184] (Anon.), "Into The Front Line", *West*, 20 February 1942, p. 4.
[185] Regarding the main news reports of the Darwin bombing, "war" and "attack" keywords
were mentioned 20 times in *The Age*; and three times in *The West Australian* and *The Sydney
Morning Herald*.  In contrast, "defence" was mentioned only once in *The West Australian*
and *The Age*.  Curtin's security-related call to "nerve our steel" and "gird our loins" was
repeated once in *The Sydney Morning Herald*.  See (Anon.), "Two Air Raids On Darwin",
*Age*, 20 February 1942, p. 1; (Anon.), "Two Big Air Raids On Darwin", *SMH*, 20 February
1942, p. 5; (Anon.), "Darwin Bombed", *West*, 20 February 1942, p. 5.

Curtin mentioned "enemy" only once in his statement,[186] the next day's related *Canberra Times* reports included this term 18 times.[187]  Neither Curtin nor the Australian reporters referred to the ideals of freedom, liberty and democracy, which were prevalent in his earlier speeches.[188]  Yet his appeal to "the gallantry that is traditional in the people of our stock"[189] was repeated in the next day's reports.[190] Although it was noted he had released his first prime ministerial statement from a hospital bed, the four selected newspapers did not include detailed reports about his health.[191]  In fact, *The Age* leader writer announced: "The Government of this country is entitled to the pre-knowledge that the Australian people are prepared to trust its considered judgment, and to accept whatever conclusion it may reach."[192] The newspaper publishers reaffirmed their support for Curtin's leadership by stating: Australians would "trust" the government's "considered judgement"; [193] heed his call for "total mobilisation"[194] to be "in the forefront of the fight";[195] and give "solid backing" for his strategies to place the nation "on a war footing".[196]

The press editorial endorsement was noteworthy, given the myriad set of challenges confronting the ALP administration in early 1942.  After Curtin confidentially briefed the press gallery, he secured journalists' assurances that they would protect national security and withhold publication of his defiance of Churchill, when he succeeded in bringing the 6th and 7th Australian Divisions from the Middle

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[186] Curtin, "Attack On Darwin", pp. 8-9.
[187] (Anon.), "Australia Can Take It", *Canberra*, 20 February 1942, p. 4; (Anon.), "Heavy Japanese Blows On Darwin", *Canberra*, 20 February 1942, p. 1.
[188] E.g. Cinesound Productions, "Curtin Cabinet sworn in"; Curtin, "National broadcast", pp. 19-22.
[189] Curtin, "Attack On Darwin", p. 9.
[190] (Anon.), "Darwin Bombed", *West*, 20 February 1942, p. 5; (Anon.), "Heavy Japanese Blows On Darwin", *Canberra*, 20 February 1942, p. 1; (Anon.), "Two Air Raids On Darwin", *Age*, 20 February 1942, p. 1; (Anon.), "Two Big Air Raids On Darwin", *SMH*, 20 February 1942, p. 5.
[191] E.g. (Anon.), "Darwin Bombed", *West*, 20 February 1942, p. 5; (Anon.), "Heavy Japanese Blows On Darwin", *Canberra*, 20 February 1942, p. 1; (Anon.), "Two Big Air Raids On Darwin", *SMH*, 20 February 1942, p. 5.
[192] (Anon.), "War Comes Home To Australia", *Age*, 20 February 1942, p. 2.
[193] (Anon.), "War Comes Home To Australia", *Age*, 20 February 1942, p. 2.
[194] (Anon.), "Darwin Bombed", *West*, 20 February 1942, p. 5.
[195] (Anon.), "Australia Can Take It", *Canberra*, 20 February 1942, p. 4.
[196] (Anon.), "The War Comes To Australia", *SMH*, 20 February 1942, p. 3.

East to defend their homeland.[197]   In private cables, the two prime ministers clashed over the allocation of military forces because Churchill planned to divert the same Australian troops to fight in Burma.  On 20 February, one day after the Darwin bombing, Churchill wrote to Curtin, "a vital war emergency cannot be ignored and troops en route to other destinations must be ready to turn around and take part in a battle".[198]   In his reply two days later, Curtin emphasised Australia's precarious military position because of Japan's raids in the north-west and the enemy's "superior sea and air power".  The Federal Government, he wrote, "finds it most difficult to understand that it should be called upon to make a further contribution of forces" in a distant area.  As a result of these serious threats to national security, Curtin declared, "we have every right to expect them [the divisions] to be returned as soon as possible with adequate escorts to ensure their safe arrival".[199]   With hindsight, Churchill sympathised with Curtin's plight in the Pacific conflict because "destruction was at the very throat of the Australian Commonwealth", as he wrote in *The Hinge of Fate*.[200]   Despite the cable exchange, Churchill remarked he became friends with "this eminent and striking Australian personality" and added: "I regret any traces of impatience which my telegrams may bear."  Curtin showed the "great pile of cables" to reporters at one of his morning conferences, requesting their cooperation to uphold his media embargo during the divisions' precarious ocean voyage to Australia, made without the protection of air cover.[201]

When Murdoch heard the news, "he was furious at the very idea of Curtin presuming to question Winston Churchill", Alexander recalled.  Although Curtin enjoyed "friendly" relations with Murdoch at the beginning of his prime ministership, their relations had "cooled off" by 1942, according to Alexander.[202]   Curtin continued to reject Murdoch's calls in *The Herald* for a national government consisting of all the political parties.  The Federal Labor Conference supported

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[197] E.g. Geoff Burgoyne to John Curtin, JCPML, Bentley, N/C. acc. no. 009, 27 March 1942; John Curtin to Geoff Burgoyne, JCPML, Bentley, N/C. acc. no. 010, 20 April 1942.
[198] Winston Churchill to John Curtin, National Archives of Australia [hereafter NAA], Canberra, A816, 52/302/142, 20 February 1942, p. 285.
[199] Curtin to Churchill, NAA, Canberra, A816, 52/302/142, 22 February 1942, pp. 279-280.
[200] Churchill, *The hinge of fate*, pp. 4-5.
[201] Alexander, "Alexander interview"; Don Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, p. 77.
[202] Alexander, "Alexander interview".

Curtin's aim of maintaining a separate opposition party.[203]  Also Murdoch became "angry" when Curtin refused Churchill's request to divert the Australian troops to Burma.  Although Murdoch did not support the important strategy of bringing back the 6th and 7th divisions to Australia, he maintained his silence to protect military security, in accordance with the censorship rules.

Yet the press gallery supported Curtin's determination to fight for an Australian victory in the Pacific war.  Alexander recounted:

> … although we were staggered at the idea of Curtin opposing the will of a man like Churchill at a time like this, we all felt, I think, proud of him, because he was determined to put Australia first.[204]

ABC wartime federal political journalist, John Commins, recalled Curtin's "concern" for Australia's safety "was genuine".  Commins also supported the administration's accelerated military production program because he said the previous government:

> … sent our best troops overseas, we'd stripped the country of equipment to send with them … and [Curtin] was faced with a war on his very doorstep. The way he hopped in and handled his Cabinet and organised the country was, I think, nothing short of superb.[205]

During the troops' return to Australia, Commins heard Curtin's words: "I'm not able to sleep while the boys are on the water."[206]  Other journalists learned of his personal struggles and night-time Canberra walks.  As they travelled together by train to Gisborne in Victoria, Curtin talked with *The Sun* bureau chief, Alan Reid, in the lobby about his nightmares that the troops' ships might be torpedoed.  Reid recalled he "tried to comfort" Curtin by playing a game of bridge in the train, but "periodically you'd see him wipe the sweat from his forehead".[207]  One late summer evening in King's Hall, Parliament House, Curtin saw Harold Cox, paused and exclaimed: "Harold!  What would you do if you knew their [the troops'] equipment was on another convoy two days behind them?"  The next evening he met Cox by coincidence again.  The journalist remarked to Curtin that he looked "a lot better".

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[203] Oliver, *Unity is strength*, p. 156.

[204] Alexander, "Alexander interview".

[205] John Commins, interviewed by Mel Pratt [hereafter "Commins interview"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01092/1, 22-26 May 1971, transcript np.

[206] Commins, "Commins interview".

[207] Alan D. Reid, interviewed by Mel Pratt, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00501, 4 October 1972 and 28 February 1973, transcript np.

Curtin replied: "Yes, I feel a lot better, too.  They're coming home."[208]  In their oral histories, all four press gallery members cited the episode as an example of Curtin's "intensity and his devotion" to his country.[209]


By early 1942, ABC news bulletins featured government representatives to such an extent that one opposition parliamentarian, Percy Spender, protested the practice in the AWC on 19 January.  As recorded in the meeting minutes, Spender said the ABC's Canberra reports should cover "a wider field" because they consisted almost entirely of statements made by ministers and their anonymous spokespeople.[210]  About a month after Spender's complaint, Curtin agreed to extend more ABC airtime to Fadden as the opposition leader.  Fadden would "be afforded facilities to broadcast over national stations, which will be governed by the occasions as they arise", the AWC's Shedden noted.[211]  A few days later, the AWC resolved to impose "a strict censorship" and remove media references to Australian Imperial Force movements, as well as any recommendation or decision affecting them.[212]  This suppression of sensitive news was in accordance with the general approach taken by past and successive Australian Governments, which initiated various legislative provisions to prevent the disclosure of material that would prejudice national security or defence.[213]  The ABC broadcasters portrayed Curtin's Pacific war strategies favourably because they respected his leadership and supported the war against Japan.[214]  He managed the news efficiently, balancing censorship with bipartisanship as he extended opportunities for opposition parliamentarians to broadcast national messages, thus creating an impression of a unified war effort, even though he did not agree to an all-party government.


Curtin projected this image of bipartisan unity to international cinema audiences during the filming of British Movietone News' 1942 newsreel that showed him opening a "£20 million pound war loan drive" at crowded Martin Place in

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[208] Cox, "Cox interview".
[209] Commins, "Commins interview".
[210] In 1942, Shedden was the Secretary for the Department of Defence.  Shedden, "AWC minutes", vol. 4, 19 January 1942, p. 427.
[211] Shedden, "AWC minutes", vol. 4, 11 February 1942, p. 456.
[212] Shedden, "AWC minutes", vol. 4, 19 February 1942, p. 462.
[213] Joseph Fernandez, *Media Law Handbook,* Network Books, Australia Research Institute, Perth, fifth edition, 2007, p. 94.
[214] Commins, "Commins interview".

Sydney on 17 February.  As he stood on a podium to announce the government and
opposition war councillors would regulate "the complete mobilisation" of "all the
resources – human and material" for "the complete defence of this Commonwealth",
Fadden was seated directly behind him.[215]   Earlier the film's narrator, Leslie
Mitchell, said: "As we know, he is not in the habit of beating about the bush and his
impromptu remarks on this occasion were typically frank".  As Curtin spoke into a
microphone, he confidently hooked a thumb into his waistcoat pocket, displaying his
watch chain, and paused during the spectators' applause.  Yet Fadden was shown to
be listening grimly and remained silent in the background.  By emphasing that Curtin
made recent, "impromptu remarks", the filmmakers created the appearance of a
spontaneous news report, even though the newsreel was released on 12 April, about
two months after the event.  Contrasting with Nazi propaganda of a "master race",
this newsreel showed patriotic white and non-white members of the public near a big
banner with the slogan: "We dare not fail!"  Thus the British Movietone News
camera techniques, narration, visual imagery and focus on Curtin's rhetoric
conveyed him as the agenda setter, forcefully directing the country's role in the war
with public support.[216]

## "Our principal spokesman": Curtin's international radio broadcast, March 1942

Curtin advanced his strategy of "looking to America" by using a powerful new
shortwave transmitting station, which he had initiated at the beginning of his prime
ministership, to deliver the first prime ministerial broadcast directly from Australia to
US listeners.[217]  He gave the radio talk on 14 March 1942, two and a half months
after his newspaper appeal to the US.[218]  The speech was delivered to a receptive
press, anticipating General MacArthur's arrival in Melbourne on 21 March to
establish his base as the supreme commander of the Allied forces in the South-West

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[215] British Movietone News (producer), "Mr. Curtin Opens War Loan" [hereafter "Curtin
opens war loan"], in *Curtin newsreels*, 1942; Heather Campbell, "Diary of a Labour Man"
for 17 February 1942, JCPML, Bentley, 2008, retrieved on 27 September 2009 at
<http://john.curtin.edu.au/diary/primeminister/1942.html>.
[216] British Movietone News, "Curtin opens war loan".
[217] (Anon.), "Publicity: Relations with America: Australia Expands", *Canberra,* 31 October
1941, p. 4.
[218] Curtin, "US radio broadcast", pp. 9-13.

Pacific area.  The "stirring speech" was broadcast to the "widest network available" and "the largest potential audience ever hooked up for an Australian", according to *The West Australian* report.  It was noted Curtin's words were disseminated by more than 700 US radio stations connected to the National Broadcasting Company of America.[219]  Although he greeted "men and women of the United States",[220] the broadcast was also heard by audiences in the British Isles, Canada, Europe and South America.[221]  Within a few minutes after his conclusion at Canberra's 2CY station, he received a brief San Francisco report about the speech's technical quality, which stated, "[v]ery good to excellent".[222]

While Curtin directly addressed "the people of America", particularly working-class radio listeners who were "fighting", "sweating in factories and workshops" and "making sacrifices", he might have intended Axis leaders to hear his words also.  Churchill, Curtin, Roosevelt and other democratic leaders became targets for Axis propagandists, who attempted to portray them as weak.  Enemy propagandists were not Roosevelt's chief concern and they did not seem to distract Curtin from publicising his main messages.[223]  According to *The West Australian*, he wanted to counter "vicious rumours" spread by Ankara and Vichy French radio announcers that he would reach a separate armistice with Japan.[224]  Yet he did not mention these false allegations and instead affirmed to US listeners that Australian people were "firmly determined to hold and hit back at the enemy".[225]  Curtin's speech registered a Flesch readability score of 69.4, well within the recommended standard for public audiences.  He spoke about 150 words a minute, somewhat faster than the prescribed standard but still accessible.  It was understandable that he would adopt simple terms for overseas audiences largely unacquainted with the

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[219] (Anon.), "Pledge To U.S.A.", *West*, 16 March 1942, p. 5.

[220] Curtin, "US radio broadcast", p. 9.

[221] (Anon.), "Broadcast to Americas", *Age*, 16 March 1942, p. 2; (Anon.), "Dr Evatt's Mission To U.S.A. Not As Medicant, Says Mr. Curtin", *Canberra*, 16 March 1942, p. 1; (Anon.), "Pledge To U.S.A.", *West*, 16 March 1942, p. 5.

[222] (Anon.), "Broadcast to Americas", *Age*, 16 March 1942, p. 2; (Anon.), "Pledge To U.S.A.", *West*, 16 March 1942, p. 5.

[223] For example, (Anon.), "Momentous Discussions Taking Place at White House", *Canberra*, 25 December 1941, p. 1; Richard W. Steele, "Franklin D. Roosevelt and His Foreign Policy Critics" [hereafter "Roosevelt and his foreign policy critics"], *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 94, no. 1, spring 1979, pp. 15-16.

[224] (Anon.), "Pledge To U.S.A.", *West*, 16 March 1942, p. 5.

[225] Curtin, "US radio broadcast".

complexities of the battles, let alone the inner machinations of Australian foreign policy.  His keywords appealed to nationhood – the people united against a common foe – as well as ideals such as freedom, hope and a triumphant future. [226]  As a result, the speech was reported widely by the Allied press, emphasising his warning that if Australia were defeated, Japan's next invasion target would be the US west coast.[227] Americans heard the talk at the peak listening hour on Friday between 7pm and 8pm.[228]  Before the event, it was not known how many listeners would tune into the speech because Allied governments did not advertise it due to concerns the enemies might "jam" the broadcast.[229]  In *The New York Times*, for example, the entire text was reprinted, an honour often given to FDR's "fireside chats".[230]  London's *Daily Mail* and *Daily Express* reporters also praised Curtin's "fighting message to America".[231]  Through his innovative address to the American people, with his emphasis on a sense of shared values, accessible terms and clarity, Curtin was able to strike a right chord with international audiences at a crucial time.

Across Australia, his words received positive coverage in a diverse sample of newspapers, comprising *The Age*,[232] *The Canberra Times*,[233] *The Sydney Morning Herald*,[234] *The Mercury*[235] and *The West Australian*.[236]  The news reports included direct quotations of the speech and leader pages.[237]  In a front-page story, for example, *The Canberra Times* publisher, Shakespeare, applauded Curtin's

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[226] During this broadcast, Curtin used "nationhood" keywords 22 times; terms about "the people" 76 times; "enemy" keywords 19 times (including "the Japanese aggressor" and Nazis); and terms about freedom, liberty and democracies eight times.

[227] (Anon.), "Australia The Last Bastion", *Age*, 16 March 1942, p. 2; (Anon.), "Pledge To U.S.A.", *West*, 16 March 1942, p. 5.

[228] (Anon.), "Pledge To U.S.A.", *West*, 16 March 1942, p. 5.

[229] (Anon.), "Broadcast to Americas", *Age*, 16 March 1942, p. 2.

[230] (Anon.), "Pledge To U.S.A.", *West*, 16 March 1942, p. 5.

[231] (Anon.), "Australia The Last Bastion", *Age*, 16 March 1942, p. 2.

[232] (Anon.), "Australia The Last Bastion", *Age*, 16 March 1942, p. 2; (Anon.), "Broadcast to Americas", *Age*, 16 March 1942, p. 2.

[233] (Anon.), "Dr Evatt's Mission To U.S.A.", *Canberra*, 16 March 1942, p. 1; (Anon.), "From Pacifism To Deadly Realism", *Canberra*, 16 March 1942, p. 2.

[234] (Anon.), "Australia's Call To The U.S.A.", *SMH*, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 2, 16 March 1942.

[235] (Anon.), "Why We Look To America", *The Mercury*, Hobart, cited in *Scrapbooks,* no. 2, 16 March 1942.

[236] (Anon.), "Mr. Curtin's Broadcast", *West*, 16 March 1942, p. 4; (Anon.), "Pledge To U.S.A.", *West*, 16 March 1942, p. 5.

[237] For example, the speech text was reprinted in *The West Australian* on 16 March 1942. On the same day, Curtin was quoted directly and indirectly in 34 sentences in *The Age* and in 23 sentences in *The Canberra Times*.

international "realism" diplomacy and sophisticated use of radio.  A related leader
stated:

> Australia is to-day in the position of having to point to her realism as an
> argument still in favour of the moulding of machinery for the direction of the
> vital operations which now concern our shores, not merely as our national
> home but as the most vital base of all the United Nations in the battles that
> must be fought in the Pacific to-morrow.[238]

Leader writers also praised his rhetoric, particularly his "vigorous, inspiring
words"[239] and his expressions of "deep and sincere emotion"[240] that strengthened his
role as "our principal spokesman".[241]  In like manner to the news coverage of
Curtin's previous statements, editorial writers repeated his messages about a united
people fighting a common foe.  Although Curtin emphasised ideals of freedom, hope
and the future in his radio talk, this study sample found that journalists concentrated
on his keywords of "fighting mad" and "total warfare".[242]  After the public
"sensation" caused by his US appeal at the end of 1941, many Australian journalists
reported their support for the bilateral alliance by March the next year.[243]  In *The
West Australian* on 14 March 1942, for instance, a large photograph featured Perth
visitors, A. Raymond of the New York *Herald-Tribune* and R. R. Knickerbocker of
the Chicago *Sun*, to mark the rare occasion of two international war correspondents
working in the city.  They were pictured at a convivial reception held in their honour
by the AJA state branch.[244]  The positive attitude towards the two countries' new
partnership was evidenced in a prominent letter in *The Age* by Reverend Dr A.C.
Button from Ballarat.  Button wrote: "It is a fact that we are 'looking to America' for
most immediate material aid which can come most readily from there."  He also
asserted that only a "vocal few" who lacked "horse sense" would wish to sever the

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[238] (Anon.), "From Pacifism To Deadly Realism", *Canberra*, 16 March 1942, p. 2.
[239] (Anon.), "Why We Look To America", *The Mercury*, Hobart, cited in *Scrapbooks,* no. 2,
16 March 1942.
[240] (Anon.), "Broadcast to Americas", *Age*, 16 March 1942, p. 2.
[241] (Anon.), "Mr. Curtin's Broadcast", *West*, 16 March 1942, p.4.
[242] For example, *The West Australian* editorial used "enemy" keywords 23 times; referred to
wars and battles seven times; mentioned an Allied offensive and initiative three times; and
mentioned defence only once.  In contrast, the leader writer did not use keywords about
freedom and liberty, which appeared in Curtin's speech.  (Anon.), "Mr. Curtin's Broadcast",
*West*, 16 March 1942, p. 4.
[243] Alexander, "Papers", 28 December 1942.
[244] (Anon.), "Journalists Meet Journalists", *West*, 14 March 1942, p. 6.

"Imperial tie".  In the repetition of Curtin's phrase, "Australia looks to America", the letter indicated these previously controversial words had quickly become an accepted part of everyday, public conversation.[245]

Curtin's innovative use of the radio was not completely welcomed by rival press organisations, however.  A *Sun* editorial stated:

> Again and again the ABC is used as the first medium of announcements by himself [Curtin] and other members of his Government.  This even includes the dissemination of war news of the highest importance to the Australian public.[246]

Defending newspaper institutions, the editorial writer warned: "There are also dangers in national broadcasting".  According to the editorial, radio addresses were a problem because:

> They are less perfectly interpreted by the public, and with mistakes in announcing, which are frequent, and mistakes in hearing, which are even more common, the radio has far less authority than a reputable newspaper.[247]

Although Curtin frequently briefed press journalists about government initiatives, they were forced to relinquish their news monopoly to include more federal radio reporters.

Two Sydney tabloids reflected contrasting editorial views of Curtin's announcement of the bilateral alliance.  Shortly after his broadcast, *The Daily Telegraph's* Mahony emphasised his stark warning that Australia was the last bastion between the US and Japan (see Figure 12).[248]  Similarly to an earlier *Daily Telegraph*

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[245] Reverend Dr A.C. Button "Australia & Britain", *Age*, 16 March 1942, p. 2.

[246] (Anon.), "A Lesson To Be Learnt", *The Sun*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks* no. 2, 20 March 1942.

[247] (Anon.), "A Lesson To Be Learnt", *The Sun*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 2, 20 March 1942.

[248] William Mahony, "Look Behind", *The Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 2, 16 March 1942.

cartoon,[249] the newspaper conveyed Curtin as a lone figure struggling to tell a mighty power not to underestimate a foe.  A more optimistic tone appeared in *The Daily Mirror* leader page about the "new Australian-American union in battle".  The editorial writer declared, "Australia is electrified ... stimulated and energised" by MacArthur's appointment in the Pacific war zone.  The alliance was a "triumph for



Figure 12

Mr. Curtin" and "America has hailed the news with enthusiasm", according to the leader writer.[250]  Again Curtin was portrayed as an important newsmaker because he reportedly requested FDR to make the general's appointment.[251]  Although the newspaper statements reflected varying degrees of hyperbole and cynicism about the partnership, the four largest Australian press owners – Fairfax, Murdoch, Norton and Packer – endorsed Curtin's US strategy in their news coverage of his international radio address.

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[249] William Mahony, "Team Work", *The Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 2, 31 December 1941.

[250] (Anon.), "Now Comes The Fight", *The Daily Mirror*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 2, 18 March 1942.

[251] (Anon.), "The Prime Minister: His Hair Was Thinner", *The Sunday Telegraph*, Sydney, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00964/83, 27 December 1942.

Consistent with his largely impersonal characterisation of the enemy in his radio talks, Curtin moved to correct a racist media portrayal of Asian people.  Before the Pacific war, he had cultivated a close relationship with Japan's first Minister to Australia, Tatsuo Kawai, who would later describe Curtin as one of his best friends.[252]  In this study's content analyses of selected prime ministerial speeches and statements, totalling 35,444 words, Curtin made a total of four short references to skin colour.[253]  He directed DOI propagandists to stop promoting some 1942 advertisements and radio talks, which were perceived as being racist by the Sydney archbishop and many Australian listeners.[254]  The Australian Government further tightened censorship rules to restrict racially adverse comments in 1943. Government officials advised journalists to avoid expressions that were "an unintentional affront" to our "Chinese allies".[255]  Thus Curtin targeted his messages increasingly to an international audience, beyond the British Empire, to gain sympathy for his foreign policies.

**"Statesmanlike warning": The Battle of the Coral Sea, May 1942**

This section will analyse Curtin's parliamentary address about the unfolding and ultimately successful Battle of the Coral Sea because his press secretary remembered this was probably "his finest speech"; likewise the ABC reporter, John Commins, recalled that listening to his words was "one of the most memorable moments in my

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[252] Bob Wurth, "Saving Australia & the growing danger of revisionism", JCPML, Bentley, 2006, retrieved on 28 September 2009 at
<http://john.curtin.edu.au/events/speeches/wurth.html>.
[253] John Curtin, "Broadcast By The Prime Minister From London", *DDA*, no. 81, 8 May 1944, pp. 53-56; Curtin, "State of the war", 1942, p. 17; Curtin, "State of the war", *DDA*, no. 70, 14 December 1943, pp. 31-36; Curtin, "US radio broadcast", pp. 9-13.
[254] Rae Allen, "A history of local radio in Brisbane", *ABC Brisbane*, Brisbane, 18 February 2008, retrieved on 20 September 2009 at
<http://www.abc.net.au/local/stories/2008/02/18/2165437.htm>; Robert Crawford, "An informed citizenry? Advertising and propaganda in wartime Australia", in Sybil Nolan (ed.), *When Journalism Meets History 2003,* RMIT Publishing, Melbourne, 2004, retrieved on 27 June 2008 at
<http://search.informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=818812381907979;res=E-LIBRARY>; John Curtin to H.S. Mowell, JCPML, Bentley, R. acc. no. 005, 6 April 1942; H.S. Mowell to John Curtin, JCPML, Bentley, R. acc. no. 004, 1 April 1942.
[255] Lloyd, *Parliament and the press,* p. 131.

parliamentary life".  Curtin was describing the first naval action in history in which surface ships did not fire at one another; this was a battle between aircraft carriers and planes[256] over the Coral Sea, located between Australia and New Caledonia.[257] Curtin's speech was reproduced practically in its entirety in the following day's issues of *The Age*,[258] *The Canberra Times*,[259] *The Sydney Morning Herald*[260] and *The West Australian*.[261]  The speech, made on 8 May 1942, was the leading article on broadsheets in Canberra,[262] Melbourne[263] and Sydney[264] while *The West Australian* featured a full reprint on page five,[265] with advertisements filling the front page. Curtin's speech was only 543 words.  When he addressed the House of Representatives shortly before 4pm, he said:

> I have no information as to how the engagement is developing, but I should like the nation to be assured that there will be, on the part of our forces and the American forces, that devotion to duty which is characteristic of the naval and air forces of the United States of America, Great Britain and the Commonwealth.[266]

The battle had begun the previous day on 7 May when operations were mounted by the large Japanese carriers, *Shokaku* and *Zuikaku*, and accompanying air forces to

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[256] Encyclopædia Britannica Educational Corporation (producer), "The Second World War: Allied Victory" (documentary), 1963 (hereafter "Allied victory documentary"), *Encyclopædia Britannica 2009 Deluxe Edition,* Chicago, 2009.

[257] Curtin, "Coral Sea", pp. 4-5.  This study considered two separate announcements made by Curtin in the parliament on 8 May 1942.  In the transcripts of the same date, the *DDA* also included texts of two communiqués, which were not included in this analysis.

[258] Curtin was quoted directly in 15 sentences in *The Age* battle coverage.  See (Anon.), "Heavy Naval Action In S.W. Pacific", *Age*, 9 May 1942, p. 1; (Anon.), "Of Crucial Importance: P.M.'s Appeal To Nation", *Age*, 9 May 1942, p. 1.

[259] *The Canberra Times* related reports included 32 sentences that were direct quotations made by Curtin.  (Anon.), "Invasion Is Hourly Menace To Australia", *Canberra*, 9 May 1942, p. 1; (Anon.), "Japanese Defeated In Great Naval Battle", *Canberra*, 9 May 1942, pp. 1-2.

[260] In the newspaper's main related articles, Curtin was quoted in 60 sentences.  (Anon.), "Great Naval Battle In Coral Sea", *SMH*, 9 May 1942, p. 9; (Anon.), "'Invasion Is Menace': Prime Minister Warns Nation", *SMH*, 9 May 1942, p. 8; (Anon.), "Naval Battle Of The Islands", *SMH*, 9 May 1942, p. 8.

[261] Curtin's words appeared as direct quotation in seven sentences.  (Anon.), "Big Naval Victory", *West*, 9 May 1942, p. 5; (Anon.), "Fateful Struggle: Mr. Curtin's Appeal", *West*, 9 May 1942, p. 5.

[262] (Anon.), "Japanese Defeated In Great Naval Battle", *Canberra*, 9 May 1942, pp. 1-2.

[263] (Anon.), "Heavy Naval Action In S.W. Pacific", *Age*, 9 May 1942, p. 1.

[264] (Anon.), "Grim Naval Battle In Coral Sea", *SMH*, 9 May 1942, p. 1.

[265] (Anon.), "Big Naval Victory", *West*, 9 May 1942, p. 5.

[266] Curtin, "Coral Sea", p. 4.  Also see Black, *In his own words,* p. 204.

capture Tulagi in the Solomons and Port Moresby in New Guinea.  The Japanese plans were uncovered by Allied signals intelligence.  The Allies countered the Japanese advance by using a force built around the US carriers, *Yorktown* and *Lexington*, as well as two Australian cruisers, *Australia* and *Hobart*.  These Allied ships were detached to attack the Port Moresby invasion force.  Japanese aircraft attempted to attack the ships but failed; this invasion force was turned back after losses to US air strikes.  Meanwhile the two opposing US and Japanese carrier forces fought a sea battle in which *Lexington* was lost and *Yorktown*, *Zuikaku* and *Shokaku* were heavily damaged.  During the battle, 20 Japanese aircraft were destroyed.[267] By early June, Curtin told the parliament, "the naval action in the Coral Sea … was a signal success for the allied forces engaged, and averted an immediate threat to Australian territory".[268]  While both sides suffered heavy damage, Japanese forces cancelled their Port Moresby invasion plans and Curtin was able to announce that Australians "played an important integral part" to "save this theatre from falling under axis control".[269]

Journalistic devices, such as leader pages, headlines, subheads, crossheads and the pull-out quote, emphasised Curtin's strategy to mobilise available Australian forces to the Pacific theatre.[270]  In their news articles on 9 May, the four press publishers increased the references to Curtin's keywords about nationhood, the

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[267] Ric Pelvin, "Battle of the Coral Sea, 4-8 May 1942", Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 2009, retrieved on 3 April 2009 at
<http://www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/coral_sea/doc.asp>.
[268] Black, *In his own words,* p. 206.
[269] Curtin, "Coral Sea", 9 May 1942, p. 6.  Also see Encyclopædia Britannica Educational Corporation, "Allied victory documentary".
[270] E.g. *The Sydney Morning Herald* featured a pull-out quote emphasising Curtin's call: "Be unstinting in Australia's defence".  (Anon.), "Great Naval Battle In Coral Sea", *SMH*, 9 May 1942, p. 9.

Australian people, war and the enemy.[271]   After his parliamentary address, he made a national broadcast on consumer rationing.[272]   The press emphasised his term, "menace", and focused on his "grave warning" by radio that: "The invasion is a menace capable hourly of becoming an actuality."[273]   Leader writers amplified Curtin's statement by asserting, "this [the Pacific] is the main war front" and "[i]ndeed the probability of an attack on Australia may come at any time".[274]   The battle was presented as an Allied victory for local people.   For example, *The Sun's* bold headline was, "Australians' Big Part In Battle Told By Curtin".[275]   While *The Canberra Times'* Shakespeare stressed immediate dangers, he also emphasised the appeals to freedom, hope and the future more times than these terms appeared in Curtin's speech.[276]   All of the four newspapers included prime ministerial statements about responsibility and duty.[277]   He was quoted as saying, "If we should not have the advantages from this battle, for which we hope, all that confronts us is a sterner ordeal, a greater and graver responsibility."[278]   His position was strengthened in *The Canberra Times* by the newspaper's inclusion of a comment made by New Zealand Prime Minister Peter Fraser, who said he "hoped that it would be only the beginning of further good news that could be expected from that [Pacific] area".[279]   The Melbourne, Perth and Sydney papers featured opposition members' brief, supportive

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[271] E.g. Curtin used "nationhood" keywords seven times in his speech while *The Canberra Times* repeated these terms 33 times in three articles the next day.  He used keywords about "the people" eight times; these terms were repeated 32 times in *The Canberra Times*.  He referred to the "war" six times and this term was mentioned 39 times in the newspaper.  He used "enemy" keywords five times but they were used 36 times in the newspaper's reports. See (Anon.), "Australia's Hour Of Trial", *Canberra*, 9 May 1942, p. 2; (Anon.), "Invasion Is Hourly Menace To Australia", *Canberra*, 9 May 1942, p. 1; (Anon.), "Japanese Defeated In Great Naval Battle", *Canberra*, 9 May 1942, pp. 1-2; Curtin, "Coral Sea", pp. 4-5.

[272] John Curtin, "State Of The War: Prime Minister's Broadcast", *DDA*, no. 28, 8 May 1942, pp. 15-17.

[273] (Anon.), "Australia's Hour Of Trial", *Canberra*, 9 May 1942, p. 2; (Anon.), "Invasion Is Hourly Menace To Australia", *Canberra*, 9 May 1942, p. 1; (Anon.), "'Invasion Is Menace': Prime Minister Warns Nation", *SMH*, 9 May 1942, p. 8.

[274] (Anon.), "Australia's Hour Of Trial", *Canberra*, 9 May 1942, p. 2.

[275] (Anon.), "Australians' Big Part In Battle Told By Curtin", *The Sun*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 2, 9 May 1942.

[276] In *The Canberra Times* reports, the journalist used the keywords of "hope", "the future" and "freedom" six times.  Curtin used the terms, "hope" and "the future", only one time each.

[277] See *The Age*, *The Canberra Times*, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The West Australian*, 9 May 1942.

[278] (Anon.), "Japanese Defeated In Great Naval Battle", *Canberra*, 9 May 1942, pp. 1-2.

[279] (Anon.), "Japanese Defeated In Great Naval Battle: Heartening News to N.Z.", *Canberra*, 9 May 1942, p. 2.

statements.[280]  *The Courier-Mail* leader writer described Curtin's words as "cheering" while applauding his "statesmanlike warning" because "it would be foolish to buoy ourselves with hopes of a signal victory over the Japanese".[281]  The wartime leaders' guarded optimism, supported by the press publishers, was soon proven to be correct with the victory of the Battle of Midway Island from 3 to 6 June 1942.  The successful battle allowed the Allies to hold command over the southern seas.  MacArthur stated, "to a significant extent the victory at Midway ended the threat of a possible invasion of Australia".[282]  Therefore it seemed appropriate for the news media to encourage readers to look forward to a brighter future.

Almost a year after his appointment as the nation's leader, Curtin's initial rapport with press gallery journalists extended to widespread media support for his international, political and economic strategies to win the war.  Press publishers approved his Pacific war priorities, and newsreels portrayed his strong agreement with MacArthur.  In a cinematic interview, the general emphasised the "close cooperation" and "support" between Australia and the US.  The film also depicted the 1942 Allied successes at Coral Sea and Milne Bay, a deep natural harbour at the eastern tip of New Guinea, to strengthen Curtin's stature as a wartime leader.[283]  While both men used propaganda to consolidate publicly their mutually beneficial alliance,[284] the moving images were an accurate reflection of Curtin's private relationship with MacArthur.  Both men worked hard to modify "The Beat Hitler First" policy adopted by Churchill and Roosevelt in December 1941 and January

[280] (Anon.), "Big Naval Victory", *West*, 9 May 1942, p. 5; (Anon.), "Fateful Struggle: Mr. Curtin's Appeal", *West*, 9 May 1942, p. 5; (Anon.), "Great Naval Battle In Coral Sea", *SMH*, 9 May 1942, p. 9; (Anon.), "Of Crucial Importance: P.M.'s Appeal To Nation", *Age*, 9 May 1942, p. 1.

[281] (Anon.), "Curtin's Grim Words On Naval Battle", *The Courier-Mail*, Brisbane, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 2, 9 May 1942.

[282] Douglas MacArthur, cited in Black, *In his own words,* p. 207.

[283] Cinesound Productions (producer), "Airmen Blitz Japs In Coral Sea", in *At The Front*: *1939-1945: Australia's WWII Newsreels* (newsreel)*,* JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00441/2, 1942.

[284] David Black, "Assessments of the Curtin-MacArthur relationship" [hereafter "Curtin-MacArthur"], JCPML, Bentley, 2006, retrieved on 12 May 2008 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/macarthur/assessment1.html>

1942.[285]  At an AWC meeting, MacArthur affirmed, "the Pacific was the real centre ... Australia must stand firmly by its view that the Pacific is the predominant theatre", as noted in the meeting minutes on 19 June 1942.[286]  F.T. Smith of the Australian United Press wrote that during Curtin's confidential "table talk" with press gallery journalists, he appeared "very disappointed" over Middle East war setbacks and particularly concerned that Roosevelt and Churchill "are inclined to think that Australia is in no great danger".  In his typescripts of the secret media briefings, Smith wrote that Curtin read aloud "in full" the Churchill and FDR messages to the press gallery, "but would not allow us to take a note" on 21 September.[287]  Although the transcripts conveyed Roosevelt's chief concern as defeating Nazism,[288] the president was receptive to Australian attitudes and sent a personal message to Curtin on 1 June, inviting him to the White House.

While Roosevelt did not mention this to Curtin, he had been searching for ways to restore "goodwill" between the Australian prime minister and Churchill. FDR had privately cabled Churchill on 22 March to state: "I am simply wondering how something might be done" to repair "a rather strained relationship between Australia and the United Kingdom".[289]  In a separate telegram, FDR wrote to Curtin:

> Because we face so many mutual problems across the Pacific, I think it would
> be most helpful if we might have a talk on the war situation ... I should be
> very glad to put at your disposal such transportation facilities as might render
> your voyage possible ... I should genuinely welcome an opportunity for such

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[285] Black, "Menzies and Curtin"; Paul Hasluck, *Australia In The War Of 1939-1945: The Government And the People 1942-1945*, The Australian War Memorial, Canberra, vol. 2, 1970, pp. 153-154; Wurth, *Saving Australia,* p. 163.

[286] Advisory War Council, "Discussions with General MacArthur", NAA, Canberra, CA495, A2684, 967, 26 March 1942, pp. 1-2 [The online page numbers are pp. 8, 12-13].

[287] Frederick Thomas Smith, cited in Clem Lloyd and Richard Hall (eds), *Backroom Briefings: John Curtin's war* [hereafter *Backroom briefings*], NLA, Canberra, 1997, pp. 1, 50, 51, 89.

[288] Steele, "Roosevelt and his foreign policy critics", p. 16.

[289] Franklin D. Roosevelt to Winston Churchill, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00719/1/11, 22 March 1942.

a discussion ... Any time will suit me if you will give me about a week's notice.[290]

Curtin, however, viewed his main task as to remain in Australia to help fight Japanese forces.  He did not travel overseas until 1944, when he met Churchill in London, Mackenzie King in Ottawa and FDR in South Carolina, to be discussed in Chapter 8.  Due to his rhetoric of responsibility and his practice of economic austerity, journalists repeated his call to civic duty in their news reports, leader pages and editorial cartoons.

Public opinion polls, private letters and anecdotal evidence suggested the Federal Government's strategies were popular, as discussed in Chapter 3.  But the public's confidence in Curtin did not extend to having faith in all Australian state governments, according to pollsters.  Sixty eight per cent of Sydney's population wanted to abolish the conservative-controlled New South Wales Legislative Council, as announced in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 24 June.  "Wealthy people" were more likely to favour retaining the upper house while lower income earners said, "the State Parliament was a luxury we couldn't afford in wartime".[291]  Abolition of state upper houses was also early Labor policy.  Another survey found that a majority of people in NSW, Queensland and Victoria would favour closing down their state governments.  The abolitionists said they would like to dismantle the ALP-led NSW Legislative Assembly and Queensland Parliament, as well as Alan Dunstan's Country Party government in Victoria.  Interviewers asked: "Should the States hand over their powers to the Commonwealth, leaving minor matters to local councils, and State boards?"  Fifty four per cent of respondents answered "yes".[292]  Although the result was not positive for state premiers, it was an indication of citizens' trust in the federal administration, which had assumed greater power including the collection of income tax – formerly the states' domain – because of the unprecedented war

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[290] Franklin D. Roosevelt to John Curtin, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, Hyde Park, 1 June 1942, retrieved on 28 September 2009 at <http://docs.FDRlibrary.marist.edu/psf/box2/a09a01.html>.

[291] (Anon.), "Upper House unpopular", *SMH*, 24 June 1942, retrieved on 28 September 2009 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/letters/category/newspapers/clippings/N.013t.html>.

[292] (Anon.), "Most Favor End Of State Parliaments", *SMH*, 9 June 1942, retrieved on 28 September 2009 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/letters/category/newspapers/clippings/N.012t.html>.

emergency.  Yet when a public referendum was held on this issue in 1944, WA and South Australia were the only states to record a majority of votes in favour of granting additional powers to the Federal Government; the result contrasted with the opinion poll findings two years earlier.[293]  The commonwealth retained the vital taxation role, which was alone sufficient to ensure federal domination of Australian political affairs.[294]

Likewise, the Curtin administration's national policies extended to imposing liquor controls that were the result of intense lobbying, and not only by the clergy,[295] because *The Daily News* editor Geoff Burgoyne complained to Curtin about "the returned soldier drunkenness in Perth" in March 1942.[296]  About the same time, a *Courier-Mail* leader writer reported:

> There is the Federal Government, armed with full powers to order what is necessary for the nation's safety.  Why does it not use its powers to keep liquor trading within the bounds of national security?[297]

Yet news reports suggested "Australia's Austerity Campaign" appealed to the nation's sense of civic duty and desire for social unity.[298]  In November 1942, Curtin was sent the new lyrics of "The Austerity Song", written and composed by the Royal Australian Air Force's Aircraftman First Class Roy Sparks and Flying Officer Alan Morton.  In a letter, Sparks wrote that the song had received press publicity because "the number has a catchy tune and is being featured with great success by the Army

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[293] Oliver, *Unity is strength*, pp. 163-166.

[294] Parliament of New South Wales, "1939 to 1965 – War and Post-War", Sydney, 2008, retrieved on 21 September 2009 at <http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/web/common.nsf/key/HistoryWar>.

[295] C.N. Button to John Curtin, JCPML, Bentley, R. acc. no. 010, 11 March 1942; N.F. Finlayson to John Curtin, JCPML, Bentley, R. acc. no. 013, 8 April 1942; W.G. Hilliard to John Curtin, JCPML, Bentley, R. acc. no. 016, 10 August 1942; N. Lade and R. Jackson to John Curtin, JCPML, Bentley, R. acc. no. 014, 12 November 1942.

[296] Geoff Burgoyne to John Curtin, JCPML, Bentley, NC. acc. no. 009, 27 March 1942.

[297] (Anon.), "Liquor Discipline Needed", *The Courier-Mail*, Brisbane, JCPML, Bentley, NC. acc. no. 008, 6 March 1942.

[298] (Anon.), "Labour Party Policy", *SMH*, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 3, JCPML acc. no. 00297/3, 27 July 1943; (Anon.), 'Setting A Better Example', *Age*, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 3, 9 August 1943.

and R.A.A.F. at their Community Signing Sessions in this Area" in Darwin.[299]

Curtin's slogans and keywords had become a part of the public dialogue.

**"Stirring Appeal": Curtin's Kokoda Track tribute, December 1942**

After the Battle of the Coral Sea disrupted Japan's plans, the enemy forces began in July to attempt to advance overland along the Kokoda Track to reach Port Moresby, the administrative capital of the Australian external territory, Papua.  In the parliament on 10 December, Curtin praised the bravery of Australian troops, who had been fighting in atrocious conditions and against vastly superior enemy numbers in the Kokoda Track.[300]  About 625 Australians were killed along this track, although Curtin did not specify this in his speech.  Also more than 1,600 Australians were wounded there.[301]  During the same parliamentary speech, Curtin announced that Allied forces had completely occupied Gona, "pinned down" the Japanese in a narrow, coastal strip in the Buna area on the northern coast of Papua.  He said critics should not be too quick to judge this phase of battle as a defeat, adding:

> I make these observations: it is a misrepresentation of the spirit of the
> Australian people and the Anzac tradition to cry out when things appear to be
> going against us.  It is premature for critics to rush in and criticize a phase of
> an operation as though it were the whole campaign that was being decided …
> I speak for the whole Parliament when I offer the tribute of the nation to those
> who gave their lives in its defence.  The same gratitude is due to the wounded
> and sick.[302]

Curtin was proved correct in his assessment of the situation.  All Japanese resistance in Papua ceased on 22 January 1943.  Although his long address was more complex than his radio broadcasts, Curtin selected his words carefully and seemed to direct his "tribute of the nation" to the press gallery with the intention it would be

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[299] A.R. Morton and A.C.1 Sparks to John Curtin, NAA, Canberra, CA 12, M1415, 237, 16 December 1942, p. 48; Roy Sparks to John Curtin, NAA, Canberra, CA 12, M1415, 237, 11 November 1942, pp. 50-52.

[300] Curtin, "State of the war", pp. 17-24.

[301] (Anon.), "Australian Military Units – Kokoda Track Campaign", Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 2009, retrieved on 3 April 2009 at <http://www.awm.gov.au/units/event_291.asp>.

[302] Curtin, "State of the war", pp. 19-20.

publicised in shorter, simpler news reports across Australia.  The speech recorded a Flesch Reading Ease score of 45.2 and the Flesch-Kincaid grade was 12.6, indicating it was more complicated than prescribed public speaking standards.  Although Curtin used keywords about hope and the future, he concentrated on the need to defeat the enemy.[303]

Leading with Curtin's announcement on the next day's front cover, *The Sydney Morning Herald* editors used more modern journalistic devices than they did in previous newspaper editions considered in this study.  Instead of the earlier page one summaries, the lead article resembled a modern press report dispatched from a battle scene, with sensational news, action-packed language and a rare byline for "war correspondent" Charles Buttrose.  After a "20-day battle for the beachhead" in Gona, as Buttrose reported, Australian troops "squeezed" Japanese forces into a "pocket" of land and "slaughtered" enemies.[304]  Buttrose portrayed this conflict as an Allied victory.[305]  Also the battle was the main lead of *The Age* front page.[306] Curtin's address was reprinted in the inside pages of *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The West Australian*, with his keywords turned into headlines, subheads and crossheads.[307]  The three newspapers' editorial support continued to the leader pages, even though *The West Australian* focus was on the Australian guerilla campaign against Japanese forces in Timor due to that area's relatively close geographical proximity to WA.[308]

In *The Age*, the leading letter displayed the bold, block case headline, "Tribute From An Elector", and it was written to praise Curtin's war leadership. Mark Talpley of Ringwood asked how any Australian could be "unmoved" by Curtin's "stirring appeal to the nation".  Talpley wrote:

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[303] During his parliamentary address, Curtin referred three times to "hope" and "the future", but he used "enemy" terms 66 times.  Curtin, "State of the war", pp. 17-24.

[304] Charles Buttrose, "Allied Forces Occupy Gona Area", *SMH*, 11 December 1942, p. 1.

[305] Richard Reid, "1942 – An Overview of the Battle for Australia", Anzac Day Commemoration Committee of Queensland, Aspley, 1998, retrieved on 29 September 2009 at <http://www.anzacday.org.au/history/ww2/bfa/overview.html>.

[306] (Anon.), "Gona Occupied By Allied Forces", *Age*, 11 December 1942, p. 1.

[307] (Anon.), "Mr. Curtin's Review Of War", *SMH*, 11 December 1942, p. 7; (Anon.), "Papuan Campaign", *West*, 11 December 1942, p. 5.

[308] (Anon.), "Australia's Part In The World War", *SMH*, 11 December 1942, p. 4; (Anon.), "The Timor Danger", *West*, 11 December 1942, p. 4; (Anon.), "War Cabinet Must Be Supreme", *Age*, 11 December 1942, p. 4.

> I have listened to every Australian leader of note for half a century, and, in
> my opinion, this sincere, rugged orator has never been excelled ... Though in
> the past I generally regarded Labor politicians with disfavour, I am now right
> behind this great Australian and his capable team.  Winning the war is my
> only political faith for the duration.[309]

A similar expression of support was sent by a Sydney solicitor, J.J. Mulligan, later in 1942.  In a letter to *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Mulligan wrote that while "always voting for the party officially opposed to Labour", he defended "the consistent Curtin" for consulting his party's "governing body" about conscription.  Mulligan passed on his note and his best wishes to Curtin that he would "continue the fight". He added the newspaper's editor had made "alterations and omissions" in his letter before publishing it.[310]  Letters sections had not yet become regular and prominent news pages.  In the absence of other interactive media, opinion poll newspaper reports and letters were valuable indicators of readership attitudes.  The survey sampling suggested Curtin persuaded many Australians to endorse his unified war effort and this was reflected in the 1943 election results.  The next chapter will examine the extent to which favourable press coverage may have influenced the election outcome.

Although he set press agendas about the leading Pacific war news, less prominent articles focused on the "unanticipated" fighting within the ALP in December 1942 over compulsory military service.  The story was reported as a political "crisis" in *The Canberra Times*;[311] it was a "delicate situation" in *The Sydney Morning Herald*;[312] a "mischievous intrusion" in *The Age*;[313] and a "bitter attack" in *The West Australian*.[314]  All four press organisations supported conscription.  Wartime Australia had the all-volunteer Australian Imperial Force (AIF) that was enlisted to serve outside the country; however, the Australian Military Force (AMF), or Militia, consisted of volunteers and conscripts and could serve only

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[309] Mark Talpley, "Tribute From An Elector", *Age*, 11 December 1942, p. 4.

[310] J.J. Mulligan to John Curtin, NAA, Canberra, CA 12, M1415, 237, 1 January 1943, p. 102; J.J. Mulligan to *The Sydney Morning Herald* editor, NAA, Canberra, CA 12, M1415, 237, 31 December 1942, p. 103.

[311] (Anon.), "Government Faces Crisis On Anti-Conscription Move", *Canberra*, 11 December 1942, p. 2.

[312] (Anon.), "Home News", *SMH*, 11 December 1942, p. 1.

[313] (Anon.), "A Mischievous Intrusion", *Age*, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 3, 11 December 1942.

[314] (Anon.), "One-Army Plan", *West*, 11 December 1942, p. 5.

on national soil, which included Papua and the Australian-administered Trust Territory of New Guinea.  One of the ALP's central policies was opposition to conscription for military service overseas.[315]  The related news coverage focused on an independent MP, Maurice Blackburn, who called for his colleagues to affirm "opposition to any form of conscription outside of Australia and its territories". Blackburn was supported by ALP Ministers Arthur Calwell and Eddie Ward.[316] Newspaper coverage included opposition members' criticisms of the government's limited Militia policy.[317]  For instance, Fadden reportedly commended other Allied nations for waging "total war".[318]  Yet Curtin had been considering this question already.  In November 1942, one month before the parliamentary debate, he had sought authority from a special Labor federal conference for the Militia to serve in an expanded area of the South-West Pacific.  He told conference delegates that his proposal "amounted only to a modification of traditional [ALP] policy".[319]  *The Canberra Times* leader writer described conscription as "the supreme issue confronting the country at this hour".  As the journalist declared, "the matter should be forced to a vote" in the parliament because "[t]he safety of Australia thus hangs on the speed with which effect is given to this vital military necessity".[320]  In the selected press coverage, this was the first time *The Canberra Times* publisher decided to allocate more space to independent and opposition views rather than to one of Curtin's public addresses about an issue.[321]  While a few editors made scathing criticisms of anti-conscription politicians, they did not directly attack Curtin in their editorials.[322]  Apart from the four broadsheets already considered, he

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[315] Black, *In his own words,* pp. 214-215; Oliver, *Unity is strength*, p. 166.

[316] (Anon.), "Government Faces Crisis On Anti-Conscription Move", *Canberra*, 11 December 1942, p. 2.

[317] (Anon.), "Conscription Issue Raised", *Age*, 11 December 1942, p. 3; (Anon.), "Government Faces Crisis On Anti-Conscription Move", *Canberra*, 11 December 1942, p. 2; (Anon.), "Labour Attack On Curtin", *SMH*, 11 December 1942, p. 5; (Anon.), "One-Army Plan", *West*, 11 December 1942, p. 5.

[318] (Anon.), "Government Faces Crisis On Anti-Conscription Move", *Canberra*, 11 December 1942, p. 2.

[319] Black, *In his own words,* p. 216; Oliver, *Peacemongers,* pp. 84-85; Oliver, *Unity is strength*, p. 166.

[320] (Anon.), "Australia's Hollow War Aim", *Canberra*, 11 December 1942, p. 2.

[321] (Anon.), "Australia's Hollow War Aim", *Canberra*, 11 December 1942, p. 2; (Anon.), "Government Faces Crisis On Anti-Conscription Move", *Canberra*, 11 December 1942, p. 2.

[322] (Anon.), "A Mischievous Intrusion", *Age*, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 3, 11 December 1942; (Anon.), "The Task Defined", *The Argus*, Melbourne, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 3, 11 December 1942.

received statements of support for his conscription position in such newspapers as *The Courier-Mail*,[323] *The Sun*[324] and *The Argus*.[325]


      Yet Murdoch had started publishing signed *Herald* editorials that criticised the government's war conduct, particularly about the conscription question.  In October, F.T. Smith recalled Curtin's "amazing outburst" at a confidential press gallery briefing after reading an editorial in which Murdoch portrayed the government as giving only half-hearted support to US forces.  Curtin said, "this attack … was silly and unfair.  The basis of it was all wrong … it is no good for public morale", as Smith noted.  Also Curtin reportedly remarked he did not trust Murdoch.[326]  *The Herald's* Alexander recalled his embarrassment about the editorials:

> These long, boldly featured articles in 'The Herald' made a painful impression on me, because the country was at war and in grave danger, and certainly there was no one else who could conceivably be considered as taking Curtin's place.[327]

After Murdoch's "particularly personal attack" against Curtin's anti-conscription record in World War I, the prime minister said privately to Alexander:

> Tell Murdoch … that I have been advised that statements in his latest article are gravely libelous.  I want him to withdraw immediately and apologise in the next article.  If not, I shall at once institute a suit claiming £20,000 damages for libel.[328]

The next day, Murdoch published a statement to retract the previous editorial and apologise to Curtin.[329]  Although he would continue to clash publicly with Murdoch during the next year, as described in Chapter 7, his honest news management style won sympathy from press gallery journalists such as Smith and Alexander.

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[323] (Anon.), "Let's Face This Honestly", *The Courier-Mail*, Brisbane, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 3, 11 December 1942.
[324] (Anon.), "Battle Of Words – Or Deeds?", *The Sun*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 3, 11 December 1942.
[325] (Anon.), "The Task Defined", *The Argus*, Melbourne, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 3, 11 December 1942.
[326] Smith, cited in Lloyd and Hall, *Backroom briefings*, pp. 99-100.
[327] Alexander, "Alexander interview".
[328] Alexander, "Alexander interview".
[329] Alexander, "Alexander interview".

The ALP's conscription debate over compulsory military service was
satirised in several press cartoons.  At the offices of *The Argus* and *The Daily
Telegraph*, for example, cartoonists parodied Curtin's efforts to cajole ALP members
to support conscription.  Although a *Sunday Telegraph* opinion column conveyed
impatience with the delay in resolving the compulsory service debate,[330] Curtin
"followed the correct ALP policy procedure" and sought a ruling by the party's
decision-making body, including state Labor executives, in January before
introducing legislation.[331]  As *The Sunday Telegraph* opinion writer claimed:

> Each State – no matter how large or how small its A.L.P. membership – sends
> the same number of delegates to conference.  It now rests with Western
> Australia, which has comparatively few members, to decide the issue for
> Curtin.[332]

The writer expected that Curtin would demonstrate "courage and sincerity" when
MPs met again to discuss the issue.[333]  One day later, *The Daily Telegraph's* Mahony
depicted WA as a proud cat seated on a fence and needing to be coaxed to Curtin's
side (see Figure 13).[334]  In fact, the WA state executives were unambiguous in their
support of his conscription policy, which was passed at a special conference in
January 1943 and resulted in the *Defence (Citizen Military Forces) Bill*.  While some
anti-conscription politicians were increasingly subject to press criticism, Curtin did
not move to repress the public debates over national defence.  A year after his
declaration of war against Japan, newspaper editors published their confidence in his
leadership.  According to *The Sunday Telegraph* writer, Curtin had proven to be "a
master tactician" during the past year.[335]  The nation's undiminished "Australian
spirit" resulted in "our strength increasing and the danger of invasion receding",

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[330] (Anon.), "Opinion: You must face the issue, Mr. Curtin!", *The Sunday Telegraph*,
Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 3, 13 December 1942.
[331] Black, *In his own words*, p. 217; Oliver, *Unity is strength*, p. 166.
[332] (Anon.), "Opinion: You must face the issue, Mr. Curtin!", *The Sunday Telegraph*,
Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 3, 13 December 1942.
[333] (Anon.), "Opinion: You must face the issue, Mr. Curtin!", *The Sunday Telegraph*,
Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 3, 13 December 1942.
[334] Figure 13 appeared in William Mahony, "Waiting For The Jump", *The Daily Telegraph*,
Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no 3, 14 December 1942.
[335] (Anon.), "The Prime Minister: His Hair Was Thinner", *The Sunday Telegraph*, Sydney,
JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00964/83, 27 December 1942.

WAITING FOR THE JUMP

Figure 13

noted a *Truth* journalist.[336]  The next year would bring fresh challenges as Curtin

strove to end ALP divisiveness, to achieve an electoral mandate from the Australian

people and to secure greater British Commonwealth collaboration.

**Conclusion**

As soon as Curtin was appointed to be the prime minister, major metropolitan

newspaper owners published a strong endorsement of his leadership.  This example

of government-media cooperation resembled the model of news in an administered

society, developed by Ericson et al, as well as Foucault's theories of

"governmentality" that were discussed earlier in this chapter's introductory

section.[337]  As press proprietors and journalists promoted favourable images of the

new prime minister seated next to the governor-general, the media appeared to be

operating as an extension of government.  In the words of Ericson et al, they acted as

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[336] (Anon.), "War With Japan Is Just One Year Old", *Truth*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no.
3, 6 December 1942.
[337] Michel Foucault, "Governmentality"; Ericson, Baranek and Chan, *Visualizing deviance*.

"control agents" and "cultural workmen", contributing to "the construction of social order" and a smooth transition of power by emphasising stability, propriety and cooperation in Australia during the escalating global war.[338]  As the new theatre of war opened in the Pacific, Curtin was increasingly portrayed positively on the covers of *The Age*, *The Canberra Times* and *The Sydney Morning Herald*, as well as in *The West Australian* main news pages.  In each of the six selected public addresses, Curtin's keywords and messages were repeated in the broadsheets' reports the next day.  Through the limited content analysis, this study has found that Curtin adapted his speeches to appeal to different audiences, ranging from his accessible radio broadcasts to his relatively more complex parliamentary addresses that he expected would be disseminated by the press gallery.  Due to the Japanese bombing of Darwin on 19 February 1942, journalists decided to emphasise his keywords about enemy attacks more than his phrases about liberty and freedom.  Yet the press frequently included Curtin's terms of "tradition", "responsibility" and "austerity".  By emphasising these keywords of nationhood, the Australian people and war, the press editors conveyed a sense of civic duty and desire for national unity; this demonstrated the theories of Ericson et al and Foucault about western liberal governments' use of the media to contribute to the optimal development of populations and maintain social order.

Curtin's original, rhetorical devices in his declaration of war broadcast were similar to those of FDR's "date of infamy" speech and the "fireside chats".  Both men made innovative use of radio and film to present themselves as strong, forceful and likeable leaders who communicated candidly with working people.  The ABC's positive news coverage of Curtin demonstrated Foucault's theory of "the art of government".  According to Foucault, this concept of "governmentality" is constituted of political leaders and media institutions, working together to allow a "very specific albeit complex form of power" to disseminate knowledge to the public.[339]  Also Curtin developed a wide range of journalism strategies to persuade the media to support his war leadership.  His formal communication methods involved the establishment of Australia's first prime ministerial press secretary, as well as informative, "sensational" press statements, dramatic newsreels and regular

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[338] Ericson, Baranek and Chan, *Visualizing deviance,* p. 356.
[339] Foucault, "Governmentality", pp. 102-103.

radio announcements of important war news.  Canberra's senior reporters were impressed by his uniquely unguarded media conferences, where he would brief them on the latest Allied and military leaders' private communications.  His informal talks extended to impromptu conversations during night walks and train journeys with journalists about the top-secret, controversial and precarious ocean voyage of the 6th and 7th Divisions returning to Australia.  Although conservative press proprietors welcomed his new prime ministership as a way to prevent internal chaos and focus on external challenges in October 1941, they became increasingly critical of the Labor administration by December 1942.  While he was still portrayed as a successful leader in terms of foreign policy, a "crisis" had reportedly emerged within the ALP over the conscription question.  Despite Murdoch's "particularly personal attack" in *The Herald*, Curtin did not move to repress debates about issues in the public sphere.  As will be discussed in the next chapter, he overcame the political challenges to win resoundingly the 1943 federal election.  An analysis of relevant radio, film, press and parliamentary statements will be conducted in the next chapter to identify his news management strategies to win media and public support in 1943.

# Chapter 7

# Curtin as a front-page personality: transforming Australia's public sphere, 1943

During the Pacific war battles of 1941-1942, Curtin's mass communication strategies, including his radio broadcasts, newsreel appearances, press statements and media interviews, were attracting prominent global news coverage. While Chapter 6 has dealt with Curtin as a prime minister appointed during a crisis, this chapter examines him as an elected national leader setting the media agenda during 1943, the year when he was re-elected with a resounding majority. This chapter is aimed at understanding various aspects of Curtin's performance as a media politician in the wartime public sphere. The following sections will examine how Curtin employed media strategies to persuade journalists and public audiences to support his administration as the Allied nations began mounting an offensive against the Axis powers in 1943. The first section examines Curtin's parliamentary address in support of extended conscription and his ability to generate favourable news coverage for his endorsement of the *Defence (Citizen Military Forces) Bill.*[1] As he sought to consolidate Australians' support for his Bill, he increasingly promoted an image of a strong Allied partnership with Churchill and Roosevelt. This first section engages with the liberalism theories of the political philosopher and historian of ideas, Isaiah Berlin,[2] because they will inform this chapter's evaluation of Curtin's rhetoric of liberty to inspire Australian people to fight Axis fascist enemies.[3] Secondly the chapter will investigate Curtin's attempts to cultivate relations with journalists and media owners leading to the election on 21 August. The third section

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[1] John Curtin, *Commonwealth of Australia: Parliamentary Debates* [hereafter "Militia Bill speech"]*,* vol. 173, 11 February 1943, pp. 592-596.
[2] Isaiah Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty* [hereafter *Liberty*]*,* Oxford University Press, London, 1969; Isaiah Berlin, *Freedom and Its Betrayal: Six Enemies of Human Liberty* [hereafter *Freedom and its betrayal*]*,* ed. Henry Hardy, Chatto & Windus, London, 2002; Isaiah Berlin, *The Proper Study of Mankind: An Anthology of Essays* [hereafter *The proper study of mankind*]*,* Chatto & Windus, London, 1997.
[3] For example, Cinesound Productions and Cinesound Review (producers), *Compiled speeches of John Curtin, 1941 – 1945* (newsreels) [hereafter *Compiled speeches*), JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00130/1, 1941-1945.

focuses on his use of radio, newsreels and the press during the "multimedia" election campaign; this includes a textual analysis of his election policy radio broadcast on 26 July[4] and the news coverage of this event.  Fourthly this chapter will investigate Curtin's emphasis of the global public sphere; as part of this section, an analysis will be made of his international proposals to the ALP federal conference on 14 December.[5]  Through this chapter's analyses of selected Curtin speeches, an assessment will be made of his ability to win journalists' support, to persuade them to report his foreign policies positively and to reproduce his main messages prominently in the news.

**Political skills: appeals to the patriotic duty and commanding Allied approval**

As a vehement protester against conscription in World War I, Curtin had written a *Westralian Worker* editorial to urge that "conscription should be voted to oblivion".[6] Later he faced the "greatest challenge" of his prime ministership when he embarked upon securing Labor's acceptance of compulsory military service for Australians other than for the direct defence of their homeland.[7]  He overcame his biggest hurdle when he introduced the issue at a special conference of the ALP in November 1942. Another Labor conference passed his proposal in January 1943.  As Curtin attempted to unite his colleagues, journalists and voters to support the introduction of the *Defence (Citizen Military Forces) Bill* in the parliament on 11 February 1943, press gallery members reported on his rhetoric to persuade politicians to agree that

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[4] John Curtin, "General Election ALP Policy Statement" [hereafter "Election policy statement"], John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library [hereafter JCPML], Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00421/2, 26 July 1943, transcript np.

[5] John Curtin, "State Of The War" [hereafter "State of the war"], *Digest of Decisions and Announcements and Important Speeches by the Prime Minister (Right Hon. John Curtin)* [hereafter *DDA*], no. 70, 14 December 1943, pp. 31-36.

[6] Cited in John Curtin, "Australia Keeps the Pact.  Everything Britain has Asked Voluntarism Has Accomplished", *Westralian Worker*, Perth, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00302/40, 30 November 1917.  Similar Curtin editorials were published in *The Westralian Worker* on 16 and 23 November 1917.

[7] David Black (ed.), *In His Own Words: John Curtin's Speeches and Writings* [hereafter *In his own words*], Paradigm Books Curtin University, Bentley, 1995, p. 215; Bobbie Oliver, *Unity is Strength: A History of the Australian Labor Party and the Trades and Labor Council in Western Australia, 1899-1999* [hereafter *Unity is strength*], API Network, Bentley, 2003, p. 166.

"members of the militia [including conscripts] could be required to serve in any area of General MacArthur's command in the South West Pacific Zone".[8]  To elicit the journalists' support, he spoke of the need to wage war against fascism to preserve democracy.  As he used his powerful position to help Australians win their battles and plan for post-war society, he was closely aligned with the positive conception of liberty, as described by Berlin.  He defines positive liberty as the notion of the government using more power to help people to achieve self-mastery.  When Curtin advocated a war on Axis enemies, his rhetoric resembled Berlin's conception of negative liberty, associated with non-coercion and freedom from government impositions.[9]  Berlin writes: "The fundamental sense of freedom is freedom from chains, from imprisonment, from enslavement by others.  The rest is extension of this sense, or else metaphor."[10]  Freedom is not simply about "the absence of frustration (which may be obtained by killing desires)", but it is the result of "the absence of obstacles to possible choices and activities".[11]  Individuals gain liberty when they are able to choose freely and stand up for their convictions.[12]  While Berlin supports the use of negative liberty, he writes that positive liberty has led to political doctrines in anti-liberal directions.[13]  As an Allied leader, Curtin reflected a sense of the negative conception of liberty by declaring he was fighting fascism to preserve "[t]he free institutions of democracy".[14]  He was also aligned with a positive conception of liberty by supporting the role of a welfare state, unions[15] and limited government censorship to prevent the possibility of vital information being disseminated to Axis enemies.[16]  This chapter will examine his various persuasive techniques during his parliamentary speech in support of extending conscription.

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[8] Oliver, *Unity is strength*, p. 166.

[9] Berlin, *Freedom and its betrayal*; *Liberty*; *The proper study of mankind*; John Curtin, "Duty With Press" [hereafter "Duty with press"], *DDA*, no. 81, 19 April 1944, p. 46.

[10] Berlin, "Liberty", p. 1vi.

[11] Berlin, "Liberty", p. xxxix.

[12] Berlin, *Freedom and its betrayal*, pp. 103-104; Berlin, "From Hope and Fear Set Free", in Berlin, *The proper study of mankind,* p. 109.

[13] Berlin, "Liberty", p. x1vii; William A. Galston, "Moral Pluralism and Liberal Democracy: Isaiah Berlin's Heterodox Liberalism", *The Review of Politics*, vol. 71, 2009, p. 89.

[14] Curtin, "Duty with press", p. 46.

[15] Oliver, *Unity is strength*, p. 169.

[16] Hilvert, *Blue pencil warriors,* pp. 197-203.

**Emotive speech and gestures**

On 11 February, *The Age* news representative wrote Curtin "had spoken with emotion and had emphasised the points by striking the desk in front of him".  The stirring tone of his address resulted in "an extraordinary spectacle in the House", according to the unnamed *Age* reporter, because it triggered a heated debate and revealed deep divisions within the opposition.  In contrast, the UAP's Percy Spender "faced a considerable amount of heckling from the Government benches and almost complete silence from members of the Opposition", as reported in *The Age*[17] and *The Canberra Times*.[18]  Since Curtin proposed that conscripts should fight in the South West Pacific, Spender unsuccessfully attempted to remove the territorial limitation for compulsory service; *The Age* portrayed him as a lone figure and quoted him as saying "the Opposition had differing views"[19] on conscription.  Curtin's gesture of striking a parliamentary desk resembled Churchill's use of his walking cane as a pointing stick, as he was filmed in newsreels,[20] because both leaders communicated by emphasising their words with actions intended to show them as decisive.

**Inclusive language**

Mindful of the press gallery, Curtin repeatedly used "we" and "our" to convey he identified with Australian citizens, such as his statement: "I ask that we shall be more disposed to let the world know the magnificence of our achievements."[21]  Also he emphasised his government's "duty" and its "deepest sense of responsibility" to "hold Australia" as a "base of the utmost strategic importance to the United

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[17] (Anon.), "Militia Bill Passes All Stages", *The Age* [hereafter *Age*], Melbourne, 12 February 1943, p. 2.

[18] (Anon.), "Militia Bill Passes All Stages In House", *The Canberra Times* [hereafter *Canberra*], Canberra, 12 February 1943, p. 2.

[19] (Anon.), "Militia Bill Passes All Stages", *Age*, 12 February 1943, p. 2.

[20] Derek Lukin Johnston, "Winston Churchill: Master of the English Language", *Finest Hour*, no. 46, winter 1984-85, p. 9; Jonathan Sikorsky, "From British Cassandra to American Hero: The Churchill Legend in the World War II American Media", *Finest Hour*, The Churchill Centre, no. 108, autumn 2000, pp. 30-36.

[21] He referred to such inclusive terms as "we", "us" and "the people" 36 times.  Nationhood keywords appeared 22 times.  See Curtin, "*Militia Bill* speech", pp. 592-596.

Nations".[22]  Although the UN was officially established as an international organisation only in October 1945, he referred to the "United Nations" before this to indicate his solidarity with the major Allied powers.  Since Curtin was speaking directly to politicians, he aimed for journalists to publicise his main messages to public audiences.  His parliamentary address was more complex than his radio talks and registered as suitable for an audience with an eleventh-grade education.[23]  His messages of unity inspired "applause from both sides of the House", *The Age* journalist noted.  "Many members from both the Government and Opposition benches came forward to congratulate him."[24]

## Marginalising critics

In addition to his conservative opponents, Curtin was confronted by critics from the left who did not want any forced military service, such as his Labor colleague, Arthur Calwell, as well as the independent MP, Maurice Blackburn.[25]  Yet he branded them as "the mischief-makers outside" the government and the "abusers" whose "quarrelling" would not hinder "those who have the responsibility of conducting war".[26]  This rhetorical technique was also used by Roosevelt when he "assailed his opponents … as often as he greeted his friends" in his "fireside chats".[27]  Newspaper editors copied selected extracts of Curtin's speech, focusing on his description of "the mischief-makers".[28]

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[22] During this speech, Curtin spoke of "duty" once and referred to "responsibility" three times.  See Curtin, "*Militia Bill* speech*",* pp. 592-596.

[23] This speech recorded a Flesch Reading Ease score of 55.5.  See Curtin, "*Militia Bill* speech", pp. 592-596.  See Chapter 1 for more information on the readability statistics.

[24] (Anon.), "Militia Bill Passes All Stages", *Age*, 12 February 1943, p. 2.

[25] Oliver, *Unity is strength,* p. 166.

[26] Curtin made seven references to the "enemy", Japan and "they", meaning his political opponents.  See Curtin, "*Militia Bill* speech", pp. 592-596.

[27] Elvin T. Lim, "The Lion and the Lamb: De-mythologizing Franklin Roosevelt's Fireside Chats" [hereafter "Fireside chats"], *Rhetoric & Public Affairs,* vol. 6, no. 3, 2003, p. 449.

[28] (Anon.), "Militia Bill Passes All Stages", *Age*, 12 February 1943, p. 2; (Anon.), "Militia Bill Passes All Stages", *The Sydney Morning Herald* [hereafter *SMH*], Sydney, 12 February 1943, p. 4; (Anon.), "The Militia Bill", *The West Australian*, [hereafter *West*], Perth, 12 February 1943, p. 5.

**The well-timed comeback**

Churchill was known for his quick, clever and well-timed rebuttals.  Although he appeared to be improvising, he was adept in "the loaded pause" and "the calculated use of interruptions".  As the Churchill scholar, Graham Cawthorne, noted:

> Planning his speech, Winston thinks of everything.  He even, one suspects, looks ahead to see where he is likely to be interrupted.  Then, if the interruptions come, he is more often than not, ready for them with a telling reply.[29]

Similarly to Churchill, Curtin delivered quick replies to some parliamentarians' interjections.  He responded to the opposition's interruptions by saying: "He deplored the fact that the bill should be made the subject of any form of political partisanship."[30]  Such "recriminations", Curtin said, were damaging Australia's reputation, "which will be a shining light in the history of this war when the full story can be told".[31]  The poetic phrase was not included in his speech text, but Curtin might have planned to use the rejoinder during an anticipated parliamentary interruption.  The press gallery emphasised the exceptionally heated arguments that followed Curtin's speech to convey his deft – and perhaps previously rehearsed – debating style.  He defeated proposed opposition amendments and ensured that the *Militia Bill* passed all stages with the aid of such rhetorical devices as: recurring appeals to patriotic duty, forceful hand gestures, an emotional delivery, inclusive words, a clever comeback and portraying his adversaries as undermining national security.

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[29] Graham Cawthorne, "The Fabulous Parliamentarian", in *Mr. Speaker, Sir*, Hume Press, London, 1952, pp. 24-26, cited in Richard M. Langworth (ed.), *Churchill by Himself*, Ebury Press, St Ives, 2008, p. x.

[30] Curtin's impromptu "political partisanship" remark was made in: (Anon.), "Militia Bill Passes All Stages", *Age*, 12 February 1943, p. 2; (Anon.), "The Militia Bill", *West*, 12 February 1943, p. 5.

[31] (Anon.), "The Militia Bill", *West*, 12 February 1943, p. 5.

## Communicating to journalists

Since Curtin's language was accessible, press gallery reporters positively portrayed his oratory in the four selected newspapers the next day.[32]  As part of this content analysis, the news coverage of UAP divisiveness was calculated as being advantageous to Curtin.  For example, a discordant exchange involving Menzies and Spender was published in *The Age*.  Spender announced the opposition executive recommended supporting Curtin's *Militia Bill* on "two occasions".  Menzies interjected: "This happened on three occasions."  Spender replied: "I don't want to argue about that."[33]  The two UAP politicians and their colleague, Eric Harrison, resigned from the opposition executive to protest the bill, prompting newspaper headline writers to declare an "Opposition Split" in the next day's editions.[34]  Such press reports about weak rivals benefited Curtin by strengthening his stature and, as a result, *The Age* and *The Canberra Times* articles were resoundingly favourable towards him.[35]  This selected news coverage, which also included *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The West Australian*,[36] led with Curtin's speech and the journalists repeatedly referred to him[37] to portray him as the agenda setter.

## Winning press approval through international backing

Following the analysis of Curtin's media communications, this section examines his "political" strategies and how he attempted to strengthen his relations with international leaders, particularly Churchill and Roosevelt, to gain more press gallery approval at home.  Within weeks of Curtin's successful passage of the *Militia Bill*,

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[32] The selected news coverage related to *The Age, The Canberra Times*, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The West Australian* issues on 12 February 1943.

[33] (Anon.), "Militia Bill Passes All Stages", *Age*, 12 February 1943, p. 2.

[34] The same headline, "Opposition Split" appeared in *The Age*, p. 2, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, p. 4, and *The West Australian*, p. 5 on 12 February 1943.

[35] (Anon.), "Militia Bill Passes All Stages", *Age*, 12 February 1943, p. 2; (Anon.), "Militia Bill Passes All Stages In House", *Canberra*, 12 February 1943, p. 2.

[36] (Anon.), "Militia Bill Passes All Stages", *SMH*, 12 February 1943, p. 4; (Anon.), "The Militia Bill", *West*, 12 February 1943, p. 5.

[37] In the four press articles on 12 February 1943, references to "Mr. Curtin" and "the Prime Minister" were made eight times in *The Canberra Times*, ten times in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 times in *The West Australian*, and 17 times in *The Age.*

anecdotal evidence conveyed Australians' increasing optimism that they had met the invasion challenges of 1942.  ABC General Manager, Charles Moses, recalled by March 1943, "[i]t was obvious that the war in the Pacific had taken a turn for the better … [and] was moving to a conclusion, a favourable conclusion".[38]  On 18 June, Curtin announced the nation was no longer in danger of an invasion.[39]  In a Movietone newsreel, he assured cinema audiences: "The Battle of Australia has assuredly been won just as the Battle of Britain has been won."  As he made this declaration in the parliament, he read from his notes to announce the nation's air force strength had increased by 60 per cent.  The filmmakers also portrayed Curtin's public thanks to Roosevelt for sending more US planes to Australia, as well as his appreciation of Churchill's support for "our case" in Washington DC.  By unobtrusively filming his speech to MPs, the Movietone producers created the appearance of a credible, authoritative news report about a strong Allied partnership.[40]

Private, informal communications revealed Curtin's determination to build a friendship with Churchill in the lead-up to the Australian federal election.  His efforts to improve Anglo-Australian relations were not only connected to his need to win on 21 August.  Curtin indicated his foreign policy vision to journalists that, "Britain, Australia and America should become the policemen of the Pacific".[41]  To Australians, Churchill was a prominent personality whose image appeared in Labor and UAP advertisements.  For example, he had been pictured in Menzies' patriotic 1940 election poster.[42]  Sydney double-decker bus advertisements depicted Curtin and Churchill to promote the Third Liberty Loan from 15 March to 20 April 1943.[43]  Increasingly angered by the UAP's public references to war secrets during the election campaign in early July, Churchill sent confidential, personal cablegrams to Curtin to criticise these indiscretions.  Churchill complained about Menzies' public

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[38] Charles Moses, interviewed for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation [hereafter "Moses interview"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00408/3, 27 May 1982, transcript np.
[39] Clem Lloyd and Richard Hall (eds), *Backroom briefings: John Curtin's war* [hereafter *Backroom briefings*], National Library of Australia [hereafter NLA], Canberra, 1997, p. 159.
[40] Movietone News (producer), *Prime Minister Tells House Of Evatt's Mission* (newsreel), JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00236, 1943.
[41] Frederick Thomas Smith, cited in Lloyd and Hall, *Backroom briefings*, p. 160.
[42] Lloyd and Hall, *Backroom briefings*, p. 165.
[43] Black, *In his own words*, p. 229.

revelations of AIF manoeuvres and Spender's discussion of evacuation plans from the Middle East.[44]   Menzies reportedly said in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 14 July, "when the Burma Road was in great danger … Australia [with Curtin as the prime minister] refused to divert its leading A.I.F. division to Burma to help keep the road open".[45]   Although not specifically stated in the news report, Menzies was referring to Curtin's dispute with Churchill over his determination to bring back Australian troops to defend the homeland in 1942, as discussed in Chapter 6.   In response to Menzies, the ALP Minister, J.A. Beasley, was quoted as saying: "These very A.I.F. men, instead, were used in the New Guinea operations which … stopped the downward trend of the Japanese towards our own shores".[46]   The report suggested that Menzies might have been trying to question Curtin's loyalty to Britain and exploit divisions between the two Allied nations.


The stories reached Churchill, who urged Curtin "to consider what can be done to prevent embarrassing and possibly dangerous disclosures".[47]   As the election drew closer in early August, Churchill backed Curtin forcefully and appeared to endorse the Labor leader's bid for a second term.   Both prime ministers agreed the Country Party leader, Fadden, had improperly alluded to one of Churchill's secret cablegrams, which had been discussed in the bipartisan Advisory War Council (AWC).   On 13 August 1943, Curtin made the highly unusual decision of sending a draft media release to Churchill about the issue and asking him to review it.   In this press statement, Curtin accused Fadden of behaving improperly by divulging the contents of Churchill's cablegram.   Since he sent the draft release to Churchill, Curtin was determined to avoid repeating Fadden's mistake by giving away too much information about the secret cablegram to the media.[48]   Three days later, Churchill wrote he agreed with the first three paragraphs of Curtin's media release, which stated that Fadden had made "a gross breach of faith" and "a complete

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[44] John Curtin to Winston Churchill, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00869/57, 19 July 1943, p. 10; Winston Churchill to John Curtin, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00869/57, 21 July 1943, p. 11.

[45] (Anon.), "Burma Road Decision" [hereafter "Burma"], *SMH*, 14 July 1943, p. 6.

[46] (Anon.), "Burma", *SMH*, 14 July 1943, p. 6.

[47] Winston Churchill to John Curtin, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00869/57, 17 July 1943, p. 6.

[48] John Curtin to Winston Churchill, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00869/57, 13 August 1943, pp. 22-23.

distortion of the facts to serve his political ends".  Moreover, Churchill urged Curtin to "refuse to follow Mr. Fadden's bad example" and remove additional sentences about his cablegram.[49]  On 18 August, Curtin replied to Churchill that he would "gladly respect your wishes" by deleting the confidential material.[50]  The condensed media release, with Curtin's criticisms of Fadden, appeared in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on the same day.  Readers were informed Curtin had consulted Churchill about the issue, indicating the British prime minister supported his charges against Fadden.[51]  According to F.T. Smith, Curtin had already told senior journalists that Churchill was "worried" about conservative Australian politicians' references to top-secret British policy and "snaky" about the opposition's use of his speeches for its election campaign.[52]  Alexander's diaries indicated Churchill commanded the press gallery's respect.[53]  Churchill's avowed confidence in Curtin bolstered the Australian leader's stature in the global media.

The Australian-US alliance emerged as another challenging issue before the election because UAP politicians were calling for Curtin to visit Roosevelt.  At the beginning of 1943, a *Sun* editorial writer declared: "The time has come when the Prime Minister should serve his country best by a visit to Washington."[54]  In *The Daily Telegraph*, cartoonist William Mahony satirised Curtin's long-distance

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[49] Winston Churchill to John Curtin, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00869/57, 16 August 1943, p. 26.

[50] John Curtin to Winston Churchill, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00869/57, 18 August 1943, p. 29.

[51] (Anon.), "Charge by Mr. Curtin: Secret Cables and Mr. Fadden", *SMH*, 18 August 1943, p. 9.

[52] Smith, cited in Lloyd and Hall, *Backroom briefings*, p. 165.

[53] J.A. Alexander, "Papers 1833-1957" [hereafter "Papers"], NLA, Manuscript Collections, Canberra, NLA acc. no. MS 2389, 27 December 1941, transcript np.

[54] (Anon.), "Curtin Should See Roosevelt", *The Sun*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks compiled by the Prime Minister's office* [hereafter *Scrapbooks*]*, JCPML, Bentley, no. 3, JCPML acc. no. 00297/3, 6 January 1943.

diplomacy with the burdened president (see Figure 14).[55]  Inside the AWC on 25

January, the former Prime Minister and UAP member, William Morris Hughes,

"urged" Curtin to make the trip that would "enable us to hold on" in the South-West

Pacific area.[56]  Yet Ezra Norton defended Curtin in a *Daily Mirror* editorial by
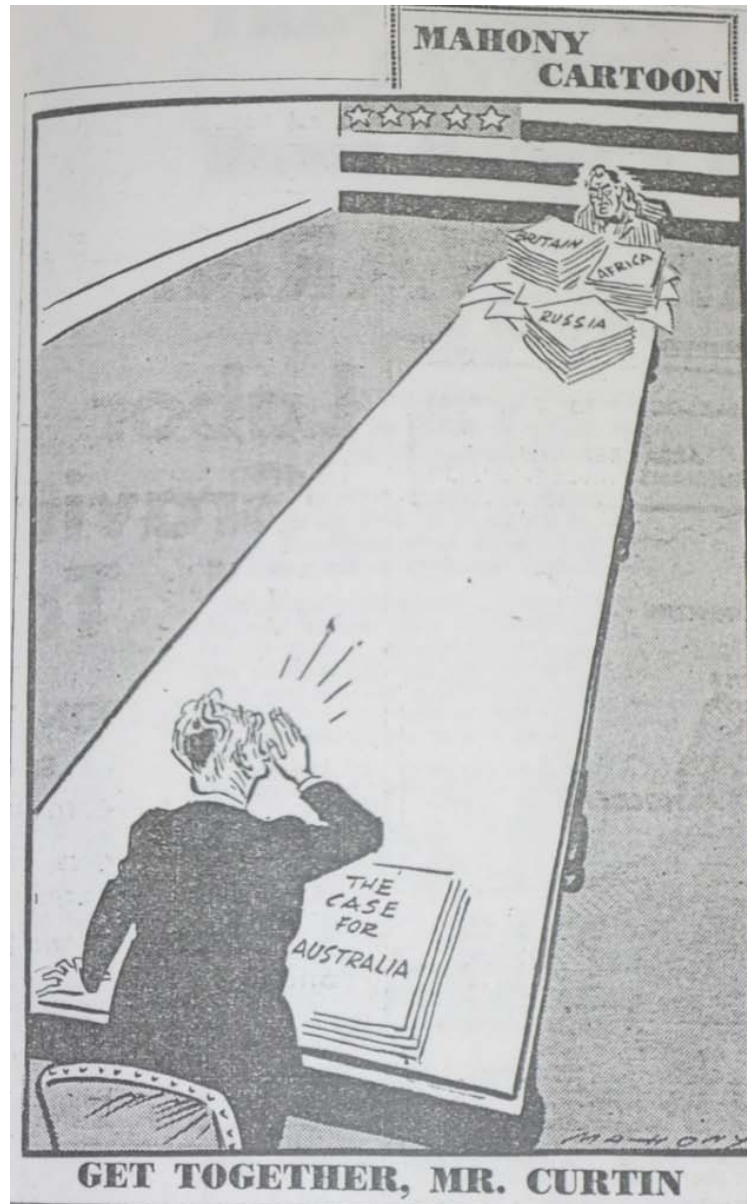


Figure 14

publishing the headline, "Curtin In Best Position To Judge Nation's Requirements".

The editorial writer affirmed Curtin faced "great and important work" in the nation

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[55] Figure 14 appeared in William Mahony, "Get Together, Mr. Curtin", *The Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks,* 8 January 1943.

[56] Department of Foreign Affairs, "Advisory War Council Minutes" [hereafter "AWC minutes at JCPML"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00869/10, 25 January 1943, p. 6.

"in the time of its greatest crisis".  The two related photographs showed a beaming Roosevelt and cheerful Curtin; they were pictured together to indicate their friendship.[57]



Figure 15

Although Curtin might not have known it, he received powerful support in a secret memorandum from the US Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, to Roosevelt. After Curtin had declined FDR's invitation to the White House in 1942, Hull sent some information to the president that sympathetically outlined the prime minister's legitimate reasons for refusing to travel to Washington DC.  To his presidential memorandum, Hull attached a background briefing paper prepared by the American Legation in Canberra.[58]  The legation[59] affirmed:

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[57] Figure 15 appeared in (Anon.), "Curtin In Best Position To Judge Nation's Requirements", *The Daily Mirror*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks,* 14 January 1943.

[58] Cordell Hull to Franklin D. Roosevelt, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00266/2, 22 August 1942, p. 100.

[59] Although the author of this briefing paper was not named in the correspondence, he might have been Nelson T. Johnson, who led the American Legation in Canberra from 1941 to 1945.  See: The Embassy of the United States of America, "History of the U.S. Embassy", Yarralumla, 2010, retrieved on 27 January 2011 at <http://canberra.usembassy.gov/history/chiefsofmission.html>.

> Mr. Curtin, as Prime Minister, has developed.  He is today, I believe, trusted
> and respected throughout the Commonwealth because of his obvious
> sincerity, directness and integrity of character.  No other member of the
> Cabinet has stood the test of recent months as well as John Curtin.[60]

In the unsigned briefing paper, the American Legation agreed with Curtin that he should remain in Australia because:

> We are now on the threshold of a great military movement … Australia is
> destined to play a very important part in that movement.  Prime Minister
> Curtin's presence in Australia is essential to continuity of Australian policy in
> connection with this effort.[61]

The legation noted Curtin was obliged to stay in Australia due to his Cabinet "disunity", chiefly caused by a Labor Minister, E.J. Ward, and the High Court proceedings over income tax proposals, which were unfolding when the Roosevelt briefing was prepared in July 1942.[62]

US diplomats also observed that Curtin was seeking to avoid repeating the mistake of other Australian leaders who travelled to London during a national crisis. As prime ministers, Menzies and Scullin had returned from trips to England to find more dissension within their parties than before they had left.[63]  While Churchill's support was vital, Curtin did not want to be viewed as deserting the Australian people.  The following comments in the unsigned American Legation briefing paper indicated Curtin's delicate balancing of the British relationship:

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[60] American Legation to the US Secretary of State [hereafter "American Legation letter"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00266/2, 21 July 1942, p. 102.

[61] "American Legation letter", p. 103.

[62] "American Legation letter", p. 102, 104.

[63] In 1930 Prime Minister Scullin visited London and sent secret cables revealing dissension within his Cabinet.  The cables were leaked to *The Herald's* Joseph Alexander and the resulting press coverage contributed to the Scullin administration's electoral defeat the next year.  See C.J. Lloyd, *Parliament And The Press: The Federal Parliamentary Press Gallery 1901-88,* Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1988, pp. 95-104.  Prime Minister Menzies returned to Australia on 25 May 1941 after a five-month trip that included England.  He faced a divided Cabinet, causing him to reflect privately that "my political leadership clearly rested upon nothing better than quicksands", and resigned on 28 November.  See A.W. Martin and Patsy Hardy (eds), *Dark and Hurrying Days: Menzies' 1941 Diary,* NLA, Canberra, 1993, p. 142.

> … it must also be remembered that, politically, one of the most dangerous
> things for an Australian Prime Minister to do is to visit London.
> Traditionally, these visits have marked the political eclipse of each Prime
> Minister that has undertaken them in the past, and Mr. Curtin could not visit
> Washington without visiting London, unless perhaps his visit could in some
> way be timed to coincide with a visit to Washington of Prime Minister
> Churchill.[64]

The legation concluded as a result of these "personal observations", it would be
unlikely that Curtin would travel to the US before September 1942.[65]  When Curtin
remained in Canberra in 1943, Roosevelt did not appear insulted.  Instead Eleanor
Roosevelt prepared to meet him at Australia's federal capital.  On 14 June 1943,
Curtin tipped off the media about her imminent visit.  After the press conference,
F.T. Smith noted: "There's a good chance of Mrs Roosevelt coming to Australia but
the Government doesn't want to say much about it."[66]  By 19 August, two days
before the election, Alexander scribbled in his diary: "Mrs Roosevelt coming to
Australia ... expected very soon.  This is important in relation to Curtin [Curtin's]
election.  He doesn't seem that excited about it."[67]  Although Curtin appeared
nonchalant in the press interview, private communications showed he deeply cared
about the bilateral alliance.  The military partnership was promoted in Queensland
election posters, which featured General MacArthur's statement: "No nation is
making a more supreme war effort than Australia."[68]  Behind the scenes, however,
Curtin's news tip about Eleanor Roosevelt's upcoming visit strengthened his position
as a prime minister seeking a second term in office.  Curtin's promotion of his
associations with Churchill and US leaders showed his adeptness in utilising
international authority to his electoral and political advantage.

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[64] "American Legation letter", p. 104.
[65] "American Legation letter", pp. 104-105.
[66] Smith, cited in Lloyd and Hall, *Backroom briefings*, p. 158.
[67] Alexander, "Papers", 19 August 1943.
[68] Oliver, *Unity is strength,* p. 167.

**Governing with the media: cultivating press barons and baiting the opposition**

Curtin's close relationships with ABC General Manager, Charles Moses, in 1943 demonstrated the theories of news in an administered society and governmentality discussed in Chapter 2.[69]  Media executives, including Moses, worked with Curtin to act as "control agents", contributing to "the construction of social order".[70]  Wartime news was subject to "immense diffusion and consumption" in diverse forms and it was disseminated by the "apparatuses of education and information", including the radio media.[71]  In January Curtin intervened in ABC management to recall Moses, who was away on military leave and serving as a lieutenant-colonel in Port Moresby. In a private letter to Moses, Curtin wrote: "I believe it is in the best interests of Australia and its fighting effort that you should now resume your work as General Manager of the A.B.C."  He continued that the general manager conducted a "national job", whose "work is of such significance" that it "should not be left indefinitely in the hands of an acting officer".  Moses was asked to use his army experiences when broadcasting Australian war programs.[72]  One month later, Curtin sent a press statement to notify journalists that the army had released Moses to resume his ABC position.  The prime minister added Moses' return would be "highly advantageous to the Commonwealth war effort".[73]  Forty years later, Moses described Curtin's letter as "a mandate from the prime minister … to provide some programs directed to the Army".  Although Curtin had not directly criticised the radio broadcaster in his media release, "the government was concerned that the ABC needed stronger leadership", Moses recalled.[74]  Curtin had been complaining about a

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[69] Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller (eds), *The Foucault Effect: Studies In Governmentality: With Two Lectures By And An Interview With Michel Foucault,* The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1991; Richard V. Ericson, Patricia M. Baranek and Janet B. L. Chan, *Visualizing Deviance: A Study of News Organizations* [hereafter *Visualizing deviance*]*,* Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1987.
[70] Ericson, Baranek and Chan, *Visualizing deviance,* p. 356.
[71] Michel Foucault, "Truth and Power" [hereafter "Truth and power"], trans. Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham and Kate Soper in Colin Gordon (ed.), *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, The Harvester Press, Brighton, 1980, p. 131.
[72] John Curtin to Charles Moses, National Archives of Australia [hereafter NAA], Canberra, CA 12, M1415, 237, 22 January 1943, p. 77.
[73] John Curtin, "Australian Broadcasting Commission – Lt-Col. C.J.A. Moses", NAA, Canberra, CA 12, M1415, 237, 11 February 1943, p. 70.
[74] Moses, "Moses interview".

lack of Australian radio content on the ABC.[75]   In his oral history, Moses stated,

"Australians were rather out a bit" because they were not producing specialised, local

radio entertainment for the nation's troops.   After Moses returned, he initiated a new

"victory show", known as "The Army Hour", consisting of light entertainment for

Australian troops and based on similar US broadcasts.

Curtin's attempts to influence the ABC were not as direct as those made by

the previous Menzies Government.   The day after Menzies' declaration of war in

1939, an army officer strode into ABC headquarters and said he was taking over the

news services, Moses remembered.   "The army was told to get out of it and they

retired", he said.[76]   Also Menzies ordered radio commentator E.A. Mann (of the

popular program "The Watchman") not to criticise the government.[77]   Moses was

proud of the ABC's "high reputation" as well as its "fair and objective" reports.[78]

During the election broadcasting, the head of ABC news, Michael Francis (Frank)

Dixon, sent frequent staff memos about how "we should not touch the political

campaign at all" and directed journalists to "keep all political propaganda out of your

State news bulletins".[79]   When Fadden's publicity secretary asked ABC Canberra

reporter, Warren Denning, whether a staff member would join the opposition election

campaign, he was told "there would be no political coverage whatsoever".   Yet

Denning said an ABC journalist would accompany Curtin in case he announced "a

vital war development or a national emergency".   Dixon recounted the episode in a

memo to the ABC's Controller of Public Relations on 8 July and he noted Fadden's

publicity secretary "seemed satisfied with this explanation".[80]   On the surface, the

ABC appeared impartial, but it was really giving more free airtime to Curtin and this

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[75] Alan Thomas, "Cleary, William James (1885 – 1973)" [hereafter "The government and the ABC"], *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, vol. 8, 1981, pp. 21-22, retrieved on 28 November 2009 at
<http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A080022b.htm?hilite=William%3BJames%3BCleary>.
[76] Moses, "Moses interview".
[77] Thomas, "The government and the ABC".
[78] Moses, "Moses interview".
[79] M.F. Dixon, "Federal Election Campaign (Memorandum To All States For Information News Department)", NAA, Canberra, CA251, SP286/16, 5, 9 July 1943, p. 80.  The archives contained Dixon's similar memoranda sent on 14 July, 15 July, 20 July and 5 August 1943.
[80] M.F. Dixon to Controller Of Public Relations, "Mr. Fadden's Tour", NAA, Canberra, CA251, SP286/16, 5, 8 July 1943, p. 81.

seemed to be a shift from the broadcaster's previously conservative attitudes.[81]   He took advantage of this opportunity on 26 July by giving a highly political, innovative and detailed speech on his party's policy, the first one to be broadcast by a prime minister through a radio hook-up from Canberra.  In stark contrast to Dixon's internal memos, Curtin told ABC listeners:

> The Labor Government had to devote itself with unflagging industry, and
> often with heart-breaking pains, to re-shaping the country's war machine in
> all its components because of … war with Japan.[82]

Despite Dixon's calls for objectivity, Curtin benefited from the ABC's pro-government stance.

Curtin's relations with the press barons were much more complex, as revealed in his correspondence.  Although Murdoch publicly disagreed with Labor ideology, a biographer recalled his "tolerance" and he repeatedly made the light-hearted comment, "any young man ought to be a socialist, at least until the age of 25".[83]  His relations with Curtin were informally friendly at times.  Murdoch wrote a casual note on "The Herald Offices Melbourne" letterhead stationery in response to Curtin's enquiry about his health after he was involved in a minor accident.  As Murdoch told Curtin:

> It was kind of you to write to me and send your good wishes.  I had a lucky
> escape from serious injury as at the end of a family outing my horse carried
> me at a good pace under a tree.  I trust that your health is good.  We have
> reached about the same age – I find it one at which it must be recognised that
> some things must be left undone and that 30 minutes of 'feet up' is a good
> thing.[84]

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[81] Neville Petersen, *News Not Views: The ABC, the Press, & Politics 1932-1947,* Hale & Iremonger, Sydney, 1993, p. 130.

[82] Curtin, "Election policy statement".  Curtin reportedly talked for 55 minutes, according to *The Age*.  See (Anon.), "Unique Speech", *Age*, 27 July 1943, p. 2.  The entire broadcast was described as two hours in duration.  See Black, *In his own words*, p. 226.

[83] The Herald & Weekly Times, *Keith Murdoch: Journalist*, The Herald & Weekly Times Ltd., Melbourne, 1952, p. 22.

[84] Keith Murdoch to Curtin, NAA, Canberra, CA 12, M1415, 237, 1943, pp. 141-142.

Although the note was undated, it was filed among letters that Curtin received in April 1943.  Murdoch's bright, relaxed tone conveyed the two men enjoyed friendly relations outside of the political arena.  For example, Murdoch worked with Hugh Paton's advertisers to help promote Curtin's Third Liberty Loan before the election.  According to Ryan, Paton was known to be the founder of the modern Australian advertising industry, who was responsible for promoting the government's "Freedom" and "Liberty" loans during World War I.[85]  In a telegram sent to Curtin on 16 April, the Paton Advertising Service stated its client, Murdoch, had devoted all advertising to the government loan during the popular, live Sunday night radio theatre that was broadcast on 2GB.[86]

As the election drew closer, however, Murdoch became more publicly partisan, publishing *Herald* editorials that caused "considerable dissatisfaction" among the newspaper's senior journalists, according to Alexander.  As he noted in his diary:

> They say the paper has made enemies everywhere.  What I fear is that the Government if it gets back will be vindictive and set out to injure him [Murdoch] in many ways.[87]

Alexander was predicting an ALP election victory in Victoria.  Other newspaper editors published Murdoch's anti-Labor views[88] and this sometimes provoked a fierce response from Curtin's supporters.[89]  In a front-page spread in Victoria's *Camperdown Chronicle* on 13 August, for example, Murdoch criticised Curtin for refusing Churchill's request to divert the AIF's 6th and 7th Divisions to Burma.  The media owner had adhered to censorship rules and maintained silence during the

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[85] Peter Ryan, "Paton, Hugh (1871 – 1951)", *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, vol. 11, 1988, pp. 160-161, retrieved on 1 November 2009 at <http://adbonline.anu.edu.au/biogs/A110163b.htm>.

[86] Paton Advertising to John Curtin, NAA, Canberra, CA 12, M1415, 237, 16 April 1943, p. 143.

[87] Alexander, "Papers", 21 August 1943.

[88] Keith Murdoch, "Dangerous Scourge of Dedmanism", *The Advertiser*, Adelaide, 24 July 1943, p. 4; Keith Murdoch, "Some Facts Behind Our Overseas Policies" [hereafter "Overseas policies"], *Camperdown Chronicle*, Camperdown, 13 August 1943, p. 1.

[89] Ena Creelman, "Reply To Sir Keith Murdoch" [hereafter "Reply to Murdoch"], *Camperdown Chronicle*, Camperdown, 20 August 1943, p. 2; John Dedman, "Minister Replies To Sir Keith Murdoch", *The Advertiser*, Adelaide, 17 August 1943, p. 4.

troops' voyage to defend Australia in 1942; however, he published this editorial as Churchill was complaining about the "embarrassing and possibly dangerous disclosures".[90]  Murdoch argued: "To have held Burma would have been to shorten the war against Japan by years and to save a multitude of fine lives."[91]  His view did not seem to resonate with the Australian electorate, perhaps because the Japanese had overrun all of Burma by the end of 1942.  In a letter to the editor, Ena Creelman of Camperdown described Murdoch's editorial as a "remarkable piece of verbosity" and "arm chair criticism".  She wrote the AIF men would have died in Burma because they had not been adequately equipped; Curtin had privately acknowledged this concern to Alan Reid and other reporters in 1942.[92]  She added: "The fact that Murdoch seeks to pour scorn on the head of the Prime Minister, Curtin, has in reverse ratio the effect of enhancing the latter's popularity."[93]  Her letter conveyed that Australian citizens knew about the AIF controversy through word of mouth and they admired Curtin for his decision.  Despite Alexander's foreboding, Curtin did not retaliate against Murdoch media organisations.


Media revelations of opposition divisiveness also boosted Curtin's electoral prospects.  *The Sun News-Pictorial's* new federal political journalist, Frank Chamberlain, broke the story with his headline, "Menzies attacks Fadden", about a UAP meeting at Camberwell City Hall in Melbourne.  Before the meeting, Menzies distributed his speech text in the form of a media release, "which every newspaper accepted as gospel", Chamberlain recalled.  As a result, no reporter heard Menzies' speech except Chamberlain, who arrived incognito at the City Hall.  A police constable told Chamberlain that: "The only hope you've got of getting in is to call yourself a Young Nationalist."  Therefore he pretended to be a patriotic UAP supporter and party organisers led him through the back door to the stage, where he was seated directly behind Menzies, who did not recognise the journalist.  After his formal speech, Menzies "leaned over the front of the platform and saw that the Press table was quite empty", Chamberlain remembered.  Then Menzies put his speech

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[90] Winston Churchill to John Curtin, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00869/57, 17 July 1943, p. 6.

[91] Murdoch, "Overseas policies", p. 1.

[92] Alan D. Reid, interviewed by Mel Pratt, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00501, 4 October 1972 and 28 February 1973, transcript np.

[93] Creelman, "Reply to Murdoch", p. 2.

notes aside and said: "Ladies and Gentlemen, fellow electors, I want to take you into my confidence and tell you what I really think about Arthur Fadden." Menzies then proceeded to denounce Fadden's post-war credit scheme as "completely alien to everything that we stand for and … an outrageous confidence trick upon the Australian people".[94] Fadden proposed to return one-third of wartime taxation to taxpayers in instalments after the war.[95] Chamberlain said: "I thought I was dreaming, as most of the veterans in the audience did." Menzies "politically undressed" Fadden "in such a vigorous way that it had to be heard to be believed". *The Sun News-Pictorial* photographer took a picture of the empty press table and Menzies with his arm upraised as he spoke. Chamberlain rushed to phone his office and give a news update. When Fadden was told of the news, he reportedly exclaimed: "This is a typical Menzian stab in the back." Chamberlain said Menzies was interviewed by other journalists later and did not deny the article, acknowledging it was uncovered by a "bright young reporter". Also Chamberlain remembered his employer, Murdoch, shook his hand for the "outstanding scoop" and gave him a £100 bonus. Murdoch added: "It's a scoop I would have preferred not to have had politically." Furthermore, Curtin praised Chamberlain in a personal telegram as he wrote: "Thank you, the name Chamberlain rings a bell in Australian history." The prime minister's truncated but glowing tribute became one of his "treasured possessions", Chamberlain said.[96] One year later, the Australian Journalists' Association (AJA) discouraged members from using dishonest tactics such as those adopted by Chamberlain at Camberwell City Hall. The AJA established a code of ethics in 1944 that required each member "[t]o use only fair and honest means to obtain news, pictures and documents" and "[a]lways to reveal his identity as a representative of the press before obtaining any personal interview for the purpose of using it for publication".[97] Chamberlain's reminiscence was consistent with scholarly accounts of the fragile UAP-Country Party coalition. According to historian David Black, Menzies "attacked" Fadden's taxation proposal

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[94] Frank Chamberlain, interviewed by Mel Pratt [hereafter "Chamberlain interview"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00552, August 1972-January 1973, transcript np.
[95] David Black, "Curtin as an Election Leader" [hereafter "The election campaign"], JCPML, Bentley, 2008, retrieved on 28 November 2009 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/electionleader/1943/1943_policies.html>.
[96] Chamberlain, "Chamberlain interview".
[97] Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance, Australian Journalists' Association, "Ethics Review Committee Final Report", November 1996, retrieved on 26 November 2009 at <http://www.gwb.com.au/99a/ethics.html>.

on the night of 24 July.[98]   A combination of factors – including Chamberlain's cunning, Menzies' media naivety and his disagreements with Fadden – helped tip public opinion towards Curtin.

The Labor prime minister's adept media management was further evidenced in his handling of the contentious, so-called "Brisbane Line" strategy.  According to historian Lloyd Ross, the political debate in mid-1943 centred on Australian General Iven Mackay's private government memorandum, dated 4 February 1942, where he stated "the principles of Australian defence" were to concentrate troops in these "vital" areas: Melbourne; Brisbane, as the city was an "essential" US base; and Newcastle, Sydney, Port Kembla and Lithgow, New South Wales, the centre of black coal and steel production, manufacturing and Australia's "best equipped naval base".[99]  Mackay recommended withdrawing or excluding troops from Darwin, South Australia, Tasmania, Western Australia and from all Queensland areas that were north of Brisbane.[100]  Curtin said the Labor government rejected Mackay's advice in favour of defending the whole country.[101]  At a press interview on 17 March 1943, MacArthur referred to the Brisbane line as a "defeatist conception" that he "instantly changed" to ensure the Allied forces fought the Japanese in nearby islands north of the Australian mainland.[102]

The Minister for Labour and National Service, Eddie Ward, increasingly accused the Menzies and Fadden administrations of having developing the "Brisbane Line".[103]  As *The Daily Telegraph* correspondent, Don Whitington, recalled, Ward received this information from a confidential source, who was "a military member of

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[98] Black, "The election campaign".
[99] Lloyd Ross, *John Curtin: A Biography* [hereafter *A Curtin biography*], The Macmillan Company of Australia, South Melbourne, 1977, p. 309.
[100] Ross, *A Curtin biography*, p. 311.
[101] Ross, *A Curtin biography*, pp. 312-313.
[102] Douglas MacArthur, cited in Ross, *A Curtin biography*, p. 313.
[103] Black, *In his own words*, pp. 223-224; Ross, *A Curtin biography*, pp. 309-314; Don Whitington, *Strive to be Fair: An Unfinished Biography* [hereafter *Strive to be fair*], Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1977, pp. 79-80.

the staff of a former Minister for the Army".[104]  Menzies and Fadden strenuously denied Ward's claims.[105]  Private cables indicated that Churchill was pressuring Fadden, when prime minister, to keep Australian troops in Tobruk before the war against Japan.  In a cable on 30 September 1941, Churchill wrote to Fadden, "we are entitled to count upon Australia to make every sacrifice necessary for the comradeship of the Empire".[106]  The next year, Churchill told Curtin that he would not divert the "continuous stream" of British troops, travelling around the Cape of Good Hope, to defend Australia if Japan made "localized attacks in the north or ... mere raids elsewhere".  Churchill sent this cable about two months after Japan's bombing of Darwin, when US forces were in Australia.  He added that he would send these British forces to Australia if "eight or ten" Japanese divisions "heavily invaded" the country.[107]  His messages implied that the Commonwealth Government should be not too concerned over "mere raids".  During a parliamentary debate on 24 June 1943, Ward claimed a crucial document was missing that would have linked the "Brisbane Line" to the former government.  Curtin, however, denied there was a missing document and Ward was relieved of his ministerial duties while a royal commission was set up to investigate the allegations.[108]  On the same day, *The Daily Telegraph* cartoonist, William Mahony, directed criticism at Ward, rather than Curtin, for discussing private policy (see Figure 16).[109]  Curtin told reporters, "[the] fact remained that he inherited all these things", referring to the government documents on the military strategy.[110]  Yet Curtin also "found Ward useful in the

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[104] Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, p. 80.  Later Whitington did not reveal this anonymous source's identity.

[105] Department of Foreign Affairs, "AWC minutes at JCPML", 3 June 1943, pp. 7-8.

[106] Winston Churchill to A.W. Fadden, Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade [hereafter "Foreign affairs department"], Barton, vol. 5, 30 September 1941, retrieved on 7 January 2011 at <http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/vWeb?OpenView>.

[107] Winston Churchill to John Curtin, "Foreign affairs department", 30 March 1942.

[108] Black, *In his own words*, p. 224.

[109] Figure 16 appeared in William Mahony, "We'll Hang Out Our Washing On The – Brisbane Line", *The Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks,* 24 June 1943.

[110] Smith, cited in Lloyd and Hall, *Backroom briefings*, p. 154.

Figure 16

Brisbane Line controversy" because it allowed him to stress his position to defend the whole of Australia.[111]

Curtin survived the opposition's vote of no-confidence in the government on 24 June, a censure really directed at Ward, and proposed an election.[112]  A *Daily Telegraph* cartoon conveyed the view that the "Brisbane Line" debate was motivating Curtin and Fadden in their campaigns (see Figure 17).[113]  During his

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[111] Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, p. 80.
[112] Ross, *A Curtin biography*, p. 317.
[113] Figure 17 appeared in George Edmond Finey, "The Road Back", *The Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, 25 June 1943.
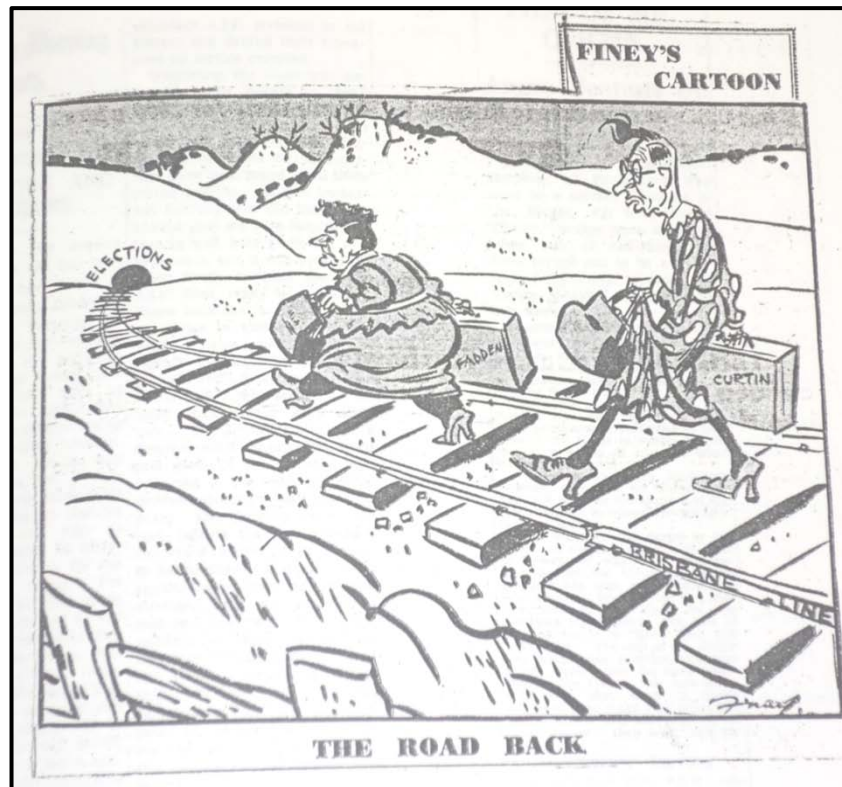
Figure 17

radio election policy speech on 26 July, however, Curtin made only one allusion to this controversy when he said:

> … the Labor Government … rejected the concept that the little islands to the north of Australia would be taken, that upper Queensland and the Darwin area would be over-run by the enemy.[114]

He used keywords about "defence",[115] safety and security[116] in his broadcast and concentrated on his administration's "positive record", telling listeners: "The Labor Government has kept you safe … It won security for you".[117]  The next section will elaborate on his radio talk.  Many reporters seemed to cooperate with his strategy because Curtin's speech appeared prominently in the four selected newspapers the next day and the "Brisbane Line" was not the main issue.[118]  Only *The West Australian* editorial writer referred briefly to the strategy by describing the speech's

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[114] Curtin, "Election policy statement".

[115] Curtin talked about "defence" ten times.  See Curtin, "Election policy statement".

[116] He used keywords about safety and military security eight times.  See Curtin, "Election policy statement".

[117] See Curtin, "Election policy statement".

[118] The selected news coverage related to *The Age, The Canberra Times*, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The West Australian* issues on 27 July 1943.

"less commendable feature" as Curtin's "unwarranted support" of Ward's insinuations.[119]  Ward claimed parliamentary privilege and refused to answer the royal commission inquiry, which resulted in inconclusive findings.  Although most criticisms of Curtin on this issue centred on the delay in disciplining his minister, it was impossible to dismiss him because the caucus had elected Ward.[120]  Whitington recalled, "it is indisputable" that Curtin used "the Brisbane Line affair" to his "political advantage" and "helped Labor win a record number of seats in Queensland in the 1943 election".[121]  This indicates Curtin's ability to divert most media attention to the defence messages that he wanted to promote.

In Queensland, for example, *The Courier-Mail* published only ten stories that focused on the "Brisbane Line" between 1 May 1943 and 1 September 1943.[122]  An unnamed *Courier-Mail* editorial writer urged politicians to focus on present circumstances, stating: "The people are not interested in fighting the war of the past. They are interested in fighting only NOW."[123]  The statement was highlighted in bold type.  In a signed editorial, Murdoch levelled criticisms mainly at Ward for inventing a "discreditable story" to smear his conservative opponents.[124]  By the end of July, this issue ceased to be a story in *The Courier-Mail*.  In the election, the ALP candidates representing Queensland won all three Senate seats, previously held by the conservatives, and they maintained six out of the state's ten seats in the House of Representatives.[125]  This was Labor's greatest victory in Queensland since 1914, when the party held 13 federal parliamentary seats representing the state. Afterwards, a *Courier-Mail* leader writer declared:

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[119] (Anon.), "Labour's Stewardship", *West*, 27 July 1943, p. 4.
[120] Ross, *A Curtin biography*, p. 314.
[121] Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, p. 80.
[122] These stories appeared in the following *Courier-Mail* issues: 28 May 1943, p. 3; 29 May 1943, p. 1; 2 June 1942, p. 4; 4 June 1943, p. 1; 9 June 1943, p. 2; 24 June 1943, p. 1; 6 July 1943, p. 1; 15 July 1943, pp. 2-3; 21 July 1943, p. 3.
[123] (Anon.), "Editorial: Brisbane Battle", *The Courier-Mail*, Brisbane, 29 May 1943, p. 1.
[124] Keith Murdoch, "Discreditable Story Of The Brisbane Line", *The Courier-Mail*, Brisbane, 9 June 1943, p. 2.
[125] Parliament of Australia, "Federal election results 1901-2007", Parliamentary Library, Canberra, research paper no. 17, 2008-2009, retrieved on 6 January 2011 at <http://www.aph.gov.au/library/pubs/rp/2008-09/09rp17.htm#statistical>.

> As the campaign proceeded the Prime Minister addressed his argument more directly to the middle voter by curbing excesses of party propaganda, by dwelling on the nation's war necessities, and by acknowledging merit in the previous war administration.[126]

The Labor caucus re-elected Ward to the ministry.[127]   During this controversy, Curtin initially allowed Ward to publicise attacks against conservative opponents, while he focused on positive messages about defence, national security and safety. Some media and political critics largely directed their censures against Ward, rather than Curtin, for making allegations that he could not prove to be correct.  Since Curtin had developed positive relationships with senior press gallery journalists, they were willing to cover more favourable news about his administration and did not dwell on the "Brisbane Line".[128]

Along with benefiting from the media coverage of an Allied advance, Curtin generated favourable press comments on Australia's jobs growth during his election campaign.  The nation had emerged from the Great Depression and achieved full employment as it sent military supplies to faraway Nazi battles.[129]  With the opening of the Pacific war theatre, Curtin accelerated weapons production at "breakneck speed", according to *The Sydney Morning Herald*, creating more jobs.[130]  To gauge the national mood prior to the election, Alexander travelled to the prosperous NSW town of Wagga Wagga to interview the local newspaper's managing editor.[131] Alexander referred to the town's economic boom, partly attributed to the

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[126] (Anon), "Editorial: The Job Ahead Of Mr. Curtin", *The Courier-Mail*, Brisbane, 23 August 1943, p. 2.

[127] Black, *In his own words*, p. 224.

[128] Joseph A. Alexander, interviewed by Mel Pratt, JCPML, Bentley, acc. no. 00551, 2 March 1971, transcript np; Tom Mead, *Breaking The News: The events which changed life in Australia through the eyes of a man who worked at the front line of journalism and politics,* Dolphin Books, Sydney, 1998, p. 55; Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, pp. 78-81.

[129] Bruce Scates, "Unemployment", in Graeme Davison, John Hirst and Stuart Macintyre (eds), *The Oxford Companion to Australian History*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2001, retrieved on 28 January 2009 at <http://www.oxfordreference.com.dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t127.e1492>.

[130] (Anon.), "Labour [sic] Party Policy", *SMH*, cited in *Scrapbooks,* 27 July 1943.

[131] Alexander did not clearly identify the name of the Wagga Wagga newspaper editor in his diaries.  See Alexander, "Papers", 10 August 1943.

establishment in 1940 of the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Base Wagga,
which included a flying training school and aircraft depot.  This town would be
declared officially to be a city in 1946.  The local newspaper editor told Alexander,
"the people benefiting by the flow of easy money will vote for the ALP" because the
large towns "are going through a wartime boom and they are unlikely to want to vote
out Father Christmas [a light-hearted name for Curtin]".[132]  As Alexander toured
rural areas, he noticed "the flow of wartime paper money" because of the nation's
full employment, and he forecast Labor's election victory on 21 August.[133]  *Sun*
cartoonist, Stuart Peterson, wryly portrayed Curtin's vision of abundance.[134]
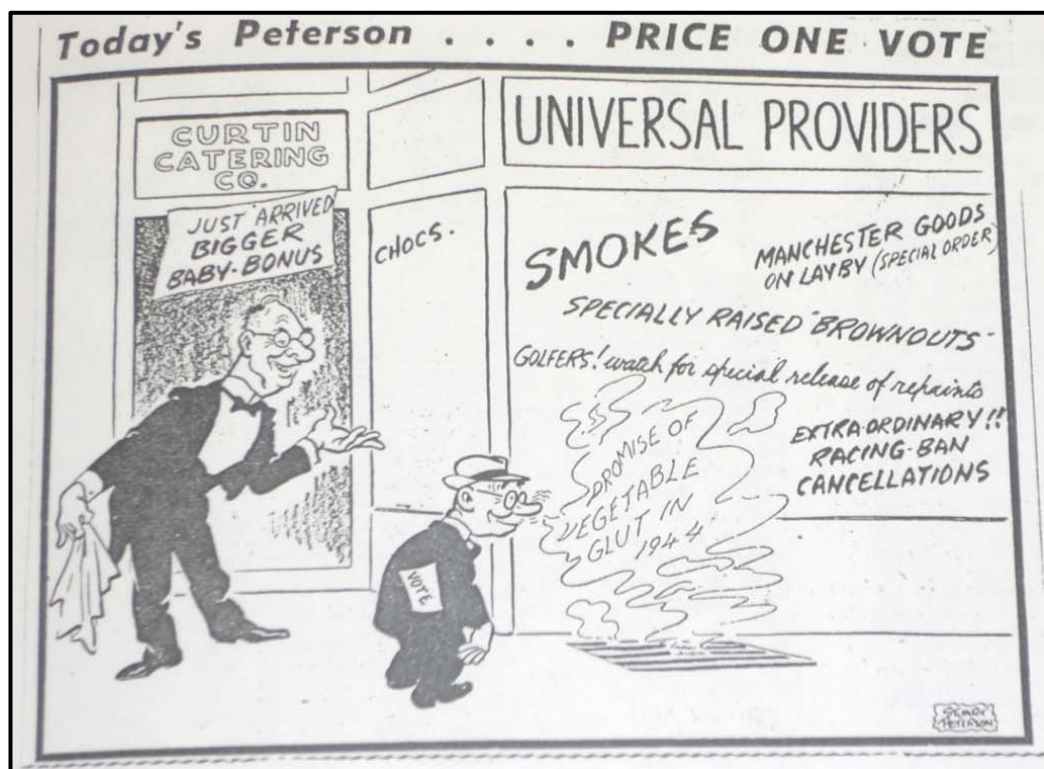


Figure 18

Although more Australians had returned to work, they still faced the grim, everyday
realities of war shortages, according to a *Time* correspondent who reported:

> The Australian lines up for an hour or more to get a haircut, another hour for
> a crude 'austerity' meal at a restaurant … It takes six weeks to get shoes
> soled, five months to get a watch repaired.  If an Australian is lucky he gets

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[132]Alexander, "Papers", 10 August 1943.
[133] Alexander, "Papers", 11 August 1943.
[134] Figure 18 appeared in Stuart Peterson, "Today's Peterson …. Price One Vote", *The Sun*,
Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, 5 July 1943.

four gallons of gasoline a month.  Horse racing and all sports have been

curtailed … There are not enough houses, apartments or even hotel rooms.[135]

When the government removed restrictions on night street lights, Alexander

attributed this to a heightened sense of international security.  He noted in his diary,

"[t]he best proof of the improvement in the war position" was the government

announcement that street lights would be restored except those facing seawards.[136]

Due to Australia's enhanced security, the previous "brown-out" was lifted for areas

from Rockhampton on the eastern coast to a point just south of Exmouth Gulf on the

western coast.[137]  On 4 July, Alexander wrote: "The lights are shining again in

Canberra … This is evidence that the Japanese threat has receded, never to come

again in this war."[138]  The Allied victories were the main reason for the newly

restored night-time lights and it was fortuitous for the government that military

successes preceded the election.  The timing of the electricity restoration and the

journalists' repetition of the government's key message about "Australia's improved

position"[139] strengthened the ALP's electoral prospects.


**The multimedia election**

Curtin's victory was also a testament to the success of his campaign policy speech,

delivered by a national radio hook-up to reach about 100 ABC and commercial

broadcasting stations as well as short-wave transmissions.  It was the first time that

any party leader had announced his policy from the nation's capital.  The broadcast

was scheduled between 8pm and 9pm on Monday night, with the text printed in three

army dailies as well as the RAAF newspaper "to ensure the widest possible

coverage", a government media release stated.  The press bulletin also emphasised

Curtin's reputation as an innovative strategist, noting that he had been the first party

leader to announce his policy from Western Australia, where his Fremantle electorate

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[135] (Anon.), "Curtin and Poll", *Time*, New York, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01222/11, 23 August 1943, p. 34.
[136] Alexander, "Papers", 2 July 1943.
[137] (Anon.), "Brown-Out Lifted South Of Rockhampton", *Canberra*, 3 July 1943, p. 2.
[138] Alexander, "Papers", 4 July 1943.
[139] Alexander, "Papers", 2 July 1943; (Anon.), "Brown-Out Lifted South Of Rockhampton", *Canberra*, 3 July 1943, p. 2.

was located, in 1937 and 1940.[140]  Curtin made his campaign speech in the presence of only the Canberra radio studio officials and a few press gallery journalists.[141]  He spoke 149 words a minute, slightly faster than the recommended rate,[142] probably resulting from the nervousness that he complained of several times before making the speech.[143]  Curtin emphasised his keywords of nationhood, the people and the government's wartime responsibilities.[144]  He adopted a hopeful tone as he talked about national unity, freedom, the future and used a new term, "cooperation".[145]  He used rhetorical techniques favoured by charismatic leaders such as describing a positive vision of the next years, increasing references to the future, and referring to group values, freedom and cooperation, to attain goals.[146]  This chapter has shown that Curtin used a longer, more detailed and complex script than in his earlier radio talks to describe the increased economic and military production under his government.  Yet his election policy broadcast was still aimed at an audience with a secondary school education, and registered as suitable for a twelfth-grade reading level.[147]  Afterwards he gave more one-hour national radio talks: they were held in the Melbourne Town Hall on Friday, 6 August from 8pm to 9pm, and in the Fremantle Town Hall on Wednesday, 18 August from 7.15pm to 8.15pm.[148]  In addition to government advertisements, which focused on his personal popularity in an unprecedented way, state and federal Labor politicians gave "an extensive schedule" of speaking engagements and radio broadcasts.[149]

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[140] Australian Commonwealth Government, "Prime Minister's Itinerary" [hereafter "Election speech itinerary"], NAA, Canberra, CA12, A461, R4/1/12, 1943, p. 117.
[141] (Anon.), "Mr. Curtin Was Nervous", *SMH*, 27 July 1943, p. 6.
[142] According to the JCPML, the prepared statement was 8,196 words. *The Age* correspondent noted during the broadcast, "several unimportant deletions were made, but Mr. Curtin also made two additions".  The reported additions were two brief phrases that encouraged voters to choose the ALP. *The Age* journalist also wrote: "He read his speech in 55 minutes."  See (Anon.), "Unique Speech", *Age*, 27 July 1943, p. 2; Curtin, "Election policy statement".
[143] (Anon.), "Mr. Curtin Was Nervous", *SMH*, 27 July 1943, p. 6.
[144] Nationhood keywords were used 22 times.  He also talked about "the people", "we" and "us" 36 times.  Furthermore, he spoke about "duty" and "responsibility" four times and referred twice to "tradition".  See Curtin, "Election policy statement".
[145] Curtin referred five times to Australia's future; three times to cooperation; twice to freedom; and once to national unity.  See Curtin, "Election policy statement".
[146] Vivianne Seyranian and Michelle C. Bligh, "Presidential charismatic leadership: Exploring the rhetoric of social change", *The Leadership Quarterly*, vol. 19, 2008, p. 67.
[147] The Flesch Reading Ease score was 40.3.
[148] Australian Commonwealth Government, "Election speech itinerary", p. 117.
[149] Oliver, *Unity is strength*, p. 167.

Newsreels indicated that Curtin strove to appeal to mainstream voters; also he attracted support from the left and the right of the political spectrums.  Echoing the same words that the politically conservative Joseph Alexander had written in his diary, Communist Party film narrator, Max Julius, told cinema audiences: "The Curtin Government has done a splendid job."[150]  The party had changed its tone remarkably since the beginning of the war, when communists were hostile towards both Menzies and Curtin.  They had denounced Australia's role in the war against Germany, causing Menzies to ban the organisation's activities in 1940.  By late 1942, however, communists had joined the Allied cause and Curtin removed the ban on their party.[151]  In a variety of newsreels,[152] close-up, eye-level images portrayed Curtin as an honest, hard-working war leader who was working "to keep [Australia] free".[153]  Along with preparing for his direct-to-camera, election advertisements, Curtin rehearsed for a staged scene that was set up to look like a press conference.  Cinema audiences watched him say, "the truth is if we do not strip ourselves to save for our country, the enemy will do it for us with ruthless efficiency, imposing upon us a maximum of misery".  The filmmakers created the appearance of a factual news report as they showed eye-level images of the prime minister moving his head from side to side to speak to an assumed group of people, not pictured in the scene.[154]  In fact, the unedited version showed the director tried medium and close-up shots while Curtin adopted a variety of speaking postures during "take three" of this scene.  These moving images were finally screened as medium shots to show Curtin seated at a table, leaning forward, and to convey a personal relationship between him and his assumed audience, possibly reporters.  A narrator informed filmgoers, "the position is tense and the Prime Minister minces no words" and then the scene cut to

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[150] Communist Party of Australia (producer), *Everything for the Victory of Democracy* (newsreel) [hereafter *Victory*], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00242/1, 1943.  The same tribute, "Curtin has done a splendid job", was written by Joseph Alexander.  See Alexander, "Papers", 11 December 1941.

[151] David Black, "Menzies and Curtin in World War Two: A comparative essay", [hereafter "Menzies and Curtin"], JCPML, Bentley, 2006, retrieved on 10 May 2008 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/ww2leaders>.

[152] Australian Labor Party (producer), *The Man Of The Hour* (newsreel) [hereafter *Man of the hour*], Australia, 1943; Cinesound Review (producer) "This Is Vital To You!", in *Compiled Speeches Of John Curtin* (newsreels), JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00130/1, 1943; Communist Party of Australia, *Victory*.

[153] Australian Labor Party, *Man of the hour*.

[154] Cinesound Review and Movietone News (producers), "Two Years … Dec. 7 1941-1943", in *John Joseph Curtin 1885-1945*, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00238/1, 1943.

Curtin to create a sense of urgency.  Although the evidence suggests that he rehearsed meticulously to create the desired effect of seemingly spontaneous film scenes, the audience was unaware of the practice shots.[155]  Differing from the strong film focus on Curtin, there is an absence of preserved footage about Fadden and Menzies during the 1943 election.[156]

Through his skilful use of the media and his wartime leadership, Curtin achieved the best federal election victory for the ALP at the time.  He won 66.9 per cent of the vote in his Fremantle electorate on 21 August.  Labor achieved substantial gains in NSW, South Australia and WA, along with gains in Tasmania and Victoria.  The ALP won 49 of the 74 House of Representatives seats.  In the Senate, the ALP won all of the contested seats and increased its representation to 22 out of a total of 36 members.[157]  Due to the NSW "enormous swing" to the left, the new Labor candidate Allan Fraser – who had left his position as *The Daily Mirror* Canberra chief political correspondent to contest the election – won the "bellwether" seat of Eden-Monaro and held it for 23 years.  Fraser partly attributed his success to following a Labor branch secretary's advice and adopting Curtin's serious, conservative dress style.  This branch secretary, Bill Beasley, told Fraser:

> You wear the best suit that you can buy and never come out here [to the electorate's industrial area of Goulburn] without your shoes properly polished and the heels properly done, and yourself looking absolutely the best that you can look, because you're our member and we want to be proud of you.

Fraser noticed that after the local railway men finished a day's work, "once they were in their own time, they dressed magnificently, and they took great pride in their appearance".  As soon as he was elected, Fraser began a weekly radio talk on

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[155] ScreenSound Australia, *Parliament in Session* (newsreel), JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00876/4, 1944.

[156] National Film and Sound Archive, "Prime Ministers of Australia" (fact sheets on Sir Arthur William Fadden and Sir Robert Gordon Menzies), Acton, 2008, retrieved on 29 November 2009 at <http://www.nfsa.gov.au/the_collection/collection_spotlights/apms/index.html>.

[157] Black, "The election campaign"; Lesley Carman-Brown, "Parliamentary Power", JCPML, Bentley, 2004, retrieved on 28 January 2009 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/aspirations/parliament.html>; Oliver, *Unity is strength,* pp. 167-169.

Canberra station 2CA, broadcasting his views and available times to meet constituents.[158]

The election result was also unique in bringing the first female politician to each House.  Labor's Dorothy Tangney of WA became the first woman senator, while Dame Enid Lyons, wife of the late Prime Minister Joseph Lyons, won the Tasmanian seat of Darwin.[159]  Curtin had pitched his radio policy speech to female voters when he talked about Labor initiatives towards "the betterment of the status of women" such as increasing maternity allowances, widow's pensions and crèches for working mothers.[160]  When he visited the WA suburb of South Perth a few days before the election, Curtin "was given an excellent hearing by about 300 women" who "keenly questioned" him.[161]  While a number of factors, such as divisiveness in the UAP-Country Party alliance and the "Brisbane Line" revelations played into Labor's hands, Curtin's media strategies – from his inclusive, public addresses to his choice of clothes – had influenced other ALP politicians to adopt similar techniques and contributed to the outstanding victory.

This study conducted a limited content analysis of the selected four newspapers' coverage of Curtin's election policy speech to gauge whether journalists promoted his key messages.  The text of his radio broadcast was substantially reprinted in *The Age,*[162] *The Canberra Times*,[163] *The Sydney Morning Herald*[164] and *The West Australian.*[165]  In his newspaper, *The Age* editor, Oswald Syme, repeated Curtin's quotation of one of his positive editorials.  During the radio talk, Curtin said: "In the words of the 'Age' newspaper, 'it is a matter for gratitude that in virile,

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[158] Allan Fraser, interviewed by Mel Pratt [hereafter "Fraser interview"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00550, August 1972-January 1973, transcript np.
[159] Black, *In his own words,* p. 228; Oliver, *Unity is strength,* p. 168.
[160] Curtin, "Election policy statement".
[161] (Anon.), "Women Questioners", *SMH*, 18 August 1943, p. 9.
[162] (Anon.), "War And Peace Policy: Aims Of Labor Party Reviewed", *Age*, 27 July 1943, p. 3.  Curtin's speech was reprinted in three broadsheet columns.
[163] (Anon.), "Bold Postwar Development of National Resources", *Canberra*, 27 July 1943, p. 2.  One hundred sentences of the speech appeared as direct quotations.
[164] (Anon.), "War-Time Record Emphasised", *SMH*, 27 July 1943, p. 4.  Curtin's address was reprinted on pages four, five and six.
[165] (Anon.), "Federal Elections", *West*, 27 July 1943, p. 4.  The speech coverage expanded to three columns in the broadsheet newspaper.

statesmanlike form, national leadership is being provided'".[166]  The same tribute appeared in the next day's issue of *The Age*.[167]  The radio talk was framed as a serious, factual and prominent news report in all four metropolitan dailies.  Curtin's stature was enhanced by the front-page news of the day, which included reports of the resignation of Italian Fascist Party dictator, Benito Mussolini, the news of "frantic Axis" troops fleeing Sicily, as well as the announcement of the heaviest bomb load ever carried by a striking force in the southern Pacific, with more than 186 tonnes of bombs dropped by Allied aircraft onto Japanese defences at Munda, New Georgia.[168]  In a related leader, *The Canberra Times* editor, Arthur Shakespeare, endorsed Curtin's re-election.  The editorial writer stated he was "entitled to undeniable credit" for national war victories and he had outlined "a great vision of post-war Australia".  Also Curtin was praised for his "personal honesty", his successful "counsels", "word pictures" and "vigorous policy of Australian welfare after the war".[169]  His appeals to a hopeful future were made frequently in *The Canberra Times* coverage.[170]  The other three newspaper editorials were calculated to be neutral.[171]  While this group of editors praised Curtin's "creditable record of achievement", they criticised his "unjust" disparagements of the previous conservative administrations and called for him to make "a pledge that socialism will not be enforced for any reason while the war continues".[172]  Early in the campaign, Curtin insisted that socialism was a "dead tiger" and that "we have not socialised Australia, and we do not intend to do it just because we are at war".[173]  Black wrote: "Three days before the election he [Curtin] reaffirmed this commitment."[174]  During Curtin's nationwide radio broadcast at the Fremantle Town Hall on 18 August, he

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[166] Curtin, "Election policy statement".

[167] (Anon.), "War And Peace Policy: Aims Of Labor Party Reviewed", *Age*, 27 July 1943, p. 3.

[168] *The Canberra Times*, Canberra, 27 July 1943, p. 1.  Similar international news appeared in *The Age*, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The West Australian* on the same day.

[169] (Anon.), "Labour's [sic] Vision of Australia', *Canberra*, 27 July 1943, p. 2.

[170] Curtin used "hope" and "future" keywords 20 times; these terms were repeated 14 times in *The Canberra Times*.  See (Anon.), "Bold Postwar Development of National Resources", *Canberra* , 27 July 1943, p. 2; (Anon.), "Labour's [sic] Vision of Australia', *Canberra*, 27 July 1943, p. 2; Curtin, "Election policy statement".

[171] (Anon.), "Labour [sic] Party Policy", *SMH*, 27 July 1943, p. 4; (Anon.), "Labour's [sic] Record and Aims", *Age*, 27 July 1943, p. 2; (Anon.), "Labour's [sic] Stewardship", *West*, 27 July 1943, p. 4.

[172] (Anon.), "Labour [sic] Party Policy", *SMH*, 27 July 1943, p. 4.

[173] Curtin, *DDA*, no. 61, 23 July 1943, pp. 28-29, cited in Black, *In his own words,* p. 227.

[174] Black, *In his own words,* p. 227.

said his government would not socialise any industry during the war and "the Labor Party had no affiliation with the Communist party".[175]  His rhetoric was published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* the next day, assisting him to increase editorial support.[176]  On the eve of the election, Alexander wrote in his diary: "The most interesting feature of the last day of the campaign is the Sydney Morning Herald's strong summing up against the opposition.  It has given the Government strong support."[177]  When the news coverage – including the editorial leaders and speech reports – was measured together, the ultimate result was a positive outcome for Curtin.  During the campaign, he kept refining his messages to appeal to the political centre.

Curtin's "extraordinary"[178] press rapport might have persuaded traditionally anti-Labor journalists to support him electorally.  One of Perth's *Sunday Times* publishers, Victor Courtney, was a former Nationalist state political candidate, who was also Curtin's friend.  With his *Sunday Times* co-publisher, John J. Simons, a previous Labor candidate, Courtney approved favourable news about Curtin in his newspaper in 1943.[179]  Moreover, Sydney's *Daily Telegraph* wartime correspondent, Edgar Holt, recalled his "tremendous admiration for Curtin" influenced him to vote for Labor in 1943.  In his oral history, Holt said he appreciated the two-way conversations at the frequent prime ministerial briefings, where he was impressed by

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[175] Black, *In his own words,* pp. 227-228; Heather Campbell, "Diary of a Labour Man" for 18 August 1943, JCPML, Bentley, 2008, retrieved on 2 December 2009 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/diary/primeminister/1943.html>.

[176] (Anon.), "Labour's Work Upheld", *SMH*, 19 August 1943, p. 4; Black, *In his own words,* p. 228.

[177] Alexander, "Papers", 20 August 1943.  Also see (Anon.), "The Opposition And Its Prospects", *SMH*, 20 August 1943, p. 4.

[178] Edgar George Holt, interviewed by Mel Pratt [hereafter "Holt interview"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01059, 23 May 1978, transcript np.

[179] As Chapter 3 discussed, John J. Simons and Curtin had been anti-conscription activists and prominent members of the WA Labor movement during World War I.  See Donald Grant, "Smith, James MacCallum (1868 – 1939)" [hereafter "James McCallum Smith"], *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, vol. 11, 1988, pp. 651-652, retrieved on 21 January 2008 at <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A110671b.htm>; Lyall Hunt, "Simons, John Joseph (Jack) (1882 – 1948)", *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, vol. 11, 1988, pp. 608-609, retrieved on 22 January 2009 at <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A110624b.htm>; Norman E. Lee, *John Curtin: Saviour of Australia,* Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1983, pp. 129.

Curtin's "poise", "calmness" and "patience" immediately before the Battle of the Coral Sea. Moreover, Curtin used their mutual interest in literature to develop a positive relationship with Holt, who was a published poet. On a lunch break during the campaign, Rodgers approached Holt to say that Curtin had invited *The Daily Telegraph* correspondent to talk about poetry. Holt agreed to sit down with Curtin, Rodgers and a government chauffeur at a Sydney club. He said:

> … Don and the driver had nothing to say, they knew what it was all about, and Curtin began to talk about Australian poets and poetry, and we did this probably for an hour. There was not one word of politics, and at the end of it Curtin said 'Well, thank you very much, Edgar. I enjoyed that,' and he got up and went away. [180]

Afterwards Rodgers explained to Holt that the prime minister liked to relax by discussing Australian literature. Holt recalled that this episode "made me realise what an unusual character he was as a politician". Previous prime ministers did not normally engage in one-hour talks with a journalist about poetry. Curtin did not deliberately "set out to charm people", but he was able to develop a warm rapport with reporters on the sideline of the election campaign. Holt said as a result, he became "quite strong as a private citizen, private individual, in support of the Labor Party during the period of John Curtin." [181] His friendships with Courtney and Holt suggested his ability to appeal to newsmen, who had not been traditional Labor supporters, by investing time to discuss their mutual interests and listen to their views.

Similarly to Churchill and Roosevelt, Curtin experienced some media criticisms of his election policy speech. In an undated letter to Churchill, FDR wrote his news coverage was generally "not so bad" but acknowledged both leaders were "menaced" by "a handful or two of gentlemen who cannot get politics out of their heads in the worst crisis". [182] In Australia, Murdoch and Packer influenced journalists to write positive reports about the opposition coalition. Such senior Canberra correspondents as Alexander and *The Daily Telegraph's* Don Whitington

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[180] Holt, "Holt interview".
[181] Holt, "Holt interview".
[182] Roosevelt, cited in Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War: The Hinge of Fate,* Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1950, p. 200.

did not agree with their employers.[183]  While press proprietors welcomed Curtin's appointment as the prime minister, negative editorials about his election campaign appeared in some newspapers.[184]  A few positive statements appeared in *The Sun*,[185] Frank Packer's *Daily Telegraph*[186] and Norton's *The Daily Mirror* when an editorial writer declared: "This Labor Government can claim credit for a great many achievements, chief of which is Australia's present comparative security".[187]  Yet these press owners also emphasised their fears of communism and industrial anarchy. Immediately after the election, however, they recognised Curtin's "prestige".  In *The Daily Telegraph,* Whitington reported: "The Government's sweeping victory at the polls was a vote of confidence in John Curtin".[188]  A cartoonist conveyed him as a true victor in the *Bulletin* (see Figure 19).[189]  Also Stuart Petersen portrayed him as a heroic leader in a *Sun* cartoon (see Figure 20).[190]  Moreover, the election stirred US interest, with a *Time Magazine* journalist writing that "Honest John" had a 78 per cent approval rating in Australian public opinion polls.[191]  Curtin did not retaliate against his press critics and Packer held his Allied Works Council position.  The Packer and Murdoch challenges were surmounted by Curtin's extraordinary rapport with the ABC's Moses, his positive radio coverage, his emphatic newsreel appearances and his ability to win the trust of senior journalists and other press owners.

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[183] Alexander, "Papers", 21 August 1943; Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, pp. 88-89.

[184] Negative editorials appeared in the following newspaper issues on 27 July 1943: *The Advertiser, The Argus, The Courier-Mail, The Daily Mirror, The Herald, The Mercury, The Sun* and *The Sun News-Pictorial*, cited in *Scrapbooks.*

[185] (Anon.), "Curtin's Two Voices", *The Sun*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks,* 27 July 1943.

[186] (Anon.), "Who Will Be Labor's Boss?", *The Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks,* 27 July 1943.

[187] (Anon.), "Some Things Mr. Curtin Did Not Say", *The Daily Mirror*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks,* 27 July 1943.

[188] Don Whitington, "Election Won On Curtin's Prestige", *The Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks,* 23 August 1943.

[189] Figure 19 appeared in (Anon.), "Knockout Scene From The Sensation Film Serial 'Alone We Did It.'", [cartoonist unknown], *The Bulletin*, cited in *Scrapbooks,* 23 June 1943.

[190] Figure 20 appeared in Stuart Peterson, "Today's Peterson …. Key Of Destiny", *The Sun*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, 24 August 1943.

[191] (Anon.), "Curtin and Poll", *Time*, New York, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01222/11, 23 August 1943, p. 34; (Anon.), "Curtin Up", *Time*, New York, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01222/12, 30 August 1943, p. 28.

KNOCKOUT SCENE FROM THE SENSATIONAL FILM SERIAL "ALONE WE DID IT."
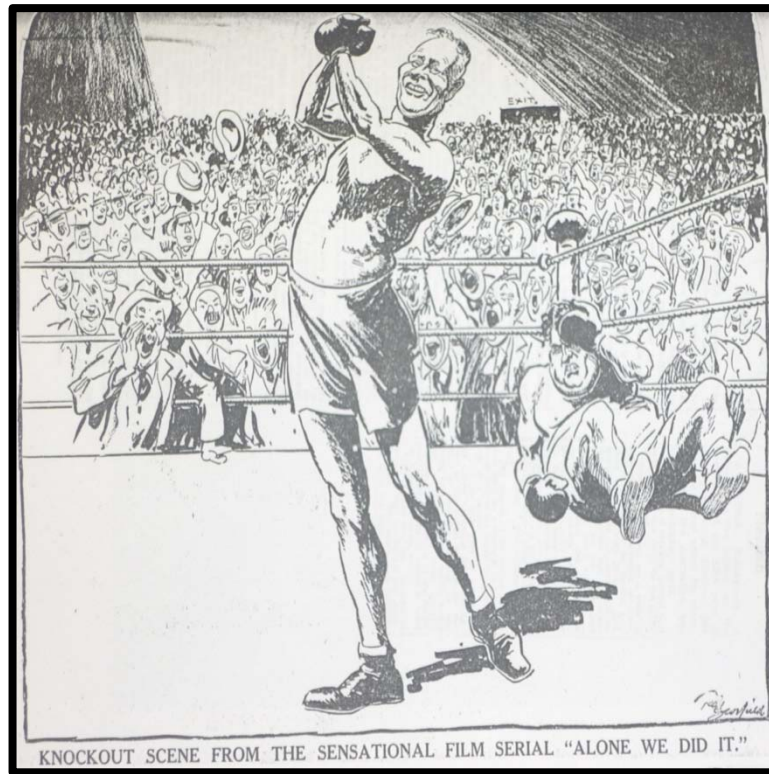
Figure 19 (above) and Figure 20 (below)



Today's Peterson .... KEY OF DESTINY

IT'S IN YOUR HANDS, JOHN!
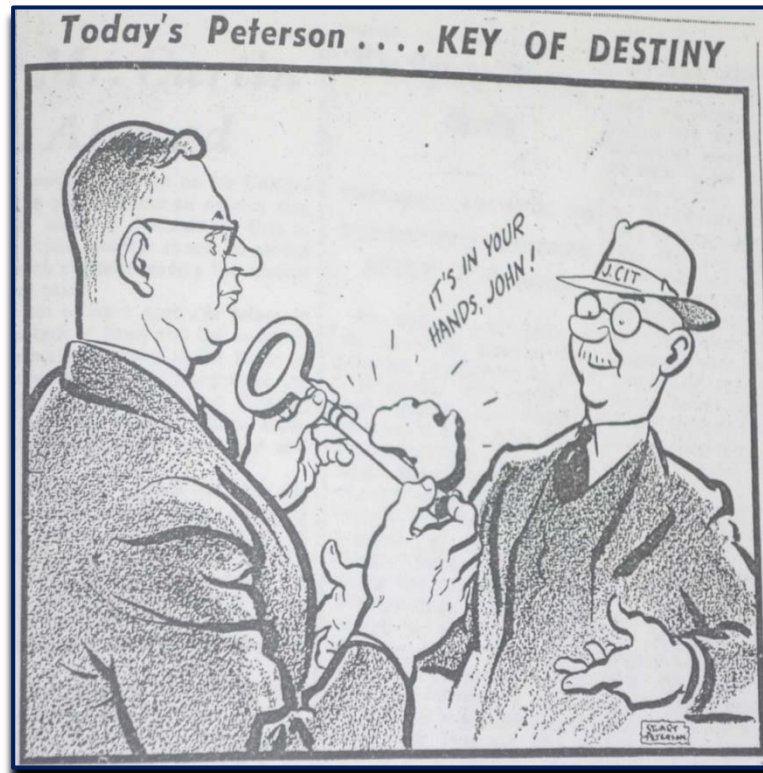
**Curtin's "global public sphere"**

After his decisive win, all of the major press proprietors cooperated with Curtin to portray him as an international statesman.  Due to his comfortable electoral margin, he was able to spend more time on foreign policy and give less attention to domestic issues.  In September, Eleanor Roosevelt's visit to Canberra attracted media attention, including newsreel coverage of her address to parliamentarians.  In a close-up shot, Curtin toasted her at a formal function, telling her:

> You have in Australia won a place, not only a place that causes us to admire you, but we have … formed an affection for you that I'm quite sure symbolises the real nature of the links that exist between Australia and the United States of America.[192]

Eleanor Roosevelt explained to the dignitaries – and cinema audiences – that she wanted:

> … to learn as much as I can of the work which your women have been doing in the war effort so that I may take home that knowledge and it may inspire our women in the United States.[193]

She described Australians and Americans as a "united people" and predicted "[m]any people will cross between our two countries".  Although Curtin invited former Prime Minister Hughes to address the function as the UAP's representative, the cameras turned away from the elder statesman to pan across the other guests during his brief speech.[194]  These film techniques ensured the cinema audiences would not hear some of Hughes' remarks that might have embarrassed Eleanor Roosevelt.  When talking of Australian-US relations, for example, he said: "Our beginnings were obscure; and some of us, perhaps, consider that they ought to remain in obscurity."[195]  He told the guest of honour: "The Press has said that your coming here has no political

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[192] ScreenSound Australia, *Mrs Roosevelt's Visit To Canberra, 1943* (newsreel) [hereafter *Eleanor Roosevelt*], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01049/1, 1943.
[193] ScreenSound Australia, *Eleanor Roosevelt*.
[194] ScreenSound Australia, *Eleanor Roosevelt*.
[195] William Morris Hughes, cited in Commonwealth Government, "Mrs. F.D. Roosevelt – Speeches At Official Welcome" [hereafter "Official welcome"], *DDA*, Canberra, no. 63, 4 September 1943, p. 42.

significance.  A more utterly banal observation than that, I cannot conceive."[196]  His comment did not accord with the media's positive coverage of Eleanor Roosevelt's Australian trip between 3 and 13 September; press photographers conveyed that Curtin developed a friendship with her.[197]



Figure 21

After the election, he provided more confidential briefings to persuade journalists to support his foreign policy views.  On 6 September, F.T. Smith privately wrote that Curtin passed on a transcript of British Deputy Prime Minister Anthony Eden's "[o]ff-the-record talk" to the press gallery.  In the transcript, Eden indicated the major Allied powers would refer to other UN members before reaching final decisions. [198]  Eden's statement helped to vindicate Curtin's continued insistence that

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[196] Hughes, cited in Commonwealth Government, "Official welcome", p. 43.
[197] Figure 21 appeared in (Anon.), "Curtin and the guest of honor", *The Sun*, Sydney, 5 September 1943; similarly positive photographs appeared in *The Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, on 4 and 5 September 1943, cited in *Scrapbooks.*
[198] Lloyd and Hall, *Backroom briefings*, p. 171.

Australia should participate in more Allied war planning.[199]  By November he was urging press editors to increase publicity of Australian forces in New Guinea.[200] About the same time, MacArthur privately complained about "the general attitude of the Australian press".  Editors "sought to cry down the importance of the operations in the Southwest Pacific Area", MacArthur asserted to Curtin privately.  The AWC minutes summarised MacArthur's grievance:

> Many of the papers did not even publicise his communiques.  However, they gave great prominence to the reports of War Correspondents, who mostly gathered their information from talkative members of messes and who were not in a position to see the full picture.  The consequence was that the despatches did not present the operations in their right perspective.[201]

Curtin also initiated new media strategies to promote Australia's role in Europe as he increased the RAAF's public relations team in the United Kingdom from three employees to nine staff members.  He arranged with the UK Ministry of Information to produce a film about RAAF activities in Britain.[202]  *The Melbourne Herald* pictured him at a civic reception to welcome four correspondents representing newspapers across Canada including Ontario, Quebec and Winnipeg (see Figure 22).[203]  In a Department of Information newsreel, popular cameraman Damien Parer talked about the 3rd Australian Divison's "bitterly contested battles" in the jungle of Salamaua, New Guinea, which fell to Allied control on 11 September.  Parer was filmed in a close-up shot as he said: "If these pictures can convey to you even a vague idea of their sacrifice … then the little that I've been able to do is more than worthwhile."[204]  Internationally recognised for his cinematography, Parer

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[199] Frederick Geoffrey Shedden, "Advisory War Council Minutes, Records of Frederick Shedden", JCPML, Bentley, vol. 3, JCPML acc. no. 00928/4, 9 December 1941, p. 3.
[200] "Advisory War Council minutes" [hereafter "AWC Minutes at NAA"], NAA, Canberra, series no. A5954, control symbol 815/1, 25 November 1943, p. 4.
[201] "AWC minutes at NAA", 9 December 1943, p. 5.
[202] "AWC minutes at NAA", 14 October 1943, p. 3.
[203] Figure 22 appeared in (Anon.), "Press Visitors From Canada", *The Herald*, Melbourne, cited in *Scrapbooks*, 15 November 1943.
[204] Department of Information (producer), "Assault On Salamaua", in *At The Front: 1939-1945: Australia's WWII Newsreels* (newsreel), JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00441/2, 1943.

**PRESS VISITORS FROM CANADA**

The Prime Minister (Mr J. Curtin) speaking at today's civic reception to members of the Canadian Press Delegation at the Town Hall. Left to right: Mr T. B. Richardson, of Winnipeg Free Press, Mr A. R. Ford (leader), president of the Canadian Free Press and Editor of the London (Ontario) Free Press, the Town Clerk (Mr H. S. Wootton), the Lord Mayor (Cr. Nettlefold), the Prime Minister (Mr J. Curtin), Mr Lorenzo Pare, of L'Action Catholique, a French language Quebec daily newspaper.

Figure 22

considerably aided Curtin's efforts to boost Australian morale.  Thus after the election, Curtin increasingly developed initiatives in giving off-the-record press talks, promoting Australia to overseas media, attracting international correspondents to visit him and screening films about military victories.

On 14 December, as the nation looked forward to a fresh Allied offensive, newspaper journalists endorsed Curtin's proposals for greater British Commonwealth collaboration.[205]  Several days earlier, he had announced a new phase of Australia's war effort.  "The defensive stage, he says, has been passed", *The Courier-Mail* editor

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[205] Curtin, "State of the war", pp. 31-36.  His address received positive news treatment in *The Age, The Canberra Times, The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The West Australian*, cited in *Scrapbooks*, 15 December 1943.

writer recounted.  "Now we are moving to the offensive."[206]  Curtin made his
international speech at the Labor Party's federal conference in Canberra.  He
emphasised the terms of peace and security along with familiar keywords about
cooperation and a new world order as Australians recognised that the bomb threats
were receding.[207]  As a result, he adopted a far more optimistic tone than in his
parliamentary address on 11 February 1943, analysed earlier, with his increased
references to freedom, liberty, ideals and independence.[208]  Since he was addressing
his colleagues, the speech was more complex than his radio talks and registered as
suitable for a thirteenth-grade reading level.[209]  The next day's press coverage was
positive in the four selected dailies.  The event was turned into front-page news in
*The Age*[210] and *The Sydney Morning Herald*,[211] with the speech substantially
reproduced inside the papers.  Curtin received three separate ovations at the ALP
conference, according to *The Sydney Morning Herald*.[212]  His key messages and
terms were also repeated in *The Canberra Times*[213] and *The West Australian*.[214]
Among this newspaper sample, only one journalist referred to a negative aspect of

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[206] (Anon.), "From Defence To Offence", *The Courier-Mail*, Brisbane, cited in *Scrapbooks*,
6 December 1943.

[207] In his address, Curtin referred 25 times to "peace" and "security"; 27 times to
"cooperation"; and 14 times to a "new world order".  See Curtin, "State of the war",
pp. 31-36.

[208] These keywords were mentioned 25 times in the address.  See Curtin, "State of the war",
pp. 31-36.

[209] The Flesch Reading Ease score was 36.9.

[210] The address was featured on page one and again in two full columns on the third page.
(Anon.), "Australia's Policy In The Pacific: Prime Minister Advocates Regional Co-
Operation", *Age*, 15 December 1943, p. 3; (Anon.), "International & Empire Relations: Mr.
Curtin's Plan For Post-War Years", *Age*, 15 December 1943, p. 1.

[211] Curtin's speech was promoted on the front cover, the leader page and then was allocated
four entire columns on pages seven and eight.  (Anon.), "Australia's Place In A New
World", *SMH*, 15 December 1943, p. 6; (Anon.), "Australia's Place In Peace Plan", *SMH*, 15
December 1943, pp.7-8.

[212] (Anon.), "Australia's Place In Peace Plan", *SMH*, 15 December 1943, p. 8.

[213] In the news coverage, 59 sentences of Curtin's speech were repeated as direct quotations.
(Anon.), "Mr. Curtin Calls For Peace-Treaty-Making Powers in Labour Platform",
*Canberra*, 15 December 1943, p. 2.

[214] One and a half columns were allocated to the speech coverage.  (Anon.), "Organising The
Peace", *West*, 15 December 1943, p. 3.

the event.  A small subhead in *The Age* was "Press Excluded".  As the writer explained, delegates spent an hour debating a motion to admit journalists to the conference.  Although Curtin supported the motion, it was defeated by a large majority.[215]  As a result, the reporters were forced to rely on the prepared statement, but it did not seem to detract from Curtin's reputation.  Even Murdoch's *Courier-Mail* featured the editorial headline, "Mr. Curtin's Best Speech", about the event.[216]

**Conclusion**

Through Curtin's leadership, Australians were looking forward to securing a pivotal position in the post-war world.  He increasingly promoted a shared sense of Australian nationhood in his media messages, which resembled Berlin's views of liberty as being "freedom from chains, from imprisonment, from enslavement by others".[217]  Thus Curtin was able to transcend political partisanship and bridge the traditional divide between the left and right of the political spectrums.  Rhetorically he used an emotional speaking style, emphatic hand gestures such as striking a parliamentary table with his fist, and appeared to adopt the Churchillian "loaded pause" when he anticipated interjections and rebutted them with a well-timed, poetic comeback.  Curtin's warm appeals to his friends and his derision of "mischief-makers"[218] continued to resemble Roosevelt's "fireside chats".  These oratory techniques were particularly evident in the newspaper coverage of Curtin's speech on the *Militia Bill* on 11 February.  As a result, he received positive press treatment in the four selected newspapers: *The Age*, *The Canberra Times*, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The West Australian*.  To consolidate support for this Bill, he promoted an image of international unity with Churchill, MacArthur and Franklin Delano and Eleanor Roosevelt.  As Churchill protested conservative politicians' "embarrassing

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[215] (Anon.), "Press Excluded", *Age*, 15 December 1943, p. 3.
[216] (Anon.), "Mr. Curtin's Best Speech", *The Courier-Mail*, Brisbane, cited in *Scrapbooks*, 16 December 1943.
[217] Berlin, "Liberty", p. 1vi.
[218] Curtin, "*Militia Bill* speech", pp. 592-596.

and possibly dangerous disclosures",[219] Curtin distributed this statement to journalists to show that the British prime minister was backing him.  These Allied relations enhanced his stature as an international statesman leading to the election.

Film and radio coverage were beginning to show signs they might eclipse the power of the press.  As Curtin had cultivated a friendly relationship with ABC General Manager Charles Moses, the national radio news was generally pro-government in 1943.  The cooperation between the federal administration and ABC reporters was illustrative of the theories of governmentality and news in an administered society.  Furthermore by unobtrusively filming Curtin's public addresses, newsreel companies cleverly created the semblance of factual, straightforward news reports.  He was often portrayed in close-up, eye-level shots that emphasised his image as "Honest John".[220]  The favourable broadcasts might have influenced voters more than the editorial criticisms appearing in some newspapers.

Yet he strengthened his press relationships by providing newspaper correspondents with more tips about his close Allied communications, including Eleanor Roosevelt's imminent visit and British secret cables.  Fortunately for Curtin, the press gallery reporters honoured the verbal confidentiality agreements and he did not provoke the other Allied leaders' wrath.  Private correspondence showed that he enjoyed an informally friendly relationship with Murdoch at times.  He turned the "Brisbane Line" controversy to his positive advantage as ALP Minister Ward criticised the former government for neglecting less populated communities while he focused on his "positive record" of safeguarding national security.[221]  Critics, such as Murdoch, mainly targeted Ward and Curtin diverted much media attention to his central messages.  Although he rejected the all-party national government advocated

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[219] Winston Churchill to John Curtin, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00869/57, 17 July 1943, p. 6.

[220] (Anon.), "Curtin and Poll", *Time*, New York, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01222/11, 23 August 1943, p. 34; (Anon.), "Curtin Up", *Time*, New York, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01222/12, 30 August 1943, p. 28.

[221] Curtin, "Election policy statement".

by Murdoch, Curtin's professional relations with the publisher survived the political turmoil.

The press reproduced Curtin's inclusive language.  His innovative campaign policy broadcast, directed to "men and women of Australia",[222] was substantially repeated positively in *The Age, The Canberra Times, The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The West Australian*.  This chapter's study sample of Curtin's speeches indicated he spoke slightly faster and used more complex scripts than in his earlier radio talks.  Yet his election policy broadcast was still accessible and registered as suitable for a twelfth-grade audience.  This more detailed speech, with his discussions of economic policies, strengthened his media reputation as a candid communicator.  During the campaign, he publicly distanced himself from the Communist Party and attracted more support from mainstream news editors willing to replicate his new key terms of cooperation, peace and security, which he began emphasising in 1943.  After the election, Packer approvingly published the news that voters were attracted to Curtin's "prestige".[223]  Other ALP candidates, such as Allan Fraser, adopted Curtin's media techniques, including regular radio talks, and credited this to their electoral success.  Certainly the news companies were not monolithic and due to his skilful press rapport with journalists in private meetings, Curtin consolidated support from such normally conservative senior reporters as Joseph Alexander of Murdoch's *Herald* and Edgar Holt of Packer's *Daily Telegraph.*

After the election, journalists readily portrayed his diplomatic efforts to reach out to Allied leaders and the global media.  He expanded the Australian air force's public relations unit in the UK to promote their role in the war against Germany.  In the Pacific, the celebrated cameraman, Damien Parer, filmed more cinematic tributes to the heroism of Australian fighting forces in response to Curtin's directive that their exploits be given more publicity.  As Curtin had secured a decisive election victory, he was able to set media agendas more easily.  The press owners generally reacted

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[222] Curtin, "Election policy statement".
[223] Don Whitington, "Election Won On Curtin's Prestige", *The Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks,* 23 August 1943.

favourably to his proposals for a new world order, repeating his keywords and his message for closer British Commonwealth collaboration on 14 December. Journalists would increasingly describe him as an international statesman in 1944 during his visits to London, Ottawa and the US, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

# Chapter 8

## "A new world": Curtin's global communications, January - July 1944

This chapter sets out to examine Curtin's media initiatives to counter mounting economic, political and international challenges, to analyse his communication methods to different audiences, and to investigate resultant newspaper coverage of his selected speeches.  To achieve these objectives, the research methods include a textual analysis of Curtin's radio broadcast, delivered in London on 8 May 1944,[1] and an examination of his Australian parliamentary address about his international mission on 17 July 1944.[2]  Lastly this chapter will evaluate Curtin's skills in generating favourable news coverage of his foreign policies, as elucidated in the selected sample of his speeches.

The Pacific war seemed increasingly burdensome as Australia deployed more than twice as many land and air troops to this zone as the United States by October 1943.[3]  The extent of Australia's overall wartime commitment can be seen by the fact that more than 993,000 Australians served in the armed forces[4] at a time when the population was about seven million people, the equivalent to that of New York.[5] In the same period, 12 million United States men and women were in military

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[1] John Curtin, "Broadcast by the Prime Minister from London" [hereafter "London broadcast"], *Digest of Decisions and Announcements and Important Speeches by the Prime Minister (Right Hon. John Curtin)* [hereafter *DDA*], no. 81, 8 May 1944, pp. 53-56.

[2] John Curtin, "Meeting of Prime Ministers – Australian Prime Minister's Report", [hereafter "Prime ministers' meeting], *DDA*, no. 84, 17 July 1944, pp. 28-44.

[3] John Curtin to Winston Churchill, Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade [hereafter "Foreign affairs department"], Barton, vol. 6, 8 October 1943, retrieved on 10 January 2010 at <http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/vWeb?OpenView>; Jeffrey Grey, *A Military History of Australia* [hereafter *Military history*], Cambridge University Press, Port Melbourne, third edition, 2008, pp. 176, 178, 183-184.

[4] National Archives of Australia [hereafter NAA], "Boer War to Vietnam", Canberra, 2010, retrieved on 6 June 2010 at <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/explore/defence/conflicts.aspx#section3>; Parliamentary Library, "Anzac Day 2010", Canberra, 1 April 2010, retrieved on 29 May 2010 at <http://www.aph.gov.au/library/pubs/anzac/stats.htm>.

[5] John Curtin, "Prime Minister's Review, May, 1944", *DDA*, no. 81, 4 May 1944, p. 30.

service.[6] The US population was nearly 140 million people in July 1945.[7] Curtin created new mass media strategies to gain journalists' support for his reassessment of Australia's heavy wartime commitments in 1944.

This investigation of Curtin's media relations was informed by archival research including confidential Allied memoranda, the secret prime ministerial diaries of Menzies and Canada's Mackenzie King, Advisory War Council (AWC) minutes, and the private notes of the journalist, Frederick Thomas Smith. This chapter has also drawn upon Harold Cox's letters to his employer, Murdoch, about Curtin's interviews from 1944 to 1945.[8] Smith's transcripts of the same interviews often corroborated Cox's summaries.[9] Unlike in previous chapters, Joseph Alexander's diaries were not used as a reference in this chapter because Curtin agreed to his wish to be appointed as the first secretary at the Australian legation in Moscow in 1944.[10] Therefore this study used other journalists' observations to compare Curtin's media image, as shown in his film appearances, radio broadcasts and international interviews, with his private statements.

**Economic challenges**

Curtin's major economic challenge was the acute labour shortage. By 1944 journalists were reporting on a lack of Australian workers to produce food for Allied troops. The former press gallery journalist, Allan Fraser, who was the new Labor

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[6] Kenneth Paul O'Brien and Lynn Hudson Parsons, "Introduction: The Home-Front War", in Kenneth Paul O'Brien and Lynn Hudson Parsons (eds), *The Home-Front War: World War II and American Society*, Greenwood Press, Westport, 1995, p. 4.

[7] See Appendix 1 and U.S. Census Bureau, "Historical National Population Estimates: July 1, 1900 to July 1, 1999", Washington DC, 28 June 2000, retrieved on 29 May 2010 at <www.census.gov/popest/archives/1990s/popclockest.txt>.

[8] Harold Cox, "Typescript reports, 1944-1964" [hereafter "Typescript reports"], National Library of Australia [hereafter NLA], Manuscript Collections, Canberra, NLA MS acc. no. 4554, 1944-1945, transcript np.

[9] Clem Lloyd and Richard Hall (eds), *Backroom briefings: John Curtin's war* [hereafter *Backroom briefings*], NLA, Canberra, 1997.

[10] Joseph A. Alexander, interviewed by Mel Pratt, John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library [hereafter JCPML], Bentley, acc. no. 00551, 2 March 1971, transcript np; J.A. Alexander, "Papers 1833-1957" [hereafter "Papers"], NLA, Manuscript Collections, Canberra, NLA acc. no. MS 2389, 1941-1943, transcript np.

member for Eden-Monaro, invited *The Daily Telegraph* correspondent, Tom Mead,[11] and Alan Reid of *The Sun* to tour the neglected Bega Valley dairy country in New South Wales.  As Mead observed, conscription had caused agricultural communities to become "stripped of manpower", resulting in elderly people, women and children struggling to supply Allied forces' milk and butter requirements.  Consequently he reported on "a growing danger that Australia might not continue to be 'a land of plenty'" and publicised Fraser's "damning report" about this area of his electorate. Published on 10 January 1944, the headline was: "Shortage of food amid abundance – Shameful waste in Bega Valley".[12]  Fraser released his report in accordance with ALP media statements on the need to accelerate agricultural production.  Curtin had said that at the beginning of the war against Japan, "The Labor Government had to devote itself with unflagging industry, and often with heart-breaking pains, to re-shaping the country's war machine" because the previous administration had not planned for this conflict.[13]  The Minister for Munitions, Norman J.O. Makin, announced that weapon production had peaked in March 1943; afterwards, men and women were being transferred from government factories to "high priority classes" of rural production.[14]  As the Allies recorded more crucial Pacific military victories in the Solomon Islands in October 1943, the Cabinet authorised the release of 20,000 men from the army and 20,000 people from munitions and aircraft production to work in the agricultural sector.[15]  Food rationing remained for Australians and local mills re-opened to export flour and fulfill more British Ministry of Food contracts.[16] Curtin urged Australians to "make our maximum contribution" to help fortify "[t]he people of the United Kingdom".[17]  Mead did not blame Labor for this agricultural downturn and seemed to share Curtin's view that the administration had taken over

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[11] Mead later became a Liberal parliamentarian, representing the seat of Hurstville in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly from 1965 to 1976.

[12] Tom Mead, *Breaking The News: The events which changed life in Australia through the eyes of a man who worked at the front line of journalism and politics* [hereafter *Breaking the news*], Dolphin Books, Sydney, 1998, pp. 68-69; Grey, *Military history*, pp. 183-184, 186.

[13] John Curtin, "General Election ALP Policy Statement" [hereafter "Election policy statement"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00421/2, 26 July 1943, transcript np.

[14] Norman J.O. Makin, "Review Of War Commitments-Man-Power, Release To Rural Production, Munitions 'Bloc'", *DDA*, no. 73, 25 January 1944, p. 21.

[15] David Black (ed.), *In His Own Words: John Curtin's Speeches and Writings* [hereafter *In his own words*], Paradigm Books Curtin University, Bentley, 1995, p. 231; John Curtin to Douglas MacArthur, "Foreign affairs department", vol. 8, 15 February 1945.

[16] William J. Scully, "Exports to Britain-Flour", *DDA*, no. 73, 24 January 1944, p. 13.

[17] Curtin, cited in Black, *In his own words*, pp. 232-233.

an inadequate defence system, the result of years of neglect. [18] Curtin might have helped to initiate Mead's *Daily Telegraph* report because he needed public support for the transfer of military personnel to rural industries to achieve food production targets.

When he turned 59 on Saturday, 8 January 1944, Curtin promoted his austerity message by foregoing celebrations, presents and a birthday cake, as reported in *The West Australian.* The article featured a close-up photograph of a smiling Curtin, who reportedly enjoyed a "usual" Saturday in Perth by gardening, meeting friends and attending to a "few routine official matters". [19] Journalists conveyed that Curtin was a likeable politician determined to make personal sacrifices to help win the war.

Secret cables revealed the severity of Australia's food shortages, a fact that Curtin omitted from his media statements. After he brought back the 6th and 7th Divisions in early 1942, he negotiated with Roosevelt and Churchill for the return of the 9th Division from the Middle East to Australia in April 1943. [20] Despite the increased home defence, Curtin warned Churchill on 8 October 1943 that Australians had "overreached" themselves and lacked "the capacity" to help provide food and other necessities for Allied forces. He advised Churchill of his government's decision to transfer troops to food production and limit new military recruitments. [21] In response, Churchill invited Curtin to a meeting of commonwealth prime ministers, scheduled in December 1943. [22] Curtin, however, asked to defer the meeting until April 1944 because "[t]his food problem has become very acute here". He added: "I

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[18] Curtin, "Election policy statement"; Grey, *Military history*, pp. 168-169; Mead, *Breaking the news*, pp. 50, 68-69.

[19] (Anon.), "Curtin has Austerity 59th birthday", *The Sun*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks compiled by the Prime Minister's office* [hereafter *Scrapbooks*], JCPML, Bentley, no. 4, JCPML acc. no. 00297/4, 9 January 1944.

[20] Winston Churchill to John Curtin, 24 July 1942; John Curtin to Winston Churchill, "Foreign affairs department", vol. 6, 16, 30 July 1942; Grey, *Military history*, p. 184; Franklin D. Roosevelt to Winston Churchill, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00719/1/12, 26 March 1942.

[21] John Curtin to Winston Churchill, "Foreign affairs department", vol. 6, 8 October 1943; Grey, *Military history*, p. 186.

[22] Winston Churchill to John Curtin, "Foreign affairs department", vol. 6, 21 October 1943.

am fearful of serious breakdown in our industries and primary production systems unless I give it my personal attention until [a] better position has been reached."[23] While Curtin avoided making such strong statements in public, ALP politicians were persuading journalists to support their plans for troop reductions.

Once Curtin notified Churchill of these "acute" problems, Roosevelt used his media conferences to praise Australian efforts to provide meat to US forces. When FDR met White House reporters on 29 October 1943, he announced: "We have been receiving from Australia enough beef and veal, practically, to feed all of our troops that are based in Australia." He explained "the reverse lend-lease process", which enabled US meat producers to send about the same amount of beef and veal to troops in Europe. "I didn't know it until this morning", he told journalists. "I grabbed hold of it and said that's the thing that has been overlooked." He also encouraged them to publish the news by saying: "That is a real headline. In the long run that is something that the country doesn't know."[24] In an interview on 24 March 1944, Roosevelt added that New Zealand was also providing meat to US troops.[25] He might have been referring to the "U.S.-Australia Reciprocal Aid Agreement", which was endorsed on 3 September 1942.[26] FDR promoted the agreement because he was keen for Australia to keep supplying the US military in the Pacific.

Yet Roosevelt did not focus on Australian troop reductions when he invited Curtin to Washington DC again. In his letter on 3 January 1944, FDR wrote to Curtin: "I feel that there is a real void which can only be filled by a meeting between you and me." He wanted to discuss Australian defence, Japanese-controlled islands and "the future policing" of the Asia and Pacific areas. Also he tried to persuade

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[23] John Curtin to Winston Churchill, "Foreign affairs department", vol. 6, 23 October 1943.

[24] Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Excerpts from the Press Conference" [hereafter "Press conference"], in John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters, *The American Presidency Project* [hereafter *American presidency project*], Santa Barbara, 29 October 1943, retrieved on 11 February 2009 at <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=16334&st=press+conference&st1=>.

[25] Roosevelt, "Press conference", 24 March 1944.

[26] J.B. Brigden, "Australia's Economic Future" [hereafter "Australia's economic future"], *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 17, no. 3, September 1944, p. 326; Grey, *Military history*, pp. 188, 195.

Curtin to visit London even though he had not raised "the matter in any way" with Churchill.  Curtin would receive "a very warm welcome" in London, Roosevelt wrote.  He added: "As we used to say in my rowing days, Australia is 'pulling its weight in the boat.'"[27]  Curtin accepted Roosevelt's repeated invitation in 1944 when his political circumstances had improved considerably because of his landslide election victory.[28]  By January, Curtin achieved the AWC's bipartisan support for reducing the army to address labour shortages, which were also "gravely prejudicing food production" in Queensland.[29]  On 27 January, Curtin announced: "There's a limit upon man-power in this country and all demands cannot be met"; however, he assured audiences that he would not "weaken" the army.[30]  Confidentially, Curtin told Canberra reporters the lack of "manpower" was a problem in all countries and would be the main topic at the London prime ministers' meeting, which was postponed to April.[31]  A close Roosevelt aide, Lauchlin Currie, sent a memorandum to FDR to confirm on 4 February 1944: "After long negotiation, the Australians have decided not to extend us reverse lend lease in raw materials."[32]  Despite trade disagreements, Curtin publicly explained Australians needed to maintain "a minimum" military effort to ensure "an effective voice in the peace settlement".[33]  By 9 March 1944, the Minister for External Affairs, Herbert Vere Evatt, announced the completion of the "U.S.-Australia Reciprocal Aid Agreement" to the parliament.[34]  Curtin increasingly proclaimed his nation's significant wartime investment while privately renegotiating Australia's commitments with other Allied nations.

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[27] Franklin D. Roosevelt to John Curtin, "Foreign affairs department", vol. 7, 3 January 1944.

[28] John Curtin to Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Foreign affairs department", vol. 7, 2 February 1944.  Roosevelt's first invitation was sent on 1 June 1942, as discussed in Chapter 6.  See Franklin D. Roosevelt to John Curtin, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, Hyde Park, 1 June 1942, retrieved on 28 September 2009 at <http://docs.FDRlibrary.marist.edu/psf/box2/a09a01.html>.

[29] Frederick Geoffrey Shedden, "Advisory War Council Minutes, Records of Frederick Shedden" [hereafter "AWC minutes"], JCPML, Bentley, vol. 7, JCPML acc. no. 00928/8, 20 January 1944, p. 4.

[30] John Curtin, "Prime Minister's Review, January, 1944", *DDA*, no. 74, 27 January 1944, p. 10.

[31] Black, *In his own words*, pp. 240-246; Lloyd and Hall, *Backroom briefings*, p. 196.

[32] Lauchlin Currie, "Memorandum For The President", JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00269/3, 4 February 1944, p. 11.

[33] John Curtin, "Prime Minister's Statement, February, 1944", *DDA*, no. 75, 9 February 1944, p. 19.

[34] Brigden, "Australia's economic future", p. 327.

After an 18-day voyage from Sydney, he arrived in San Francisco on Wednesday, 19 April 1944 at 10am and held a hastily organised, crowded media conference two hours later in the luxurious Fairmont Hotel.[35] Curtin talked to journalists and confirmed the Australian army would not reduce its "compact strength"; however, fewer "ancillary forces" would be deployed at bases and a "wide stretch of coast", which "until recently was vulnerable to the enemy". The released men would help produce food, which was "getting scarce in certain other countries".[36] On 31 May, US Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, wrote a memorandum to Roosevelt on how they had unsuccessfully "tried for two years to push" for a trade agreement with Australia.[37] After Curtin returned to Australia on 26 July, F.T. Smith noted privately that he said: "He had seen no country where the manpower problems were as acute as in Australia. All that they had maintained here were the spinal columns of basic industries."[38] Although such concerns persisted in 1945, new President Harry Truman announced on 17 April that the US Congress had extended the *Lend-Lease Act* for a third time, allowing Allies to mount "a combined attack which is now beating at the doors of Tokyo".[39] The US-Australian alliance appeared solid when 238 war correspondents and photographers reported on the subsequent peace settlement; newsreels showed MacArthur and Australia's General Blamey at the 37-minute ceremony on board the *USS Missouri* in Tokyo Bay on 2 September 1945.[40] The global media images of a bilateral partnership were the result of Curtin's intense, diplomatic negotiations and his candid discussions with journalists.

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[35] Heather Campbell, "Diary of a Labour Man" for 19 April 1944 [hereafter "Diary"], JCPML, Bentley, 2008, retrieved on 11 February 2010 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/diary/primeminister/1944.html>; Great Britain Foreign Office, "Political situation: consular reports, 1944" [hereafter "Political situation"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00779/13, 28 April 1944, pp. 1-3.

[36] John Curtin, "Review Of War Commitments: Prime Minister's Statements", *DDA,* no. 81, 19 April 1944, pp. 18-19.

[37] Cordell Hull, "Memorandum for the President" [hereafter "Memorandum"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00269/3, 31 May 1944, pp. 32-33. I referred to Cordell Hull as the author of this presidential memorandum because it was typed on the Department of State letterhead in Washington DC and it was signed by "C H".

[38] Lloyd and Hall, *Backroom briefings*, p. 213.

[39] Harry S. Truman, "Statement by the President Upon Signing Bill Extending the Lend-Lease Act" [hereafter "Statement"], Harry S. Truman Library & Museum, Independence, 17 April 1945, retrieved on 11 February 2010 at <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/publicpapers/index.php?pid=3&st=&st1=>.

[40] Cinesound Review (producer), "War's Last Drama", in *At The Front*: *1939-1945: Australia's WWII Newsreels* (newsreel)*,* JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00441/2, 1945.

They cooperated to support his plans to reduce Australian troops, transfer more military personnel to rural industries and increase food production.  At the same time, the Australian media promoted the nation as a strong US ally to help fulfil the government's objective to secure a role in the peace negotiations.

**Asserting "sovereignty" in the ANZAC Pact**

As Curtin enlisted journalists' support for his economic policies, he developed media strategies to divert attention from political and international challenges.  He used press conferences to generate journalists' support for the Australia-New Zealand Agreement and mask the controversy it was causing in the US.  The agreement, also known as the ANZAC Pact, was signed on 21 January 1944.  Curtin and NZ Prime Minister, Peter Fraser, declared their nations' rights to establish "a regional zone of defence" and other initiatives. [41]  On 19 January, Curtin privately told reporters about a "move" to try to transfer NZ forces to join Australian troops in the South-West Pacific.  At the time, NZ troops were engaged in separate Pacific Ocean Areas from the Australians.  At an interview on 3 February, Curtin was asked about "complaints" relating to the pact in US newspapers.  He replied the agreement had been reported positively in the US and British media.[42]  Confidentially, Hull stated in a memorandum to Roosevelt on 31 May, "we have been considerably shocked by the attitude of the Australian Government".  Hull accused Australian politicians of "behaving outrageously" regarding a number of issues including the ANZAC Pact, "parts of which were aimed at the United States", and the stalled trade agreement.[43]  Yet Curtin managed to achieve his aim to strengthen the war zone defending Australia.  After a press gallery briefing on 3 July, Cox wrote that NZ air forces were transferred to MacArthur's command in the South-West Pacific.[44]  The next year, the

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[41] Black, *In his own words*, pp. 239-240; Brigden, "Australia's economic future", pp. 325-326; Commonwealth of Australia Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, "Australian Treaty Series: Australian-New Zealand Agreement 1944", Canberra, 1944, retrieved on 13 January 2010 at <http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/dfat/treaties/1944/2.html>.
[42] Frederick Thomas Smith, cited in Lloyd and Hall, *Backroom briefings*, pp. 189, 195.
[43] Hull, "Memorandum", pp. 32-33.
[44] Cox, "Typescript reports", 3 July 1944.  This information was corroborated by Smith in Lloyd and Hall, *Backroom briefings*, p. 213.

Australian Minister to China, Sir Frederic William Eggleston, noted he found "a lot of support" for the pact among "Canadians, French and others".[45]  At his news conferences, Curtin deftly avoided reporters' questions on "complaints" about the pact; instead he attempted to generate favourable publicity, which helped him to fulfil his objective: securing more NZ forces to protect Australia.

In film and press images, Curtin tried to gain public enthusiasm for his pact by appealing to Australia's traditional ties to British political ideals.  Some unedited film footage of Curtin showed him patiently rehearsing his words and hand gestures in a variety of close-up and longer camera angles.  He seemed to be prepared to be directed by professional film crews.[46]  When he signed the ANZAC Pact with Peter Fraser in Canberra, a newsreel close-up shot emphasised his declaration that the two nations would "contribute to the peace, welfare and good government of the whole Pacific".  A long shot showed the two leaders and their national flags to reinforce Curtin's statement that the policy was "not narrow".  The camera zoomed closer as he explained the agreement served "a global ideal" that was "good for us" and, during another long shot, "good for civilisation".  Audiences were told the pact would enhance the two countries' "authority" to "speak to the world" and it was signed on the same table used by Queen Victoria to give her assent to the Commonwealth of Australia, inaugurated in 1901.  Through his rhetoric and the film director's calculated camera angles, Curtin established a close relationship with Australian cinema audiences as well as evoking the sense of an active British partnership.[47]  Since he did not signal his government's objective to reorganise the Pacific war zones, this cinematic depiction accomplished Foucault's theory of masking national power.  As Foucault stated, "it was necessary for power to be self-effacing, for it not to show itself as power".[48]  The film signs, or meaning, of Queen

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[45] Frederic William Eggleston to Herbert Vere Evatt, "Foreign affairs department", vol. 8, 15 January 1945.

[46] ScreenSound Australia, *Parliament in Session* (newsreel), JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00876/4, 1944.

[47] ScreenSound Australia, "Anzac Agreement Signed At Canberra", in *John Joseph Curtin 1885 – 1945* (newsreel), JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00238/1, 1944.

[48] Teresa Bergman, "Can Patriotism Be Carved In Stone?: A Critical Analysis Of Mt. Rushmore's Orientation Films" [hereafter "Can patriotism be carved in stone?"], *Rhetoric & Public Affairs,* vol. 11, no. 1, spring 2008, p. 96; Michel Foucault, "Film and Popular

Victoria's table, Commonwealth flags and the eloquent, democratic oratory belied the US Secretary of State's privately expressed astonishment at Australia's assertive new treaty with NZ.

## The "war brides" strategy

After the ANZAC Pact was signed, Curtin developed a new media tactic to ease tensions with the US before his ocean voyage to San Francisco.  When John and Elsie Curtin sailed from Sydney on the US naval transport, *Lurline*, on 5 April 1944, their fellow passengers included 76 Australian brides of US servicemen.  Newsreels showed the cheerful young wives as they prepared to board the ship with their children.[49]  While archives revealed British, Canadian and US leaders' desires to maintain secrecy during their journeys,[50] Curtin announced his plans about ten days before his trip.  Several newspaper reports conveyed "goodwill" and bipartisan support for his "statesmanlike grasp of the mission".[51]  At Curtin's San Francisco media conference, he answered a journalist's question on whether American soldiers were hindering the Australian Government's population expansion plans by marrying local women and taking their brides to the US.  The inquiry generated the "[f]irst laugh of the interview" and "pressmen" reportedly applauded when Curtin joked that neither he nor Roosevelt "could get outside of the law of natural attraction".[52]

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Memory: An Interview with Michel Foucault" [hereafter "Film and popular memory"], trans. Martin Jordan, *Radical Philosophy*, vol. 11, summer 1975, pp. 25, 27.

[49] Campbell, "Diary", 5 April 1944; Movietone News (producer), *Departures: Curtin And Blamey For America* (newsreel) [hereafter *Curtin And Blamey for America*], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01051/1/7, 1944; ScreenSound Australia, *Visit to England: Prime Minister John Curtin goes overseas* (newsreel) [hereafter *Visit to England*], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01023/1, 1944.

[50] William Lyon Mackenzie King, "The Diaries of William Lyon Mackenzie King", Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, 21 March 1944, p. 3, retrieved on 11 February 2010 at <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/king/index-e.html>; Franklin D. Roosevelt to Winston Churchill, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00796/3, 14 October 1943.

[51] These statements appeared in *The Age*, *The Argus*, *The Courier-Mail* and *The Sydney Morning Herald*, cited in *Scrapbooks*, 25-27 March 1944.

[52] John Curtin, "American Servicemen Marrying Australians", *DDA*, no. 81, 19 April 1944, p. 35; Theo Moody, "Mr Curtin Parries Tricky Questions" [hereafter "Curtin parries tricky questions"], *The Argus*, Melbourne, 21 April 1944, p. 16.

Consequently US journalists reported on "the war brides",[53] but this type of romance was not as well-received in Australia, as conveyed by *The Bulletin* cartoonist, Norm Rice.[54]  Also Eleanor Roosevelt recalled receiving an "amusing letter" from a NZ



"*Look, Bert; and no Yanks about!*"

Figure 23

serviceman, who asked her to tell US troops to leave "their girls alone".[55]  In fact, between 12,000 and 15,000 Australians, at least 50,000 British, and some 1,500 New

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[53] (Anon.), "Australian Leader's Wife Real Person", *Republican,* Waterbury, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00964/124, 5 May 1944; (Anon.), "Impression of U.S.A.: Mrs Curtin Interviewed", *The West Australian*, Perth, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00964/119, 28 April 1944; (Anon.), "Not Like Movies", *Valley News,* Tarentum, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00964/127, 6 May 1944; Associated Press, "War Brides Arrive In U.S.", 21 April 1944, retrieved on 13 January 2010 at <http://www.uswarbrides.com/newsarticles/440420.html>.
[54] Norm Rice, "Look, Bert; and no Yanks about!", *The Bulletin*, 23 December 1942, retrieved on 11 February 2010 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/education/cartoonpd/index.html>.
[55] Public Broadcasting Service Online, "Eleanor Roosevelt's tour of the South Pacific", Washington DC, 1999, retrieved on 13 January 2010 at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/eleanor/maps/tour.html>.

Zealanders married US servicemen during the war.[56]  Despite the light-hearted tone
of the mainstream media coverage, some Australian troops' "rage", "jealousy" and
"simmering resentment" over the sight of American men romancing Brisbane
women had led to "widespread violence" and rioting in the city in late 1942.[57]  The
three-day "Battle of Brisbane" began on US Thanksgiving Day, 26 November.  The
next day, *The Courier-Mail* cartoonist only alluded to multicultural tensions by
depicting a US serviceman who did not share his turkey dinner with an Australian
colleague during American Thanksgiving celebrations.[58]  After the weekend, the
newspaper's military commentator, Paul Goldenstedt, wrote government authorities
"have declared war on reckless drivers of army vehicles" by making them pay for
damages when "furious driving is proved".[59]  During the Pacific war, almost one
million US servicemen were based in Brisbane, with a population of fewer than
330,000 people.[60]  In accordance with censorship policies, *The Courier-Mail* did not
directly report on the fights during the riot[61] and to date, there is no official record of
fatalities.  Likewise, the government censored an official report on the "great
increase" in pregnant, single, Australian servicewomen "because of its possible
effect on enlistments to the women's services", according to F.T. Smith.[62]  Despite
these tensions, Curtin approved the "war brides" newsreel to promote a harmonious
alliance in the US media and mask more controversial aspects of the military
partnership.

**"Blue pencil" briefings**

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[56] Robyn Arrowsmith, "Travelling for love: journeys of WWII war brides", State Library of
Queensland, South Brisbane, 2008, retrieved on 13 January 2010 at
<www.slq.qld.gov.au/__.../SLQ_-_Travelling_for_Love_-_War_Brides_talk_-
_Robyn_Arrowsmith.pdf>; History Group of the New Zealand Ministry for Culture and
Heritage, "Yankee boys, Kiwi girls - US Forces in New Zealand", Wellington, 2010,
retrieved on 30 May 2010 at <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/war/us-forces-in-new-
zealand/yankee-boys-kiwi-girls>.
[57] Raymond Evans and Jacqui Donegan, "The Battle of Brisbane" [hereafter "Battle of
Brisbane"], *Politics and Culture*, no. 4, 2004, retrieved on 11 January 2011 at
<http://www.politicsandculture.org/issue/2004-issue-4>.
[58] (Anon.), "Thanksgiving Dinner", *The Courier-Mail*, Brisbane, 27 November 1942, p. 2.
[59] Paul Goldenstedt, "Reckless Army Drivers To Pay For Damage", *The Courier-Mail*,
Brisbane, 30 November 1941, p. 4.
[60] Evans and Donegan, "Battle of Brisbane".
[61] *The Courier-Mail*, Brisbane, 26-30 November 1942.
[62] Smith, cited in Lloyd and Hall, *Backroom briefings*, p. 188.

Censorship was a prominent topic at Curtin's first US media conference as Australian newspaper publishers challenged his policies on suppressing information during his absence.[63]  Reporters asked him whether Australian censors enabled US correspondents to present "a fair picture" of his nation.[64]  He responded by emphasising his journalism background to create a collegial atmosphere, saying he had been a "newspaperman" with "a little editorial experience", whose reporting was affected by "years of [censors'] blue pencil" during World War I.  Moreover, his administration was open, approachable and provided correspondents with "facilities rather than hindrance".  He persuasively explained the government only imposed censorship due to the "overriding consideration of security", adding: "You cannot allow the enemy to know lots of things that would be helpful to him."  Appealing to journalists' sense of integrity, Curtin said they were in an "honourable" profession that necessitated a "high degree of responsibility" and upholding a "code".[65]  He might have been referring to the new Australian Journalists' Association (AJA) code of ethics, endorsed by Labor but unpopular among the nation's newspaper publishers, who deemed it to be an imposition.[66]  Cox said the "honour" self-censorship system was effective because it withheld vital military information from the enemy, did not undermine public morale and preserved positive relations with Allies.[67]  Curtin persuaded unenthusiastic journalists to accept censorship by accentuating their shared experiences, establishing an egalitarian relationship and delegating "blue-pencil" tasks, as did Roosevelt.[68]

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[63] Ron Davidson, "John Curtin: From Revolutionary Firebrand to Journalist in Spirit", JCPML, Bentley, 2000, retrieved on 19 June 2009 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/journalist>; Don Whitington, *Strive to be Fair: An Unfinished Biography* [hereafter *Strive to be fair*], Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1977, p. 77.

[64] Campbell, "Diary", 19 April 1944.

[65] John Curtin, "Communiques–Prime Minister's Statement", *DDA*, no. 81, 19 April 1944, p. 44.  See also John Curtin, "Chief Publicity Censor–Prime Minister's Statement On Action Against Newspapers", *DDA*, no. 81, 19 April 1944, pp. 43-44; John Curtin, "Duty With Press", *DDA*, no. 81, 19 April 1944, p. 45.

[66] Clem Lloyd, *Profession: Journalist*, Hale & Iremonger, Sydney, 1985, p. 229; Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance, Australian Journalists' Association, "Ethics Review Committee Final Report", November 1996, retrieved on 26 November 2009 at <http://www.gwb.com.au/99a/ethics.html>.

[67] Harold Cox, interviewed by Mel Pratt, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01060/1, 6 April 1973, transcript np.

[68] William H. Hammond, "Book review: Secrets of Victory: The Office of Censorship and the US Press and Radio in World War II" (Michael S. Sweeney), *The Journal of Military History,* vol. 65, no. 3, 2001, pp. 840-841; Roosevelt, "Press conference", 8 December 1941.

**US public spheres, April 1944**

Despite controversial issues, such as censorship and "war brides", Curtin generated positive news coverage about his US trip. Reports varied on the estimated number of journalists who attended his first US news conference, held in San Francisco on 19 April. According to the British Consul-General in San Francisco, Godfrey Fisher,[69] 61 journalists and five newsreel operators saw Curtin at the interview.[70] Yet a special *Argus* correspondent, Theo Moody, wrote, "there were 19 pressmen, 10 newspaperwomen, nine Press photographers, and three newsreel men".[71] Once Curtin and his team had safely arrived in San Francisco, Australian newspapers published photographs of the smiling prime minister as he left his country with Elsie Curtin and General Blamey.[72] "That Gen Blamey would travel with Mr Curtin was a very close secret", Moody confined to his newspaper readers on 21 April.[73] While the film footage was not preserved, *The Argus* report suggested that the news conference was covered widely and broadcast extensively. Curtin spent 90 minutes with the journalists and this included newsreel filming under "strong arc lights" for 15 minutes, as well as an impromptu, "off-the-record" discussion for another 20 minutes. Columbia Broadcasting System commentator, William "Wynter" (Winter), was quoted as saying Curtin's interview "was the most comprehensive ever held in San Francisco" because his answers "were the frankest we have ever had". Even though jostling photographers pushed over the arc lights twice, Curtin "joked easily" with them and agreed to their various requests to pose in front of the cameras.[74] John

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[69] Great Britain Foreign Office, "Political situation", pp. 1-3. This report was sent by "Consul-General Fisher (San Francisco)". The Online Archive of California refers to "Consul Godfrey Fisher of Great Britain" in September 1944. See Online Archive of California, "Guide to the San Francisco News-Call Bulletin Newspaper Photograph Archive", retrieved on 15 January 2011 at <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/view?docId=tf338n99v6&view=dsc&style=oac4&dsc.position=4 2501>.

[70] Great Britain Foreign Office, "Political situation", pp. 1-3.

[71] Theo Moody, "Triumph For Mr Curtin At Press Talk" [hereafter "Triumph for Curtin"], *The Argus*, Melbourne, 21 April 1944, p. 1.

[72] These photographs appeared in *The Sun News-Pictorial* and *The Sydney Morning Herald*, cited in *Scrapbooks*, 21 April 1944.

[73] Moody, "Curtin parries tricky questions", p. 16.

[74] Moody, "Triumph for Curtin", p. 1. This *Argus* article referred to "William Wynter". Yet the correct spelling was Winter, according to the *Los Angeles Times*. See Myrna Oliver, "William Winter: Foreign Affairs Commentator", *Los Angeles Times*, Los Angeles, 9

and Elsie Curtin's arrival in the US coincided with the visits of Peter Fraser, Costa Rican President-elect Teodoro Picado and their wives.[75] At Curtin's interview, "the press showed very great interest in his coming", as Fisher wrote to Nevile Butler of the British embassy in Washington DC.[76] The media conference was reportedly "the biggest and best ever held in San Francisco". Fisher added: "Mr. Curtin made an excellent impression."[77] This observation was supported by *The New York Times* and *The Washington Star*.[78] In contrast, Fraser "preferred to pass through here – as he has done in the past – without any publicity".[79] Due to their differing media approaches, Curtin was more well-known in the US because Americans were familiar with his radio broadcasts, independent media statements and newsreel appearances.[80] In Australia, *The Daily Telegraph* cartoonist, William Mahony, characterised him as a personable figure in the international media (see Figure 24).[81] Later the Sydney *Sun* published an official photograph of a jovial Curtin walking with Hull in Washington DC; this signified a partnership had replaced a sense of Australian isolation.[82]

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November 1999, retrieved on 10 June 2010 at <http://articles.latimes.com/1999/nov/09/news/mn-31605>.

[75] General Watson to Stephen Early, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00269/3, 16 April 1944, p. 21.

[76] This report was addressed to "N.M. Butler" of the British Foreign Office. Nevile Butler often corresponded with Roosevelt. See "Diplomatic Correspondence. Great Britain: Military Situation", Franklin D. Roosevelt Library & Museum, Hyde Park, 1940, retrieved on 14 January 2011 at <http://docs.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/psf/britain>.

[77] Great Britain Foreign Office, "Political situation", pp. 1-3.

[78] (Anon.), "Curtin, In Capital, Is Greeted by Hull; Lord Halifax Also Welcomes Australian Leader, Here For War Conferences", *The New York Times*, New York, 24 April 1944, p. 11; (Anon.), "Hail Curtin's Reception; Australians Are Gratified by U.S. Greeting of Prime Minister", *The New York Times*, New York, 22 April 1944, p. 7; Lawrence E. Davies, "Curtin On Coast; To See Roosevelt", *The New York Times*, New York, 20 April 1944, p. 3.

[79] Great Britain Foreign Office, "Political situation", pp. 1-3.

[80] E.g. Curtin delivered radio talks to Americans on 14 March 1942, 26 January 1943, 5 July 1943 and 17 March 1944. Cited in JCPML, "Index to John Curtin's speeches in the Digest of Decisions and Announcements and Important Speeches by the Prime Minister, 1941-1945" [hereafter "Index to John Curtin's speeches], Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01148/1, 2007.

[81] Figure 24 appeared in William Mahony, "Personal Representative", *The Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, 21 April 1944.

[82] Theo Moody, "Curtin In U.S.A.", *The Sun*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, 27 April 1944.

Figure 24

    While Allied officials remarked on Curtin's skills in generating US publicity, he worked hard to look like a natural communicator.[83]  One month before the San Francisco conference, a Cinesound team filmed Curtin's formal dinner to honour MacArthur during the general's second year at his Australian base.  Although the film was titled *MacArthur Speaks*, Curtin's three-minute opening speech was almost as long as the general's four-minute address.  The two men were pictured together in medium camera shots as Curtin delivered his oratory while standing and using

[83] Department of External Affairs, "Visit of Mr. Curtin to USA & UK in connection with Prime Ministers' Conference London" [hereafter "Curtin's visit"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00768/2, June 1944; Great Britain Foreign Office, "Political situation", pp. 1-3.

forceful gestures, such as leaning forward, shaking his head to emphasise his words and placing his hands on the table to indicate his open manner.  He asserted that MacArthur's leadership "enables us to say to the world that this Australia still stands a free nation able to play its part in the cause of freedom throughout the whole world".  Newsreel images,[84] press photos[85] and archival research[86] indicated the two men liked and respected each other.  Filmed rehearsals of other speeches showed Curtin's determination to perfect his messages as he uncomplainingly waited for the director's clapperboard and the call for "action!"  During his stand-up in "take three", Curtin pointed his finger, moved his head from side to side, looking like he might be addressing an unseen audience, and said: "We know that our destinies will go forward hand-in-hand and we are proud and confident in that association."  The camera zoomed in closer during "take four" as he embellished his statement to add, "we will stand or fall together" and "we are proud *and happy* in that association [emphasis added]".  As in *MacArthur Speaks*, he did not refer to notes.[87]  Yet his practice film scenes indicated he refined his memorised rhetoric, gestures and camera delivery to build "a closer relationship between the Australian and American peoples", as he declared in a public statement.[88]

Yet Roosevelt was keen to prevent undue media attention of Curtin's visit because he was secretly resting at his advisor Bernard Mannes Baruch's hunting and fishing lodge in Hobcaw Barony, South Carolina.  Before the meeting, Eleanor confided to Elsie: "The President may still be away on an enforced holiday due to complete weariness."[89]  Documentary evidence indicates that Fraser, Picado and their wives were also invited to see FDR, but the NZ Prime Minister did not join the

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[84] Cinesound Review (producer), *MacArthur Speaks* (newsreel), JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01050/1, 1944.

[85] E.g. these photographs were published in *The Age*, *The Sun News-Pictorial* and *The Sydney Morning Herald*, cited in *Scrapbooks*, 18 and 20 March 1944.

[86] E.g. AWC, "Discussions with General MacArthur", NAA, Canberra, CA495, A2684, 967, 26 March 1942; Douglas MacArthur to George C. Marshall, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, Hyde Park, 31 March 1942, retrieved on 11 February 2010 at <http://docs.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/PSF/BOX3/T43nn04.html>.

[87] ScreenSound Australia, *Parliament in Session* (newsreel), JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00876/4, 1944.

[88] John Curtin, Untitled, *DDA*, no. 81, 24 April 1944, p. 33.

[89] Eleanor Roosevelt to Elsie Curtin, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00330/1, 17 April 1944, p. 24.

group at Hobcaw Barony on 25 April.[90]  Roosevelt's press secretary, Stephen Early, relayed his concerns of a potential news leak to General Watson, who was staying at the retreat.[91]  Early needed to send a telegram because Baruch's residence lacked telephones.[92]  He stated on 22 April:

> I feel very certain, knowing something of the desire of these people [the Australian officials] for publicity, that unless a brief statement … is made, much more will come out through your visitors or their contacts in Washington.[93]

Allied leaders seemed accustomed to releasing terse, prepared statements quickly to prevent unwelcome journalist enquiries.[94]

Despite Early's foreboding, John and Elsie Curtin kept Roosevelt's secret. Curtin did not give details of his forthcoming trip when he spoke to 80 leading journalists at the stately Blair House, Washington DC on 24 April.  Instead, correspondents positively portrayed his views on peace talks and post-war immigration to Australia.[95]  While detailed records do not exist, FDR seemed to have enjoyed Curtin's visit because on the same day, he cabled Churchill to confirm: "Everything goes well here in my vacation residence.  The doctor agrees with me that I am better."[96]  Early's draft media release indicated only that the Curtins had

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[90] Stephen Early, "Draft Of Proposed Release" [hereafter "Proposed release"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00269/3, 22 April 1944, p. 15; General Watson to Stephen Early, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00269/3, 16 April 1944, p. 21.

[91] Stephen Early to General Watson, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00269/3, 22 April 1944, p. 14.

[92] Belle W. Baruch Institute For Marine & Coastal Studies, "History and Structure", University of South Carolina, Columbia, 2009, retrieved on 11 February 2010 at <http://links.baruch.sc.edu/history.html>.

[93] Stephen Early to General Watson, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00269/3, 22 April 1944, p. 14.

[94] E.g. Roosevelt had authorised an "immediate joint press release" to announce MacArthur's Australian arrival in March 1942.  Cited in Roosevelt to Churchill, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00719/1/14, 17 March 1942.

[95] E.g. (Anon.), "Curtin Puts Aside Questions Of Bases; Reciprocal Matter Best Left to Peace Conference, Says Australian Premier", *The New York Times*, New York, 25 April 1944, p. 5; (Anon.), "Curtin Wants Yank Settlers in Australia", *The Washington Post*, Washington DC, 25 April 1944, p. 2; Heather Campbell, "Diary", 24 April 1944.

[96] Franklin D. Roosevelt to Winston Churchill, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00796/4, 25 April 1944.

accompanied Eleanor on a one-day return trip to Roosevelt's "vacation residence in the South".[97]  This abstruse message was repeated in newspapers and an official photograph of the cheerful visitors was published.[98]  In fact, Roosevelt revealed his "vacation hide-out" to White House correspondents only when he invited them to an interview at Hobcaw Barony on 6 May.  Imploring them to maintain confidentiality, he said: "I have been very comfortable down here.  I want to come back."[99]

A day after his presidential meeting, Curtin gave an evening radio broadcast at his Blair House suite to confirm his "consultation" with Roosevelt had reinforced "complete harmony between our views".  Also he assured US listeners of Australia's "responsibility" to "feed" Allied "fighting forces" in the South-West Pacific.  He emphasised, "Australia, has, and can have, much in common with America" and repeated his well-known statement that his nation "will look to the United States in the future".[100]  His radio messages, delivered by the National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC), were favourably repeated in *The New York Times*.[101]  As a result of the strengthened bilateral relations, on 29 April the Australian Government announced lower prices to send telegrams between Australia and the US;[102] this initiative facilitated more international journalism.  Through Curtin's balancing of secret diplomacy and public egalitarianism, his enthusiastic use of new media and his repetition of appealing messages, he secured the support of FDR and US journalists for his policy on a post-war military security alliance between the two nations.

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[97] Early, "Proposed release", p. 15.

[98] (Anon.), "Australian Leader's Wife Real Person", *Republican,* Waterbury, 5 May 1944, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00964/124; (Anon.), "Brief Stay In U.S.A.", *The Sydney Morning Herald,* Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, 25 April 1944; (Anon.), "P.M. Flies To Meet President", *The Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, 27 April 1944.  Their photograph was published in *The Daily Mirror*, 1 May 1944, and *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 June 1944, cited in *Scrapbooks*.

[99] Roosevelt, "Press conference", 6 May 1944.

[100] Campbell, "Diary", 26 April 1944; John Curtin, "Broadcast in America", *DDA*, 26 April 1944, no. 81, pp. 49-52.

[101] (Anon.), "He And President Agree, Says Curtin; Australian Finds Full Harmony on Pacific Strategy and Post-War Problems", *The New York Times*, New York, 27 April 1944, p. 4.

[102] *DDA*, Untitled, no. 86, 29 April 1944, p. 31.

Furthermore, Elsie Curtin became a popular media personality, who assisted her husband's US mission.  Shortly after Curtin announced his overseas trip, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* publishers praised Elsie's decision to "break a tradition" and accompany her husband.[103]  Eleanor promoted a firm friendship with Elsie.  She sent flowers, along with a note of "warm congratulations and best wishes", to the Curtins because they were celebrating their twenty-seventh wedding anniversary on 21 April.  In her telegram, Eleanor seemed to attempt to cajole Elsie to remain in Washington DC instead of joining Curtin in London.  "If you stay here while your husband goes to London, I hope you will let me help you in any way possible", Eleanor wrote.[104]  One day after the South Carolina meeting, Elsie returned to Blair House to conduct her first US news conference, where she accentuated her husband's themes of kinship by saying Australian and American women had "a good deal in common" and she would continue to support their "prominent" work in "public affairs".[105]  After her interview with about 20 of Washington DC's leading female journalists, she was praised for her "honest opinions of matters American and Australian".[106]  Elsie extended her US visit, resulting in *Washington Post* stories about her "busy time" as an "honor guest at luncheons" and her speech at the American Association of University Women (AAUW).[107]  Later she addressed a Canberra Parliament House function, where she explained Curtin's aides decided "[t]here were seven men in the plane" leaving Washington DC to fly to London "and they didn't want me just because I was a woman".  She was "very cross" about being "dumped", as she was quoted in *The*

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[103] (Anon.), "Curtin's Wife Breaks a Tradition To See U.S., Britain With Premier", *The New York Times*, New York, 4 April 1944, p. 14; (Anon.), "Mrs. Curtin to Accompany Husband Here", *The Washington Post*, Washington DC, 6 April 1944, p. 9.

[104] Eleanor Roosevelt to Elsie Curtin, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00330/1, 17 April 1944, p. 24.

[105] Elsie Curtin, "Press Statement by Mrs Curtin" [hereafter "Press statement], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00652/1/3, 26 April 1944.

[106] This phrase was quoted from: (Anon.), "Mrs. Curtin Buys Gloves, No Nylons; Prime Minister's Wife Compares Shopping Conditions Here and in Australia", *The New York Times*, New York, 26 April 1944, p. 20.  Positive US press statements also appeared in: (Anon.), "Australian Leader's Wife Real Person", *Republican,* Waterbury, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00964/124, 5 May 1944; (Anon.), "Impression of U.S.A.: Mrs Curtin Interviewed", *The West Australian*, Perth, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00964/119, 28 April 1944; (Anon.), "Not Like Movies", *Valley News,* Tarentum, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00964/127, 6 May 1944.

[107] (Anon.), "Mrs Curtin Honor Guest At Luncheons", *The Washington Post*, Washington DC, 12 May 1944, p. 12; (Anon.), "Shepherdstown AAWU Hears Mrs. Curtin and Lady Dixon", *The Washington Post*, Washington DC, 15 May 1944, p. 3.

*Argus*.  Her daughter recalled the aircraft passengers wanted Elsie to stay in the US because "[i]t was an army type plane with rather primitive toilet facilities".[108] Subsequently she pioneered direct relationships between a prime minister's wife and international journalists.[109]

**"Mr. Curtin's Success In London", April-May 1944**

Differing from Roosevelt's secret meeting, Churchill endorsed widespread publicity of Curtin's one-month stay in London.  Curtin's frequent media statements, interviews and film appearances masked the earlier controversies that had characterised his relations with Churchill.[110]  For example, after he arrived at the Croydon aerodrome, south of London, on 29 April, a newsreel team filmed his enthusiastic exchange with reporters.  Clad in a light-coloured, herringbone overcoat, he removed his hat and smiled as he directly addressed the British Movietone camera.  His jovial appearance contrasted with his stern look in earlier newsreels and differed from other commonwealth prime ministers, filmed at the same aerodrome, because they wore dark hats shading their faces.  He changed his central message on the Pacific war and adopted a patriotic theme targeted to London audiences as he seemed to remark spontaneously:

> The first thing I would like to say is to express the unbounded admiration and
> gratitude of the people of Australia to the people of Britain for having stood
> alone as the rampart of civilisation and held the fort … for all the hopes of the

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[108] (Anon.), "Mrs Curtin's Racy Story Of Her Trip", *The Argus*, Melbourne, 21 July 1944, p. 8.

[109] There is a lack of scholarly publications about Australian prime ministerial wives' relationships with journalists, from the first person in this role, Jane Barton, until Elsie Curtin.  Research suggested that correspondents were interested in their public roles. Margaret Cook was "interviewed at every public event"; Ethel Bruce was photographed for the British *Daily Graphic* in 1923; and Sarah Scullin participated in a lunch hosted by the NSW Institute of Journalists.  Cited in NAA, "Australia's Prime Ministers", 2009, retrieved on 12 February 2010 at <http://primeministers.naa.gov.au/primeministers>.

[110] E.g. (Anon.), "The Facts Of Power", *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Chicago, 6 May 1944, p. 10; British Movietone (producer), "Empire Premiers Assemble" [hereafter "Empire premiers"], in *Newsreels of Curtin, 1942-1945* (newsreel) [hereafter *Newsreels of Curtin*], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00734/1, 1944; John Curtin, "Prime Minister's Review", *DDA*, no. 81, 4 May 1944, p. 21.

future. When I speak of Australians, I would like it to be understood that I speak for seven million Britishers.[111]

His message was carefully planned to interest British "people" by focusing on their heroic fight against Nazis. Also Curtin hoped to attract their attention to Australia's plight by emphasising the historic links between the two nations. The same newsreel included long shots of the prime ministers' meeting at 10 Downing Street, London, which showed Curtin seated next to Churchill, as he is in a number of photographs of his visit,[112] to suggest a close friendship that disguised previous frictions.[113]

During his radio broadcast to British people, Curtin shifted his emphasis on foreign policies by saying he accepted the "strategy of beat Hitler first" and a "minimum" effort in the Pacific.[114] This speech marked a departure from the confidential views evidenced in an Australian AWC transcription in March 1942. According to the transcription, MacArthur advised the war councillors:

> … the Pacific was the real centre … Australia must stand firmly by its view that the Pacific is the predominant theatre … The Commonwealth Government must stand up to their views on the Pacific situation against opposing views which might be held by Mr. Churchill and Mr. Roosevelt.[115]

This transcription did not refer to any AWC objections to MacArthur's views and it seemed to suggest that the Australian Government had agreed with the general in 1942. As the war tide increasingly turned to the Allies' favour, Curtin seemed to stress his approval of the "beat Hitler first" strategy to gain Britons' support for his radio talk on 8 May 1944. Speaking into the microphone at the BBC studio, he tried to captivate his "gallant" listeners by depicting Australia as a "bastion" of democratic ideals, institutions and "the British way of life".[116] Moreover, he appealed to the

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[111] British Movietone, "Empire premiers".
[112] (Anon.), "John Curtin at the Empire Conference, London, May 1944", JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01125/1; (Anon.), "Mr. Curtin In London", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Sydney, 8 May 1944; Picturegram, "Curtin And Churchill", *The Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 10 May 1944. The latter two photographs were cited in *Scrapbooks*.
[113] British Movietone, "Empire premiers".
[114] Curtin, "London broadcast", pp. 53-56.
[115] AWC, "Discussions with General MacArthur", NAA, Canberra, CA495, A2684, 967, 26 March 1942, pp. 1-2 (the online page numbers are pp. 8, 12-13).
[116] Cited in Curtin, "London broadcast", pp. 53-56.

empire's familiar, noble and endearing images of Australia, including their mutual relatives and shared wartime victories, as well as koalas and kangaroos.  In his radio talk, Curtin used "nationhood" keywords 43 times and referred to Britain 31 times, in contrast to only one mention of the US.



Figure 25[117]

Curtin also used the political device of referring to cricketer Donald Bradman, a symbol of national "resilience and identity" for many Australians, who had been mainly unaware that the ABC's popular "synthetic cricket" broadcasts were "an elaborate pretence" during the 1930s.[118]  Following the controversial "Bodyline"

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[117] The photograph in Figure 25 is courtesy of the State Library of Western Australia, The Battye Library, records of the J S Battye Library of West Australian History, Perth, BA499/22, 53436P, 1944.

[118] ABC commentators would play gramophone recordings of cheering crowds and tap a pencil on a hollow piece of wood to imitate the sound of a batsman striking a cricket ball in front of appreciative spectators.  See Brett Hutchins, *Don Bradman: Challenging The Myth*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002, p. 17; K. S. Inglis, *This is the ABC: The*

tour, when English fast bowlers targeted their deliveries at Bradman's small physique between 1932 and 1933, British cricket fans appeared to focus on the importance of "[s]hared values of sportsmanship" and "fair play", instead of "winning at all costs". According to sports historian, Richard Holt, the boom in radio broadcasting and cinema newsreels benefited Bradman because the media coverage generated "a new public enthusiasm" for the cricketer among British audiences.[119] In May 1944, *The Argus* reported that during Curtin's "morning shave", he chatted amiably with his London-based barber on Bradman's future; the story enhanced his egalitarian appeal.[120]

After referring to popular images in his radio talk, Curtin then concentrated on Australia's battle to preserve "liberty", "freedom" and "civilisation" in "the southern world".[121] He elaborated his nation's labour, food and clothes rationing commitments to emphasise the "terrific strain on Australia's manpower pool". It was not until the middle of his radio talk that he referred generally to the true objectives of his London mission: to resolve Australia's production shortages and galvanise British support for maintaining Allied defence forces in his country during the war. He explained to "the people of Britain" that "[s]ince Pearl Harbour, Australia has been almost completely preoccupied with the war against Japan".[122] Yet "while recognising and accepting the strategy of 'beat Hitler first'", he said "a certain minimum effort must be maintained in the Pacific". In his conclusion, he reiterated, "we Australians are proud to be of the stock which populates the British Isles".[123] Also he focused on previous themes of a "grave responsibility" as he said: "There can be no going back to the good old days."[124] Due to his elucidation of detailed

*Australian Broadcasting Commission 1932-1983*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1983, p. 37.

[119] Richard Holt, "Bradman and the British", *ESPNcricinfo*, London, 2002, retrieved on 21 July 2010 at <http://www.cricinfo.com/wisdenalmanack/content/story/154886.html>.

[120] David McNicoll, "Mr Curtin's Barber Talks Of Cricket", *The Argus*, Melbourne, cited in *Scrapbooks*, 20 May 1944.

[121] Curtin used the keywords of "freedom" and "free" six times. He referred to "liberty" twice and also mentioned "civilisation" once. Curtin, "London broadcast", pp. 53-56.

[122] He mentioned ten "war" keywords. Curtin, "London broadcast", pp. 53-56.

[123] This speech included 30 keywords about "the people", "we" and "us". Curtin, "London broadcast", pp. 53-56.

[124] "Responsibility" keywords appeared twice and "tradition" once. Curtin, "London broadcast", pp. 53-56.

Australian wartime production statistics, the speech was slightly more complicated than the recommended levels.  Curtin's radio talk registered a Flesch Reading Ease score of 50.4 and it was suitable for an eleventh-grade audience.[125]  Through his frequent appeals to "civilized", democratic ideals, as well as his repetition of common bonds between Australians and Britons, he attempted to deliver an accessible, inspiring radio talk that would persuade embattled people to continue their war against Japan.

Although Curtin was courting the British, it was possible that he became more acutely aware of their suffering after visiting London's bombed areas, the result of Germany's "Blitz" campaign that killed about 30,000 of the city's residents.  Curtin wrote to his wife that "the buildings are just ruins & the scarred city has a queer impression".[126]  Also during the prime ministers' conference, he might have developed more esteem for Churchill because it was more than two years after their heated cable exchanges over the deployment of the 6th and 7th Australian Divisions.  Following Curtin's return from London, he held a Canberra press conference on 3 July, where he reportedly praised Churchill to Harold Cox and other Australian journalists.  Afterwards Cox wrote in a letter to Murdoch that: "Mr. Curtin described Mr. Churchill as the most important single person in the world at present opposed to the Axis."  Curtin appeared to be impressed with Churchill's personal commitment to the success of the Allied "D-Day" landing in Normandy, France, on 6 June.  According to Cox, Curtin told the journalists: "I know that on D Day he [Churchill], in imagination, fired every shot and suffered every wound that was inflicted."[127]  Curtin's first-hand observations might have deepened his appreciation for the British "fighting fortress" and perhaps compelled him to broadcast assurances that Australia remained a "proud" part of the empire.[128]

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[125] As discussed in Chapter 6, the recommended Flesch Readability score was 60 to 70. Elvin T. Lim, "Roosevelt's fireside chats", *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*, vol. 6, no. 3, 2003, pp. 445-446.

[126] John Curtin to Elsie Curtin, London, cited in Campbell, "Diary" for 30 April 1944.

[127] Cox, "Typescript reports", 3 July 1944.

[128] Curtin, "London broadcast", pp. 53-56.

Australian newspaper publishers responded positively to Curtin's BBC broadcast.  His speech was substantially repeated in the four newspapers in this survey: *The Age*,[129] *The Canberra Times*,[130] *The Sydney Morning Herald*[131] and *The West Australian*.[132]  Furthermore in a front-page bulletin, *The Sydney Morning Herald* informed readers that Curtin's London objective "appears to have been achieved".[133]  The newspaper's page three lead headline, in bold, block case, was: "Mr. Curtin's Success In London".  Readers were told Curtin had secured commonwealth support for the redistribution of Allied forces to ensure "a lively war effort against Japan" and to allow more Australian workers to increase food production.  In the article, the journalist alluded to Curtin's proposal to establish an "empire secretariat", although this was not specified in the broadcast.[134]  Under Curtin's plan, a permanent secretariat would represent the British Commonwealth and oversee close international collaboration.[135]  Moreover, the reporter referred to his London newsreel and public appearances, including a lunch-time visit to RAAF members, who "cheered" him at the Boomerang Club.[136]  While *The Age*, *The Canberra Times* and *The West Australian* publishers endorsed his "readiness" to "accept the strategy of 'Beat Hitler First'", they also welcomed news of Britain's commitment to send "ships and aircraft" to the South-West Pacific.[137]  The Canberra

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[129] (Anon.), "British Aid In The Pacific", *The Age* [hereafter *Age*]*,* Melbourne, 9 May 1944, p. 3.  Curtin was quoted directly in three sentences and his speech was paraphrased in another 12 sentences.

[130] (Anon.), "Australia Has British Mandate In The Pacific", *The Canberra Times* [hereafter *Canberra*], Canberra, 9 May 1944, p. 2.  This article included eight sentences that were direct and indirect quotations made by Curtin.

[131] (Anon.), "Mr. Curtin's Success In London", *The Sydney Morning Herald* [hereafter *SMH*], Sydney, 9 May 1944, p. 3.  His speech was directly quoted in 41 sentences and another sentence paraphrased his words.  Furthermore, a positive summary appeared on page one of the same issue.

[132] The address was covered in three articles in *The West Australian* [hereafter *West*] in Perth on 9 May 1944.  The articles were (Anon.), "Mr. Curtin's Broadcast", p. 2; (Anon.), "Pacific War: Mr. Curtin's Assurance", p. 3; (Anon.), "Press Comment: 'Need Have No Doubt'", p. 3.  In the "Pacific War" article, he was directly quoted in 52 sentences and his words were paraphrased in another seven sentences.

[133] (Anon.), "Summary Of To-Day's News", *SMH*, 9 May 1944, p. 1.

[134] (Anon.), "Mr. Curtin's Success In London", *SMH*, 9 May 1944, p. 3.

[135] Black, *In his own words*, pp. 240-242; John Curtin, "Empire Council–Prime Minister's Statement", *DDA*, no. 81, 24 April 1944, p. 9.

[136] (Anon.), "Mr. Curtin's Success In London", *SMH*, Sydney, 9 May 1944, p. 3.

[137] (Anon.), "Australia Has British Mandate In The Pacific", *Canberra*, 9 May 1944, p. 2; (Anon.), "British Aid In The Pacific", *Age,* 9 May 1944, p. 3; (Anon.), "Mr. Curtin's Broadcast", "Press Comment: 'Need Have No Doubt'", and "Pacific War: Mr. Curtin's Assurance", *West*, pp. 2-3.

publisher revealed an imperial attitude by referring to Britain as "the mother country"; this term was not used by Curtin in his broadcast.[138]  A Perth leader writer likened Curtin's radio talk to Churchill's House of Commons speech on 22 February 1944, when he also emphasised ideals of freedom, responsibility and the need for "resolve".[139]  Curtin's democratic rhetoric was consistent with his open, friendly associations with the media, Australian air force fighters and commonwealth leaders, generating favourable news coverage.

His radio messages were strengthened by London press tributes, which were reported in the Canberra and Perth dailies.  A leader writer for London's conservative *Evening Standard* reportedly enthused over "[t]he fresh mind and language" conveyed in Curtin's speech because his "demands" that the "beat Hitler first strategy" should not "stultify" the Japanese war were "of service to us all."  In England's popular *Daily Telegraph,* a lead story emphasised the unity of Australians and Britons, restating Curtin's words that they were "determined never to return to the bad old ways of the 'good old days'".  The labour-oriented *Daily Herald* reportedly declared Britain sympathised with Australia's plight in the Pacific.  Moreover, radio reporters in Ankara, Turkey, described the prime ministers' conference as a "great success".[140]  Thus Curtin attracted support from diverse political spectrums of the mass news media.

Although he was unable to achieve his "permanent secretariat" proposal, Curtin gained media attention for his empathy with Londoners.  Mackenzie King did not support an empire council and associated secretariat because of his nation's relations with the US.[141]  Also Canada had adopted a much more independent stance

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[138] (Anon.), "Australia Has British Mandate In The Pacific", *Canberra*, 9 May 1944, p. 2.
[139] (Anon.), "Mr. Curtin's Broadcast", *West*, 9 May 1944, p. 2; Winston Churchill, "War and International Situation", *Hansard*, London, 22 February 1944, retrieved on 12 February 2010 at <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1944/feb/22/war-and-internationa-situation#S5CV0397P0_19440222_HOC_342>.
[140] (Anon.), "Australia Has British Mandate In The Pacific", *Canberra*, 9 May 1944, p. 2; (Anon.), "Press Comment: 'Need Have No Doubt'", *West*, 9 May 1944, p. 3.
[141] (Anon.), "Curtin Opens Fight for Empire Bureau", *The New York Times*, New York, 5 May 1944, p. 8; (Anon.), "End Of Conference", *The Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, 20 May 1944; Black, *In his own words*, p. 242.

than Australia since the 1920s.[142] Despite these disagreements, Curtin reiterated his message of unity. This seemed popular because he and Peter Fraser were awarded the honorary degrees of Doctor of Laws at Cambridge University;[143] then he lunched with King George VI at Buckingham Palace.[144] Moreover, British Movietone focused on Curtin and Fraser when they were presented with the "Freedom of the City of London" at Guildhall. Leaving aside his notes, Curtin spoke of Britain's "pledge of honour" to defeat Nazi Germany. "That pledge was expressed and supported by the people of Australia", he declared to an applauding audience. In like manner to his previous London addresses, he emphasised Europe's conflict, rather than Pacific battles, to engage British audiences.[145] Correspondent David McNicoll noticed his informal relations with ordinary Britons: his politeness was incomprehensible to "two pleasant-faced, elderly English maids"; he invited his driver to share tea at *Ye Abbott's Kitchen* in Guildford; and he was "quite unimpressed" with the "almost royal" procession of "bowing waiters and bellboys" at his hotel.[146] In a newsreel released on 1 June, British Movietone portrayed him as a celebrity at Lords cricket ground, where he talked with schoolboys, clamouring for his autograph, as well as servicemen and women. Although the narrator explained this was "[a]n exciting match with cricket stars old and new", Curtin was the leading figure; his twofold strategy, interacting with dignitaries and working people, was successful.[147] In Murdoch's *Herald*, for instance, a cartoonist good-naturedly

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[142] Bobbie Oliver, "Shaping the Nation: John Curtin and Australia" [hereafter "Shaping the nation"], JCPML, Bentley, 2001, retrieved on 4 June 2008 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/shapingthenation/index.htm>.

[143] (Anon.), "Mr. Curtin At Cambridge", *SMH*, cited in *Scrapbooks*, 19 May 1944.

[144] Campbell, "Diary", 5 May 1944.

[145] British Movietone, "Commonwealth Premiers Honoured", in *Newsreels of Curtin*, 1944.

[146] David McNicoll, "Curtin's Informality Embarrasses Servants", *The Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 21 May 1944; David McNicoll, "Mr Curtin's Barber Talks of Cricket", *The Argus*, Melbourne, 20 May 1944. Both articles were cited in *Scrapbooks*.

[147] British Movietone, "Lord's", in *Newsreels of Curtin,* 1944.

caricatured Curtin's consonance with Churchill (see Figure 26).[148]  Norman Lindsay

of *The Bulletin* indicated Curtin was outshining, or perhaps taking credit from,

extremely different national identities, ranging from veteran politician, Billy Hughes,



Figure 26

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[148] Figure 26 appeared in (Anon.), "The Harmony Boys", *The Herald*, Melbourne, 20 May 1944.  Similar cartoons, indicating goodwill between the prime ministers, appeared in (Anon.), "At The Ringside", *The Herald*, Melbourne, 2 May 1944; (Anon.), "Canada, Australia Shakes Hands – With A Proviso", *The Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 20 May 1944. All three cartoons did not clearly identify the illustrators and were cited in *Scrapbooks*.

351

to athletes (see Figure 27).[149] Later at an Australian interview, Curtin said he and
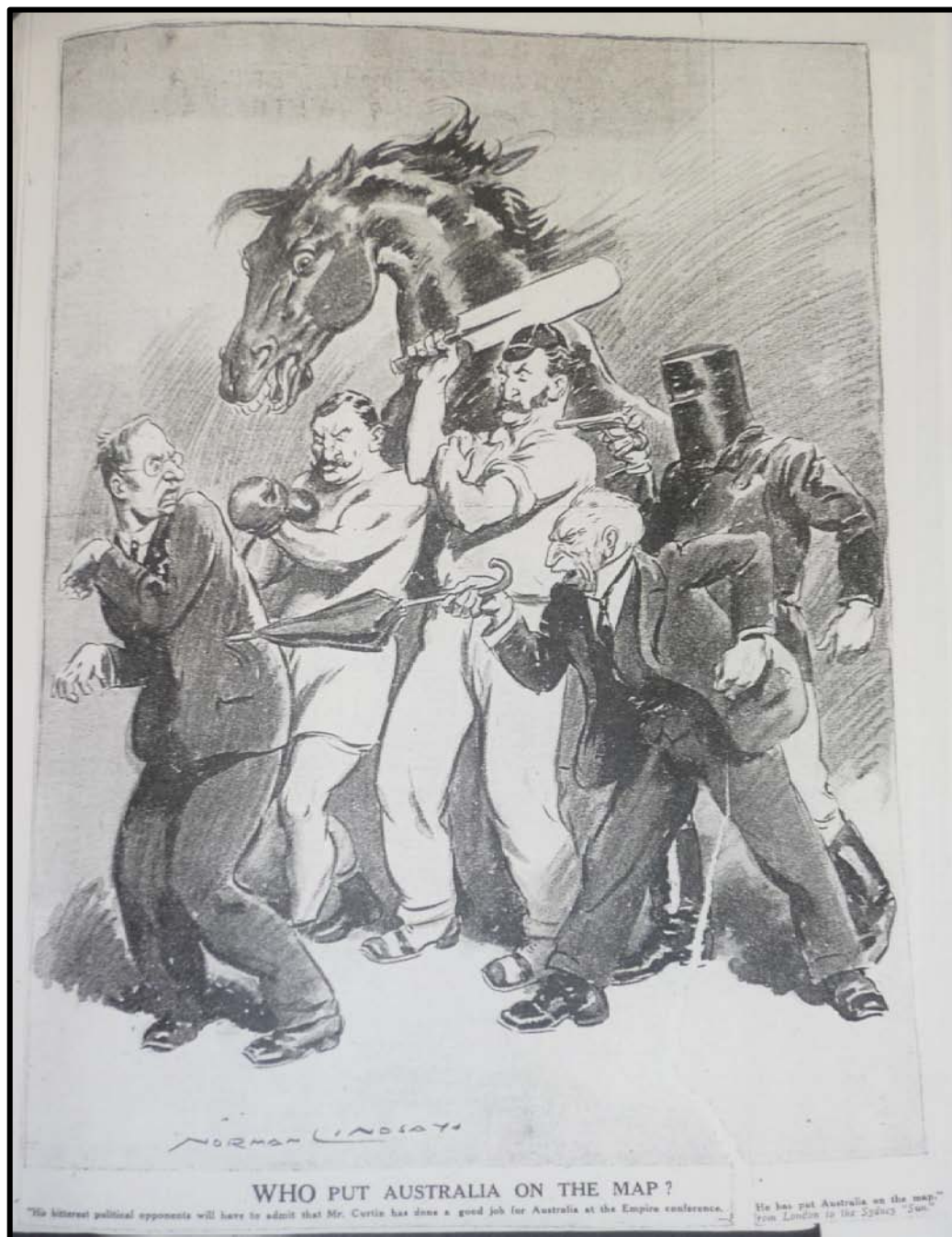


WHO PUT AUSTRALIA ON THE MAP ?

Figure 27

Churchill "had got on handsomely" in London.[150]  The pictorial, cinematic and press representations of strong Anglo-Australian relations were consistent with his private comments at his news briefings.

**"A very favourable impression on Canadian newspaper men", May-June 1944**

When Curtin arrived in Ottawa on his return from Britain, he generated resoundingly positive film images, radio reports and press statements that masked Mackenzie King's disagreement with the Australian Government's "empire council" proposal. At 10.15pm on 30 May 1944, King met John and Elsie Curtin at Union Station, Ottawa, where they were greeted by reporters, photographers and a film crew, as well as a large crowd that gave "a spirited ovation".[151]  Curtin and King used the mass media to support their international partnership because Canadian and Australian troops shared experiences in the wars on Germany and Japan.  More than 37,000 Australian airmen had participated in the Empire Air Training Scheme during the war and this involved travelling to Canada for advanced instruction.[152]  Likewise, Canada supported Australians in the Pacific theatre.  In October 1941, two months before the Japanese war, about 1,975 Canadian soldiers had sailed from Vancouver to defend Hong Kong.  In addition, about 8,000 Canadians served in South East

[150] Smith, cited in Lloyd and Hall, *Backroom briefings*, p. 210.

[151] Campbell, "Diary", 30 May 1944; Department of External Affairs, "Curtin's visit", pp. 10-22; ScreenSound Australia, *Prime Minister Welcomed In Canada* (newsreel) [hereafter *Prime minister welcomed in Canada*], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01052/1, 1944.

[152] Also Australians were crew members of landing craft to take Canadians to the beaches of Normandy.  See Australian War Memorial, "Australia, Britain & Canada In The Second World War", Canberra, 2005-2006, retrieved on 5 June 2010 at <http://www.awm.gov.au/exhibitions/sharedexperience/index.asp>; Australian War Memorial, "Empire Air Training Scheme", Canberra, 2010, retrieved on 5 June 2010 at <http://www.awm.gov.au/units/unit_14939.asp>.

Asia.[153]  To promote his nation's war effort, King had invited Australian journalists to visit his nation in March 1944; in response, Curtin sent three senior Canberra correspondents.[154]

In the Ottawa newsreel, Curtin delivered a targeted message when he spoke about the "successful prime ministers' conference", as well as Australian airmen training in Canada for "a common cause".  Both nations would "stand side by side" to "represent free people" fighting for a "victory" against "aggressors".  He added: "Never again will evil rear its head in the world."  Likewise, King emphasised terms of "unity".[155]  The next day at the Canadian House of Commons, Curtin held an informal interview to answer reporters' questions; however, King appeared to discourage impromptu queries and Ottawa correspondents noticed this difference.[156] While focusing on Australia's battles and labour challenges, Curtin spoke of the need for a world organisation and post-war planning.  As he sought to persuade journalists to accept his foreign policies, he tried to establish a link with them by saying "the press and parliament are the two great institutions that have a trusteeship in the service of men".[157]  Australian High Commissioner to Canada, Sir William Glasgow, a former conservative politician, wrote:

> Mr Curtin made a very favourable impression on Canadian newspaper men, many of whom have expressed the opinion that it was one of the most useful conferences ever held in the Ottawa [Press] Gallery.[158]

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[153] (Anon.), "Canada To Play Big Role In Pacific", *Canberra*, 6 April 1945, p. 2; The Battle for Australia Commemoration National Council, "Battle for Australia", National Council Newsletter, Evatt, 2008, retrieved on 6 June 2010 at <http://www.battleforaustralia.org.au/2911/Latest_News>; Veteran Affairs Canada, "Canada and the Second World War 1939-1945", Ottawa, 1998, retrieved on 6 June 2010 at <http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/remembers/sub.cfm?source=history/secondwar/canada2/intro>.

[154] Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, p. 92.

[155] ScreenSound Australia, *Prime minister welcomed in Canada*.

[156] (Anon.), "Canada At War", *Time*, New York, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01222/15, 12 June 1944, p. 16; Department of External Affairs, "Curtin's visit"; Roosevelt, "Press conference", 16 September 1944.

[157] (Anon.), "Curtin Hails M'Arthur; Says Allies Now Hold Initiative In Every Theatre", *The New York Times*, New York, 1 June 1944, p. 7; Department of External Affairs, "Curtin's visit", pp. 10-22.

[158] Department of External Affairs, "Curtin's visit", pp. 10-22.

On 1 June, a day after the news briefing, Curtin spoke for 45 minutes without notes to both Houses of the Canadian Parliament, where he affirmed, "the struggle to preserve Australia was a struggle to be of service to the world".  Possibly aware of media microphones, he made "a plea for the average citizen, for the shopkeeper, for the mother of forty years of age".  He exhorted Canadians to work with Australians in "fraternity and association and collaboration".[159]  Curtin received standing ovations and mainly favourable news coverage,[160] while press photographs conveyed his friendly relations with Canada's Government.[161]

## Revisiting Roosevelt, June 1944

During his return trip to the US, Curtin skilfully raised journalists' awareness of his foreign policies while avoiding questions about his second meeting with FDR on 5 June.  During his blunt talk to the National Press Club luncheon, three hours before he saw Roosevelt, he focused on "the problems of Australia".  He explained, "I resolved that America should not go to sleep on its responsibility" in the Pacific.  Emphasising Australia's role, he asserted: "You must not get it into your head that Douglas MacArthur is an American commander … he is the Allied commander … and, during the greater part of his leadership, the major part of his forces have not come from the United States".  Referring to the US government's previous neutrality, he told journalists that no country should "isolate itself from the influences of another".[162]  He might have intended his message to be heard by some isolationist US politicians and press owners, such as Colonel Robert McCormick, *Chicago Daily Tribune* proprietor, who had reportedly complained of Australia's "insufficient war effort".[163]  Curtin said the "present problem" was that Australia had "worn out a great part of our capital equipment" by supplying most requirements of

[159] John Curtin, "Speech To Canadian Parliament", *DDA*, no. 81, 1 June 1944, pp. 75-84. Also see King, "Diaries", 1 June 1944, pp. 564-565.

[160] (Anon.), "Curtin Urges Unity Of Allies After War", *The New York Times*, New York, 2 June 1944, p. 3; Department of External Affairs, "Curtin's visit", pp. 1-3.

[161] E.g. (Anon.), "Mr. Curtin In Canada", *The Argus*, Melbourne, 5 June 1944; (Anon.), "Mr. Curtin In Ottawa", *The Argus*, Melbourne, 23 June 1944; Canadian Wartime Information Board, "Mr. Curtin Addresses Canadian Parliament", *The Sun News-Pictorial*, Melbourne, 5 June 1944.  Articles cited in *Scrapbooks.*

[162] John Curtin, "Speech to National Press Club, Washington" [hereafter "Press club speech"], *DDA*, no. 81, 5 June 1944, p. 90.

[163] (Anon.), "McCormick Answers Some Questions: Complains of Lag in Australia's War Effort", *The Argus*, Melbourne, 6 July 1944, p. 2.

the Allied forces based in the nation.[164]   As a result, Australia's lend-lease commitments would amount to one-sixth of its war expenditure in 1944.  Balancing his sharp rhetoric with appeals to democracy, "a high sense of national duty" and a global "good neighbour policy",[165] he sought to prepare US journalists to accept their nation's increasing fight in the Pacific as more Australian troops were transferred to wartime industries.  Afterwards the Associated Press and *The Christian Science Monitor* reported positively on Curtin's statement that Australia was supplying 95 per cent of US forces' food requirements in the South-West Pacific.[166]

Differing from his talk at the National Press Club luncheon, Curtin did not publicise a detailed account of his discussion with Roosevelt for one and a half hours on 5 June.[167]  His itinerary and appointment book indicated only that he left the Shoreham Hotel in Washington DC to see Roosevelt at 3.30pm and then took a train bound for New York at 8pm.[168]  On the same day, he also wrote a letter to FDR on the need to adjust Australian military levels to cope with food production requirements; he emphasised, "the Government and people of Australia are anxious that the strength of the fighting forces should not be permitted to fall below a certain minimum point".[169]  After his meeting, he simply advised the media: "Events will indicate what we talked about".[170]  Perhaps Curtin was referring to Roosevelt's "fireside chat" that evening, when he announced that "Rome fell to American and Allied troops",[171] and his next day's White House press conference, where he talked good-humouredly with 181 correspondents about the "D-Day" landing on 6 June.[172]  During the Normandy invasion, Curtin continued to generate favourable publicity as

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[164] Curtin, "Press club speech", p. 89.

[165] Curtin, "Press club speech", p. 90.

[166] (Anon.), "Lend-Lease Helps Yanks in Australia", *The Christian Science Monitor*, Boston, 6 June 1944, p. 7.

[167] (Anon.), Untitled, *DDA*, no. 81, 5 June 1944, p. 35.

[168] Frederick McLaughlin, "Prime Minister's visit to England via USA, Itinerary and engagements 1944" [hereafter "Travel itinerary"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00129/1, pp. 10, 23 (online page numbers have been cited).

[169] John Curtin to Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Foreign affairs department", vol. 7, 5 June 1944.

[170] John Curtin, "Prime Minister's Meetings With President Roosevelt", *DDA*, no. 81, 5 June 1944, p. 35.

[171] Roosevelt, "Fireside chat", in Woolley and Peters, *American presidency project*, 5 June 1944.

[172] Roosevelt, "Press conference", 6 June 1944.

he met New York Mayor, Fiorello La Guardia, resulting in *The New York Times* publishing a headline that "they think alike";[173] then he boarded a ship with Elsie in San Francisco to return to Australia on 11 June.[174]



Figure 28[175]

Uncharacteristically, he adopted other leaders' travel policies and censored the press from reporting on his return journey until his official entourage safely

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[173] (Anon.), "Curtin Visits La Guardia; Australian Premier and Mayor Find They Think Alike", *The New York Times,* New York, 8 June 1944, p. 10.

[174] Heather Campbell, "Diary", 11 June 1944.

[175] Figure 28 shows a *Time* magazine cover that was illustrated by Boris Artzybasheff and published on 24 April 1944.  JCPML, "Time magazine, vol. 43 no. 17, 24 April 1944", Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00953/1, 1944.

reached Australia.[176]  Journalists remarked on his unusual decision to travel without a bodyguard.[177]  While Curtin did not employ a bodyguard, his travel itinerary showed that he paid $US 105 in gratuities to "plain-clothes police", "motor-cycle police" and detectives, assigned to him in New York and Washington DC.[178]  Upon his arrival in Brisbane on 26 June, a newsreel team filmed his patriotic, targeted greeting to Australian reporters.  During his stand-up, he smiled and said:

> Although every man can be forgiven for loving his own country best, I believe it is an impartial assessment of the facts to say that I have not seen any country or any people better than my own.[179]

Returning to his regular Canberra press gallery interviews on 3 July, he seemed "initially querulous" but "warmed to the talk" and his two-hour discussion was one of his "best and most interesting" conferences, Cox noted.[180]  Curtin confirmed, "the tempo of the Pacific operations was satisfactory";[181] later he informed journalists, "the immediate future had been settled by his talks in Washington".[182]  Curtin even appeared to praise McCormick's *Chicago Daily Tribune*.  In his regular letter to Murdoch, Cox wrote of Curtin's appraisal that the *Tribune* was "well conducted and efficient", but "it went astray only when its proprietor himself wrote its leading articles".  Curtin apparently added that this problem occurred in other newspaper organisations, "when people on the management undertake themselves a task for which they pay competent journalists".[183]  Perhaps he was commenting on Murdoch's editorials, although he did not directly name any Australian press proprietor.  On the whole, Curtin generated favourable news coverage in *The New*

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[176] Shedden, "AWC Minutes", vol. 8, JCPML acc. no. 00928/9, 9 June 1944, p. 4.

[177] (Anon.), "John Curtin gets ready for London trip", *The Australian Women's Weekly*, Sydney, 1 April 1944, p. 9; Alan Reid, "Plain John Curtin Who Led Australia Through Darkest Days", *The Sun*, Sydney, in JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. JCPML00964/165, 5 July 1945.

[178] McLaughlin, "Travel itinerary", pp. 3-4.

[179] This newsreel scene was shown in: ScreenSound Australia, "A Great Australian Passes", in *John Joseph Curtin 1885 – 1945* (newsreel)*, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00238/1, 1944.

[180] Cox, "Typescript reports", 3 July 1944.

[181] Smith, cited in Lloyd and Hall, *Backroom briefings*, p. 210.

[182] Cox, "Typescript reports", 17 February 1945.

[183] Cox, "Typescript reports", 3 July 1944.

*York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *Time* magazine.[184]  His sharp words to the US

National Press Club appeared to increase international correspondents'

understanding of his foreign policy priorities.

## Curtin and Menzies: Dissonant styles

In contrast to Menzies' prime ministerial overseas press interactions, Curtin made

frequent and enthusiastic use of the mass media during his time in Britain, Canada

and the US.  A comparison was made of the media strategies adopted by Curtin and

Menzies when each prime minister travelled to these Allied areas.  Menzies spent 87

days in these countries from 20 February to 17 May 1941.  According to his detailed

diary notes, he directly associated with the media 15 times then, including his radio

broadcasts (see Appendix 10).[185]  In his 54 day trip in 1944, Curtin had 17 media

associations including newsreel appearances, interviews and broadcasts (see

Appendix 11).[186]  Although Curtin and Menzies made other public statements, they

were not included in this comparison.  Thus Curtin interacted with the media at least

once every three days while overseas.  In contrast Menzies talked with the media

slightly less than once every six days.  Therefore Curtin directly interacted with the

media twice as much as Menzies in Britain, Canada and the US.  Moreover, Menzies

seemed reluctant to talk with journalists.  After he arrived in England, he was

"forced" to speak to a "movie-camera man" and give interviews; it was "the kind of

thing I shy at very much", he wrote.[187]  In newsreels, Menzies addressed overseas

press conferences, but did not take any questions;[188] Curtin answered journalists'

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[184]  This study included the following issues: *The New York Times* on 5, 20, 22 and 24-27
April 1944, 5, 19, 22 and 31 May 1944, 1, 2 and 8 June 1944; *The Washington Post* on 26
December 1941, 6 and 25 April 1944, 12 and 15 May 1944, 18 July 1944; *Time* on 13
October 1941, 5 and 12 January 1942, 2 and 23 March 1942, 12 October 1942, 23 and 30
August 1943, 31 January 1944, 17 April 1944, 12 June 1944.
[185] A.W. Martin and Patsy Hardy (eds), *Dark and Hurrying Days: Menzies' 1941 Diary*
[hereafter *Dark and hurrying days*]*,* NLA, Canberra, 1993, pp. 60-132.
[186] Campbell, "Diary", April to June 1944; JCPML, "Index to John Curtin's speeches".  For
a more detailed account, see Appendix 11.
[187] Martin and Hardy, *Dark and hurrying days*, p. 60.
[188] British Movietone News (producer), *Mr. Menzies On Eve Of Sailing Reviews War
Situation*, England, 8 May 1941; Movietone News (producer), *Mr. Menzies In New York*,
New York, 19 May 1941.

queries.[189]  Menzies told reporters that he returned home "with just one sick feeling in my heart" because he was forced to "play politics".[190]  US diplomat, Averell W. Harriman, informed Roosevelt that Menzies' "nose was a bit out of joint in London as he wanted to be made a member of the [British] War Cabinet".[191]  Curtin, however, quickly denied media rumours that he wanted to remain in England, telling Canberra journalists on 4 July that although these untruths were "a fantastic piece of nonsense", it "could do much harm" to his reputation in Australia.[192]  The positive relationship that he forged with the journalists was reflected in their treatment of the information that he provided to them, irrespective of policy.  No evidence has been found to show that Curtin intended to stay in Britain.  In fact, a journalist noted that he was probably the first Australian prime minister to have packed so lightly for an overseas trip.[193]  In London, he had reportedly appeared "tired after almost non-stop conferences and negotiations" to achieve his "major aim" of securing British support for more resources in the Pacific after Hitler's fall.[194]  Across Australia, newspaper correspondents wrote that he was happy to return home.[195]  Curtin's international strategies differed remarkably from those developed by Menzies in terms of their approaches to journalists, the frequency of their interviews and their attitudes towards their prime ministerial roles in Canberra.

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[189] (Anon.), "Canada At War", *Time*, New York, cited in JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01222/15, 12 June 1944, p. 16; Department of External Affairs, "Curtin's visit", pp. 10-22; Moody, "Curtin parries tricky questions", p. 16; Moody, "Triumph for Curtin", p. 1.

[190] Robert Menzies, "Transcript of Press Conference Film" [hereafter "Film transcript"], Menzies Virtual Museum, East Melbourne, 1941, retrieved on 18 May 2009 at <http://www.menziesvirtualmuseum.org.au/1940s/1941.html#MenziesEvents>; Penny Robins (executive producer), *The Prime Ministers' National Treasures: Robert Menzies' Camera* (television broadcast), Film Australia, Old Parliament House and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Canberra, 11 September 2007, retrieved on 27 January 2011 at <http://www.filmaust.com.au/primeministers/default.asp>.

[191] Averell W. Harriman to Franklin D. Roosevelt, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, Hyde Park, Great Britain Diplomatic Files, box 37, 7 May 1941, p. 2.

[192] Smith, cited in Lloyd and Hall, *Backroom briefings*, p. 215.

[193] (Anon.), "John Curtin gets ready for London trip", *The Australian Women's Weekly*, Sydney, 1 April 1944, p. 9.

[194] (Anon.), "Major Aim Achieved", *SMH*, 30 May 1944, p. 3.

[195] E.g. (Anon.), "Mr Curtin Back In Australia", *The Mercury*, Hobart, 27 June 1944, p. 12; (Anon.), "Mr Curtin Home", *The Cairns Post*, Cairns, 27 June 1944, p. 2; (Anon.), "Prime Minister Back In Australia", *The Argus*, Melbourne, 27 June 1944, p. 3.

**"Mr. Curtin's announcement was cheered by members", July 1944**

In the Federal Parliament, Curtin explained his international mission objectives, including planning for the Pacific conflict to be "prosecuted with the same vigour as the war in Europe" and ensuring the nation "can most influentially express itself" in a post-war "world organization".  During his speech on 17 July, he introduced a new keyword about a national "purpose" to bolster enthusiasm for a prolonged war and more international collaboration.[196]  He spoke of "our purpose" to "influence" world decisions and fulfil the "ideals" of "fair play, fair dealing, tolerance and justice, and the right of each to live their lives equally freely".[197]  Along with his increased appeals to egalitarian ideals, he announced that British "large and powerful forces" would become available later in 1944 to contribute to "the ultimate defeat of Japan".[198]  At the same time, he said: "I offer no opinion on the speedy end of the struggle in Europe."[199]  As a result, he had arranged "to re-allocate the man-power resources of Australia".  While the nation intended to make "a fighting contribution", more Australians would be transferred from the military to work in "economic services" that would supply Allied troops.[200]  Since he did not deliver his speech directly to public crowds, it was more complex than his radio broadcasts.  The text of his address registered a Flesch Reading Score of 42.8, meaning it was suitable for readers with 13 years of education.  Yet his repetition of inclusive terms, such as "we", "us" and "the people", indicated his messages were intended for a wider audience.[201]  Also he carefully selected words calculated to inspire Australians, such as his tributes to their "war effort", which had "evoked the highest praise" from Allied leaders.[202]

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[196] Curtin, "Prime ministers' meeting", pp. 28-44.  He referred to a national "purpose" seven times.

[197] Curtin made 24 references to hope, the future, vision and unity.  Furthermore, keywords of freedom, liberty and independence were mentioned ten times.  Curtin, "Prime ministers' meeting", pp. 28-44.

[198] Emphasising a British orientation, he made 47 references to this region; in contrast, the US was mentioned only 17 times.  Also he spoke of the "war" 85 times and "enemy" nations 46 times.  Curtin, "Prime ministers' meeting", pp. 28-44.

[199] He increased his references to "peace" and "security" terms, mentioning them 49 times, contrasting with his 1941 addresses.  Curtin, "Prime ministers' meeting", pp. 28-44.

[200] He used "economy" keywords 12 times.  Curtin, "Prime ministers' meeting", pp. 28-44.

[201] In fact, Curtin spoke of "we", "us" and "the people" 138 times.  Curtin, "Prime Ministers' Meeting", pp. 28-44.

[202] Curtin used "nationhood" keywords 42 times.  Curtin, "Prime ministers' meeting", pp. 28-44.

As a result, his parliamentary speech received mainly positive press coverage, with several journalists promoting his cleverly constructed word-picture of British "large and powerful forces" moving into the Pacific to help defend Australia. The speech text was prominently displayed and substantially repeated in *The Age*,[203] *The Canberra Times*,[204] *The Sydney Morning Herald*[205] and *The West Australian*.[206] For example, Curtin's new keyword about "purpose" appeared six times in the related *Canberra Times* coverage, including the leader headline, "Australian Purposes and Method". Indicating the newspaper's endorsement, a *Canberra Times* journalist wrote, "Mr. Curtin's announcement was cheered by members" in the parliament. Furthermore as the tide of global battles continued to turn in favour of the Allied advance, reporters increasingly referred to his idealistic rhetoric of hope, freedom, the future, cooperation and "a new system of world security".[207] While *The West Australian* and *The Age* editorials focused on other subjects, the publishers' reprinting of a considerable part of his speech conveyed their approval.[208] Likewise, Curtin's message of "large and powerful British forces" attracted US media attention; *The Chicago Daily Tribune* and *The Washington Post* publicised his speech.[209]

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[203] (Anon.), "British Forces In The Pacific This Year: London Conference Survey by Prime Minister", *Age*, 18 July 1944, p. 3. Curtin's speech was quoted directly in 17 sentences and paraphrased in 35 sentences.

[204] (Anon.), "Australian Purposes And Method", *Canberra*, 18 July 1944, p. 2; (Anon.), "Great British Force Coming To The Pacific", *Canberra*, 18 July 1944, p. 2. Curtin was directly quoted in 20 sentences and indirectly in 27 sentences.

[205] The speech was covered in three articles from *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 18 July 1944. In total, Curtin's words were directly quoted in 190 sentences. The articles were: (Anon.), "Man-Power Review Promised: Parliament Hears Prime Minister's Report", p. 1; (Anon.), "Mr. Curtin's Review", p. 2; (Anon), "Review Of London and Washington Talks: Mr Curtin's Speech to Parliament: Report On Conference of Empire Leaders", p. 5.

[206] (Anon.), "Mr Curtin's Mission: Statement To House: British Forces: In Pacific This Year", *West*, 18 July 1944, p. 2. Curtin's speech was directly quoted in 27 sentences and indirectly in 20 sentences.

[207] Curtin referred nine times to a "world organization"; seven times to "world security"; also he spoke of a "world of collaboration", "world peace" and a "world council". See Curtin, "Prime ministers' meeting", pp. 28-44.

[208] Please refer to footnotes 203 and 206.

[209] (Anon.), "British Aid Assured in Pacific in '44", *The Washington Post*, Washington DC, 18 July 1944, p. 2; (Anon.), "British To Send Army To Pacific In 1944-Curtin", *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Chicago, 18 July 1944, p. 6.

*The Sydney Morning Herald* leader writer adopted a more neutral tone when writing that a "disappointing feature of the Prime Minister's otherwise excellent and exhaustive report" was the "vagueness of his references to the reallocation of Australian man-power".  The journalist continued that the parliament was "entitled to an outline of official plans".[210]  At his press conference a few days earlier, Curtin had asked reporters to tell newspaper editors not to be "too impatient" about the "manpower" question because the government was still ascertaining "a proper balance" between their army and food export commitments.[211]  Also *The Sydney Morning Herald* leading news story was a favourable summary of Curtin's speech and continued to page five.[212]  Overall the newspaper's coverage was positive, similar to the other three dailies, because it fulfilled this study's criteria that two-thirds of the statements needed to support Curtin.  His public assurances that Britain would strengthen the military fight against Japan appeared to be evidenced by some tangible results.  By November 1944, the British Pacific Fleet was formed[213] and also British forces had superior numbers, weaponry and air cover to the Japanese in Burma.  The British 14th Army helped to achieve a victory in the Battles of Mandalay and Meiktila in central Burma from February to March 1945.  As a result, the British 4th Corps, the 33rd Corps, elements of the 15th Corps and the Gurkhas entered the capital city of Rangoon and assisted in effectively liberating Burma on 6 May 1945.[214]

Yet in his private news briefings, Curtin appeared to play down Britain's commitment to fighting in the Pacific.  On 3 July, Curtin reportedly said: "Any idea that millions of men might be based in Australia was poppycock."[215]  While the

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[210] (Anon.), "Mr. Curtin's Review", *SMH*, 18 July 1944, p. 2.

[211] Lloyd and Hall, *Backroom briefings*, pp. 212-213.

[212] (Anon.), "Man-Power Review Promised: Parliament Hears Prime Minister's Report" and (Anon.), "Review Of London and Washington Talks: Mr Curtin's Speech to Parliament: Report On Conference of Empire Leaders", *SMH*, 18 July 1944, pp. 1, 5.

[213] In January 1945, the British Pacific Fleet included: four aircraft carriers, one battleship, three cruisers and ten destroyers. See: Gregory P. Gilbert, "The British Pacific Fleet", *Navy*, Canberra, 2011, retrieved on 13 January 2011 at <http://www.navy.gov.au/The_British_Pacific_Fleet>.

[214] Helen Cleary, Phil Edwards, Bruce Robinson and Victoria Cook, "WW2 People's War", *BBC*, London, 2003-2005, retrieved on 6 June 2010 at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/timeline/factfiles/nonflash/a6651218.shtml>.

[215] Smith, cited in Lloyd and Hall, *Backroom briefings*, p. 211.

"British flag will be shown in the Pacific", the Churchill administration planned "a huge demobilisation of forces" with victory in Europe.[216]  This view appeared to be consistent with Churchill's description of his Japan strategy in his volume, *Closing the Ring*.  Reflecting on his decisions, Churchill wrote he was "against sending" his country's forces "to play a minor role in MacArthur's [Pacific] operations", adding that making "a mere minor contribution to the Americans … was not likely to appeal to the British people".[217]  He was committed, however, to "build up a fleet in the Pacific" that would be active after Hitler's defeat.[218]  Curtin confided to the press gallery that the Allies' planned liberation of Normandy was "going slower than was expected".  By 10 July, Cox commented that Curtin seemed "in a despondent mood about Allied progress in Europe".  Moreover, he was scathing about "the ballyhoo" of exaggerated US reports while praising the more reserved British news coverage.  His discouragement deepened with the news of more Allied shipping losses from Nazi U-boat submarine attacks, along with official, confirmed reports of new German "rocket bombs" and suicide "human torpedoes".[219]  The disturbing news did not appear in Curtin's parliamentary speech or in the selected newspapers' resultant coverage.  The sense of gloom was privately shared by the Allies, who were fighting inshore and encountering difficulties in Normandy's dense hedgerow country, known as the *bocage*, during the stalemate in June and July.  The Axis defence weakened to such an extent that Hitler permitted a Nazi withdrawal from Normandy on 16 August, paving the way for the German surrender to the Allied French Resistance on 25 August.  As Curtin balanced his publicly stated idealism with confidential war assessments, he maintained the support of the major dailies for his foreign policies.[220]

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[216] Cox, "Typescript reports", 3 July 1944.

[217] Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War: Closing the Ring* [hereafter *Closing the ring*], Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1951, p. 574.

[218] Churchill, *Closing the ring*, p. 572.

[219] Cox, "Typescript reports", 10 July 1944.

[220] Richard V. Ericson, Patricia M. Baranek and Janet B. L. Chan, *Visualizing Deviance: A Study of News Organizations* [hereafter *Visualising deviance*], Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1987.

**Conclusion**

Through Curtin's media strategies, he initiated public talks on his policies to reduce Australian troops; transfer released servicemen to remedy "acute" labour shortages;[221] promote the nation's heroic sacrifices, minimise damaging assessments of the heavy casualties, and assert Australia's regional and global roles. Curtin was particularly candid to the Canberra press gallery, using the AWC as a communications tool to pass on important information to journalists and provide them with unbiased, logical reasons for his policies. Through a semiotic analysis of available newsreels, it was revealed that Curtin approved close-up, eye-level film images of himself and carefully rehearsed his rhetoric and gestures, as well as using different signs that linked him to esteemed Allied leaders, democratic institutions and working citizens. The signified meaning was that he was able to connect closely to diverse cinema audiences and communicate effortlessly with them. His film rhetoric conveyed that he delivered targeted messages to suit different audiences, but preferred to emphasise keywords of "free people" fighting for a "common cause" and "victory" against the "aggressor".[222] He received support from the media messages delivered by Churchill,[223] Mackenzie King,[224] Roosevelt[225] and Truman.[226] Yet film audiences were not told of private tensions between Australia and the US over war brides, renegotiated lend-lease commitments and the ANZAC Pact. This cinematic depiction of Allied unity accomplished the Foucault task of masking national power and governmental struggles.[227] Although he cultivated an austere media image, appealing to the wartime mood of civic responsibility, he appeared more cheerful, confident and relaxed in newsreels[228] and photographs of his 1944 overseas mission.[229]

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[221] John Curtin to Winston Churchill, "Foreign affairs department", vol. 6, 23 October 1943.
[222] E.g. ScreenSound Australia, *Prime minister welcomed in Canada*.
[223] British Movietone, "Empire Premiers".
[224] ScreenSound Australia, *Prime minister welcomed in Canada*.
[225] E.g. Roosevelt, "Press conference", 29 October 1943.
[226] Truman, "Statement".
[227] Bergman, "Can patriotism be carved in stone?", p. 96; Foucault, "Film and popular memory", pp. 25, 27.
[228] British Movietone, "Empire Premiers"; ScreenSound Australia, *Prime minister welcomed in Canada*.
[229] *The Sun News-Pictorial* and *The Sydney Morning Herald*, cited in *Scrapbooks*, 21 April 1944.

In 1944, Curtin increasingly expanded conventional views of the public sphere, using the mass news media to encourage more citizens to participate in political discussions, and overturning the "masculine, elite and exclusive world" of the traditional domain.[230]  As stated in Chapter 3, Elsie and John Curtin made public statements to encourage more women to enter prominent careers.[231]  Their socially progressive attitudes, along with the deployment of young male journalists into military service, might have influenced Australian media owners, who hired more female correspondents than ever before, although the number was still relatively small.[232]  During their visit to the US, John and Elsie Curtin developed media strategies that revealed their support for women in the public sphere.  The positive experiences of Australian "war brides" were publicised in newsreels and press reports;[233] at the same time, the "Battle of Brisbane" riot was censored to achieve Curtin's aim of increasing media images of a strong Allied partnership.  At her first US media conference, Elsie generated favourable news coverage for her activities to promote the roles of women in public affairs.[234]  Curtin held unprecedented news conferences in terms of their frequency and openness in San Francisco, Washington DC, England and Ottawa.  This research suggested that Curtin directly associated with the media twice as much as Menzies during their respective prime ministerial visits to Britain, Canada and the US.[235]  While Menzies was "forced" to talk to the media,[236] Curtin enthusiastically sought opportunities to promote his nation. Menzies informed journalists he was upset about leaving England "to play politics" in Australia.[237]  Curtin told reporters he objected to harmful fallacies that he wanted

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[230] John Hartley, *Popular Reality: Journalism, Modernity, Popular Culture,* Arnold, London and New York, 1996, p. 72.

[231] Black, *In his own words,* pp. 229-30; Elsie Curtin, "Press Statement by Mrs Curtin", JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00652/1/3, 26 April 1944.

[232] Australian Women's Archive Project, "The Women's Pages: Australian Women and Journalism since 1850", 2008, retrieved on 28 December 2008 at <http://www.womenaustraliainfo/exhibit/cal/intro.html>.

[233] Associated Press, "War Brides Arrive In U.S.", 21 April 1944, retrieved on 13 January 2010 at <http://www.uswarbrides.com/newsarticles/440420.html>; Movietone News, *Curtin And Blamey for America*; ScreenSound Australia, *Visit to England.*

[234] Elsie Curtin, "Press statement".

[235] Campbell, "Diary", April to June 1944; JCPML, "Index to John Curtin's speeches"; Martin and Hardy, *Dark and hurrying days,* pp. 60-132.  For a more detailed account, see Appendices 10-11.

[236] Martin and Hardy, *Dark and hurrying days*, p. 60.

[237] Menzies, "Film transcript".

to remain in London and instead, they welcomed his return to Australia.[238]  Thus Curtin set precedents for an Australian leader to engage in open-ended conversations with journalists at international media conferences, while Elsie Curtin initiated direct relationships between an Australian prime minister's wife and international correspondents.

A textual analysis of two of Curtin's 1944 speeches revealed his balancing of idealism and realism.  While he increased his appeals to "liberty", "freedom" and "civilisation", he shifted the tone of his rhetoric from focusing on the Pacific war to emphasising the Allies' "Beat Hitler first" strategy.  In his BBC broadcast on 8 May, he used keywords and imagery to emphasise British values of freedom, liberty and fairness and common bonds with Australians.  Through this radio talk, he tried to persuade his listeners to accept Australia as a bastion of venerable empire ideals that deserved to be defended from aggressive enemies.  His speech was still aimed at a secondary-school level and was favourably presented in diverse international media outlets across the political spectrum.[239]  In his parliamentary address on 17 July, he introduced the keyword of a "national purpose", indicating his commitment to build a strong Australia.  As a result of his negotiations with Churchill, he was able to announce to the parliament the next month that "large and powerful" British forces would be available to help defeat Japan.[240]  Although he later appeared to play down this UK commitment in his private press briefings, saying it would not mean "millions of men",[241] Churchill was planning a Pacific fleet and British forces had gained superiority over the Japanese in Burma by November 1944, leading to its liberation in May the next year.  Curtin's parliamentary speech was aimed at a higher level than his BBC broadcast.  Yet both addresses received mainly positive news coverage in *The Age*, *The Canberra Times*, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The West Australian*.  His announcement of Britain's role in the war against Japan was tempered with confidential, realistic assessments that he shared with Australian

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[238] E.g. (Anon.), "Mr Curtin Back In Australia", *The Mercury*, Hobart, 27 June 1944, p. 12; (Anon.), "Mr Curtin Home", *The Cairns Post*, Cairns, 27 June 1944, p. 2; (Anon.), "Prime Minister Back In Australia", *The Argus*, Melbourne, 27 June 1944, p. 3.
[239] Curtin, "London broadcast", pp. 53-56.
[240] Curtin, "Prime ministers' meeting", pp. 28-44.
[241] Smith, cited in Lloyd and Hall, *Backroom briefings*, p. 211.

journalists and he was able to maintain the major dailies' support for his foreign policies.  Although he had addressed the national food shortages by transferring more military personnel to agricultural production, he faced fresh political and international challenges in late 1944 and early 1945 as Australians sought to secure a role in international peace negotiations and post-war planning.  Curtin also experienced health problems that eventually led to his death in July 1945.  The next chapter examines how he managed to secure news reporters' consensus to portray him as the nation's representative from mid-1944 to 1945.

<center>**Chapter 9**</center>

<center>**Curtin's final year, July 1944 – July 1945**</center>

As Curtin increasingly struggled with personal health problems, he attempted to focus media attention on Australia's military role in the Pacific war leading to Japan's surrender. By publicising that Australians were fighting alongside other Allies in the final conflict, he aimed to secure an "effective voice"[1] for the nation in world peace talks, post-war planning and the United Nations. During the Allied advance towards Germany and Japan, he was frequently absent from the parliament due to illness from November 1944 until his death on 5 July 1945. Although research suggested that he was still able to release statements, announcements and three radio messages during the early half of 1945, he did not give another major broadcast on foreign policy, as he had in 1944.[2] To ascertain the level of press support for Curtin during the final year of his prime ministership, this chapter examines selected news coverage of two significant events in Australia in 1945: the press reports about his return to the parliament on 22 January after he was away on sick leave for about two and a half months, and the media's portrayal of his death.

**Managing news on a national referendum**

Curtin achieved his goal of focusing media attention on his foreign policy priorities, despite the failure of the Federal Government's referendum. When confronted by the

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[1] John Curtin, "Prime Minister's Statement, February, 1944", *Digest of Decisions and Announcements and Important Speeches by the Prime Minister (Right Hon. John Curtin)* [hereafter *DDA*], no. 75, 9 February 1944, p. 19.

[2] John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library [hereafter JCPML], "Index to John Curtin's speeches in the Digest of Decisions and Announcements and Important Speeches by the Prime Minister, 1941-1945" [hereafter "Index to John Curtin's speeches"], Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01148/1, 2007. According to this source, Curtin released three radio messages in 1945. The first two broadcasts focused on the "Third Victory Loan" and were delivered on 12 March and 22 April. The other radio talk was a recorded message on Empire Day on 24 May.

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losing political battle of the so-called "Fourteen Powers" Referendum, Curtin managed his press relations to avoid the appearance of a personal defeat.  Labor had initiated debates on the legislative proposals in 1942.  If passed, the referendum would have granted 14 powers, normally held by the states, to the Commonwealth Government for a temporary five-year period from the end of the war.[3]  Former ALP politician, Fred Daly, recalled separate proposals might have been successful; however, many Australians withdrew their support because all 14 provisions were grouped together in the ballot.[4]  Aware of the public mood, Curtin began to distance himself from the referendum campaign at his press conferences, telling reporters he would not allow it "to interfere" with his war initiatives.[5]  In *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 6 July 1944, he was quoted as saying: "The referendum is no longer my referendum."  He added: "It is the referendum of the Commonwealth Parliament and of the State Premiers and leaders of the Opposition."[6]  Although he delivered three national broadcasts to persuade voters,[7] he became ill and needed to cancel his media interviews for ten days in August 1944.[8]  Only Western Australia and South Australia recorded a majority of votes in favour of the government proposals on 19 August.[9]  Curtin did not elaborate on the results at his interview on 21 August, except

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[3] The Commonwealth Government was seeking powers over the following areas: rehabilitation of ex-service personnel; employment and unemployment; marketing of commodities; companies; trusts and monopolies; production and distribution; overseas investment; airlines; uniformity of rail gauges; national health; national works; social security; and indigenous Australians.  See Clem Lloyd and Richard Hall (eds), *Backroom Briefings: John Curtin's war* [hereafter *Backroom briefings*], NLA, Canberra, 1997, p. 219; Bobbie Oliver, *Unity is Strength: A History of the Australian Labor Party and the Trades and Labor Council in Western Australia, 1899-1999* [hereafter  *Unity is strength*]*,* API Network, Bentley, 2003, pp. 164-165.

[4] Fred Daly, interviewed by Mel Pratt [hereafter "Daly interview"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00494/1, 26 August-25 November 1976, transcript np.

[5] Harold Cox, Typescript reports, 1944-1964" [hereafter "Typescript reports"], National Library of Australia [hereafter NLA], Manuscript Collections, Canberra, NLA MS acc. no. 4554, 10 July 1944; Frederick Thomas Smith, cited in Lloyd and Hall, *Backroom briefings*, p. 219.

[6] (Anon.), "„No Longer My Referendum: Mr. Curtin‟s Main Points", *The Sydney Morning Herald* [hereafter *SMH*], Sydney, 6 July 1944, p. 4.

[7] Curtin delivered these national broadcasts on 25 July 1944, 9 August 1944 and 16 August 1944.  Cited in JCPML, "Index to John Curtin‟s speeches".

[8] (Anon.), "Prime Minister Ordered To Bed: Mr Curtin Cancels Referendum Talks", *The Canberra Times* [hereafter *Canberra*], Canberra, 14 August 1944, p. 2; Cox, "Typescript reports", 21 August 1944.

[9] Lloyd and Hall, *Backroom briefings*, p. 219, footnote 157; Oliver, *Unity is strength*, p. 165.

to say "the whole matter would go to the Cabinet".[10]  The widespread rejection of the domestic proposals did not affect Curtin's agenda for foreign policy.

Around this time, he gave a news tip to journalists on Australia's confidential uranium agreement, arranged while he was in London.  Harold Cox and F.T. Smith privately wrote about plans to develop SA uranium deposits and export this "vital material" to Britain for "scientific purposes associated with the war".[11]  According to Smith, Curtin asked reporters if they had leaked the uranium deal after the SA Premier, Thomas Playford, had complained that the prime minister made "derogatory remarks" about him in a media "background statement about uranium".  Cox said he had passed on Curtin's news tip to Murdoch, "but had been informed there was no leakage" from his news organisation.  Curtin replied that "he gave off-the-record information to political roundsmen for the guidance of offices".  He expected editors to maintain their verbal confidentiality deals to protect national security. Furthermore, he took "a serious view of the leakage", implying that someone in the media had talked about the uranium development to Playford, "and if there were similar incidents in the future he would have to stop giving off-the-record information".[12]  Although research suggested Curtin did not know of the top-secret US "Manhattan Project", the code name for research involving the use of uranium to develop the atomic bomb, it was unusual for him to threaten to cancel his briefings.[13] Journalists seemed to have heeded his warning and the exceptionally candid interviews continued.

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[10] Cox, "Typescript reports", 21 August 1944.
[11] Cox, "Typescript reports", 3 July 1944; Smith, cited in Lloyd and Hall, *Backroom briefings*, pp. 213-214.
[12] Smith, cited in Lloyd and Hall, *Backroom briefings*, p. 228.
[13] Although Curtin was absent on 10 May 1945 during Advisory War Council discussions on the war taking "another two years at the present tempo", such talks indicated he and other government members were unaware of the details of the US atomic bomb project.  See Frederick Geoffrey Shedden, "Advisory War Council Minutes, Records of Frederick Shedden" [hereafter "AWC minutes"], JCPML, Bentley, vol. 8, JCPML acc. no. 00928/9, 10 May 1945, p. 4.

**Reviving war morale**

While many Australian journalists welcomed Curtin‟s reassessment of foreign policy priorities, including troop reductions and transfers of military personnel to revitalise food production industries, they increasingly published reports that the nation‟s wartime sacrifices were being overlooked.  When Curtin visited two RAAF squadrons in London, some men asked him why they were accused of "dodging" battles against Japan.  "That is not the case," he replied, but continued: "If there are any such foul aspersions, I will take immediate steps to stop it."  Consequently newspaper headlines proclaimed Curtin‟s defence of the airmen.[14]  Also a *Sydney Morning Herald* photograph conveyed his strong support of Australian pilots about to leave England for a bombing mission over Vichy France.[15]  When he returned to his daily Canberra news conferences, he urged journalists to give a "complete picture" of Australian troops in Europe.  Moreover, he criticised North American journalists for their "misleading one-eyed and jaundiced picture of the war", according to Cox and Smith.  Yet he praised "objective" Australian and British correspondents, who understood "reasons of diplomacy" and reported on other Allied nations‟ vital contributions.[16]  In August 1944, *The Argus* published an article about a British official war pamphlet that "omits to mention" other commonwealth nations. The pamphlet was originally sponsored by the Australian and NZ Governments to "dispel a widespread American impression that US forces are the only ones doing anything in the Pacific", an *Argus* journalist wrote.  "The outcome is a purely British pamphlet".  As a result, Australian News and Information Bureau director, David Bailey, lodged a "protest" to the British Information Service about the pamphlet, titled *Britain v Japan*.[17]  Although Allied leaders claimed to value Australians‟ fighting abilities, Curtin began recognising that some British and US publicists

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[14] (Anon.), "Curtin Defends RAAF: Australian Fliers in Atlantic Zone Resent Tag of „Jap Dodgers‟", *The New York Times*, New York, 22 May 1944, p. 10; (Anon.), "Mr. Curtin Told Grievances: Airmen Resent Term „Jap-dodgers", *SMH*, cited in *Scrapbooks compiled by the Prime Minister's office* [hereafter *Scrapbooks*], JCPML, Bentley, no. 4, JCPML acc. no. 00297/4, 22 May 1944.

[15] (Anon.), "Mr. Curtin Farewells Bombers", *SMH*, cited in *Scrapbooks*, 20 June 1944.

[16] Cox, "Typescript reports", 3 July 1944; Smith, cited in Lloyd and Hall, *Backroom briefings*, p. 208.

[17] (Anon.), "Our Role In Pacific Overlooked", *The Argus*, Melbourne, 5 August 1944, p. 3.

seemed to diminish Australia‟s role in the Pacific war.[18]

Curtin presided over an AWC meeting that recommended a global publicity campaign to promote Australia‟s contribution towards helping to defeat Japanese forces in the Philippines.[19]  After he returned from his overseas trip, the Cabinet directed the release of another 30,000 army troops and 15,000 airmen to help produce food supplies for Britain and Allied forces in the Pacific.[20]  He also agreed to use the nation‟s military to fight the Japanese in islands that were previously Australian and British territory and mandates;[21] this enabled MacArthur to withdraw all US forces from these areas to mount his offensive campaign against the Philippines and fulfil the pledge that he had made two years earlier, "I shall return".[22] The Allies‟ Leyte Gulf invasion to recapture the Philippines began on 20 October 1944 and it was the largest single RAN operation ever undertaken.[23]  In a private interview, Curtin asserted: "It‟s all flapdoodle to say that Australia is not going to be in the final stages of the war."  Also, he added, Australian troops would be involved in "a lot of difficult cleaning up work" in "plenty of places south of the equator".[24] He publicly stated that Australian and US forces would "share a comradeship in

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[18] Winston Churchill to John Curtin, Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade [hereafter "Foreign affairs department"], vol. 7, 24 July 1944, retrieved on 10 January 2010 at <http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/vWeb?OpenView>; John Curtin, "Meeting of Prime Ministers – Australian Prime Minister‟s Report", *DDA*, no. 84, 17 July 1944, pp. 32-33; Sumner Welles to Franklin D. Roosevelt, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, Hyde Park, 11 February 1942, retrieved on 15 February 2010 at <http://docs.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/PSF/BOX4/A50B01.TXT>.  To this memorandum, Sumner attached a message from the New Zealand Chief of Air Staff to the Chief of the Air Staff in Australia, retrieved on 15 February 2010 at <http://docs.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/PSF/BOX4/A50D03.TXT>.
[19] Shedden, "AWC Minutes", vol. 8, JCPML acc. no. 00928/9, 28 September 1944, p. 3.
[20] John Curtin to Douglas MacArthur, "Foreign affairs department", vol. 8, 15 February 1945.
[21] John Curtin to Winston Churchill, "Foreign affairs department", vol. 8, 14 February 1945.
[22] Cinesound Review (producer), *MacArthur Speaks* (newsreel), JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01050/1, 1944.
[23] The invasion fleets included the following Australian ships: the heavy cruisers, *Australia* and *Shropshire* (a former British ship gifted to the Australian navy), the destroyers, *Arunta* and *Warramunga*, as well as the landing ships, *Kanimbla*, *Manoora* and *Westralia*.  See Robert Nichols, "The first kamikaze attack?" [hereafter "Kamikaze"], *Wartime*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, no. 28, 2004, retrieved on 7 June 2010 at <http://www.awm.gov.au/wartime/28/index.asp>.
[24] Cox, "Typescript reports", circa September 1944.

arms" during the Philippines invasion, "the greatest operation in the Pacific war so far".[25]   A US Army Signal Corps newsreel celebrated the "Allied boomerang" of MacArthur's US and Australian forces as the general returned to the Philippines.  A narrator referred to HMAS *Shropshire* as being among the "600 ships and 250,000 men" who were "hurtling" to Leyte and Palo in the Philippines.  This was "[t]he greatest Armanda ever seen in the Pacific war" because previously, "Aussies and Yanks have fought mainly over primitive and undeveloped islands", the narrator said.[26]   To raise awareness of Australia's role, ABC journalist H.B. Graves conducted a 1945 interview with 28-year-old Lieutenant W.N. Swan of the HMAS *Westralia*, which had participated in the Leyte operations.  When Graves asked about "air attacks", Swan talked of a suicide *kamikaze* pilot who unsuccessfully tried to "dive bomb" his ship.  *Australia* was also attacked and, according to Robert Nichols, historians have debated whether this was the first Allied ship to be hit by suicide aircraft.[27]   Swan told radio listeners the Leyte landing on 20 October was "our greatest day", with "hundreds" of Filipinos "streaming down" the hilly country and boarding canoes to meet and thank the Australian navy.[28]   Even while he criticised "misleading" US news coverage, Curtin cooperated with MacArthur's communications bureau to sponsor films that reinforced his message of "a comradeship in arms".

Other patriotic films and radio broadcasts helped to counteract some global media messages that Australian troops were in a subordinate role.  Late in 1944, Australian forces relieved US garrisons at Aitape in New Guinea, Bougainville in the

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[25] John Curtin, "Allied Offensive–United States Forces Leave Australia" [hereafter "Allied offensive"], *DDA*, no. 91, 23 October, 1944, p. 35.

[26] US Army Signal Corps (producer), "MacArthur Returns!", in *At The Front: 1939-1945: Australia's WWII Newsreels* (newsreel) [hereafter *At the front*], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00441/2, 1944.

[27] Nichols, "Kamikaze".

[28] Australian Broadcasting Commission, "Scripts of talks broadcast by the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) Brisbane - War Time Recordings 1939 to 1945 - Interview with Lt W N Swan by N B Graves on HMAS Westralia", [hereafter "Radio script"], National Archives of Australia [hereafter NAA], Canberra, BP257/1, 73/2, 14 March 1945, pp. 1-7.

Solomons and in New Britain.[29]  On 15 November, the War Cabinet approved the posting of 500 volunteers from the Australian Women's Army Service to New Guinea.[30]  The RAAF reached its peak strength on 29 November, when there were 183,822 airmen and airwomen.[31]  To produce one newsreel, the Australian Department of Information (DOI) teamed up with the US Army Signal Corps.  The fade-in depicted "an Australian job" as "the diggers" scoured the "bomb-blasted shore of stripped and tattered palms" in Madang, Western New Guinea.  Australians captured Madang, an important Japanese air base, on 24 April 1944.  A narrator explained these troops had advanced nearly 400 miles from Milne Bay.  To emphasise a significant Australian victory, the narrator said Japanese fighters had "gone bush", leaving behind two anti-aircraft guns and a "big stock of fuel" for "our" patrol torpedo boats.  The camera operator panned across wrecked buildings, abandoned stores and old, Japanese "picture postcards", but did not show any injured Australians.  Then the film cut to "the Yanks" in "Attape" on the east coast of Hollandia, where US warships fired on Japanese forces.  In this brief scene, the narrator simply said, "[t]he Yanks are ashore" and "flushing out Attape [Aitape] village with Tommy gun and tank" to "crush" enemy forces, without commenting on Allied casualties there.[32]  Moreover, Cinesound Review filmed the Australian Women's Army Service in New Guinea in 1945;[33] while moviegoers also learned of the RAAF "Black Cats", Catalina flying boats painted black because they were mostly used at nights.[34]  Further, reporters were advised on 16 January 1945 that the government was providing "a suite of rooms in Sydney" to 25 army officers and staff to help prepare scripts for the ABC's "Army Hour" broadcasts, which provided light national entertainment to Australian troops.[35]  Although fewer Australian servicemen

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[29] Roland Wilson, *Official Year Book Of The Commonwealth Of Australia, 1944 and 1945* [hereafter *Year book 1944-45*], Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, Canberra, no. 36, 1947, p. 1019, retrieved on 16 January 2010 at <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/1301.01944-45?OpenDocument>.
[30] Wilson, *Year book 1944-45*, p. 1020.
[31] Wilson, *Year book 1944-45*, p. 1030.
[32] Australian Government Department of Information and U.S. Army Signal Corps, "Allies Thrash Japs At Attape", in *At the front*, circa 1944.  The film referred to "Attape", but it was also spelt as "Aitape".
[33] Cinesound Review (producer) "AWAS Enjoy New Guinea Life", in *At the front*, 1945.
[34] Cinesound Review (producer) "Black Cats of RAAF", in *At the front*, 1945.
[35] Lloyd and Hall, *Backroom briefings*, p. 235.

were in "an active operational role",[36] the national census recorded 727,152 army troops and 36,257 naval personnel at the end of the war; also there were 489 RAAF aircraft, compared with only 22 units in September 1939.[37]  Curtin tried to prevent the possibility of Americans saying "they won the Pacific war by themselves"[38] through magnifying the role of Australia's remaining combatants in his off-the-record interviews, media statements and government newsreels.

Although Australia's wartime media colluded with Curtin's political rhetoric to emphasise the significance of their nation's role in the Japanese retreat, some historians provided a more nuanced assessment of the "tenuous relevance" of the military tactics.  According to military historian, Jeffrey Grey, six Australian divisions[39] were "actively engaged with the enemy" in the last months of the Pacific war and this was "a greater proportion than at any other time in the war".[40]  As the Curtin administration planned to participate in the peace negotiations, they were able to prove that the nation had made a sustained fighting contribution.  Also, the government wanted to show to New Guinea's indigenous people that the "Australian imperium" had been restored in its territories.  Furthermore, parliamentary members were influenced by "compassionate arguments for freeing Australian prisoners of the Japanese as quickly as possible".  Yet as Grey noted, Australian soldiers were involved in final campaigns that "made no difference to the outcome of the war" from a military perspective.  For example, nearly 1,000 Australians were killed in the fighting on Bougainville, New Guinea, and Aitape, but these two operations yielded "negligible strategic advancement".  While the RAAF played a "significant role", the Australian forces were "an adjunct" of US airpower.  Even though the RAN was "vital", the navy's performance was "disappointing"[41] because it lost many ships in

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[36] Shedden, "AWC Minutes", vol. 7, JCPML acc. no. 00928/8, 20 January 1944, p. 3.
[37] Wilson, *Year book 1944-45*, pp. 1020, 1026, 1030.
[38] John Curtin to Winston Churchill, "Foreign affairs department", vol. 7, 12 August 1944.
[39] These divisions were: 3rd Division; 5th Division; 6th Division; 7th Division; 9th Division; 11th Division.  See Jeffrey Grey, *A Military History of Australia* [hereafter *Military history*], Cambridge University Press, Port Melbourne, third edition, 2008, p. 190; Wilson, *Year book 1944-45*, pp. 1019-1020.
[40] Grey, *Military history*, p. 190.
[41] Grey, *Military history*, p. 192.

action[42] and did not sink any German or Japanese surface warships.  Overall
Australia"s military strategy was shaped by "the very real considerations of national
interest" in needing to claim a place in the peace talks, to be recognised as a loyal
ally and to back MacArthur"s forces.[43]  Thus Curtin used the media to support these
objectives and to boost citizens" morale during the protracted Pacific battles.

## Curtin's return to parliament, January 1945

While Australia"s mass media professionals responded positively to Curtin"s
directive to publicise national military achievements, and they promoted detailed
accounts of victories, they were given little information about his health problems in
late 1944.  The government released a concise public statement about his admission
to an unnamed hospital on 6 November 1944, foreshadowing his prolonged absence
from war negotiations.  Similarly to the official US statements about Roosevelt"s
health,[44] journalists were told only that Curtin needed "complete rest" and would not
"resume his official duties for some weeks".[45]  War councillors were given little
information too.  On 30 November, the Acting Prime Minister, Francis M. Forde,
informed the AWC that Curtin "was making satisfactory progress" and was expected
to return in mid-January 1945.[46]  He was portrayed in the press as a longstanding
leader.  Murdoch and Packer published the news that Curtin was setting records "for
continuous service as a Labor Prime Minister" and for "the longest term as leader of

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[42] The RAN ships lost in action include: the corvette *Armidale*; the heavy cruiser *Canberra*;
the hospital ship *Centaur*; the naval depot ship *Kuttabul*; the destroyer *Nestor*; the sloops
*Paramatta* and *Yarra*; the light cruisers *Perth* and *Sydney*; the destroyers *Vampire*, *Voyager*
and *Waterhen*.  See Wilson, *Year book 1944-45*, pp. 1023-25.

[43] Grey, *Military history*, pp. 190-196; Peter Stanley, *Tarakan: An Australian Tragedy*, Allen
& Unwin, St Leonards, 1997.

[44] Eleanor Roosevelt to Elsie Curtin, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00330/1, 17 April
1944, p. 24; Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Excerpts from the Press Conference" [hereafter "Press
conference"]*,* in John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters, *The American Presidency Project,*
Santa Barbara, 6 May 1944, retrieved on 16 January 2011 at
<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/news_conferences.php?year=1944&Submit=DISPLAY>.

[45] McLaughlin to Defence Secretariat, NAA, Canberra, A461, R4/1/12, 6 November 1944, p.
65.

[46] Shedden, "AWC Minutes", vol. 8, JCPML acc. no. 00928/9, 30 November 1944, p. 1.

the Labor Party" on 2 December 1944.[47]  During Curtin's absence, Fadden
reportedly complained on 10 January 1945 about the "inadequacy" of MacArthur's
US-oriented communiqués.[48]  Forde also publicised the "representations" made by
the Australian Newspapers Proprietors' Association regarding these communiqués.[49]
While prominent conservatives criticised MacArthur during Curtin's absence, the
prime minister strongly defended the general when he returned to his work on 22
January.


Curtin generated favourable news headlines when he resumed his media
conferences.  Within a day, Arthur Shakespeare's editorial tone in *The Canberra
Times* shifted from cautious optimism to enthusiasm for his policies.  On the morning
of his return to the prime ministership, Shakespeare published a leader on how this
might relieve "[t]he national anxiety that Mr. Curtin's illness caused in the minds of
many Australians".  Also the editorial writer noted, "it is desirable that Mr. Curtin
should on this occasion give his party a lead" because "Cabinet strength has been at
its lowest point" due to his illness and some other members being away overseas.[50]
The next day, Curtin's name appeared in four positive headlines in the newspaper's
page two.[51]  Readers were informed that at his interview, he answered journalists'
questions about government policy "formulated while he was away" and
demonstrated "he had kept closely in touch with all developments".[52]  He
immediately issued a media statement to declare his "deep admiration for General
MacArthur for the extraordinary success that has attended the carrying out of his

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[47] (Anon.), "Curtin In Sight Of Record For Labor P.M.", *The Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 14
November 1944; (Anon.), "Mr Curtin's Record Term Of Office", *The Herald*, Melbourne, 2
December 1944, cited in *Scrapbooks*.
[48] F.M. Forde, "Allied Offensive–War Communiques", *DDA*, no. 93, 10 January 1945, p. 24.
[49] F.M. Forde, "Allied Offensive–War Communiques", *DDA*, no. 93, 23 November 1944, p.
24.
[50] (Anon.), "Mr. Curtin's Silence", *Canberra*, 22 January 1945, p. 2.
[51] The four articles were: "A.I.F. Activities Endorsed: Mr. Curtin Says Hazards Reduced";
"Air Control To Follow On Canadian Model: Mr. Curtin Makes Clear Approval Of Policy";
"Mr. Curtin Finds Cleared Desk"; "Mr. Curtin Sees Preference As Labour [sic] Policy".
Cited in *Canberra*, 23 January 1945, p. 2.
[52] (Anon.), "Mr. Curtin Finds Cleared Desk", *Canberra*, 23 January 1945, p. 2.

plans".[53]  This press release was published in newspapers across Australia.[54]  At his

briefing, he reportedly defended MacArthur's war communiqués for their "reticence"

on top-secret offensives against Pacific enemies.  Nevertheless he announced a new

communication method for the Australian army public relations unit to issue

"supplementary information" about the nation's troops, in consultation with

MacArthur.[55]

Also *The Canberra Times* featured Curtin's decisions to give "some form of

preference" to "discharged servicemen"[56] and to support government control of

interstate airlines, which he denied was "socialisation".[57]  Likewise, *The Age*[58] and

*The West Australian* coverage[59] were resoundingly favourable.  According to Oswald

Syme at *The Age*, Curtin's recovery was "welcomed with sincere satisfaction by

Australian people of all shades of political thought".  Furthermore, "the Australian

people" missed his radio talks.  *The Age* editorial writer called on Curtin:

> … to resume periodical talks to the nation so that the people may hear his
> voice, weigh his words and generally maintain that personal contact with the
> head of the Government which is eminently desirable.[60]

Similarly *The West Australian* editor, H.J. Lambert, praised his decision to give

"fuller and more frequent indications of what the Australians are doing" in the

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[53] John Curtin, "War Communiqués", *DDA*, no. 94, 22 January 1945, p. 10.

[54] E.g. (Anon.), "Activities Of A.I.F.", *SMH*, 23 January 1945, p. 4; (Anon.), "A.I.F. Activities Endorsed: Mr. Curtin Says Hazards Reduced", *Canberra*, 23 January 1945, p. 2; (Anon.), "A.M.F. Publicity", *The West Australian*, Perth, [hereafter *West*], 23 January 1945, p. 3; (Anon.), "Mr Curtin Praises MacArthur's Skill", *Army News*, Darwin, 23 January 1945, p. 1; (Anon.), "Mr. Curtin Resumes Duty", *The Advertiser*, Adelaide, 23 January 1945, p. 5; (Anon.), "S.W. Pacific News System To Stay", *The Courier-Mail*, Brisbane, 23 January 1945, p. 3.

[55] (Anon.), "A.I.F. Activities Endorsed: Mr. Curtin Says Hazards Reduced", *Canberra*, 23 January 1945, p. 2.

[56] (Anon.), "Mr. Curtin Sees Preference As Labour [sic] Policy", *Canberra*, 23 January 1945, p. 2.

[57] (Anon.), "Air Control To Follow On Canadian Model: Mr. Curtin Makes Clear Approval Of Policy", *Canberra*, 23 January 1945, p. 2.

[58] (Anon.), "The Steersman Returns To The Helm", *The Age* [hereafter *Age*], Melbourne, cited in *Scrapbooks*, 22 January 1945.  Also see (Anon.), "News Of The Day: P.M. On Duty", *Age*, 23 January 1945, p. 2.

[59] (Anon.), "A.M.F. Publicity" and "Army Plan", *West*, 23 January 1945, p. 3.

[60] (Anon.), "The Steersman Returns To The Helm", *Age*, cited in *Scrapbooks*, 22 January 1945.

Pacific war.[61]   While Cox observed Curtin seemed "generally washed out" at the interview on 22 January, this private misgiving did not appear in the Canberra, Melbourne and Perth newspapers.[62]   In like manner to Roosevelt‟s media image, Curtin was portrayed as a charismatic speaker able to connect to national audiences, who needed to hear his reassuring, inspiring and inclusive messages.[63]   The press in both countries willingly self-censored news about the health of a popular leader.[64]

In Sydney, Fairfax adopted a more positive attitude as a result of Curtin‟s first media conference after his absence.   On 22 January, a *Sydney Morning Herald* leader writer acknowledged the government‟s "political trouble", including people‟s growing war fatigue, but stated Curtin‟s "return to duty" would be "warmly welcomed throughout Australia" because he was "the country‟s trusted war leader". Since this editorial writer supported Curtin, but commented on other ministers‟ policy struggles, the article‟s overall tone was neutral.[65]   The next day, the newspaper‟s political correspondent, Ross Gollan, noted voters "trusted" Curtin‟s deeds and sayings, including his promise to "push domestic political considerations back into days of peace".   On the whole, Gollan‟s article was positive about Curtin‟s "war-time Government", but called on him to keep "avoiding issues which divide a nation".[66]   Also *The Herald* cartoonist Samuel Wells depicted Curtin‟s choice between "a united war effort" and "nationalisation" that would result in "political disunity".   Although the signalman figure in *The Herald* appeared indecisive (see

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[61] (Anon.), "Army Plan", *West*, 22 January 1945, p. 3.
[62] Cox, "Typescript reports", 22 January 1945.  Also see *Age* and *Canberra*, 23 January 1945; *West*, 22 January 1945.
[63] Granada Media (producer) *Roosevelt: Men Of Our Time* (documentary), JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00813/1, 1990.
[64] Cox, "Typescript reports", 22 January 1945; Harold Cox, interviewed by Mel Pratt [hereafter "Cox interview"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01060/1, 6 April 1973, transcript np; Hugh Gallagher, "The Politics of Polio" [hereafter "Politics"], *Social Education,* vol. 60, no. 5, 1996, pp. 264-266.
[65] (Anon.), "The Prime Minister‟s Return", *SMH*, cited in *Scrapbooks*, 22 January 1945.
[66] According to the formula used in this study, an article is deemed positive if two-thirds of the statements support Curtin.  Using this formula, slightly more than 50 per cent of the statements in Gollan‟s article are positive about Curtin.  Therefore the overall tone of the article was neutral, leaning towards being positive. See Ross Gollan, "Mr. Curtin-A New Phase Or A Fixed Policy?", *SMH*, 23 January 1945, p. 2.

Figure 29), Murdoch did not brand Curtin as a socialist.[67]  As they conveyed their opposition to some Labor policies, Murdoch and Fairfax still affirmed Curtin was the legitimate, national leader.
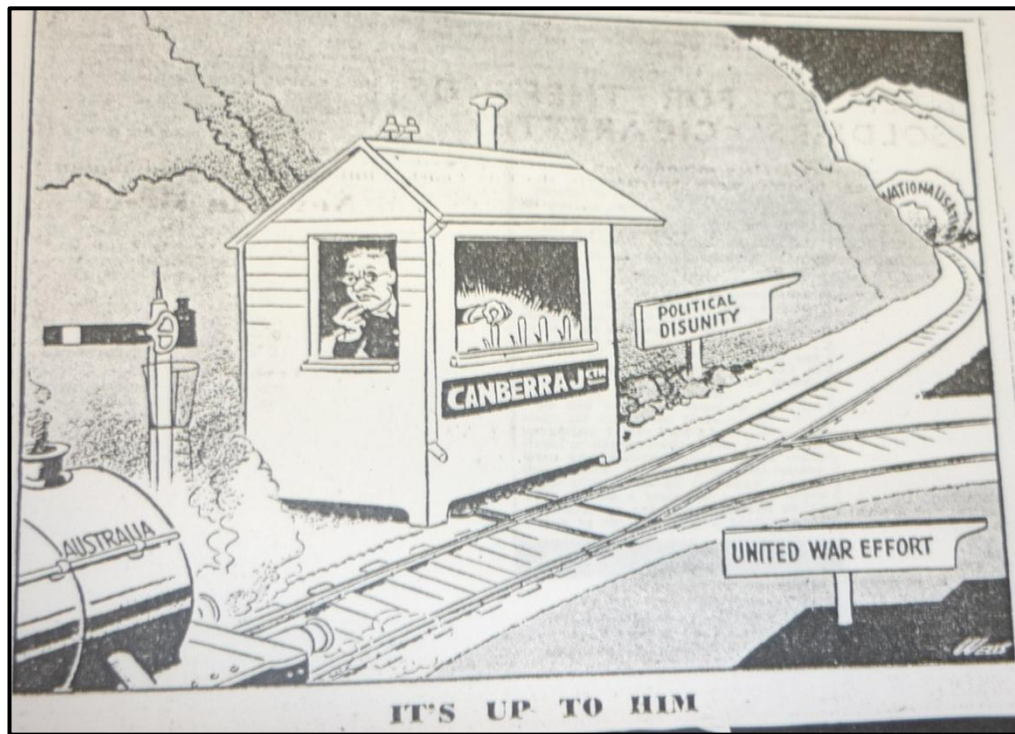


Figure 29

Through his relationships with journalists, he increased global interest in Australian combatants.  As he expanded the number of media statements about Australian fighting forces, he also attracted British support when he greeted the newly appointed Governor-General, the Duke of Gloucester, who was the brother of King George VI.  Departing from his party's policy of preferring an Australian governor-general, Curtin announced the choice of Gloucester on 15 November 1943 and won "surprised approval" in the press.[68]  Through long-shot newspaper photographs, a jovial atmosphere was conveyed at Curtin's reception for the Duke

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[67] Figure 29 appeared in Samuel Wells, "It's Up To Him", *The Herald*, Melbourne, cited in *Scrapbooks*, 23 January 1945.
[68] Chris Cunneen, "Gloucester, first Duke of (1900-1974)", *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, vol. 14, 1996, pp. 281-282, retrieved on 15 January 2010 at <http://adbonline.anu.edu.au/biogs/A140317b.htm>.

and Duchess at the Parliament House on 30 January 1945.[69]  British Movietone
showed John and Elsie Curtin seated directly behind the Gloucester family at the
swearing-in ceremony.  While the film narrator did not refer to Labor concerns over
the appointment, he explained to British moviegoers that "[t]here is usually more
pomp and pageantry" on such occasions, but Australia‟s war necessitated fewer
festivities.[70]  Recognising Australia needed London‟s continued support, Curtin told
reporters to discount "nonsense" about British forces being only "minor" in the
Pacific zone.  Cox relayed Curtin‟s message to Murdoch:

> He said „you can [tell] all your editors not to take any notice of these
> statements that there is dissatisfaction with the role assigned to the British
> Fleet in the Pacific‟.[71]

After the successful landings at Normandy and the advance towards Germany,
Churchill had formed the British Pacific Fleet on 22 November 1944; but he also
planned for "a huge demobilisation of forces" once Germany surrendered, as Curtin
had privately mentioned to reporters (see Chapter 8).[72]  Headed for Australia, aircraft
from the British fleet successfully attacked two oil refineries at Palembang in eastern
Sumatra and inflicted heavy losses on Japanese fighter planes.  The British fleet
arrived at its main Sydney base in February 1945.  Yet the US navy was "somewhat
reluctant" to include the British fleet "in the forefront" of operations against Japan
because it was viewed as "largely untried".  Due to political pressure from London,
the US navy allocated the British fleet to the invasion of Okinawa and the subsequent
advance directly upon Japan.[73]  Curtin supported Churchill‟s insistence to have
British forces "flying the Union Jack" in Pacific operations.  Both leaders attempted
to limit opportunities for Americans to claim they won the Japanese war "relatively
unaided" because Australia and Britain were keen to build post-war military alliances

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[69] For example, these photographs appeared in *The Argus*, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and
*The Sun* on 31 January 1945, cited in *Scrapbooks*.

[70] British Movietone (producer), "Australia‟s New Governor-General", in *Newsreels of
Curtin, 1942-1945* (newsreel) [hereafter "New governor-general"], JCPML, Bentley,
JCPML acc. no. 00734/1, 1945.

[71] Cox, "Typescript reports", 10 March 1945.

[72] Cox, "Typescript report", 3 July 1944.

[73] Gregory P. Gilbert, "The British Pacific Fleet" [hereafter "British Pacific fleet"], *Navy*,
Canberra, 2011, retrieved on 13 January 2011 at
<http://www.navy.gov.au/The_British_Pacific_Fleet>; Nicholas E. Sarantakes, "The Short
but Brilliant Life of the British Pacific Fleet" [hereafter "Short but brilliant life"], *Joint
Force Quarterly*, no. 40, first quarter 2006, pp. 85-91.

with the US.[74]  By May 1945, Curtin‟s administration was releasing more

"operational reports" to highlight Australian troops‟ achievements such as their

pioneering of the technique of jungle fighting in New Guinea.[75]  His strategy seemed

successful as he struck a balance between generating patriotic messages and

developing media messages linking him to Britain‟s royal family and Pacific fleet.


**Mediating prisoner of war images**

As Australian troops found more prisoners of war (POWs), the government gradually

released news of Japanese war crimes.  On 23 June 1943, the Curtin administration

commissioned the Chief Justice of Queensland, Sir William Webb, to prepare a

report on whether the Japanese military had committed atrocities or breaches of

warfare.[76]  Webb presented the report summary to the government on 15 March

1944.  Curtin told journalists that he had suppressed news of specific atrocities

because it would antagonise Japanese captors and result in "the worsening of the

victims‟ conditions".[77]  Likewise, the British and US administrations agreed that

news "leakages" might prejudice future legal proceedings against war criminals.[78]

On 19 November 1944, the Australian and British Governments announced Webb‟s

preliminary findings, including evidence of some Japanese soldiers and officers

exhibiting "chivalry and decent conduct".[79]  Around the same time, the AWC began

allowing journalists to interview survivors, whose names were to be kept confidential

and the stories were to be vetted by censors.[80]  In 1945 Cinesound Review released a

graphic newsreel on Japanese war crimes that was a distinct departure from the

previous "blanket censorship" of these atrocities.  The film focused on Private

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[74] John Curtin to Winston Churchill, "Foreign affairs department", vol. 7, 12 August 1944.
[75] *DDA*, no. 99, 5 April 1945, p. 13; Department of External Affairs, "Binder of cables outward from Australian Delegation, San Francisco (and London)" [hereafter "Correspondence to the Australian delegation"], NAA, Canberra, series no. A4764,7, 1 May 1945, p. 287.
[76] Australian War Memorial, "Guide to the papers of Sir William Webb", Canberra, collection no. 3DRL/2481, 2004, retrieved on 29 January 2010 at <http://www.awm.gov.au/findingaids/private/webb.xml>; Department of External Affairs to Legation in Washington, "Foreign Affairs Department", vol. 8, 10 September 1945.
[77] Smith, cited in Lloyd and Hall, *Backroom briefings*, p. 217.
[78] Shedden, "AWC Minutes", vol. 8, JCPML acc. no. 00928/9, 19 October 1944, pp. 4, 8.
[79] H.V. Evatt, "Atrocities In Pacific Area", *DDA*, no. 93, 30 November 1944, p. 12.
[80] Shedden, "AWC Minutes", vol. 8, JCPML acc. no. 00928/9, 16 November 1944, p. 4.

William Cook, who had survived a Japanese-led massacre in New Britain's "Toll [Tol] plantation" in which some 145 Australian soldiers had been killed.  Cook had served with the 2/22nd Battalion AIF in the town of Rabaul, New Britain.  Defeated by the Japanese navy in 1942, Cook's team had sought sanctuary with missionaries, who turned them over to the enemies.  Film audiences were told he was bayoneted 11 times before escaping the area; it was captured by the Australian 5th Division on 23 March 1945.[81]  In a stand-up, Cook declared "every war criminal must be brought to trial".  The newsreel narrator said his account was part of a war crimes report, presumably from Webb's investigation, which "shocked and horrified the world".[82] Of the more than 993,000 Australians in military service, some 14,519 were imprisoned by the Japanese and a third of those captured died in captivity.  In contrast during the European conflict, 8,540 Australian service personnel became prisoners in the war against Germany, with the death rate being about five per cent among these POWs.[83]  At the end of the war, newsreels and photographs appeared that showed emaciated Australian soldiers, who had been captured and forced into slave labour by the Japanese; due to these visual images, the POWs became the nation's "iconic figures" of the era.  In the Pacific, journalists reported on the release of women from Japanese camps; newspaper interviews extensively repeated Australian nurses' stories that they were not used as "prostitutes" during their internment.[84]  Subsequently, the media messages were designed to raise public awareness of the POWs' mistreatment and assist the government's crusade for justice at the UN War Crimes Commission.

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[81] The 5th Division was allotted New Britain.  See Australian War Memorial, "This Month in Australian Military History: March" [hereafter "This month in history"], Canberra, 2009, retrieved on <http://www.awm.gov.au/atwar/thismonth/mar.asp>; Grey, *Military history*, p. 190.

[82] Please note the "Toll Plantation" was also spelt as "Tol plantation".  See Australian Government Department of Veterans' Affairs, "Australians at War", Canberra, 2001, retrieved on 15 February 2010 at <http://www.australiansatwar.gov.au/stories/stories_war=W1_id=160.html>; Australian War Memorial, "This month in history"; Cinesound Review (producer), "I Was Bayoneted By The Japs", in *At the front*, 1945.

[83] Grey, *Military history*, pp. 194-195.

[84] Christina Twomey, "Captive Women and Audiences: Internment in the Asia-Pacific in World War II", *Meanjin*, vol. 58, no. 1, 1999, pp. 45-57.

**"Australia's very independent thinking" at the United Nations, April-May 1945**

Given Curtin's objective to ensure Australian participation in peace talks, he persuaded journalists to publicise his government's viewpoints at a global conference on the UN Charter.  Forty-six nations sent delegates to the San Francisco meeting, which convened on 25 April.  According to Harold Cox, it was the first major international conference at which Australia was represented in its own right.[85]  In February 1945, Curtin reportedly informed journalists that "a reasonably good press delegate" should attend the conference to help promote "a proper pageant of Australia" and "educate the other delegates".  Furthermore, the San Francisco venue was significant because "[i]t would focus attention on the Pacific war".[86]  Curtin prepared a strong government team to advance Australia's proposals including the removal of the veto allotted to the small number of powerful nations comprising the Security Council.[87]  During a radio broadcast, he urged Australians to support his government's "world-wide advertisement at San Francisco".[88]  Although Curtin did not attend the conference, his delegation included at least four Australian news representatives and five MPs, as well as Labor publicity officer, Charles Buttrose (who had been a *Sydney Morning Herald* correspondent).[89]  Curtin's interviews, media statements and the government's invitation to selected delegates indicated his direct attempts to influence journalists to portray his UN mission positively.

During this conference on 26 May, the BBC's Alistair Cooke told listeners "a theatre was filled" as delegates listened to Evatt's speech on the "Big Power Veto",

[85] Cox, "Cox interview"; NAA, "Fact sheet 88 – Australia and the United Nations", Canberra, November 2007, retrieved on 10 January 2010 at <http://www.naa.gov.au/about-us/publications/fact-sheets/fs88.aspx>.

[86] Cox, "Typescript reports", 16-17 February 1945.

[87] G. C. Bolton, "Evatt, Herbert Vere (Bert) (1894 – 1965)" [hereafter "Evatt"], *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, vol. 14, 1996, pp. 108-114, retrieved on 16 February 2010 at <http://adbonline.anu.edu.au/biogs/A140124b.htm>; Commonwealth Government to Cranborne, 11 January 1945; Herbert Vere Evatt to Eggleston, Officer, Maloney and Bruce, 17 January 1945; Evatt to McIntosh, 6 January 1945.  The latter three sources were cited in "Foreign Affairs Department", vol. 8.

[88] John Curtin, "Prime Minister's Opening Broadcast", *DDA*, no. 97, 12 March 1945, p. 71.

[89] Charles Buttrose, "Allied Forces Occupy Gona Area", *SMH*, 11 December 1942, p. 1; Cox, "Cox interview"; Department of External Affairs, "Correspondence from the Australian delegation", p. 167; Department of External Affairs, "Binder of cables inward from Australian Delegation, San Francisco (and London)" [hereafter "Correspondence from the Australian delegation"], NAA, Canberra, A4764,6, 16 June 1945, pp. 126-127.

which exemplified "Australia‟s very independent thinking".  Cooke said Evatt
"minces no words and yet wins the confidence of the press" because "it is no secret
by this time that Australia has known its mind and spoken without ambiguity".[90]
Several days later, a *New York Times* correspondent affirmed "the validity of the
position" taken by Evatt and New Zealand‟s Peter Fraser on the veto.[91]  Buttrose
wrote to Australia‟s DOI director-general, Edmund Garnet Bonney, about the
"enormous press and radio attention" given to the nation‟s delegation team and this
included favourable coverage in every US newspaper.  Buttrose added that
Australian journalists contacted him three times a day while many international
correspondents visited his office daily.[92]  Later the former US delegate, Theodore
Achilles, recalled "a good many" had agreed with Evatt.[93]  Joseph E. Johnson, who
had also been a US delegate, remembered Evatt‟s frequent interviews were unusual
because Roosevelt‟s team did not give media briefings at first.  Evatt‟s openness with
journalists influenced the Roosevelt administration to initiate press background
briefings on the UN negotiations.[94]  Although the Curtin Government did not manage
to block the veto, they achieved other aims such as stronger roles for smaller
nations.[95]  Moreover, they set a number of important precedents in fostering direct,
positive media relationships that contributed to the US Government‟s initiation of
press briefings on the UN Charter.


While the Australian Government representatives attracted favourable news
coverage, only one journalist, Harold Cox, criticised them at the UN conference,
according to Buttrose.  The Labor publicist accused Cox of biased reporting in a

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[90] Department of External Affairs, "Correspondence from the Australian delegation", p. 20.
[91] Department of External Affairs, "Correspondence from the Australian delegation", p. 21.
[92] Department of External Affairs, "Correspondence from the Australian delegation", pp.
126-127.
[93] Theodore Achilles, "Oral History Interview with Theodore Achilles", interviewed by
Richard D. McKinzie, Harry S. Truman Library & Museum, Independence, 13 November
and 18 December 1972, retrieved on 16 February 2010 at
<http://www.trumanlibrary.org/oralhist/achilles.htm>.
[94] Joseph E. Johnson, "Oral History Interview with Joseph E. Johnson" [hereafter "Johnson
interview"], interviewed by Richard D. McKinzie, Harry S. Truman Library & Museum,
Independence, 29 June 1973, retrieved on 16 February 2010 at
<http://www.trumanlibrary.org/oralhist/johnsonje.htm>.
[95] Bolton, "Evatt".

letter to Australia‟s chief censor, Bonney.[96]  Cox denied this allegation in his oral history, but recalled the "terrific row" over a negative news article he had filed during the conference‟s conclusion.  Evatt and his wife, Mary Alice, returned to Australia while Cox remained in the US.  Since Mary Alice Evatt had inadvertently left her clean laundry at a San Francisco hotel, an official gave her washed clothes to Cox to bring back to Australia.  Reluctantly Cox agreed to take the parcel; in Canberra, he posted it and his "extremely stiff note" to Evatt.  During his first family dinner in Canberra after his trip, Cox received a telephone call from Evatt, who said: "Look, old boy, I don‟t like bad feeling … I want you to come down this evening and have a yarn with me."  Finally Cox agreed and stayed with Evatt until 2am.  "I couldn‟t have had a more pleasant, gracious host", Cox remembered.  Their mutual "goodwill" developed and Cox said later, he "really liked Evatt".[97]  Their relationship seemed to resemble Curtin‟s associations with Murdoch; although the conservative journalists publicly disagreed with Labor policies, neither of the two politicians remained bitter and thus they maintained positive media associations.[98]

**"V-E Day", May 1945**

While Curtin was again ill as the Allies advanced to victory in Europe, Australian journalists appeared to follow his wish to portray a "solemn" occasion.  On 4 October 1944, a *Daily Telegraph* journalist noted the Federal Government would discourage "[j]oyful celebrations" over Germany‟s defeat because it was "premature" while Australia was fighting Japan.[99]  Contrasting with British media images of "V-E Day" revelry,[100] a *Canberra Times* front page headline referred to "Solemn Scenes In Parliament" on 9 May 1945, two days after the German High Command authorised

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[96] Department of External Affairs, "Correspondence from the Australian delegation", pp. 126-127.

[97] Cox, "Cox interview".

[98] Caryn Coatney, "Curtin is Doing a Splendid Job‟: How a Wartime Labour Prime Minister Won Press Support", in Bobbie Oliver (ed.), *Labour History in the New Century*, Black Swan Press, Perth, pp. 91-101.

[99] (Anon.), "Premature Celebrations Discouraged By Govt.", *The Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, cited in JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00269/3, 4 October 1944, p. 56.

[100] (Anon.), "1945: Rejoicing at end of war in Europe", *BBC*, London, 8 May 1945, retrieved on 16 February 2010 at
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/may/8/newsid_3580000/3580163.stm>.

the Nazi surrender.  *The Canberra Times* publisher, Shakespeare, allowed only a brief statement on Curtin"s absence, avoiding an in-depth discussion on this topic.  It was reported that radio listeners heard Australia"s House of Representatives broadcast proceedings for the first time.  Acting Prime Minister Joseph Benedict ("Ben") Chifley"s speech was positively represented while less newspaper space was allocated to the opposition leader, Menzies.[101]  Mindful of the fierce Japanese counterattacks on Okinawa,[102] *The Canberra Times* writers stressed the prime ministerial keywords of "war", "the enemy" and "sacrifice" more times than the ideals of "hope", "freedom" and "peace".[103]  Readers were warned "we are in danger that the blessings of peace may be one day made a mockery".[104]  Instead of devoting an entire page to European celebrations, *The Canberra Times* continued to reflect Curtin"s earlier media messages regarding Pacific war priorities.

**"His service to this country deserves to stand as a model for men", July 1945**

With increasing concerns over Curtin"s health, Fairfax and Murdoch began departing slightly from the newspaper publishers" earlier consensus to portray him as the nation"s legitimate leader.  Cox was providing confidential updates to Murdoch about Curtin"s physical appearance and condition.[105]  Acting Prime Minister Chifley advised that Curtin had left hospital and returned to The Lodge on 22 May, reported Fairfax"s *Sydney Morning Herald*.  The House of Representatives granted a two-month leave of absence to Curtin, beginning in early June.  In the brief news article, NSW Labor Senator, John Ignatius Armstrong, was quoted as saying "there was little hope of his ever being properly restored to health".  Also *The Sydney Morning*

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[101] Chifley"s speech was directly quoted in 22 sentences and indirectly quoted in ten sentences.  In contrast, Menzies" words were quoted in six sentences and one indirect sentence.  See (Anon.), "Solemn Scenes In Parliament", *Canberra*, 9 May 1945, p. 1.
[102] (Anon.), "American Gains Under Heavy Fire In Okinawa", *Canberra*, 9 May 1945, p. 3.
[103] In the selected news coverage, keywords about "war", the "enemy" and "sacrifice" appeared 37 times; whereas ideals of "hope", "freedom" and "peace" were mentioned four times.  See (Anon.), "Light In Our Darkness", *Canberra*, 9 May 1945, p. 4; (Anon.), "Solemn Scenes In Parliament", *Canberra*, 9 May 1945, p. 1.
[104] (Anon.), "Light In Our Darkness", *Canberra*, 9 May 1945, p. 4.
[105] Cox, "Typescript reports", 21 August 1944, 19 October 1944, 22 January 1945, 9 February 1945, 5 March 1945, 19 March 1945, 9 April 1945.

*Herald* quoted anonymously "[i]nformed quarters" as saying that Curtin"s "complete recovery" might take longer than two months.  Chifley, however, reportedly rejected "unfounded rumours" that Curtin "was in hospital again".[106]  Clive Turnbull, a staff writer for Murdoch"s *Herald*,[107] acknowledged Curtin was determined to remain the prime minister.  Turnbull added if Curtin resigned to become "a more or less non-combatant backbencher", this would evoke:

> … the general regret of the Parliament at the personal misfortune of a highly respected leader who, in any event, must take his place in the forefront of Australia"s Prime Ministers.[108]

The related photograph showed a smiling Curtin, signifying he was still healthy.[109] On 4 July, the AWC extended "its sincere hope that he may be restored to health".[110] Former ALP politician, Fred Daly, remembered being told that Curtin "was getting on better" around the same time.[111]  Although Fairfax and Murdoch questioned Curtin"s health, they acknowledged his strong leadership skills and did not demand his resignation.

As US correspondents had portrayed Roosevelt"s death as a shock to Americans,[112] similarly many Australians were reportedly astonished by the loss of Curtin.[113]  Both nations" citizens seemed genuinely surprised by the news because journalists had cooperated with the two leaders and avoided publishing detailed

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[106] (Anon.), "Mr. Curtin"s Health: Longer Rest Likely", *SMH*, cited in *Scrapbooks*, 14 June 1945.

[107] Peter Ryan, "Turnbull, Stanley Clive Perry (1906 – 1975)", *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, vol. 16, 2002, pp. 422-423, retrieved on 13 January 2011 at <http://adbonline.anu.edu.au/biogs/A160511b.htm>.

[108] Clive Turnbull, "Mr Curtin And The Nation"s Future" [hereafter "Curtin"], *The Herald*, Melbourne, cited in *Scrapbooks*, 24 May 1945.

[109] Turnbull, "Curtin".

[110] Shedden, "AWC Minutes", vol. 8, JCPML acc. no. 00928/9, 4 July 1945, p. 1.

[111] Daly, "Daly interview".

[112] Meghan O"Shaughnessy, "*The Hidden Campaign: FDR's Health and the 1944 Election* (review)", (Hugh E. Evans), *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* [hereafter "FDR"s health"], vol. 6, no. 4, winter 2003, pp. 792-794.

[113] (Anon.), "A People"s Judgement", *SMH*, 6 July 1945, p. 3; (Anon.), "Nation Loses Her Leader", *Truth*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, 8 July 1945; (Anon.), "Opinion-He Was A Good Man", *The Daily Mirror*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, 5 July 1945.

medical diagnoses.[114]  Curtin had written to Eleanor Roosevelt and Truman that Australians were deeply "shocked" by the news of FDR's death at the presidential health spa resort in Warm Springs, Georgia, on 12 April 1945.[115]  Similar statements were made about Curtin after he died in Canberra at 4am on 5 July 1945.  *The Sydney Morning Herald* correspondent wrote most city workers were notified by "the monotonously strident cry of the corner newsboys" on the same morning.  Few Sydneysiders "were prepared" for the tragedy, with people reportedly saying they "didn't think it was so near".[116]  Likewise, Sydney citizens were quoted as saying they were "shocked" in *The Daily Mirror*.[117]  A memorial broadcast was delivered from King's Hall in the Parliament House at 2pm on 6 July.[118]  These journalists did not criticise Curtin's earlier resolve to remain as the prime minister to help achieve an Australian war victory.

His funeral became an exceptional media event and he received tributes on newspaper front pages around the world.  It was the first time that journalists, photographers and camera crews travelled from the eastern states to report on a WA funeral.  Held on 8 July, this event was the largest funeral gathering in the state's history at the time.[119]  Between 20,000 and 30,000 people attended the service; while nearly 100,000 people, comprising one-third of Perth's population, stood along the route of the funeral procession.[120]  Curtin was the first prime minister (and so far, only) to be buried in WA, and in another media first, his funeral service was

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[114] (Anon.), "Mr. Curtin's Health: Longer Rest Likely", *SMH*, cited in *Scrapbooks*, 14 June 1945; O'Shaughnessy, "FDR's health"; Turnbull "Curtin".

[115] John Curtin, "Death Of President Roosevelt", *DDA*, no. 99, 13 April 1945, p. 34.

[116] (Anon.), "A People's Judgement", *SMH*, 6 July 1945, p. 3.

[117] (Anon.), "Opinion-He Was A Good Man", *The Daily Mirror*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, 5 July 1945.

[118] (Anon.), "Body To Lie In State", *The Daily Mirror*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, 5 July 1945.

[119] Australian Prime Minister's Department, "Prime Minister – Rt. Hon. J. Curtin" [hereafter "Curtin"], NAA, Canberra, series no. A461, R4/1/12, 11 July 1945, p. 8.

[120] (Anon.), "Perth Throngs Weep As Curtin Is Buried", *The New York Times*, New York, 9 July 1945, p. 11; David Black (ed.), *In His Own Words: John Curtin's Speeches and Writings* [hereafter *In his own words*], Paradigm Books Curtin University, Bentley, 1995, p. 255; Tom Mead, *Breaking The News: The events which changed life in Australia through the eyes of a man who worked at the front line of journalism and politics* [hereafter *Breaking the news*], Dolphin Books, Sydney, 1998, p. 73.

broadcast across the nation.[121]   Curtin‟s death was announced on the front pages of
*The Age*,[122] *The Canberra Times*[123] and *The Sydney Morning Herald*[124] on 6 July.
*The West Australian* led with classified advertisements as usual, and the
announcement was published on page seven on 5 July.[125]   Similarly to these four
Australian dailies‟ favourable reports, the international press emphasised the "global
proportions" of his career that "ended on a note of triumph".[126]   Front-page tributes
appeared in *The Chicago Daily Tribune, The New York Times* and *The Washington
Post*.[127]   At London‟s *Times*, a correspondent wrote in the "British estimation he
stepped at a single stride into the first rank of Imperial statesman".[128]   *The New York
Times* leader writer declared, "he was an outspoken advocate for world organisation"
and his death was "a loss to this country [the US] and to the world as well as to his
own land".[129]   The remarkable breadth of media coverage indicated Curtin‟s ability
to connect to diverse global audiences.


Along with publishing Allied leaders‟ accolades, Australian newspaper
journalists interviewed working citizens about their opinions of Curtin‟s legacy.
Press photographs ranged from close-ups, signifying he spoke with a "typical

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[121] Australian Prime Minister‟s Department, "Curtin", p. 8.

[122] (Anon.), "World Mourns Death Of Mr. Curtin", *Age*, 6 July 1945, p. 1.

[123] (Anon.), "World Joins In Tribute To Late PM", *Canberra*, 6 July 1945, p. 1.

[124] (Anon.), "A Nation Mourns", *SMH*, 6 July 1945, p. 1.

[125] (Anon.), "Canberra Hush: A Poignant Scene", *West*, 5 July 1945, p. 7; (Anon.), "Mr.
Curtin Dead", *West*, 5 July 1945, pp. 7-8.

[126] (Anon), "John Curtin", *The Christian Science Monitor*, Boston, 6 July 1945, p. 16.

[127] (Anon.), "John Curtin Dead In Australia At 60", *The New York Times*, New York, 5 July
1945, p. 1; (Anon.), "John Curtin Dies: Premier of Australia", *Chicago Daily Tribune*,
Chicago, 5 July 1945, p. 1; (Anon.), Untitled, *The Washington Post*, Washington DC, 5 July
1945, p. 1.

[128] (Anon.), "The Right Hon. John Curtin: Prime Minister of Australia", *The Times*, London,
cited in *Scrapbooks*, 5 July 1945.

[129] Cited in (Anon.), "A People‟s Judgement", *SMH*, Sydney, 6 July 1945, p. 3.

Figure 30[130]

„fighting‟ attitude”[131] and “never used written notes”,[132] to longer shots, suggesting

his warm relationships with dignitaries and unionists.[133]  The reports conveyed that

he had been the “executive head of state”, even though the Australian Constitution

formally vested “executive power” with the British monarch.  According to *The*

*Sydney Morning Herald*, the white ensign was lowered at the RAN headquarters and

on British Pacific Fleet ships as a tribute to Curtin‟s leadership; previously this

practice occurred only to commemorate the British monarch‟s death.[134]  *The*

*Canberra Times* cover featured messages of sympathy from “ordinary people”.  A

reporter declared: “These were the real tributes of the common people, amongst

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[130] Figure 30 appeared in (Anon.), “From Printer‟s Devil To Prime Minister”, *The Sun*,
Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, 6 July 1945.

[131] For example, see the following photograph captions: “Emphatic”, *The Daily Mirror*,
Sydney, 5 July 1945; “The Late Prime Minister in a typical „fighting‟ pose”, *The Daily
Mirror*, Sydney, 5 July 1945; “The Leader In Action”, *The Herald*, Melbourne, 5 July 1945.
The anonymous photographs were cited in *Scrapbooks*.

[132] (Anon.), “Characteristic”, *The Sun*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, 5 July 1945.

[133] For example, see the anonymous photograph captions: “A Light”, “Conference” and
“Informal” in *The Sun*, Sydney, 5 July 1945; and “From Printer‟s Devil To Prime Minister”
in *The Sun*, Sydney, 6 July 1945.  Cited in *Scrapbooks*, 5-6 July 1945.

[134] (Anon.), “Shattering Blow to Empire” – Duke‟s Tribute”, and “Navy Honours Mr.
Curtin”, *SMH*, 6 July 1945, p. 2.

whom John Curtin was perhaps at his happiest."[135]  The same statement appeared in *The Age*.[136]  He was characterised as "Honest John",[137] a "lovable personality",[138] who had "greatness" thrust upon him.[139]  Leader writers remembered he was a "brilliant editor", who had befriended journalists during his prime ministerial trips. They focused on his individual qualities such as his "humanity"; being "a master of debate" who "brought hope to the masses"; his "boldness of national and international vision"; and his economic reorganisation that helped "to meet the threat of invasion".  The editorials did not focus on his specific policies.[140]  Along with emphasising his sense of "duty", "sacrifice" and the war,[141] *The Canberra Times* increased references to "hope", "freedom" and "peace" in comparison with its coverage of "V-E Day".[142]  The war outlook was not covered in the tributes in *The Age*, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The West Australian* on 5 and 6 July.  *The Canberra Times* leader noted Curtin's public "service to this country deserves to stand as a model for men".[143]  Thus Australian newspaper publishers perpetuated Labor legends of him as a natural communicator, a humble politician and a common man.  These popular symbols belied his striving to maintain power; his self-educated rhetoric; his intense film rehearsals; and his calculated managing of his relationships with journalists.

Australian and US film companies generated similar iconic images that masked Curtin's power struggles as a national leader.  H.G. Guiness' Movietone production showed "a simple service for a simple man".  Wilfred Thomas'

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[135] (Anon.), "World Joins In Tribute To Late PM", *Canberra*, 6 July 1945, p. 1.
[136] (Anon.), "Messages of Sorrow", *Age*, 6 July 1945, p. 2.
[137] (Anon.), "Mr. Curtin's Tragedy", *SMH*, 6 July 1945, p. 2; (Anon.), "Opinion-He Was A Good Man", *The Daily Mirror*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, 5 July 1945.
[138] (Anon.), "Editorial: John Curtin", *The Daily News*, Perth, cited in *Scrapbooks*, 5 July 1945.
[139] In *The Canberra Times* on 6 July 1945, the description of Curtin as "great" and showing "greatness" was repeated 15 times; similar keywords were prevalent in other major metropolitan dailies.
[140] *Age*, 6 July 1945, pp. 1-3; (Anon.), "Canberra Hush: A Poignant Scene", *West*, 5 July 1945, p. 7; (Anon.), "Mr. Curtin's Tragedy", *SMH*, 6 July 1945, p. 2; (Anon.), "Vale, John Curtin", *Canberra*, 6 July 1945, p. 3.
[141] These keywords appeared 23 times in the selected *Canberra Times* coverage on 6 July 1945, pp. 1, 3.
[142] In the same *Canberra Times* articles, these ideals appeared 21 times.
[143] (Anon.), "Vale, John Curtin", *Canberra*, 6 July 1945, p. 3.

commentary resembled the Australian newspaper coverage when he said Curtin was "a master of debate", known for his "realism and forthright courage", as well as his "austerity" for walking to his prime ministerial office in the mornings.  The newsreel incorporated previous footage of Eleanor Roosevelt‟s visit to Canberra and a close-up shot focusing on Curtin‟s smiling face when he arrived in England, where he revealed his true "statesmanship", Thomas said.[144]  Likewise, an Australian newsreel signified that Curtin connected to working people.  In the fade-in, he was shown at his Cottesloe house, "just a home like so many others in the towns and cities of Australia", the unnamed narrator said.  Film audiences watched a scene of him opening his front door and walking past his garden to his white picket fence, then striding along the footpath.  As well as showing Curtin with international dignitaries, other film signs included images of him seated with contented children and his first Australian media conference after his overseas trip, where he said jovially, "I have not seen any country or any people better than my own".  He was repeatedly described as "plain John Curtin" and a "man of the people".  The narrator likened him to Roosevelt because both leaders made a "sacrifice of health and strength" to help win the war.[145]  More egalitarian signs appeared in a Movietone special, *Peace*, to commemorate the end of the Pacific war.  The film footage showed returned servicemen waving a sign announcing the "Rats of Tobruk", a name that Curtin helped to popularise; other exuberant Australian crowds; and an anonymous "dancing man" in Sydney, who might have represented many high-spirited people. In his voice-over, Jack Davey paid "homage" to Churchill, Roosevelt and to "Australia who helped others in their hour of need".  Curtin‟s image appeared during the praise of Australia; the scene conveyed that he represented all selfless Australians.[146]

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[144] 20th Century Fox-Movietone News (producer), *Nation Mourns John Curtin* (newsreel) [hereafter *Nation mourns Curtin*]*,* JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00033/1, 1945.
[145] ScreenSound Australia, "A Great Australian Passes …", in *John Joseph Curtin 1885 – 1945* (newsreel) [hereafter "Great Australian"]*,* JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00238/1, 1945.
[146] Movietone (producer), "Peace", in *At the front*, 1945.

**Conclusion**

Despite the political setback of the "Fourteen Powers" Referendum, Curtin based the success of his prime ministerial career on helping Australia to win the war and he generated largely positive news coverage of his foreign policies in his final year.  He managed to divert much media attention from the failed referendum to the need to publish Australian military achievements.  For this purpose, he initiated a media campaign to promote the nation's role in MacArthur's Philippines offensive;[147] the promotions included collaborative Australian-US newsreels for international audiences,[148] a radio interview with a RAN lieutenant,[149] press talks[150] and media statements.[151]  Reporters' notes indicated he continued his off-the-record briefings, although he threatened to cancel them over news leaks of Australian uranium exports, which assisted the atomic bomb project.[152]

During Curtin's absence from the parliament between November 1944 and January 1945, journalists still portrayed him as the nation's representative.  *The Herald* published a favourable photograph of him, taken during his international trip earlier in 1944, signifying he was still healthy.[153]  Murdoch and Packer published reports that he was setting his party's record for continuous service as a Labor prime minister at the time.[154]  Similarly to US press reports about Roosevelt's health in early 1945, the Australian media cooperated with the government to assure citizens that Curtin would recover from his illness.  When Curtin returned to the parliament on 22 January, he immediately resumed his media conferences and the press gallery wrote favourable reports about this event.  Across Australia, newspaper publishers approved of Curtin's decision to release "operational reports",[155] focusing on the

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[147] Shedden, "AWC Minutes", vol. 8, JCPML acc. no. 00928/9, 28 September 1944, p. 3.

[148] Australian Government Department of Information and U.S. Army Signal Corps, "Allies Thrash Japs At Attape", in *At the front*, circa 1944; US Army Signal Corps, "MacArthur Returns!", in *At the front*.

[149] Australian Broadcasting Commission, "Radio script", pp. 1-7.

[150] Cox, "Typescript reports", circa September 1944.

[151] E.g. Curtin, "Allied offensive", p. 35.

[152] Smith, cited in Lloyd and Hall, *Backroom briefings*, p. 228.

[153] Turnbull, "Curtin".

[154] (Anon.), "Curtin In Sight Of Record For Labor P.M.", *The Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 14 November 1944; (Anon.), "Mr Curtin's Record Term Of Office", *The Herald*, Melbourne, 2 December 1944.  Cited in *Scrapbooks*.

[155] John Curtin, "War Communiqués", *DDA*, no. 94, 22 January 1945, p. 10.

nation's troops, which supplemented MacArthur's US-oriented communiqués.[156] They respected his initiatives to give more credit to the nation's fighting forces.


He used other media strategies to project an image of Allied unity with Britain and the US, masking tensions over the nations' military roles in the final Pacific battles.  He appeared to link himself closely to the new Governor-General, the Duke of Gloucester, in a British Movietone newsreel;[157] in a press briefing, he praised the British Pacific Fleet.[158]  He did not mention to journalists that the British government exerted pressure on US military officials, who had viewed the fleet as "largely untried", to elevate the white ensign of the Royal Navy to a prominent role in the direct advance towards Japan.[159]  At his confidential news briefings, he rejected suggestions that MacArthur had assigned Australian forces to a minor role.[160]  These correspondents willingly cooperated with his directive to censor news on released prisoners of war because of the government's concerns that reports of the atrocities might embolden their enemies.[161]  At the 1945 UN meeting in San Francisco, Evatt successfully replicated Curtin's relationships with the media by giving frank, off-the-record press talks and frequent on-the-record media conferences.  Since Evatt generated prominent, positive news coverage of the Allies' policies in the international media, the Roosevelt administration decided to hold media briefings to attract more publicity of US views of the UN meeting.[162] Although the Murdoch news group opposed some Labor policies, neither Curtin nor Evatt remained bitter.[163]  When Curtin became ill again during Germany's surrender, the acting Prime Minister Chifley continued his policy of using the radio, rather than the press, to communicate directly to Australian audiences and involve them more in

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[156] E.g. (Anon.), "Activities Of A.I.F.", *SMH*, 23 January 1945, p. 4; (Anon.), "A.I.F. Activities Endorsed: Mr. Curtin Says Hazards Reduced", *Canberra*, 23 January 1945, p. 2; (Anon.), "A.M.F. Publicity", *West*, 23 January 1945, p. 3; (Anon.), "Mr Curtin Praises MacArthur's Skill", *Army News*, Darwin, 23 January 1945, p. 1; (Anon.), "Mr. Curtin Resumes Duty", *The Advertiser*, Adelaide, 23 January 1945, p. 5; (Anon.), "S.W. Pacific News System To Stay", *The Courier-Mail*, Brisbane, 23 January 1945, p. 3.
[157] British Movietone, "New governor-general".
[158] Cox, "Typescript reports", 10 March 1945.
[159] Gilbert, "British Pacific fleet"; Sarantakes, "Short but brilliant life", pp. 85-91.
[160] Cox, "Typescript reports", July 1944-March 1945.
[161] Cox, "Cox interview"; Shedden, "AWC Minutes", vol. 8, JCPML acc. no. 00928/9, 16 November 1944, p. 4.
[162] Department of External Affairs, "Correspondence from the Australian delegation", p. 20; Johnson, "Johnson interview".
[163] Cox, "Cox interview".

political discussions.  As Chifley broadcast his parliamentary speech on the
European victory, radio listeners heard the House of Representatives proceedings for
the first time.[164]  Through a wide range of media strategies, including the expanded
use of radio, off-the-record briefings, frequent media conferences and wartime
censorship, Canberra press gallery journalists generally agreed with his policies to
focus on Australians' heroic role in Pacific fighting, fight for justice for the nation's
POWs and present a strong voice in the UN.


Thus Curtin's death, as well as Roosevelt's passing, was reported as a
"shock" to citizens because journalists had not published detailed reports about their
health-related struggles.  Since the media did not openly challenge the two men's
physical capacity to lead their countries, Allied news reporters generally upheld the
prevailing wartime censorship systems regarding this matter.  Harold Cox was able
to file confidential updates to Murdoch about the prime minister's "washed-out
appearance" because Curtin was so accessible to the media.[165]  In contrast,
journalists never knew that Churchill and Roosevelt were ill on occasions because
they did not hold daily press conferences and they were more distant from reporters,
as discussed in Chapters 4 and 8.[166]  Thus Australia's most experienced political
journalists agreed to a conspiracy of silence on Curtin's health problems and this was
enforced by national security requirements.  Many wartime Australians were
surprised by the strident cries of "corner newsboys" when they announced his death,
which received worldwide, front-page tributes because his frequent, two-way media
communications had made him a well-known leader to the Allied press.  His funeral
became a media event because it was the first service of this kind that was broadcast
to Australian listeners.  The national press coverage was positive; for example,
Curtin's optimistic keywords were repeated by *The Canberra Times'* publisher,

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[164] (Anon.), "Solemn Scenes In Parliament", *Canberra*, 9 May 1945, p. 1.
[165] Cox, "Typescript reports", 22 January 1945.
[166] Richard Moss, "Curtain goes up on new £6 million Churchill museum", *Culture 24,*
Brighton, 9 February 2005, retrieved on 9 December 2008 at
<http://www.24hourmuseum.org.uk/nwh_gfx_en/ART26042.html>; Roosevelt, "Press
conference"*,* 6 May 1944; Eleanor Roosevelt to Elsie Curtin, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc.
no. 00330/1, 17 April 1944, p. 24; Jackie Storer, "Churchill's bunker revealed", *BBC News
Online,* London, 8 April 2003, retrieved on 12 May 2008 at
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/2929063.stm>; Simon Tait, "A war leader's
love affair with the press", *The Times,* London, 8 March 2008, p. 80.

Shakespeare, as Australians looked forward to a victory.[167]   The mass media showed

Australia's "executive" as a natural communicator, a "simple man" and a humble

politician, who related well with working-class people.[168]   Moreover, as we have

seen in this chapter, Curtin had an important role in the industrial process of

"manufacturing the news" as described by Hall (see Chapter 2).[169]   Further, it is

tenable to argue that regular, in person, conversational radio broadcasts constituted

an expansion of the Australian public sphere in Habermas' sense of a domain of

rational discussion among informal citizens.[170]

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[167] *Canberra*, 6 July 1945, pp. 1, 3.

[168] (Anon.), "Shattering Blow to Empire" – Duke's Tribute", "Navy Honours Mr. Curtin", *SMH*, 6 July 1945, p. 2; 20th Century Fox-Movietone News, *Nation mourns Curtin*; ScreenSound Australia, "Great Australian".

[169] Stuart Hall, "The determinations of news photographs", in Stanley Cohen and Jock Young (eds), *The Manufacture of News: Deviance, Social Problems and the Mass Media*, Constable and Co, London, 1973, p. 182; Stuart Hall, Chas Critcher, Tony Jefferson, John Clarke and Brian Roberts, *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State, and Law and Order,* The Macmillan Press, London and Basingstoke, 1981, p. 61.

[170] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1989.

# Chapter 10

## Survey of the contemporary Canberra Parliamentary Press Gallery

As the preceding chapters have argued, John Curtin developed innovative mass communication strategies to persuade the predominantly conservative Australian media to promote his wartime views. Curtin's initiatives included the following: the creation of a full-time prime ministerial press secretary role; the regular practice of twice-daily, informative, interactive news conferences; the use of a combination of formal, informal and confidential interviews; the installation of a shortwave transmitting station to connect Australia and international radio networks; more direct film and radio broadcasts to home and overseas audiences; as well as sponsoring the national radio, film and creative arts sectors. This thesis has thus far demonstrated the uniqueness of Curtin's journalism strategies by comparing them with the media techniques used by other World War II Allied leaders, and by the Australian prime ministers who led the country before him. It has been argued that Curtin conducted more frequent, informal and confidential news interviews than did the other major Allied leaders or previous Australian prime ministers. Moreover, this research suggested that Curtin expanded the prime ministerial use of relatively new media technology.

This chapter seeks to extend our knowledge of Curtin's news media strategies by evaluating their durability following his prime ministerial term, their validity for political communications today and the extent of his legacy for the mass media. For the purpose of testing this thesis, a survey has been developed to determine whether modern news reporters are aware of the communication methods that Curtin instigated and whether they still use these practices. One of the ways to demonstrate his legacy is to ask contemporary journalists whether they are aware that current media practices originated with the strategies that he instituted. Therefore this study invited senior contemporary news reporters to contribute their views on the significance of the prime ministerial news media strategies that Curtin initiated.

These methods included the use of news conferences, confidential briefings, audiovisual communications and information provided by full-time government media advisors.  The survey findings are presented in the next section.  This thesis posits that Curtin was a brilliant media strategist, who provided valuable lessons for managing information needs during global conflicts extending well beyond World War II.  It is the argument of this chapter that Curtin made a lasting impact on political communications.

As we saw in Chapter 2, Foucault's concept of governmentality and Ericson, Baranek and Chan's theories of news in an administered society are relevant to Curtin's use of the media.  By means of working with Canberra journalists, expanding his radio addresses and sponsoring newsreels about a united Allied leadership, Curtin's media relations illustrated Foucault's theories of governmentality and the "politics of truth".  According to Foucault, liberal democratic leaders have used modern technologies and worked closely with the media to manage their nation and imprint images of reality in the public consciousness through an "immense diffusion and consumption" of information in diverse forms.[1]  Also Ericson et al's study of news and government helps us to theorise Curtin's interactions with journalists and to understand how he developed mutually beneficial relations with the press gallery.  Reporters cooperated with him to relay media messages that "visualised deviance" in the form of Axis enemies and to appeal for public support in the war against Japan.  In turn, Curtin elevated the role of press gallery correspondents; he viewed them as his colleagues and shared government intelligence with them as no other prime minister had done before him.  As this chapter's concluding section will discuss, these theories help us to understand the significance of the contemporary journalists' survey responses about prime ministers' media strategies to communicate with public audiences.

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[1] Michel Foucault, "Truth and Power" [hereafter "Truth and power"], trans. Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham and Kate Soper in C. Gordon (ed.), *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, The Harvester Press, Brighton, 1980, p. 131.

**Prime ministerial journalism strategies: From John Curtin to Julia Gillard**

According to the political scientists, Barabas and Jerit, it is vital for leaders to communicate clearly their key messages to citizens, who "can and do learn about important political developments".  They found that citizens were most knowledgeable about those events that were being covered widely by a number of distinct news outlets.[2]  Since this research suggested that media coverage increased people's knowledge, it would appear to be in a political leader's interest to talk openly and frequently to journalists to support a well-informed citizenry.  As Huckfeldt et al ascertained, "relatively few individuals hold such strong opinions and attitudes regarding the full range of political topics".  They suggested that while "some individuals hold strong opinions about some issues", still other people had neither strong opinions nor accessible points of political orientation.[3]  Ericson et al argue that in liberal democracies, journalists have become an extension of governments as they order, shape and distribute information to public audiences.[4]  While a number of scholars[5] and journalists[6] have focused on the Churchill and Roosevelt communication strategies, this study investigates Curtin's legacy for governments' relationships and the Canberra Parliamentary Press Gallery.

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[2] Jennifer Jerit and Jason Barabas, "Surveillance Knowledge and the Mass Media" [hereafter "Mass media"], *Annual meeting of the American Political Science Association,* Washington DC, 2005, pp. 1-36, retrieved on 22 March 2010 at <http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p41558_index.html>.

[3] Robert Huckfeldt, Jeffrey Levine, William Morgan and John Sprague, "Accessibility and the Political Utility of Partisan and Ideological Orientations", *American Journal of Political Science*, vol. 43, no. 3, July 1999, p. 909.

[4] Richard V. Ericson, Patricia M. Baranek and Janet B.L. Chan, *Visualizing Deviance: A Study of News Organization* [hereafter *Visualizing deviance*], Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1987, p. 356.

[5] For example, Jonathan Sikorsky, "From British Cassandra to American Hero: The Churchill Legend in the World War II American Media", *Finest Hour*, The Churchill Centre, no. 108, autumn 2000, pp. 30-36; Betty Houchin Winfield, *F.D.R. and the News Media* [hereafter *F.D.R.*], University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 1990.

[6] For example, Robert Hardman, "Winston Churchill's extraordinary relationship with the founding fathers of the Mail" [hereafter "Churchill's relationship with the Mail"], *Daily Mail,* London, 8 February 2008, retrieved on 11 December 2008 at <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-512982/Winston-Churchills-extraordinary-relationship-founding-fathers-Mail.html>; Katherine Santiago, "Newark Mayor Cory Booker rapidly gains following on Twitter", *The Star-Ledger*, New Jersey, 21 May 2009, retrieved on 21 March 2010 at <http://www.nj.com/news/index.ssf/2009/05/newark_mayor_booker_increases.html>; Barry Saunders, "Fireside chats in the 21st century" [hereafter "The 21st century"], *ABC News,* 19 November 2008, retrieved on 24 March 2010 at <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/11/19/2423615.htm>.

Although a number of scholarly researchers conducted surveys of press gallery members, it seemed that none published findings specifically on reporters' views of Curtin and his influence on contemporary political journalism.[7]   Research indicated that after Curtin, Australian prime ministers recognised the need to interact with the mass media more frequently and this trend continued in the twenty-first century.   As the federal treasurer in the Curtin administration, Ben Chifley would meet journalists to provide background information for their news reports.[8]   Chifley continued the routine of providing confidential information to senior journalists when he was the nation's leader from 1945 to 1949.[9]   In their oral histories, correspondents remembered Chifley as "very kindly",[10] "affable"[11] and "friendly",[12] with a "great sense of humour" and "terrific charm".[13]   Although he held prime ministerial media conferences regularly, he conducted them less frequently than did Curtin when Australia was most vulnerable to Allied attacks in 1942.   Chifley scheduled separate, weekly interviews for the morning and evening news representatives.[14]

According to press secretary, Don Rodgers, Curtin would talk with journalists twice a day "for a long, long time" to provide news updates that coincided with their deadlines.   Yet Rodgers said the interviews caused "a tremendous strain" on Curtin

[7] For a short bibliography of some of these surveys, see Helen Ester, "Who's Been Watching The Watchers? Australian Political Journalism" [hereafter "Australian political journalism"], *ejournalist*, vol. 1, no. 2, 2001, pp. 1-7, retrieved on 15 May 2010 at <ejournalist.com.au/v1n2/ESTER.pdf>.  Also see John Henningham, "Political Journalists' Political Preferences and Professional Values" [hereafter "Political journalists"], *The Australian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 30, no. 2, 1995, pp. 321-334; C.J. Lloyd, *Parliament And The Press: The Federal Parliamentary Press Gallery 1901-88* [hereafter *Parliament and the press*], Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1988; Julianne Schultz, *Reviving the Fourth Estate: Democracy, Accountability, and the Media,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998.
[8] Frank Chamberlain, interviewed by Mel Pratt [hereafter "Chamberlain interview]", John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library [hereafter JCPML], Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00552, August 1972-January 1973, transcript np.
[9] Clem J. Lloyd, *Parliament and the press*, pp. 169.
[10] W. J. Bridgman, interviewed by Mel Pratt, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00499, 17 November 1976, transcript np.
[11] Irvine Douglas, interviewed by Mel Pratt [hereafter "Douglas interview"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01061/1, 15-19 June 1972, transcript np.
[12] Harold Cox, interviewed by Mel Pratt [hereafter "Cox interview"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01060/1, 6 April 1973, transcript np.
[13] Edgar George Holt, interviewed by Mel Pratt [hereafter "Holt interview"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01059/1, 23 May 1978, transcript np.
[14] Lloyd, *Parliament and the press*, p. 169.

and as a result, "finally I was able to reduce the number of press conferences in the latter years of his prime ministership".[15]   Rodger's oral history suggested that perhaps Curtin communicated more often to journalists during the early years of his prime ministership because he recognised the importance of securing media support for his war strategies.  Official minutes did not exist that might have provided the exact number of Curtin's secret news briefings throughout his five-year prime ministership.  While some of the "Circus" recognised the historical significance of Curtin's interviews by lodging their reporters' notes at the National Library of Australia, their transcriptions were not comprehensive.  For instance, F.T. Smith did not write about Curtin's talks between 16 October and 19 November 1942 because at this time, the journalist might not have accompanied him on his one-month visit to Perth, Adelaide and Melbourne.[16]   While Curtin was away from Canberra during this time, he still interacted with the media as he visited his "mates" at *The Westralian Worker* offices, addressed a "Journalists Club" luncheon in Melbourne, delivered two radio broadcasts and distributed press statements.[17]   Alexander's diaries covered only the period from Curtin's appointment as prime minister in 1941 until 1944.[18]   Cox's bulletins to his employer, Murdoch, were based only on Curtin's Canberra conferences during 1944, the year when the prime minister was away overseas for almost three months, and his interviews from 22 January to 9 April 1945, a period punctuated by absences due to his illness.[19]   My research indicated that Curtin made fewer recorded national radio broadcasts during his final year.  Archival records indicated that he delivered at least five broadcasts as prime minister from October to December 1941, ten radio talks in 1942, ten in 1943, 18 in 1944, and he made only

[15] Donald Kilgour Rodgers, interviewed by Mel Pratt [hereafter "Rodgers interview"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00497, 29 April 1971, transcript np.

[16] Clem Lloyd and Richard Hall (eds), *Backroom Briefings: John Curtin's war* [hereafter *Backroom briefings*], National Library of Australia [hereafter NLA], Canberra, 1997, pp. 101-105.

[17] Helen Campbell, "Diary of a Labour Man" for 1942 [hereafter "Diary"], JCPML, Bentley, 2008, retrieved on 15 June 2010 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/diary/primeminister/1942.html>; JCPML, "Index to John Curtin's speeches in the Digest of Decisions and Announcements and Important Speeches by the Prime Minister, 1941-1945 [hereafter "Index to John Curtin's speeches]", Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01148/1, 2007.

[18] J.A. Alexander, "Papers 1833-1957", NLA, Canberra, Manuscript Collections, NLA MS 2389, 1833-1957.

[19] Harold Cox, "Typescript reports, 1944-1964" [hereafter "Typescript reports"]*,* NLA, Manuscript Collections, Canberra, NLA MS acc. no. 4554, 1944-1964.

three broadcasts during his final months between January and July 1945.[20]  This
evidence suggested he might have held fewer press conferences during his final year
because of his illness and the nation's comparatively greater security since the
Allies' military offensives.  Even so, Rodgers added in 1971 that he did not know of
any prime minister who had given as many news conference as Curtin.[21]

Since Curtin, Australia's prime ministers have pursued positive mass media
coverage in different ways.  When Menzies returned to government in 1949, he was
committed to the same pattern of news briefings as Chifley.  Menzies improved his
method of communicating to journalists, compared with his first term, because he
was more prepared to engage in a two-way discourse at his interviews.  By July
1951, he was giving background talks for senior journalists; but he increasingly
replaced his media conferences with the system of releasing "handouts", or printed
material.  He still provided confidential information to well-known reporters.[22]  The
origins of the professional media release have been traced to Ivy Lee, arguably the
United States' first true public relations practitioner, who gave instructions on how to
write a "statement from a public service corporation" in 1917.[23]  Afterwards
Australian prime ministers used the "handout" to supplement interviews with
reporters, but this type of media release "evolved as a major news system" only

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[20] For a full list of Curtin's recorded radio talks, see Appendix 12.  Also, Australian
Commonwealth Government, "Prime Minister's Itinerary" [hereafter "Election speech
itinerary"], National Archives of Australia, Canberra, CA12, A461, R4/1/12, 1943, p. 117;
British Movietone (producer), "Commonwealth Premiers Honoured", in *Newsreels of
Curtin, 1942-1945* (newsreel), JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00734/1, 1944; Campbell,
"Diary", 19 and 30 April, 7, 10 and 30 May, 1 and 26 June 1944; John Curtin, *Digest of
Decisions and Announcements and Important Speeches by the Prime Minister (Right Hon.
John Curtin)*, no. 81, 19 April 1944, p. 18; Department of External Affairs, "Visit of Mr.
Curtin to USA & UK in connection with Prime Ministers' Conference London", JCPML,
Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00768/2, May 1944, pp.10-22; Great Britain Foreign Office,
"Political situation: consular reports", JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00779/13, 28 April
1944, pp. 1-3; JCPML, "Index to John Curtin's speeches"; William Lyon Mackenzie King,
"The Diaries of William Lyon Mackenzie King" [hereafter "Diaries"]*,* Library and Archives
Canada, Ottawa, 30 May 1944, retrieved on 8 December 2008 at
<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/king/index-e.html>; ScreenSound Australia,
"A Great Australian Passes", in *John Joseph Curtin 1885 – 1945* (newsreel)*,* JCPML,
Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00238/1, 1944; ScreenSound Australia, *Prime Minister Welcomed
In Canada* (newsreel), JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01052/1, 1944.
[21] Rodgers, "Rodgers interview".
[22] Lloyd, *Parliament and the press*, pp. 174-177.
[23] Shirley Harrison and Kevin Moloney, "Comparing two public relations pioneers:
American Ivy Lee and British John Elliot", *Public Relations Review*, vol. 30, 2004, pp. 205-
215.

under Menzies during the 1950s and early 1960s.  After he retired in 1966, his Liberal successors, Harold Holt, John Gorton and William McMahon, did not hold regular media conferences; however, this changed with Gough Whitlam's victory. Promoting a wide-ranging Labor reform program in 1972, Whitlam made a commitment to weekly interviews and this "was largely honoured" during his prime ministership.[24]  Whitlam's rapport with journalists was praised by the later Liberal Party leader and Prime Minister, John Howard.  While Howard described Whitlam's "practice of regular, sit-down press conferences" as "quite an innovation",[25] they were actually instituted by Curtin.  Yet Whitlam made "little use of background briefings" after some confidential information was published from an off-the-record interview that he conducted early in his term.[26]  Labor was supported by Sir Keith Murdoch's son, Rupert, in 1972; however, after the Governor-General, Sir John Kerr, dismissed Whitlam on 11 November 1975 due to a parliamentary deadlock over the passage of the federal budget, Murdoch rewrote the political news in his nascent flagship, *The Australian*, to add "a strong anti-Whitlam flavour", which caused journalists to strike during the 1975 election campaign.[27]  With Murdoch's support, the Liberal leader, Malcolm Fraser, won the election on 13 December, and he moved away from his predecessors' emphasis on the press to redefine prime ministerial journalism strategies.

Fraser began a trend of favouring electronic media conferences over press interviews.  Often he prevented newspaper journalists from attending his conferences, when he made statements that were recorded by television cameras and tape recorders.  Afterwards he released the recorded transcriptions and this "effectively stalled print journalists from probing contentious issues".[28]  Although his successor, Robert Hawke, granted interviews "irregularly", he "maintained close links" with press proprietors, according to Lloyd.[29]  The three prime ministers

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[24] Lloyd, *Parliament and the press*, pp. 176, 244-250.

[25] John Howard, "John Howard Public Lecture – Politics and the Media: the Good, the Bad and the Ugly" [hereafter "Politics and the media"], The University of Melbourne, Melbourne, 10 August 2009, retrieved on 24 June 2010 at <http://newsroom.melbourne.edu/news/n-103>.

[26] Lloyd, *Parliament and the press*, p. 251.

[27] Nick Economou and Stephen Tanner, *Media, Power and Politics* [hereafter *Media*], Pearson Education Australia, Frenchs Forest, 2008, p. 218.

[28] Lloyd, *Parliament and the press*, p. 251.

[29] Lloyd, *Parliament and the press*, pp. 253-254.

following Hawke – Paul Keating, John Howard and Kevin Rudd – were not as regular with their media conferences as Curtin.[30]  An entourage of journalists always accompanied Keating during his increasingly frequent prime ministerial trips to Asia to discuss mutual trade and security interests and other issues, resulting in more news coverage of this world region at these times.[31]  In a 1998 address, the Australian political journalist, Michelle Grattan, reflected that in comparison, World War II journalists were given "loads of first-hand prime ministerial time and attention". Also they "were accorded prime ministerial confidence to a degree that is staggering to anyone covering politics today".[32]  Increasingly prime ministers turned to relatively new media to broadcast messages directly to public audiences.

During 2000, Howard conducted 234 radio, television and "door stop" interviews, where he spoke briefly with reporters.[33]  The scholars, Nick Economou and Stephen Tanner, credited Howard with developing talkback radio skills because he was not as well-suited to television appearances.[34]  Even when electronic media became more "participatory" such as with talkback radio, critical engagement was compromised.  Furthermore as Steve Mickler argued, talkback radio became a significant political medium during the 1998 and 2001 federal election campaigns. In the lead-ups to the two elections, Howard appeared to prefer conservative, commercial talkback radio, perhaps because this medium was less likely to broadcast serious criticisms of his policies.  He and his frequent talkback radio host, Alan Jones, shared a "particularly well-honed political skill" of presenting themselves as "non-elites", even though they were "two of the nation's most powerful social

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[30] For example, Ester, "Australian political journalism", p. 6; Helen Ester, "The media" [hereafter "Media"], in Clive Hamilton and Sarah Maddison (eds), *Silencing Dissent: How the Australian Government is controlling public opinion and stifling debate*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2007, pp. 117-118.

[31] Caryn Coatney, Australian Media Coverage of Asia: The Need to Exist and to Have a Name [hereafter Australian media coverage], MA thesis, Curtin University of Technology, Bentley, 1997.

[32] Michelle Grattan, "The Prime Minister and the Press: A Study in Intimacy", JCPML, Bentley, 1998, retrieved on 15 May 2010 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/events/speeches/grattanlecture.html>.

[33] Ester, "Australian political journalism", p. 6.

[34] Economou and Tanner, *Media,* p. 145.

elites".[35]   Although talkback radio listeners were informed that "anybody can ring in and have their say", the presenters controlled and filtered the broadcasts.[36]   Later Howard explained that he used talkback radio "a lot" because his messages were not edited.   He added, "it is the one medium where you are guaranteed that if you've got something to say, somebody will hear it in its entirety if they want to sit and listen".[37]   By October 2007, a range of mainstream media reported that the Labor opposition leader, Rudd, had won the only televised debate with Howard during the election campaign.   Afterwards journalists wrote that Rudd was "generally more positive" in front of the cameras;[38] he "appeared more concise and got his message across more clearly".[39]   The reporters' perceptions of the debate confirmed scholarly views that Howard was more comfortable with talkback radio than television.   While prime ministers have continued Curtin's practice of broadcasting media messages directly to audiences, they may avoid certain media if they deem them to be too interrogative, critical or difficult to control.


Although Howard disliked most journalists' practice of editing his messages, he spoke of political leaders' "need" to develop "goodwill" with news correspondents.   As an opposition politician, he had written a regular Friday column for *The Australian* and, when the prime minister, he assiduously developed friendships with particularly influential journalists.   Two years after his 2007

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[35] Steve Mickler, "Talkback Radio, Anti-elitism And Moral Decline: A Fatal Paradox?" [hereafter "Talkback radio"], *Southern Review: Communication, Politics & Culture*, vol. 37, no. 3, 2005, p. 30, retrieved on 9 April 2010 at <http://search.informit.com.au.dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/documentSummary;dn=990068020742 095;res=IELHSS>.

[36] Mickler, "Talkback radio", p. 44.

[37] Howard, "Politics and the media".

[38] Phillip Coorey, "Rudd's night in election debates", *Brisbane Times*, Brisbane, 22 October 2007, retrieved on 24 June at <http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/articles/2007/10/21/1192940904007.html>; Malcolm Farr, "Rudd beats Howard in federal election debate", *The Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 22 October 2007, retrieved on 24 June 2010 at <http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/classmate/rudd-wins-debate-worm-burns-9/story-e6frewti-1111114695103>.

[39] (Anon.), "Most observers believe Rudd won debate", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Sydney, 21 October 2007, retrieved on 24 June 2010 at <http://www.smh.com.au/news/National/Howard-Rudd-face-off-in-election-debate/2007/10/21/1192940904527.html>.

electoral defeat, he explained:

> Whatever may be the attitude of journalists towards politicians, they need to
> cultivate them; whatever may be the attitude of politicians towards
> journalists, we need their engagement, hopefully their goodwill, and desirably
> their objectivity and their faithful reporting in order to transmit our
> message.[40]

According to the politics scholar, Greg Barns, prime ministers have increasingly
invested in efforts to manage the news and they have relied upon expanding
government media offices to communicate regularly with journalists.  Although their
official bulletins might appear "supposedly apolitical", often these would be
influenced by "blatantly party political" purposes.[41]  Politicians have benefited from
Curtin's decision to employ a full-time prime ministerial press secretary; they have
considerably expanded this position by employing "a range of personnel to manage
their public communications" with varying degrees of sophistication and
partisanship.[42]

Julia Gillard broadened prime ministerial strategies to communicate with
journalists.  When she became the nation's leader in June 2010, she quickly
responded to reporters' queries at a televised press gallery conference;[43] shortly
afterwards, an unnamed senior Labor representative was quoted as saying that the
"centre ground" of her media strategies would be to give interviews to the nation's
top-selling women's magazines.  Previously the ALP usually paid for advertising
features in women's titles.[44]  According to the prime minister's media centre, Gillard
conducted at least 130 interviews with a wide range of news and social media

[40] Howard, "Politics and the media".

[41] Greg Barns, *Selling the Australian Government: Politics And Propaganda From Whitlam To Howard*, University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 2005, p. 10.

[42] Geoffrey Craig, *The Media, Politics and Public Life* [hereafter *The media*], Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2004, p. 130.

[43] ABC Television (producer), *National Press Club Address – Julia Gillard (Prime Minister)* (television program), Canberra, 15 July 2010.

[44] Sally Jackson, "Glossies to play a key part in Gillard crusade", *The Australian*, Surry Hills, 5 July 2010, retrieved on 17 January 2011 at <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/media/glossies-to-play-a-key-part-in-gillard-crusade/story-e6frg996-1225887766253>.

between 24 June 2010 and 12 January 2011.[45]  Yet it would likely be very difficult for a modern leader to replicate Curtin's style of spontaneous press interactions because he was "probably the only democratic leader in the wartime world to travel without a body guard", an incredible security risk by today's standards.[46]  Since researchers documented a decline in the use of the Curtin style of press gallery conference and off-the-record briefings, this study has conducted a survey of senior political journalists to investigate their views of these media strategies.  The results of this survey will be discussed later in this chapter.

Another aim of this chapter was to investigate the long-term impact of Curtin's strategies in radio and visual media.  As part of his broader media vision, Curtin envisaged an "independent" national radio news service and a first-class, internationally renowned film industry.[47]  Curtin and other Australian leaders recognised the power of radio early in the development of this medium, as mentioned in Chapter 3.  While the first US political broadcasts included the Democratic Party's 1928 dramatisation of the life of the presidential nominee, Al Smith, Australian radio emerged as a "major force" during the 1931 election campaign involving Labor Prime Minister, James Scullin, and United Australia Party leader, Joseph Lyons.[48]  This thesis has demonstrated that by 1941, Curtin used innovative media strategies to focus on his leadership, popularity and his "plain", "honest" image in an

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[45] Prime Minister of Australia, "Media Centre", Canberra, 2010-11, retrieved on 17 January 2011 at <http://www.pm.gov.au/media_centre>.  The media centre did not list Gillard's interviews in August 2010 such as her talks for: 702 ABC Radio Sydney (2 August); *The Courier-Mail* (circa 2 August); 3AW Radio in Melbourne (6 August); the Australian Christian Lobby website (6 August); Mark Latham for Nine Network's *60 Minutes* (7 August); ABC TV's *Insiders* (8 August); Channel Ten News (10 August); Nine Network's *Today on Sunday* (15 August); Clara Bowditch for MySpace (16 August); Sky News (20 August).
[46] Alan Reid, "Plain John Curtin Who Led Australia Through Darkest Days", *The Sun*, Sydney, cited in the JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00964/165, 5 July 1945.
[47] Neville Petersen, *News Not Views: The ABC, the Press, & Politics 1932-1947* [hereafter *News not views*], Hale & Iremonger, Sydney, 1993, pp. 121-122.
[48] Ian Ward, "The early use of radio for political communication in Australia and Canada: John Henry Austral, Mr Sage and the Man from Mars" [hereafter "The early use of radio"], *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 45, no. 3, 1999, pp. 316-322.

unprecedented way.[49]   Moreover, he encouraged public participation in political
events by instigating the first radio broadcasts of the House of Representatives
proceedings, when the parliamentarians solemnly celebrated the 1945 European
victory.[50]   After Chifley was returned to power in 1946, Labor members welcomed
the first broadcasts of parliamentary debates, which began in July of the same year.[51]
Liberal politicians recognised they needed a "sophisticated publicity machine"
similar to the one that Curtin and Rodgers had established for the ALP.[52]   Therefore,
the Liberals persuaded the long-time ALP publicist, Solomon "Sim" Rubensohn,
who had run Chifley's 1946 campaign, to work for them.   During the 1949 election
campaign, the Hansen-Rubensohn agency released a series of radio programs to
construct a positive, accessible image of Menzies as an average, hardworking family
man, who was keen to address citizens' everyday problems.[53]   Although Chifley
gave regular Sunday evening broadcasts on commercial radio, he did not use all of
his free, available ABC air-time during the campaign.[54]   Menzies' advertisements,
which were portrayed as newsworthy commentaries, marked "a new high point in the
cult of personality in Australian politics" as he governed for the next 17 years.[55]   He
seemed to have changed his views since 1941, when he wrote in his diary that he

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[49] (Anon.), "Mr. Curtin's Tragedy", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Sydney, 6 July 1945, p. 2;
(Anon.), "Publicity: Relations with America: Australia Expands", *The Canberra Times,*
Canberra, 31 October 1941, p. 4; (Anon.), "Opinion-He Was A Good Man", *The Daily
Mirror*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks compiled by the Prime Minister's office*, no. 4, JCPML
acc. no. 00297/4, 5 July 1945, JCPML, Bentley; David Black (ed.), *In His Own Words: John
Curtin's Speeches and Writings*, Paradigm Books Curtin University, Bentley, 1995, p. 226;
Bobbie Oliver, *Unity is Strength: A History of the Australian Labor Party and the Trades
and Labor Council in Western Australia, 1899-1999* [hereafter *Unity is strength*]*,* API
Network, Bentley, 2003, p. 167; ScreenSound Australia, "A Great Australian Passes …", in
*John Joseph Curtin 1885 – 1945* (newsreel)*,* JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00238/1,
1945.
[50] (Anon.), "Solemn Scenes In Parliament", *The Canberra Times*, Canberra, 9 May 1945, p.
1.
[51] Lloyd, *Parliament and the press*, p. 164.
[52] Bridget Griffen-Foley, "Political opinion polling and the professionalization of public
relations: Keith Murdoch, Robert Menzies, and the Liberal Party of Australia" [hereafter
"Political opinion polling"], *Australian Journalism Review,* vol. 24, no. 1, 2002, p. 46.
[53] Robert Crawford, "Modernising Menzies, Whitlam, and Australian Elections" [hereafter
"Modernising Australian elections"], *The Drawing Board: An Australian Review of Public
Affairs*, vol. 4, no. 3, March 2004, pp. 142-143; Griffen-Foley, "Political opinion polling",
pp. 54-55.
[54] Ward, "The early use of radio", p. 326.
[55] Griffen-Foley, cited in Robert Crawford, "Modernising Australian elections", p. 144.

would "shy at" a broadcast interview.[56]  By 1949 Menzies used similar radio
techniques to those of Curtin and his advertising campaign arguably assisted him to
set the record for being Australia's longest serving leader.

While Curtin was quick to use the relatively new media of radio in the
1930s,[57] the development of professional televised news was fairly slow in the
country after the first transmissions in 1956.[58]  In the US, television was a factor in
influencing voters' attitudes during the 1960 election campaign.  On 26 September
1960, US audiences watched the country's first televised debate between the
Republican nominee, Vice President Richard Nixon, and Democratic Senator, John
F. Kennedy.  Many viewers regarded Kennedy as "the outright winner" because he
appeared "tanned, confident and well-rested after campaigning in California" during
the summer.  In contrast, audiences described Nixon as looking "underweight with a
pallid complexion", because he was recovering from a knee operation and he refused
to wear any make-up for his television appearance.[59]  As political scientist, James N.
Druckman, wrote: "Television images matter in politics, and may have indeed played
an important role in the first Kennedy-Nixon debate."[60]  In Canberra, Menzies' final
press conference in January 1966 was televised.  While audiences noticed "obvious
evidence of inebriation and incompetence" among some of the journalists,[61]
Alexander said he was surprised that Menzies did not greet them and appeared
"abrupt and aloof".[62]  Although Australia's first televised current affairs show, the
ABC's *Four Corners*, began to air in 1962, electronic media studios and permanent
staff television correspondent positions were established in the press gallery only in
the 1970s.  Prime ministerial strategies became more sophisticated in the use of

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[56] A.W. Martin and Patsy Hardy (eds), *Dark and Hurrying Days: Menzies' 1941 Diary,*
NLA, Canberra, 1993, p. 60.
[57] Ward, "The early use of radio", p. 322.
[58] Lloyd, *Parliament and the press*, p. 210.
[59] (Anon.), "Kennedy and Nixon clash in TV debate", *BBC News*, London, 26 September
1960, retrieved on 21 June 2010 at
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/september/26/newsid_3104000/3104393.stm>.
[60] James N. Druckman, "The Power of Television Images: The First Kennedy-Nixon Debate
Revisited", *The Journal of Politics*, vol. 65, no. 2, May 2003, p. 559.
[61] Lloyd, *Parliament and the press*, p. 211.
[62] Joseph A. Alexander, interviewed by Mel Pratt [hereafter "Alexander interview"],
JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00551, 2 March 1971, transcript np.

audiovisual media, and Gorton was credited as being "a better television performer" than his immediate predecessors, Holt and Menzies.[63]

Due to television's rise to prominence, Labor Party leader Whitlam was viewed as more telegenic than Prime Minister McMahon during the 1972 campaign;[64] this dissonance in visual imagery between the two party leaders resembled the first Kennedy-Nixon debate.  Labor's polished television commercials featured a slogan about positive change, "It's Time", a "song with hit qualities", and "favourite TV stars" to underscore the popularity of Whitlam and his cause.  He appeared as a "man of the people", who was dedicated to public service.  His 1972 victory, similar to Menzies' 1949 win, indicated the importance of a well-orchestrated campaign that used the electronic media to focus on a seemingly unpretentious political leader, who appeared to be communicating closely with voters.[65]  These campaign skills were developed by Curtin in the lead-up to the 1943 election, when he gave at least three nationwide radio talks to communicate with voters.[66]  The historian, Robert Crawford, wrote that by 1972, the electronic media had clearly relegated press advertising to a subordinate position during Australian political campaigns.[67]

As a result, televised debates have been screened more regularly and this medium has become an important site of federal political conflict.   The major party leaders have engaged in at least one televised debate during every federal election campaign since 1984, with the exception of 1987.  Politics scholar, Philip Senior, likened the Australian debates to those televised in the US because journalists widely reported on them and their coverage could influence voters, including those who watched the verbal repartee and those who were not spectators.  In both countries, the news coverage emphasised the results of studio audience polls, conducted after

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[63] Lloyd, *Parliament and the press*, pp. 237, 240, 245, 250-251, 253.
[64] Economou and Tanner, *Media*, p. 145.
[65] Crawford, "Modernising Australian elections", pp. 149-55.
[66] Australian Commonwealth Government, "Election speech itinerary"; JCPML, "Index to John Curtin's speeches".
[67] Crawford, "Modernising Australian elections", p. 155.

the debate to identify a winner.[68]  Australia adopted the American "made-for-TV"
arrangement more quickly than Britain.  In April 2010, the world's journalists
publicised Britain's "first presidential-style TV debates", a series of three events that
involved Prime Minister Gordon Brown, Conservative Party leader David Cameron
and the Liberal Democrats' Nick Clegg before the election on 6 May.[69]  Later, the
Australian media seemed to emphasise entertainment programs instead of the
televised debate on 25 July 2010 between the Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, and the
Liberal opposition leader, Tony Abbott, a former journalist with connections to
metropolitan broadsheets and tabloids.[70]  Channel Seven and Ten Network
executives forced the evening debate to be postponed for one hour because the
original timeslot interfered with popular cooking and dance competition shows.[71]  In
Perth newspapers, front-page photographs advertising the *MasterChef* television final
overshadowed the debate reports.[72]  As more television programs have blended
information and entertainment, politicians have "hit the talk show circuit" to reach
wider audiences and discuss aspects of their lives often neglected by traditional
media.[73]  Researchers have noted the tendency of television to "limit opportunities
for critical engagement",[74] condense important messages to a snappy "sound bite"[75]
and reduce coverage of parliamentary proceedings.[76]  Although some media scholars

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[68] Philip Senior, "Reporting the Great Debate: Press Coverage of Australian Televised
Leaders' Debates" [hereafter "The great debate"], *Australian Political Science Association
Conference*, Melbourne, 24-26 September 2007, retrieved on 29 January 2011 at
<arts.monash.edu.au/psi/news-and-events/apsa/...and.../senior.pdf>.

[69] Ben Quinn, "British election: Nick Clegg wins UK's first presidential-style TV debates",
*The Christian Science Monitor*, Boston, 16 April 2010, retrieved on 21 June 2010 at
<http://www.csmonitor.com/layout/set/print/content/view/print/295037>.

[70] Malcolm Farr, personal communication, 12 March 2010.

[71] Amanda Meade and Sally Jackson, "Worm returns as MasterChef cooks up a heated
debate", *The Australian*, Surry Hills, 22 July 2010, retrieved on 29 August 2010 at
<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/worm-returns-as-masterchef-cooks-up-a-
heated-debate/story-fn59niix-1225895503476>.

[72] *The Sunday Times*, Perth, 25 July 2010, p.1; *The West Australian*, Perth, 24 and 26 July
2010, p. 1.

[73] Frédérick Bastien, "Beyond Sex and Saxophones: Interviewing Practices and Political
Substance on Televised Talk Shows" [hereafter "Televised talk shows"], *The Canadian
Political Science Review*, vol 3, no. 2, June 2009, p. 70.

[74] Craig, *The media*, p. 15.

[75] Economou and Tanner, *Media,* p. 32.

[76] Rachel K. Gibson, Wainer Lusoli, Andrea Römmele and Stephen J. Ward, "Introduction:
Representative democracy and the Internet", in Rachel K. Gibson, Andrea Römmele and
Stephen J. Ward (eds), *Electronic Democracy: Mobilisation, organisation and participation
via new ICTs* [hereafter *Electronic democracy*], Routledge, London and New York, 2004, p.
2; Lloyd, *Parliament and the press*, p. 183.

have criticised this form of political communication, the "infotainment" programs, like the televised debates, "may be important sources of information about substantive policies".[77]

Just as Australia's leaders seemed initially reluctant to adopt the American-style "made for TV" political debates, their use of internet strategies has developed at a slower pace than US online media trends.  America's two major political parties used a wide range of websites that encouraged young people to vote in the 2000 election involving the Democratic nominee, Vice President Al Gore, and the Republican candidate, George W. Bush, as well as in 2004, when President Bush was being challenged by the Democratic Party's John Kerry.  Although Howard had been Australia's leader since 1996, his advisors created the nation's first prime ministerial website to communicate to constituents and uploaded his first political video on YouTube only in 2007.  In reaction, opposition leader Rudd implemented digital strategies that sparked the "YouTube Election" campaign in the same year.[78] According to public relations scholars, Howell and Da Silva, the Labor digital campaign attracted more interest and visitors because the party's use of YouTube, MySpace and Facebook "held greater potential to influence the decision-making process of first time voters".[79]  In contrast, many young voters found "a lack of online credibility" in the Liberals' tactics.[80]  Howell and Da Silva concluded that differing from the US political sphere, Australian first time voters seemed "sceptical" about the "sincerity" of online techniques to communicate policies and information in 2007.[81]  Soon afterwards, academics noted Prime Minister Rudd's early adoption of social media technologies and the Federal Government's expanded use of Twitter and Facebook.[82]  The use of Twitter and other social media played an important role in the relatively quick leadership change from Rudd to Gillard as the new prime

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[77] Bastien, "Televised talk shows", p. 84.

[78] Gwyneth Howell and Bruce Da Silva, "New media, first time voters and the 2007 Australian federal election" [hereafter "New media"], *Public Communication Review*, vol. 1, 2010, pp. 27-28.

[79] Howell and Da Silva, "New media", p. 32.

[80] Howell and Da Silva, "New media", p. 32.

[81] Howell and Da Silva, "New media", p. 33.

[82] Saunders, "The 21st century".

minister in June 2010.[83]  The extensive Rudd and Gillard online strategies are comparable with Curtin's innovative national and international radio broadcasts because these prime ministers implemented the same principle of embracing new media to connect to a wider audience.

The "intense media focus" on prime ministers enhanced their role as "the national opinion leader and mobiliser", according to Curran.[84]  Moreover, the proliferation of new technologies might diminish the power of major media owners. Online media offered "greater potential for interactivity" with audiences; consequently the relations between media producers, public figures and the public might "change fundamentally", Craig wrote.[85]  Even though "it was not possible to specify any one universal type of internet effect on participation", Gibson et al commented on the possibilities of information communication technologies to mobilise people and involve them in the political process.[86]  News consumers can become active "citizens of the media", according to Hartley, in an "emergent, globalizing, postmodern public sphere".[87]  Although there might be a risk of trivialising important political debates, the current prime minister's technique of using relatively new audiovisual media, such as the latest online communications, could be beneficial when engaging citizens in an informed, interactive dialogue about the nation.

Thus since Curtin's prime ministership, Australian political leaders have used relatively new media to increase journalists' coverage of their objectives and to connect to younger audiences.  Although historians have debated exactly when the concept of a distinctive generation of young adults began to emerge, the US

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[83] Courtney Trenwith, "Social networking spills the beans", *brisbanetimes.com.au*, Brisbane, 25 June 2010, retrieved on 30 July 2010 at <http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/technology/social-networking-spills-the-beans-20100624-z2v0.html>.

[84] James Curran, *The Power Of Speech: Australian Prime Ministers Defining the National Image*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 2004, p. 15.

[85] Craig, *The media*, pp. 10, 17.

[86] Gibson, Lusoli, Römmele and Ward, *Electronic democracy*, pp. 2-4.

[87] John Hartley, *Popular Reality: Journalism, Modernity, Popular Culture* [hereafter *Popular reality*]*, Arnold, London and New York, 1996, pp. 71-72.

sociologist, Talcott Parsons, was believed to have coined the term, "youth culture", in 1942.  Youth has been categorised as extending from the ages of 13 to 30. According to some scholars, the World War II sub-cultures represented a clash between totalitarianism and creativity, ranging from the anti-fascist German "swing kids" to the Nazi Hitler Youth and from the jazz-oriented European underground to Frank Sinatra fans.[88]  Through Curtin's use of the popular culture of films and radio to broadcast his media messages and peacetime agenda, he deliberately attempted to appeal to young Allied servicemen and women.  He seemed to understand the need to win their support at a time when the voting age threshold was 21 years old. During the 1940 campaign, for example, Curtin realised that he had "barely retained his seat" of Fremantle because the soldiers' votes "pushed him ahead in the race".[89] Similarly to Curtin, Whitlam made a concerted effort to attract first time voters with his 1972 campaign television commercials and "popular" theme tune.  Account executive Paul Jones, of the Hansen-Rubensohn-McCann-Erikson advertising agency, developed Whitlam's "It's Time" slogan.[90]  After Rubensohn's "brief dalliance" with the Liberals during Menzies' 1949 election campaign,[91] Labor managed to persuade the agency to resume ALP publicity in 1951.[92]  When publicising Whitlam in 1972, Jones reasoned colloquially about the importance of attracting the youth vote: "The kids are the fashion leaders.  If they dig, a lot of older groups dig."[93]  Furthermore, Whitlam lowered the franchise to 18 year olds.  In contrast, Howard did not seem to be as attuned with youth culture because he often chose to discuss his policies on Alan Jones' talkback radio program with audiences, who mainly included listeners more than 40 years old.[94]  During the televised 2007 election debate, an ABC commentator observed that Rudd's appeal seemed "better

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[88] Oded Heilbronner, "From a Culture for Youth to a Culture of Youth: Trends in the Historiography of Western Youth Cultures", *Contemporary European History*, vol. 17, no. 4, 2008, pp. 575-580.

[89] Kim C. Beazley, "Curtin as Leader of the ALP", JCPML, Bentley, 1997, retrieved on 22 June 2010 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/jcmemlect/beazley1997.html>; Oliver, *Unity is strength,* p. 154.

[90] Crawford, "Modernising Australian elections", p. 148.

[91] Crawford, "Modernising Australian elections", p. 143.

[92] Murray Goot, "Rubensohn, Solomon (Sim) (1904 – 1979)", *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 16, Melbourne University Press, 2002, pp. 144-146, retrieved on 17 January 2011 at <http://adbonline.anu.edu.au/biogs/A160171b.htm>.

[93] Robert Crawford, "Modernising Australian elections", p. 149.

[94] David Salter, "Who's for Breakfast, Mr Jones?", *The Monthly*, Collingwood, May 2006, retrieved on 22 June 2010 at <http://www.themonthly.com.au/monthly-essays-david-salter-whos-breakfast-mr-jones-sydney039s-talkback-titan-and-his-mythical-power>.

suited" for people under the age of 28, while Howard targeted "the older, more conservative voter".[95]   Also Rudd appeared on the youth entertainment program, *Rove Live*, and adopted media strategies instituted by Curtin to engage and involve more young audiences in politics.

Likewise, Curtin was keen to extend the public sphere by involving the press gallery in confidential war decisions on an egalitarian, professional basis, and also through his wife Elsie's encouragement of female reporters.  Their initiatives were evidenced in modern political journalism.  Through Curtin's union leadership in 1919, for example, the nation's first university courses were held for working news correspondents.[96]  As this thesis has argued, this was the first attempt to "professionalise" journalism in the nation.  The program initiated the development of an Australian journalism profession, whose members resembled the concept of a "knowledge class", as discussed in Chapter 2.[97]  Despite Curtin's support for tertiary journalism programs, education opportunities seemed to increase slowly, because several Australian World War II journalists indicated that they did not attend university.[98]  Although many women reporters relinquished their jobs to male employees immediately after the war, the Australian Journalists' Association has become more active in supporting female news correspondents since the 1970s.[99] Strong and Hannis wrote that, even though women comprised half of Australia's

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[95] Allan Pease, "TV debates: showbiz politics in action", *ABC News*, 22 October 2007, retrieved on 21 June 2010 at
<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2007/10/22/2066346.htm>.

[96] Lloyd Ross, *John Curtin: A Biography*, The Macmillan Company of Australia, South Melbourne, 1977, p. 77; Clem Lloyd, *Profession: Journalist* [hereafter *Journalist*]*,* Hale & Iremonger, Sydney, 1985, pp. 165-167.

[97] John Frow, *Cultural Studies & Cultural Value*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1995; Hartley, *Popular reality,* p. 241; Andrew Milner, *Literature, culture and society*, Routledge, New York, 2005, pp. 37-41; Joe Moran, *Interdisciplinarity*, Routledge, London and New York, 2002, pp. 75-81.

[98] Alexander, "Alexander interview"; Chamberlain, "Chamberlain interview"; John Commins, interviewed by Mel Pratt, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01092/1, 22-26 May 1971, transcript np; Cox, "Cox interview"; Frank Davidson, interviewed by Isla Macphail, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00127/1, 24 January 1996, transcript np; Douglas, "Douglas interview"; Peter Ewing, interviewed by Bill Bunbury, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00492/2, 15 December 1999, transcript np; Allan Fraser, interviewed by Mel Pratt, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00550, August 1972–January 1973, transcript np; Alan D. Reid, interviewed by Mel Pratt, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00501, 4 October 1972 and 28 February 1973, transcript np.

[99] Lloyd, *Journalist*, p. 305.

population in 2005, their research indicated that female journalists accounted for only 34 per cent of bylined stories.[100]  Advancements had been made, but women were still underrepresented among senior editorial positions.  Also Errington and Miragliotta noted a growing "professionalization of journalistic standards".  Their research showed that the proportion of journalists entering the Federal Parliament had been steadily declining, beginning initially in the 1910s and especially since the 1930s.  The professional boundaries between Canberra-based reporters and federal politicians appeared "robust" and might help to strengthen media independence in the future.[101]  Thus Curtin's vision of tertiary trained professional journalists seems to have been partially fulfilled.  Although he and his wife aimed to involve more working male and female journalists in political and public spheres, his democratic goals have remained partially unachieved because Australians are still engaged in the "incomplete project of democracy", as Mickler and Lucy have written.[102]  While today's journalism workforce is better educated, compared with the 1940s, John and Elsie Curtin's ideals of liberty, freedom and democracy have not been fully achieved.

**Curtin's influence on Australia's international news reporting**

As part of his vision of an expanded public sphere, Curtin encouraged more Australian journalists and editors to visit and report on Allied war zones; likewise, he facilitated more overseas correspondents' trips to his nation.  His sponsorship of cross-national correspondent exchanges was discussed in Chapter 8.  This thesis argues that Curtin's international news priority made a lasting impact on Australian reporting.  In 1961 a visiting US journalism professor, W. Sprague Holden, commented, "Australian newsmen must be among the most peripatetic in the world" because their wartime experiences had highlighted the importance of foreign news

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[100] Cathy Strong and Grant Hannis, "The visibility of female journalists at Australian and New Zealand newspapers: the good news and the bad news", *Australian Journalism Review*, vol. 29, no. 1, 2007, p. 115.

[101] Wayne Errington and Narelle Miragliotta, "From the Gallery to the Parliament: Journalists in the House of Representatives and Senate, 1901-2007" [hereafter "Journalists"], *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 55, no. 4, 2009, pp. 542-543.

[102] Niall Lucy and Steve Mickler, *The War on Democracy: Conservative Opinion in the Australian Press* [hereafter *The war on democracy*]*,* University of Western Australia Press, Crawley, 2006, p. 98.

gathering, meaning "the tradition of distant and frequent travel seems a built-in part of Australian newspapering".[103]   While the Australian Associated Press had been established in 1935 to provide "basic news",[104] the nation's metropolitan dailies increasingly maintained London offices, stationed journalists in New York and Washington DC, sent correspondents to Asia and the Middle East, and used Britain's Reuters and the US Associated Press by the 1960s.[105]

As part of my Master's research, I interviewed senior editors of eight daily Australian newspapers about their views of foreign news coverage in 1996.[106]   The editors agreed the quantity of foreign news items had increased substantially in the Australian press, as well as in their particular newspapers.  They said they had allocated more space for overseas news because readers were increasingly interested in current world events and also advanced technology made it easier to publish international updates.  The survey responses indicated a move away from the traditionally strong interest in Britain and the US, and a trend towards more Asian coverage because of the increasingly interlinked economies in the region.[107]  *The Australian* deputy editor, Paul Austin, explained news attitudes had shifted dramatically since Menzies' first prime ministerial term from 1939 to 1941, when:

> We regarded ourselves as British subjects.  Many Australians, including Menzies, called Britain "home".  They regarded it as odd if a newspaper set up in Australia did not have news about "home" – home being Britain.[108]

Austin explained that in 1996: "Our readers … particularly have an interest in more than just Australia, more than just the traditional Anglo-Saxon world".  Austin added that although overseas news bureaus were expensive enterprises for *The Australian* and similar news organisations in the 1990s, they maintained these offices to enhance

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[103] W. Sprague Holden, *Australia Goes To Press* [hereafter *Australia goes to press*], Greenwood Press, Westport, 1961, p. 127.
[104] Holden, *Australia goes to press*, p. 127.
[105] Holden, *Australia goes to press*, pp. 121-128.
[106] The surveys and interview respondents included senior newspaper editors from the following eight newspapers: *The Advertiser*; *The Age*; *The Australian*; *The Canberra Times*; *The Courier-Mail*; *The Northern Territory Times*; *The Sydney Morning Herald*; *The West Australian*. The editors' responses were included in: Coatney, Australian media coverage.
[107] Coatney, Australian media coverage, pp. 31-35.
[108] Paul Austin, cited in Coatney, Australian media coverage, p. 45.

their reputations for providing comprehensive international news.[109]  Thus Curtin's insistence that Australian wartime editors publish more world news reports made an impact on the nation's media profession as they shifted from their pre-war parochialism and opened more overseas bureaus.

In 2008, I conducted a follow-up interview with *The Age* news editor, Tom Ormonde, who had participated in my 1996 survey.  Ormonde said the quantity of international news had continued to increase, although he was uncertain whether the quality had similarly improved.  He asked: "[H]ave we become more or less culturally sensitive and tolerant in our coverage of other nations?  And I'm not sure.  But more sophisticated?  I would say yes."  Ormonde added that, "[s]ome Western bias is inevitable in our coverage of the world" because "it is inevitably coloured by the cultural prism through which we view it".[110]  The quality of foreign news coverage was influenced by the mainstream Australian media's use of narrow sources, their preference for Anglo-Saxon news agencies, such as Reuters and the Associated Press, and their exclusion of other English-language reports, such as those produced by Antara in Indonesia, Agence France-Presse and Itar-Tass in Russia.

While the overseas bureaus were prestigious, their high maintenance costs also hampered international news reporting.  For example, *The Age* and *The Sydney Morning Herald* – both owned by Fairfax Media Limited – decided to close their shared Japanese bureau that was being operated by a full-time correspondent.  Ormonde explained this decision was "partly a reflection of the massive costs of sustaining a bureau there, as well as the relative decline in the importance of Japan" to Australian trade.[111]  Research revealed that the factors limiting Australian newspapers' international coverage were also common problems that inhibited other

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[109] Austin, cited in Coatney, Australian media coverage, pp. 41, 42.
[110] Tom Ormonde, personal communication, 24 September 2009.
[111] Tom Ormonde, personal communication, 24 September 2009.

western media organisations' portrayal of developing nations.[112]  Although some of the more "serious" daily newspapers, such as *The Age*, *The Australian* and *The Sydney Morning Herald*, still supported international news, many regional papers lacked world sections.  The Australian Press Council found that foreign affairs comprised only 2.33 per cent of all of the nation's metropolitan and regional papers in 2005.[113]  Three years later, the Australian Press Council stated the nation's media were relying increasingly upon press release material and news agency feeds from affiliated overseas newspapers.[114]  In the same report, Castillo wrote of an emphasis on US events to the detriment of coverage of Asian natural disasters in selected *Sydney Morning Herald* issues in 2008.[115]  While shortcomings have remained in the Australian media's portrayal of the world, Curtin's active support of foreign news correspondents, both at home and abroad, arguably set in motion an increasing interest in world events among the nation's metropolitan broadsheet dailies.

**Survey results**

As twenty-first century British journalists commended Churchill's "rapport with the media"[116] and contemporary commentators praised Roosevelt's radio broadcasts for

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[112] Leen D'Haenens, Nicholas Jankowski and Ard Heuvelman, "News in online and print newspapers: differences in reader consumption and recall", *New Media & Society*, vol. 6, no. 3, 2004, pp. 363-382; Maria M. Garcia and Guy J. Golan, "Not Enough Time to Cover all the News: An Analysis of International News Coverage in Time and Newsweek", *Journal of Global Mass Communication*, vol. 1, nos 1-2, 2008 pp. 52-53; Mike Gasher, "Researchers explore the geography of online news", *The Canadian Journalism Project*, 18 June 2008, retrieved on 7 March 2009 at <http://jsource.ca/english_new/detail.php?id=2560>; Mike Gasher and Sandra Gabrielle, "Increasing circulation? A comparative news-flow study of the Montreal Gazette's Hard-copy and On-line Editions", *Journalism Studies*, vol. 5, no. 3, 2004, pp. 311-23.
[113] Australian Press Council, *The State of the News Print Media in Australia Report 2006*, Sydney, 2006, retrieved on 7 November 2009 at <http://www.presscouncil.org.au>.
[114] Ken McKinnon, "Trends", *The State of the News Print Media in Australia Report 2008*, Australian Press Council, Sydney, 2008, pp. 1-1–1-6, retrieved on 7 March 2009 at <http://www.presscouncil.org.au>.
[115] Antonio Castillo, "Four weeks in the World of The Sydney Morning Herald", *The State of the News Print Media in Australia Report 2008*, Australian Press Council, Sydney, 2008, pp. 6-14 – 6-16, retrieved on 7 March 2009 at <http://www.presscouncil.org.au>.
[116] Hardman, "Churchill's relationship with the Mail".  Also see Simon Tait, "A war leader's love affair with the press", *The Times,* London, 8 March 2008, p. 80.

their "emotional appeal to the US people",[117] this study set out to examine Australian reporters' views of Curtin.  Since he initiated a number of journalism precedents, I sent a questionnaire to news correspondents in 2009-10 to ascertain the extent of his legacy for the press gallery and political journalism.  As I outlined in Chapter 1, a majority of journalists in my survey did not know about Curtin.[118]  Responses included the following:  "Unfortunately I don't know enough about John Curtin to respond in any meaningful sense to the questions you have posed."[119]  "I know I'm no spring chicken, but I was not around in Curtin's day.  Nor have I made a study of Curtin's relations with the media."[120]  Although World War II correspondents emphasised Curtin's greatness as a prime minister,[121] there does not appear to have been a tradition in Australian news offices of passing these stories to younger colleagues.  As Mickler and Lucy have argued, an understanding of the nation's past is essential for Australians to make progress in the future.  "History, in short, *matters*", they wrote.[122]  While many of the survey respondents seemed generally indifferent towards Curtin's wartime role, other government and media initiatives have promoted his achievements.  The John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library, which was Australia's first prime ministerial library, opened at Curtin University in 1998 to recognise his memory by facilitating research and providing educational and public outreach programs.  Also some decades after his death, two film tributes focused on his leadership during the 1942 Japanese attacks.[123]  Over time, more Australian filmmakers moved away from the "simple man" legend,[124] which was promoted in the wartime media coverage of his funeral, and preferred to remember him as a

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[117] Public Broadcasting Service (producer), *The Online NewsHour* (television program – transcript),Washington DC, 27 November 2008, retrieved on 12 December 2008 at <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/white_house/july-dec08/historians_11-27.html>.  Also see Edward Rothstein, "F.D.R. and the Stuff of His War", *The New York Times*, New York, 6 February 2006, retrieved on 19 January 2011 at <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/02/03/arts/design/03fdr.html>.

[118] See Appendix 8 for the survey methodology, questionnaire and related material.

[119] Personal communication, 11 November 2009.

[120] Personal communication, 14 December 2009.

[121] For example, Alexander, "Alexander interview"; Douglas, "Douglas interview"; Holt, "Holt interview".  Also see Appendix 13.

[122] Lucy and Mickler, *The war on democracy*, p. 147.

[123] Apollo Films (producer), *Curtin* (telemovie for Australian Broadcasting Corporation) [hereafter *Curtin*], Australia, 2007; ScreenSound Australia, *John Curtin, Memoirs* (documentary) [hereafter *Memoirs*], JCPML, JCPML acc. no. 00791/1, Bentley, 1965.

[124] 20th Century Fox-Movietone News (producer), *Nation Mourns John Curtin* (newsreel)*, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00033/1, 1945.

tough, self-assured leader, who helped to save the nation.[125]  The survey respondents' seeming lack of knowledge about Curtin and his journalism strategies contrasts with contemporaneous British and US media images of Churchill's famous wartime newsreels and patriotic broadcast speeches, along with Roosevelt's popular "fireside chats".[126]


This finding underscores Australian journalism's lack of knowledge about itself.  Indeed, "there is not much of a history of journalism" in the nation, according to Curthoys et al.[127]  Journalism scholar Henningham agrees: "After 200 years of Australian history, we have not produced a comprehensive study of Australian journalism."[128]  Furthermore, previously published research suggested that many recently graduated Australian news journalists did not know about their contemporary history.  Some news editors have described these younger employees as being "relatively oblivious to historic events".  For example, one newly employed journalism graduate asked colleagues in a television newsroom: "Who's Gough Whitlam?"[129]  This thesis aims to contribute to solving part of the problem by adding to our knowledge of Curtin and his mass communication strategies.  The following section focuses on the findings of my survey.  For the actual questions asked, see Appendix 8d.

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[125] Apollo Films, *Curtin*; ScreenSound Australia, *Memoirs*.

[126] Caryn Coatney, "John Curtin and Franklin Delano Roosevelt: A Cross-National Case Study of Media Agenda Setting in the U.S.-Australian Alliance, 1941-1945", *Midwest Political Science Association: 68th Annual National Conference*, Chicago, 22 April 2010, retrieved on 15 May 2010 at <http://conference.mpsanet.org/Online/Search.aspx?section=27&session=21>.

[127] Ann Curthoys, Julianne Schultz, and Paula Hamilton, "A history of Australian journalism, 1890 to the present: report on a research project" [hereafter "A history of journalism"], *Australian Studies in Journalism*, no. 2, 1992, p. 45.

[128] John Henningham, cited in Denis Cryle, "Australian newspaper industry: Intercolonial perspectives" [hereafter "Australian newspaper history"], *Australian Studies in Journalism*, no. 1, 1992, p. 101.

[129] Margaret Van Heekeren, "Who's Gough Whitlam? What journalism graduates don't know about the past and what news editors want them to know" [hereafter "Who's Gough Whitlam?"], *Australian Journalism Review*, vol. 27, no. 1, 2005, pp. 209-218.

**Findings of the survey: A Curtin legacy?**

While only a small minority of those surveyed had something to say about Curtin's legacy, the interesting points that they did make were that they viewed him as being more than only a wartime leader.[130]  All three respondents focused on Curtin's stature in international relations.  Referring to scholarly assessments of his role, former ABC Radio news editor, Bob Wurth, said: "Primarily, his legacy demonstrates a very 'hands on' approach to international relations by an Australian leader."  He added: "This is a lesson for modern leaders to take heed of."  He cited the example of Curtin's initiation of "long, private conversations" with the Japanese envoy to Australia, Tatsuo Kawai, "in an effort to prevent war" in mid-1941.  "Curtin was prepared to sound out, while deeply suspicious of Japan, the possibility of reaching some sort of agreement to prevent the two countries from going to war."  As a result, he and Kawai "spoke to each other from the heart" and "[t]he relationship was becoming personal", Wurth observed.  After the Pearl Harbor bombing on 7 December 1941, Curtin abandoned negotiations with Japan and decided to "to act in the immediate interest of Australia's survival".  Wurth explained:

> You could call Curtin's policy one of shrewdly keeping the door open: 'keep talking, don't be bluffed and be prepared to change focus and direction at any time in the national interest'.[131]

Curtin emphasised secret diplomacy with the enemy, until it was no longer possible to avoid a war.

This approach contrasted with Menzies' strategies in Vietnam, where the scale of Australian military involvement was greater than anything encountered since World War II.  According to historian Jeffrey Grey, the US Government requested

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[130] Correspondent A, confidential personal communication, 30 March 2010; Shane Wright, personal communication, 27 December 2009; Bob Wurth, personal communication, 24 November 2009.

[131] Wurth, personal communication, 24 November 2009.  His observations were based on his research and publications including Bob Wurth, "Menzies, Fadden, Curtin and the Japanese Envoy", JCPML, Bentley, 2009, retrieved on 16 May 2010 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/envoy/index.html>; Bob Wurth, *Saving Australia: Curtin's secret peace with Japan,* Lothian Books, South Melbourne, 2006.

Australian military aid to help assist the South Vietnamese to overcome the Viet Cong guerrillas and North Vietnamese troops.  For this purpose, Menzies offered Australian troops to the US President, Lyndon B. Johnson, on 7 April 1965 before a request was made by the Vietnamese Prime Minister, Phan Huy Quat.  On 29 April, the Australian and US ambassadors in Saigon "engineered" the Vietnamese Government's appeal for Menzies' support.  As part of the request, Vietnamese officials stated they had received details of Australia's offer of troops and were pleased to accept this proposal.  Grey wrote, "the question of the 'request' … was to play an important part in the parliamentary debate in Australia over the commitment of troops to Vietnam".  Instead of pursuing diplomacy as Curtin did in the lead-up to World War II, Menzies embarked on his Vietnam commitment in the expectation that this would "bind the Americans more closely to Australia" and he would receive "reciprocal support from the US in Australia's hour of need".[132]  Although Curtin had adopted the innovative strategy of trying first to reason with an enemy, his successors did not always follow this policy during major conflicts.

Moreover another survey respondent, *The West Australian* economics editor Shane Wright, noted Curtin's achievements in foreign relations, particularly in focusing on Australia's alliances with Britain and the US, but also his economic policy in the 1942 "change" in the "financial relationship between Federal and State Governments".[133]  He was referring to the commonwealth acquiring all income tax as revenue.[134]  A Canberra press gallery journalist, Correspondent A, explained: "He was one of the few [prime ministers] who earned respect across the political divide. He is remembered as an astute wartime leader, standing up for Australia's interests."[135]  All three respondents indicated that Curtin did not only react to crises of the times.  They observed that he made a lasting impact on Australia's relations with the world through his development of respectful relationships with potential adversaries, his success in protecting the national interest, and his alliances with Britain and the US.  It seemed to be ironic that most of the journalists said they knew

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[132] Jeffrey Grey, *A Military History of Australia*, Cambridge University Press, Port Melbourne, third edition, 2008, pp. 236-250.
[133] Wright, personal communication, 27 December 2009.
[134] Oliver, *Unity is strength,* p. 163.
[135] Correspondent A, confidential personal communication, 30 March 2010.

little about Curtin during the survey, but they benefited from the strategies that he had put in place.

Although none of the journalists surveyed knew about Curtin's radio and film strategies, a minority of this group focused on his innovative press conferences.[136] Wurth spoke of Curtin's ability "to speak secretly, but freely and very frankly, to representatives of the Australian press and news agencies during the war years". Wurth said:

> The press gallery in Canberra often knew more about what was going on in the war than some of Curtin's own ministers … there was an unprecedented level of trust between the prime minister and the press at that time.[137]

Wurth's comment was corroborated by wartime journalist, Don Whitington, who reflected that "a select band" of reporters attended Curtin's briefings and as a result, they "knew more about the secret history of the war than most Members of Parliament excepting the War Cabinet and the Advisory War Council".[138]  While this type of briefing would not be conducive to the good management of government today, Curtin was "aided" by "fairly strict censorship", as Wurth noted.  He said Curtin's most significant legacy for modern political communications was "building and maintaining trust with senior journalists in Canberra", thereby providing "some lessons on how a prime minister can relate with the media".[139]  Wright (*The West Australian*) agreed that Curtin's "use of 'off-the-record' discussions with journalists was an important development in the government-press relationship".  Wright wrote: "Curtin's relationship with the gallery was an intimate one – they were almost as equals."[140]  ABC Radio Australia correspondent, Michael Cavanagh, suggested that Curtin's relationships with journalists were "probably more personal" than the current government-media associations.  During Curtin's terms, the parliament and

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[136] Michael Cavanagh, personal communication, 27 January 2010; Editor B, confidential personal communication, 24 March 2010; Wright, personal communication, 27 December 2009; Wurth, personal communication, 24 November 2009.

[137] Wurth, personal communication, 24 November 2009.

[138] Don Whitington, *Strive to be Fair: An unfinished autobiography* [hereafter *Strive to be fair*], Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1977, p. 77.

[139] Wurth, personal communication, 24 November 2009.

[140] Wright, personal communication, 27 December 2009.

the press gallery were smaller with fewer members "and it was possible to know each other", Cavanagh wrote.  He added, "Canberra was also smaller and included more interactions between staff, politicians and the media" during the wartime years.[141]

Perhaps too, there were fewer incentives for journalists to publicise politicians' private lives back then; legal scholars noted that modern advancements in electronics and microprocessing have encouraged some contemporary journalists to pursue tactics more akin to intrusive espionage.[142]  Another journalist, Editor B, also referred to Curtin's confidential office briefings, when he "operated on a great deal of trust with journalists and this was mostly not breached".[143]  In his autobiography, Whitington recalled that the "Circus" of select journalists "never" publicised a security secret because they respected Curtin and understood "the enormity of breaching the confidence he had reposed in them".[144]  Although Whitington might have been exaggerating slightly, given Packer's attempts to defy censors when publishing *The Daily Telegraph* in 1944[145] and Curtin's warning that he might cancel his briefings due to a news leak about Australia's uranium agreement in the same year,[146] other wartime reporters testified that they voluntarily upheld the unwritten confidentiality codes.[147]  Correspondent A returned a completed questionnaire, indicating that she did not know about Curtin's use of films, radio broadcasts and a full-time press secretary.  She wrote the following answer: "Sorry, I wasn't aware of these developments under the Curtin Government."[148]  The questionnaire results indicated that a small minority of survey participants praised Curtin's "off-the-record" press gallery interviews for developing "trust" and relating well with journalists.

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[141] Cavanagh, personal communication, 27 January 2010.

[142] Joseph Fernandez, *Media Law Handbook* [hereafter *Media law*], Network Books, Australia Research Institute, Perth, fifth edition, 2007, p. 105.

[143] Editor B, confidential personal communication, 24 March 2010.

[144] Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, p. 78.

[145] Holt, "Holt interview".

[146] Cox, "Typescript reports", 3 July 1944; Lloyd and Hall, *Backroom briefings*, pp. 213-214, 228.

[147] E.g. Alexander, "Alexander interview"; Cox, "Cox interview".

[148] Correspondent A, confidential personal communication, 30 March 2010.

When asked to compare the current prime minister's press gallery relationships with those of John Curtin, a small group of senior journalists stated that interactions with the government had become more official since 1945.[149]  While Wright (*The West Australian*) described Curtin's press gallery associations as "intimate" because journalists were treated "almost as equals", he added there was "no such relationship now" between the prime minister and the media.  Wright noted: "There remains a degree of trust, but it is a highly conditioned version."[150]  Cavanagh (ABC Radio) and Correspondent A described current government-media relationships as "more distant".[151]  Also Wurth explained:

> I can't see any evidence of the sort of situation of genuine across-the-board trust that occurred in the war years, when senior journalists in the press gallery were called into the prime minister's office as a group and were given a damned good briefing of what was likely to happen.[152]

Editor B asserted, "there is no prime minister [now] who would give that level of confidential information" that Curtin had provided to journalists.  "I'm sure you wouldn't have a comparable situation now", she added.  Governments had developed "more of an arm's length relationship" with reporters.  "Perhaps I'd say that it's a less intimate relationship than it was", she noted.[153]  These survey participants talked about a relative decline in trust generally between politicians and journalists.  This finding resonates with previously published research on the "more distant" relationship between contemporary journalists and politicians, compared with their "reasonably civilised" associations in "the early days of federal politics".[154]

Historical, technological and social conditions contributed to more aloof relationships between the press gallery and the parliament, according to the survey

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[149] Cavanagh, personal communication, 27 January 2010; Correspondent A, confidential personal communication, 30 March 2010; Editor B, confidential personal communication, 24 March 2010; Wright, personal communication, 27 December 2009; Wurth, personal communication, 24 November 2009.

[150] Wright, personal communication, 27 December 2009.

[151] Cavanagh, personal communication, 27 January 2010; Correspondent A, confidential personal communication, 30 March 2010.

[152] Wurth, personal communication, 24 November 2009.

[153] Editor B, confidential personal communication, 24 March 2010.

[154] Economou and Tanner, *Media*, pp. 142-143.

respondents.  They said such diverse factors as Australia's involvement in controversial wars, parliamentary expansion, technological advancements and modern newsroom practices had created more barriers between politicians and journalists.  Editor B explained, "there has been a bit of a sea change" in government-media relationships since the Curtin era.  Immediately after the war, conservative politicians had dismantled a symbol of bipartisanship, the Advisory War Council (AWC), which Curtin had instigated in 1940 when, as the Labor opposition leader, he had suggested to Menzies to form this organisation.[155]  Almost two months after Curtin's death, the Country Party's Arthur Fadden told war councillors there was no need to maintain the organisation.  Prime Minister Chifley objected, recalling Curtin's "advice" to establish "a peacetime counterpart" of the AWC to ensure continuity of defence policy; however, he reluctantly acceded to the conservatives' request.  The AWC was disbanded on 30 August 1945 and this might have contributed to the increasingly adversarial tone of parliamentary debates in the next decade.[156]  Editor B recalled that during the Cold War era of the 1950s, "a bitter type of politics" between left-wing and right-wing parties influenced the press gallery.[157]  An example of this was the Liberal-Country Coalition's federal election campaign in late 1955, which has been described by historian Bobbie Oliver as being "particularly vitriolic",[158] as well as "the birth of a conservative party"[159] that adopted the title, Democratic Labor Party (DLP), in 1957.  Some Labor members decided to join the DLP, which developed slowly and mainly recruited Roman Catholics, who believed the nation was in danger of communism threats.[160]  Yet decades later, the DLP continued to describe Curtin as being a "foremost, moderate-

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[155] Heather Campbell, "The War Cabinet & Advisory War Council", in "Doing the best for the country", JCPML, Bentley, 2004, retrieved on 17 February 2010 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/behindthescenes/index.html>; National Archives of Australia, "Fact sheet 127 – War Cabinet records", Canberra, 2000, retrieved on 16 February 2010 at <http://www.naa.gov.au/about-us/publications/fact-sheets/fs127.asp>.

[156] "Advisory War Council Minutes, Records of Frederick Shedden", JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00928/9, 30 August 1945, pp. 10, 11, 1083.

[157] Editor B, confidential personal communication, 24 March 2010.

[158] Oliver, *Unity is strength*, p. 220.

[159] Oliver, *Unity is strength*, p. 219.

[160] Oliver, *Unity is strength*, pp. 219-221.

reformist and inspiring" leader, an indication that his enduring appeal transcended partisan divisions.[161]

Moreover, Editor B said the 1960s Vietnam War protests "divided the community more" and affected journalists' interactions with politicians.[162] According to Bobbie Oliver, 1966 was a "turbulent year for anti-war demonstrators".[163]  While protest rallies attracted large attendances, police officers reacted violently when several young men burned their draft cards during a public demonstration in Forrest Place, Perth, on 11 June.  Labor's anti-war stance might have contributed to the party's "crushing defeat" in the 1966 federal election.[164] Editor B said this divisive atmosphere adversely affected journalists' relations with the Federal Government; they became more guarded towards each other and "there's not as much trust".[165]  The media scholar, Rodney Tiffen, wrote that beginning in the 1966 election campaign, journalists increasingly emphasised politicians' "gaffes", "mis-statements" and "their lack of mastery of detail" when giving television and radio interviews.[166]  News audiences seemed more likely to be aware of these gaffes during election campaigns, when politicians increasingly talked in front of radio microphones and television cameras; this subjected them to "extra scrutiny and intensity" and opponents seized opportunities "to embarrass" them.[167]  As a result, successive prime ministers were not as casual as Curtin at his press interviews, when he was usually "relaxing in a swivel chair … leaning back and 'thinking out loud', to use his own phrase".[168]  Thus the expansion of instantaneous communications meant that prime ministers chose their words more carefully when speaking to the media. Also Editor B noted the tone of "bitter politics" contrasted with the "united" atmosphere of "the Curtin era", when journalists cooperated with the prime minister's wartime censorship policies.

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[161] Democratic Labor Party, "Our History", Melbourne, 2010, retrieved on 7 July 2010 at <http://www.dlp.org.au/index.php?page=our-history>.

[162] Editor B, confidential personal communication, 24 March 2010.

[163] Oliver, *Unity is strength*, p. 239.

[164] Bobbie Oliver, *Unity is strength*, p. 239.

[165] Editor B, confidential personal communication, 24 March 2010.

[166] Rodney Tiffen, *News & Power* [hereafter *News & power*], Allen & Unwin, Sydney, Wellington, London and Boston, 1989, p. 134.

[167] Tiffen, *News & power*, p. 136.

[168] Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, p. 77.

As journalistic competition intensified among an increased number of media outlets, reporters became more reluctant to withhold information from their audiences.[169]  After the press gallery's relocation to the new and more spacious Federal Parliament House in 1988, it was "unusual to bump into the [prime minister] in corridors", as Correspondent A stated.  She suggested the government-media "relationship is more distant given the increasing number of reporters in the gallery and press secs [secretaries]".  Furthermore, the Federal Government's media office "has become more professionalised" with "more people, who act as a go-between and in some cases, a barrier between senior politicians – the ministers – and journalists", Correspondent A wrote.[170]  Some survey participants referred to the extra pressures associated with an accelerated news cycle including 24-hour online media networks.[171]  Wright stated more media outlets "demand something every day. The size of the [media] corps, scope and timeliness of [news] coverage mean a focus on television identities".  As the Australian Government generally became more complicated, politicians increasingly released targeted messages to niche news markets, resulting in a "move from broadcasting to 'narrowcasting' for both media and government", Wright explained.[172]  The growth of "narrowcasting" meant that political candidates increasingly relied on personalised appeals to limited segments of their electorates.[173]  Cavanagh agreed that politicians aimed for "more controlled use of different [media] outlets for specific means".  The reporting trend was a "greater turnover of news"; since "the cycle is faster", journalists were finding there was "not the time to consider" complex issues, Cavanagh wrote.[174]  While these respondents indicated they preferred the informal press interactions developed by Curtin, they did not make any personal criticisms of his successors' attitudes towards journalists.  Instead they conveyed that external factors possibly outside of the prime minister's sphere of influence, such as the proliferation of online media demands, an

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[169] Editor B, confidential personal communication, 24 March 2010.

[170] Correspondent A, confidential personal communication, 30 March 2010.

[171] Cavanagh, personal communication, 27 January 2010; Correspondent A, confidential personal communication, 30 March 2010; Editor B, confidential personal communication, 24 March 2010; Wright, personal communication, 27 December 2009; Wurth, personal communication, 24 November 2009.

[172] Wright, personal communication, 27 December 2009.

[173] Michael S. Kang, "From Broadcasting to Narrowcasting: The Emerging Challenge for Campaign Finance Law", *George Washington Law Review*, vol. 73, no. 5/6, 2005, p. 1070.

[174] Cavanagh, personal communication, 27 January 2010.

enlarged press gallery and divisive politics, had contributed to more impersonal associations between journalists and Australian national leaders.

In answering the survey question about relationships with the prime minister outside of the press gallery, a few journalists focused on changes in the nature of the prime minister's media interactions.  Wright (*The West Australian)* stated that away from Canberra, Curtin's relationships with journalists were "very restricted because of the communications system" that limited media associations in the 1940s, whereas the "current [prime minister] is much more aligned with individual media markets and this is much broader – including FM radio, current affairs television and entertainment TV".[175]  Correspondent A compared the professional associations between contemporary politicians and reporters with those of World War II.  She wrote: "I think that the [prime minister] is more guarded now, which is only to be expected.  I've been to the [prime minister's residential] Lodge a few times; he has always been welcoming, but gives nothing of note away."[176]  Cavanagh (ABC Radio) observed that different journalists had developed varied relationships and access to the national leader. "Most of the access is largely often due to the organisation, and how the [prime minister] and minders view it, and what audience it will reach", he noted.[177]  While respondents seemed to view the wartime era as one of technological limitations that posed challenges for journalists outside of Canberra, they also indicated Curtin provided more confidential, newsworthy information to senior press gallery reporters.  They did not refer to Curtin's overseas radio broadcasts or to his media conferences in Britain, Canada and the US in 1944.  This chapter has so far considered respondents' answers to the historical questions about Curtin.  The next sections will focus more on journalists' views of more contemporary government-media relationships.

When asked about their professional relationships with the prime minister, two senior federal journalists said their political associations seemed to have

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[175] Wright, personal communication, 27 December 2009.
[176] Correspondent A, confidential personal communication, 30 March 2010.
[177] Cavanagh, personal communication, 27 January 2010.

diminished since the opening of the new Federal Parliament House in 1988.[178]
Although 1920s journalists complained about the cramped press facilities in the first
Canberra Parliament House,[179] a later generation of correspondents saw advantages
in working in such close proximity to parliamentarians. *The Daily Telegraph* chief
political reporter, Malcolm Farr, recalled, "there was a very communal atmosphere in
the mid-1970s in the old parliament house". The interior was "much smaller so that
you couldn't avoid people", he explained. "Back then, MPs would leave home and
not see it again for quite a while. Air travel was still a luxury." At the time,
Canberra's "limited bars and restaurants" facilitated "more unstructured mingling"
between journalists and politicians, Farr said.[180] The political editor for News
Limited's Sunday newspapers and *The Australian* columnist, Glenn Milne, agreed:

> In the old parliament house, people lived by a cheek by jowl existence. It
> was crowded and there was a very active non-members' bar, where you
> mingled with politicians who had nowhere to go, except the non-members'
> bar. There was a lot of intermingling with parliamentarians and press
> secretaries.[181]

The "vast new building" seemed be "very isolating", Milne remembered. He said:

> … every MP had their own facilities, their own bar ... and this affected the
> interaction with the press gallery to the prime minister. People needed to
> walk vast distances to see a politician, so there was a lot more reliance on
> phones.[182]

Farr stated, "now, there's a different approach ... you have to make an appointment to
go out to dinner with a MP or to have a drink with him". He often saw
parliamentarians with their young families and "we're familiar with each other". He

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[178] Malcolm Farr, personal communication, 12 March 2010; Glenn Milne, personal
communication, 17 November 2009.
[179] Lloyd, *Parliament and the press*, p. 82.
[180] Farr, personal communication, 12 March 2010.
[181] Milne, personal communication, 17 November 2009.
[182] Milne, personal communication, 17 November 2009.

added, however:

> "I don't think any journalist has any friendships with politicians these days ...
> Some MPs see me more socially – it's not a great friendship, but it's a matter
> of respect and enjoying people's company."

According to Farr, more social meetings with MPs would be helpful because "[i]f I
know more about them … then it's more likely that I won't make incorrect
assumptions about them".[183]  Both Canberra journalists indicated they would like to
see a restoration of informal associations that would assist their professional news
reporting.

Other respondents suggested that politicians had become more cautious
towards the media.  ABC Radio "AM" host Tony Eastley said:

> From a historic point of view, the contacts between the political apparatchiks,
> ministers and their officers, reporters in Canberra and elsewhere, is that it has
> been more at arm's length.[184]

Chief of Staff C said prime ministers had progressively become "more controlling of
the message of the day".  He explained: "There is always an element of separation in
how much information that governments and journalists want made public."[185]
Outside of Canberra, Curtin FM news editor, Les Welsh, noticed a trend away from
socialising between politicians and journalists in Western Australia.  He recalled:

> I would attend politicians' Christmas parties on either side of politics.  Once
> upon a time they always had Christmas parties, but it doesn't happen so much
> now, perhaps because of the drink-driving laws.[186]

Perhaps politicians had distanced themselves from journalists because they were
more concerned that an "off-the-record remark" might become front-page news the
next day.  Welsh said that more recently: "We hear about the politicians' formal
functions and a lot of the time, we will go there to ask them about something else, to

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[183] Farr, personal communication, 12 March 2010.
[184] Tony Eastley, personal communication, 9 December 2009.
[185] Chief of Staff C, confidential personal communication, 23 March 2010.
[186] Les Welsh, personal communication, 4 December 2009.

ask the hard questions."  Respondents indicated that due to a decline in professional interactions with politicians, journalists were finding mobile telephones and the internet to be helpful tools to gather information.  Les Walsh explained that he conducted more mobile telephone interviews and frequently used the internet for research purposes:

> Certainly mobile phones have changed the nature of journalism.  We do a lot
> of phone interviews because it can be the only way we can get to some people
> and this is used widely.[187]

Before the internet's advent, "it was much more time-consuming to find out about politicians' backgrounds", he said.

> We use the internet to find out the backgrounds of politicians and we find all
> sorts of things that people really didn't know about them before.  Some of the
> things are quite interesting.  It gives us more of an understanding of a
> politician's experience and beliefs.[188]

Although scholars have noted journalists' intrusive use of instantaneous communications,[189] online research tools also allowed reporters to gain more of an understanding about politicians' careers, objectives and views.

Two senior television correspondents said new government administrations tended to be friendly to journalists, but their attitudes changed later.[190]  WA ABC Television political journalist, Peter Kennedy, referred to "plenty of examples where politicians and the media get along famously early on and then it all fell apart at the end".  He explained the reason for the "tension between politicians and journalists" was that "we have significantly different interests".

> As journalists, we want to get all of the information, the truth and the whole
> story.  Politicians are keen for us to get only part of the story that's good for

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[187] Welsh, personal communication, 4 December 2009.
[188] Welsh, personal communication, 4 December 2009.
[189] Fernandez, *Media law,* p. 105; Tiffen, *News & Power*, p. 136.
[190] Paul Bongiorno, personal communication, 15 December 2009; Peter Kennedy, personal communication, 18 December 2009.

them, or that's best for them.[191]

Likewise, Curtin attempted to persuade journalists to promote the positive aspects of his foreign policies and he was mostly successful because he developed friendships with press gallery correspondents, rather than taking into his confidence only one selected, favoured reporter.  The competitive pressures on contemporary journalists made it harder to keep a politician's secret.  According to Kennedy, more recent government-media relationships followed a similar pattern because:

> … both sides have effectively competing interests; and almost inevitably it's only a matter of time when there's a breakdown and that souring of relationships occurs; and sometimes it can be a very serious souring of relationships, from which some people don't recover.[192]

As Network Ten Parliament House bureau chief and political editor, Paul Bongiorno, explained, some prime ministers "will choose at various times to invite various journalists to dinner" because "they are looking for journalists they want to influence, people viewed as being pacesetters or trendsetters".  Once a governing party had won successive elections, however, a prime minister might "miss the fact that the message they have been putting out there is no longer as relevant to the majority of the electorate", Bongiorno said.  "Credibility and being relevant are very important in politics."[193]  Although a long-term governing party may show a tendency to neglect relationships with journalists, experienced politicians would be well advised to communicate media messages that signify their responsiveness to new community concerns.

While most of the survey respondents indicated there had been a shift in their professional relationships with governments,[194] a few reporters stated their political

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[191] Kennedy, personal communication, 18 December 2009.

[192] Kennedy, personal communication, 18 December 2009.

[193] Bongiorno, personal communication, 15 December 2009.

[194] They were Bongiorno, personal communication, 15 December 2009; Correspondent A, confidential personal communication, 30 March 2010; Eastley, personal communication, 9 December 2009; Farr, personal communication, 12 March 2010; Kennedy, personal communication, 18 December 2009; Milne, personal communication, 17 November 2009; Welsh, personal communication, 4 December 2009.

associations generally had not altered.  Sky News political editor, David Speers, said:

> There are not many changes in terms of journalists dealing with politicians ...
> The relationship is fairly cordial, even friendly; it's also guarded and
> politicians are cautious about not revealing too much information.[195]

Also Wright (*The West Australian*) and Cavanagh (ABC Radio) stated their
government associations had not changed since they began reporting on Australian
politics.[196]  Wright wrote that the government-media relationships were "still
adversarial; still a system of give and take; still circumspect".[197]  In an anonymous
response, only one journalist said that her relationships with the government had
improved.[198]

Several press gallery journalists suggested it was more likely for reporters to
develop close, informal relationships with politicians other than the prime minister.
For instance, Milne said some federal opposition politicians had attended his
wedding and his children's christenings.  After these opposition members formed a
government, however, they became more distant.  "Due to the constant pressure in
[government] office, legitimate relationships get changed in nature," Milne said.[199]
Speers noted that:

> The opposition is a bit more relaxed and less restrained about following the
> leader's direction … Once politicians are in government, more discipline is
> applied; in an election year too, the discipline clicks in.  When an opposition
> party is not performing well in the polls, then the discipline breaks down;
> politicians will spend more time talking about what's on their minds to
> journalists.[200]

Likewise, Welsh (Curtin FM) indicated that after a politician's party was elected to

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[195] David Speers, personal communication, 30 March 2010.
[196] Cavanagh, personal communication, 27 January 2010; Wright, personal communication, 27 December 2009.
[197] Wright, personal communication, 27 December 2009.
[198] Correspondent A, confidential personal communication, 30 March 2010.
[199] Milne, personal communication, 17 November 2009.
[200] Speers, personal communication, 30 March 2010.

be a governing majority, he or she might treat journalists differently.  Welsh said: "When politicians are in opposition, they are very helpful because they're trying to get their message across; this can change if they are in government."[201]  Chief of Staff C said journalists tended to develop "more close professional relationships" with politicians representing their local areas.  He added: "It is still likely that journalists will get along with local politicians in the same ways that they always have."[202]  Thus these respondents conveyed that struggling opposition parties and local MPs might be more interested in cultivating positive journalism associations than a governing administration.

*Herald Sun* political columnist, Andrew Bolt, commented that journalists tended "to be tougher on conservatives than on politicians of the 'left'".  He indicated that reporters seemed to be "on the political left of their audiences" and added that:

> Canberra journalists can be turned off the tap if they criticise the government … it's much easier for a Labor Government to freeze out critical journalists because such journalists are relatively few.  And that kind of punishment works.  You see, if there are 50 Canberra journalists that are competing and 45 give the government an easy ride and five didn't, then you are vulnerable if you are one of the five.  You would want to be with the other 45 journalists because it is safer.[203]

Bolt was referring to John Henningham's press gallery surveys and his 1995 finding that Canberra political journalists were more likely to vote Labor and more left-leaning than the political journalists from other areas of Australia.[204]  Yet Henningham also stressed that his surveys did not find any evidence showing these Canberra journalists reported in a partisan way to favour the ALP; in fact, they held quite modern or cosmopolitan outlooks.  Henningham did not see "a pro-Labor bias" in the major newspapers because production demands and professional imperatives

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[201] Welsh, personal communication, 4 December 2009.
[202] Chief of Staff C, confidential personal communication, 23 March 2010.
[203] Andrew Bolt, personal communication, 19 December 2009.
[204] Henningham, "Political journalists", p. 321.

eliminated individual journalists' views.[205]  Indeed professional journalists viewed most Australian newspapers as "leaning a little towards the Liberal Party" and most mainstream press owners as being conservative.[206]  During the questionnaire implemented for this thesis, other respondents said that irrespective of ideologies, some politicians seemed to favour journalists deemed to be fairly uncritical.[207]  Welsh explained:

> Sometimes journalists won't get a response at all from the government.  They will be helpful if they think they will have favourable publicity … if it's a controversial subject, they will put us off; they're not available.  It does vary and it doesn't matter which side of politics – the WA Government or the Federal Government, Liberal, Labor – they're all the same.[208]

The majority of journalists surveyed talked about tensions between contemporary news correspondents and politicians;[209] this finding resonates with previously published research.[210]  Despite these frictions, several reporters referred to friendly aspects of the relationships.[211]

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[205] Economou and Tanner, *Media,* pp. 122-123; Henningham, "Political journalists", pp. 321-332.

[206] John Henningham, "Journalists' perception of bias" [hereafter "Journalists' perception of bias"], *Australian Journalism Review*, vol. 17, no. 2, 1995, pp. 28-31.

[207] They included Cavanagh, personal communication, 27 January 2010; Welsh, personal communication, 4 December 2009.

[208] Welsh, personal communication, 4 December 2009.

[209] They were Bolt, personal communication, 19 December 2009; Bongiorno, personal communication, 15 December 2009; Cavanagh, personal communication, 27 January 2010; Chief of Staff C, confidential personal communication, 23 March 2010; Eastley, personal communication, 9 December 2009; Editor B, confidential personal communication, 24 March 2010; Farr, personal communication, 12 March 2010; Kennedy, personal communication, 18 December 2009; Milne, personal communication, 17 November 2009; Welsh, personal communication, 4 December 2009; Wright, personal communication, 27 December 2009; Wurth, personal communication, 24 November 2009.

[210] Lloyd, *Parliament and the press*, pp. 267-268; Economou and Tanner, *Media*, pp. 142-143.

[211] They were Bongiorno, personal communication, 15 December 2009; Correspondent A, confidential personal communication, 30 March 2010; Farr, personal communication, 12 March 2010; Kennedy, personal communication, 18 December 2009; Milne, personal communication, 17 November 2009; Speers, personal communication, 30 March 2010; Welsh, personal communication, 4 December 2009.

**The accessible prime minister?**

When asked whether they were satisfied with general media access to the prime minister, some respondents said politicians were fairly approachable.[212]  Bongiorno (Network 10) noted: "The media have changed and the prime minister has adapted to this."  He recalled his first Federal Parliament House news assignment was accompanying Prime Minister Hawke on a visit to the Soviet Union in 1987. Bongiorno described Hawke as "a media-savvy prime minister with an excellent press office".  During this trip and similar overseas visits about 20 years ago, Bongiorno filed a report once a day for the 6pm television news.  Later Network 10 expanded its political coverage to four major daily bulletins "with news that needs to be filed; this creates more demands on the journalists and more demands on who we are filing about".  Bongiorno added:

> With improvements in information technology, broadband and more news
> bulletins that need to be updated by emails, the [prime ministerial overseas]
> trips changed from being leisurely to more intensive.  We are sending
> pictures by the internet and satellite and this is one of the major things that
> have changed in 22 years.[213]

During his prime ministerial term, Rudd was attuned to a sophisticated media, according to Bongiorno.  Speaking in December 2009, he said: "The Rudd media office … is pretty accessible and fairly well-organised."[214]  Likewise, Speers (Sky News) stated Australian Government leaders were relatively open:

> We do get more access to politicians, senior ministers and the prime minister
> than we get in most other countries.  Almost daily, we hear from the prime
> minister in a press conference or in a radio interview.  We have fairly open
> dealings with our leaders.[215]

Welsh (Curtin FM) observed that politicians had generally become "more aware of the media".  He explained that ministers' availability was affected by their busyness,

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[212] Bongiorno, personal communication, 15 December 2009; Farr, personal communication, 12 March 2010; Kennedy, personal communication, 18 December 2009; Speers, personal communication, 30 March 2010; Welsh, personal communication, 4 December 2009.
[213] Bongiorno, personal communication, 15 December 2009.
[214] Bongiorno, personal communication, 15 December 2009.
[215] Speers, personal communication, 30 March 2010.

the extent to which a journalist might ask controversial questions and whether an interviewer's newsroom was deemed to be "important" to the government.[216]

Furthermore, Kennedy (ABC Television) and Farr (*The Daily Telegraph*) talked about an expansion of political interviews, their rising number of news sources and fewer obstacles to reporting on governments.  Kennedy said:

> The demand for information, and access to politicians and the government, is greater than ever.  The news is less controlled than it used to be; for politicians, this puts them at a disadvantage because the less control on the information gathering, the more difficult it can be for them.[217]

While some survey participants focused on politicians' restrictions to information, Australian Governments might have reduced the number of interviews because more journalists have become intrusive in people's private lives and "peculiarly vulnerable to confusing the public interest with their own interest".[218]  Kennedy suggested contemporary politicians were more responsive to journalists' increasing demands for information than in the past.  He explained:

> Politicians used to be able to make a statement one day and then think they didn't have to deal with an issue for the rest of the day ... There is a much faster flow of information [now], particularly during election campaigns in regard to the control of the news flow … A minister will speak to journalists for the television in the morning, then speak on radio information and news programs during the day and will be interviewed again for the television evening bulletins.  Then journalists will be writing for their websites continuously.[219]

Similarly Farr said that since he had been reporting on politics for the past 25 to 30 years, he had noticed the most significant difference was "the massive increase in

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[216] Welsh, personal communication, 4 December 2009.
[217] Kennedy, personal communication, 18 December 2009.
[218] Fernandez, *Media law*, p. 102.
[219] Kennedy, personal communication, 18 December 2009.

information that's available" now than in the past.  He described that:

> Today in Canberra, sitting in my office, I frequently consult a huge range of
> information sources including: universities; think tanks; specialist
> consultants; public relations departments; ministerial offices; parliamentary
> special committees; industrial organisations and the bigger ones that have
> their own research bodies; the Reserve Bank and the individual banks.
> There's a huge flow of information and a swirl of information out there that
> journalists can hook into.[220]

For journalists, an everyday problem was "keeping in touch with those sources", Farr
added.  He said his "primary contact" had not changed because his main priority was
still to consult individual MPs, "who give the important steer, the important
information that leads to a story".[221]  Farr and Kennedy indicated that despite a faster
flow of news, they maintained close relations with parliamentarians as their main
news sources.



A minority of journalists stated they were not satisfied with the level of media
access to Australian politicians.[222]  They and other journalists talked about the
increasing frequency of "doorstops", with reporters quickly interviewing politicians
as they entered or left the Federal and State Parliament Houses.[223]  Cavanagh noted
that media access to politicians had become "increasingly controlled – most are
staged doorstops and so-called picture ops [opportunities]."[224]  Correspondent A
wrote in her questionnaire that she was "particularly" dissatisfied with the media
accessibility of the "PM, Opposition Leader and most senior members of their
Cabinets".[225]  Milne (*The Australian*) noticed a trend towards more restricted

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[220] Farr, personal communication, 12 March 2010.

[221] Farr, personal communication, 12 March 2010.

[222] Cavanagh, personal communication, 27 January 2010; Correspondent A, confidential
personal communication, 30 March 2010; Wright, personal communication, 27 December
2009

[223] Cavanagh, personal communication, 27 January 2010; Correspondent A, confidential
personal communication, 30 March 2010; Kennedy, personal communication, 18 December
2009; Welsh, personal communication, 4 December 2009; Wright, personal communication,
27 December 2009.

[224] Cavanagh, personal communication, 27 January 2010.

[225] Correspondent A, confidential personal communication, 30 March 2010.

political interviews during a 20-year period because "each successive [prime minister] has understood the idea of controlling the media agenda".[226]  Eastley (ABC Radio) referred to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Commonwealth)* and related state legislation, for which "journalists have been pushing for so long".  He said this Act, also known as "FOI", was an "an example of the tight control that has caused the need for freedom of information ... the FOI does allow us to access that information".[227]  While more of the journalists surveyed seemed concerned over an increasing number of restrictions that inhibited news coverage,[228] some of the respondents conveyed they were generally satisfied with the level of access to government and opposition sources.[229]

Survey responses and research indicated that since Curtin's leadership, successive Australian prime ministers had expanded their journalism strategies, with less focus on regular news conferences and more use of relatively new media to communicate directly to voters.[230]  Some respondents praised various prime ministers' abilities to develop a good rapport with the press gallery during interviews.[231]  Farr (*The Daily Telegraph*), for example, described Keating as a "wonderful communicator" at media conferences and added:

It was terrific covering them because he [Keating] was good at explaining things.  It wasn't snobbery.  He wouldn't talk about an esoteric issue to get

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[226] Milne, personal communication, 17 November 2009.
[227] Eastley, personal communication, 9 December 2009.
[228] Bolt, personal communication, 19 December 2009; Cavanagh, personal communication, 27 January 2010; Chief of Staff C, confidential personal communication, 23 March 2010; Correspondent A, confidential personal communication, 30 March 2010; Eastley, personal communication, 9 December 2009; Editor B, confidential personal communication, 24 March 2010; Milne, personal communication, 17 November 2009; Wright, personal communication, 27 December 2009; Wurth, personal communication, 24 November 2009.
[229] Bongiorno, personal communication, 15 December 2009; Farr, personal communication, 12 March 2010; Kennedy, personal communication, 18 December 2009; Speers, personal communication, 30 March 2010; Welsh, personal communication, 4 December 2009.
[230] Ester, "Media", p. 117; Lloyd, *Parliament and the press*, p. 252; Saunders, "The 21st century".
[231] Bongiorno, personal communication, 15 December 2009; Farr, personal communication, 12 March 2010; Milne, personal communication, 17 November 2009; Speers, personal communication, 30 March 2010.

more power over it [the press gallery].[232]

Also Farr said Howard "was extremely good at communicating the issues".[233]  All of the journalists surveyed indicated they preferred to engage in open exchanges with national leaders.  Curtin's briefings were a forerunner for these types of prime ministerial discussions with press gallery members.

Several journalists stated they would like more regular prime ministerial news conferences; the press gallery seemed to have expressed the same view after Whitlam's general interviews ended in 1975.[234]  Cavanagh (ABC Radio) and Wright (*The West Australian*) stated they were "not satisfied" with the frequency of media conferences.[235]  Cavanagh noted that most politicians' interviews were "mainly doorstops with a backdrop to highlight their message.  Few [are] free-ranging and open-ended".[236]  Some other journalists noticed fewer "one-on-ones" with the prime minister, meaning a single reporter speaking directly with Australia's leader.[237]  Another survey respondent, Speers (Sky News), said:

> There are not full conferences with the press gallery every day, every week or even every month.  We in the press gallery would like to see more of this happen.[238]

Eastley (ABC Radio) and Milne (*The Australian*) spoke of Howard's enthusiastic use of talkback radio.  Eastley described Howard as "a great proponent of using local radio" because his messages were immediately "picked up" by television journalists and then reported in the next day's newspapers.[239]  According to Milne, Howard "liked talkback radio because he could talk directly to the public and it was unfiltered

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[232] Farr, personal communication, 12 March 2010.
[233] Farr, personal communication, 12 March 2010.
[234] Lloyd, *Parliament and the press*, p. 252.
[235] Cavanagh, personal communication, 27 January 2010; Wright, personal communication, 27 December 2009.
[236] Cavanagh, personal communication, 27 January 2010.
[237] Chief of Staff C, confidential personal communication, 23 March 2010; Editor B, confidential personal communication, 24 March 2010; Milne, personal communication, 17 November 2009; Welsh, personal communication, 4 December 2009.
[238] Speers, personal communication, 30 March 2010.
[239] Eastley, personal communication, 9 December 2009.

by the journalists".[240]  Milne and Bolt (*Herald Sun*) commented on Rudd's use of Twitter and Facebook as well as his appearances on *Rove Live*.[241]  Rudd extended the prime ministerial radio strategies to holding interactive discussions with diverse internet audiences.[242]

Chief of Staff C said mid-level politicians continued to grant a personal interview with a single reporter.  He explained: "Journalists are still able to get more involved in 'one-on-ones' at the mid-level of politics and further down."[243]  Welsh (Curtin FM) noted that politicians were generally more likely to call "off-the-cuff" interviews instead of planning scheduled, formal conferences.[244]  According to Kennedy (ABC Television), reporters had developed techniques to interview less talkative ministers.  He said:

> Sometimes on big stories, politicians might find the media camped outside their houses when they walk outside at half-past seven in the morning ... Some days if they don't want to speak to you, they will say they have continuous meetings and you have to cajole them perhaps, or even lie in wait for them … If they're at [the WA] Parliament House and they don't want to talk, then you have to try to ambush them perhaps as they are leaving or coming into the building.[245]

It seemed that as Australian leaders developed new ways to communicate to voters, the press gallery became increasingly inventive, skilful and adept in persuading politicians to talk with them.

The number of high-level, confidential press gallery briefings has diminished since Curtin's talks with wartime journalists.  Wright (*The West Australian*) and Correspondent A indicated they were "neutral" about the confidential talks held by

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[240] Milne, personal communication, 17 November 2009.
[241] Bolt, personal communication, 19 December 2009; Milne, personal communication, 17 November 2009.
[242] Barry Saunders, "The 21st century".
[243] Chief of Staff C, confidential personal communication, 23 March 2010.
[244] Welsh, personal communication, 4 December 2009.
[245] Kennedy, personal communication, 18 December 2009.

politicians.  Correspondent A wrote of her "mixed" feelings about off-the-record briefings because they generally "depend on the politician and circumstances".[246] Cavanagh (ABC Radio) added that private interviews were influenced by "how well you are entrenched in the [news] round and how the ministers want it [a news report] to be treated".[247]  Speaking of prime ministerial communications, Milne (*The Australian*) said:

> There are much fewer confidential briefings now.  I'm not aware of any confidential briefings except on overseas trips by Kevin Rudd because … he is relying on the media to get his message out.[248]

Talking of other MPs as well as the prime minister, Eastley (ABC Radio) observed that in Canberra, politicians and journalists "are on first-name terms and information is passed between them rather freely – some on the record, some off the record".  He added these types of informal interactions have been a standard practice for many years.[249]  Similarly Farr indicated that some politicians still provided off-the-record information.  He said:

> The best thing you can hope for is that a politician can respect you in your work.  For example, if he has told something to you in confidence, then you keep the confidence.  You don't exaggerate …. You accept responsibility for whatever you've written.[250]

In WA, a politician's personal preference for a news outlet often determined whether he or she would release an exclusive media statement, according to Kennedy (ABC Television).  He explained:

> Some politicians like the morning newspaper [*The West Australian*].  They still like to give an exclusive story if they can get it on the front page of the paper and they think this is an advantage for them.  Others aren't really fussed and they'll say: 'We'll announce this at midday.  All of the media will be there and let's see how it's reported after that' … Perhaps the newspaper

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[246] Correspondent A, confidential personal communication, 30 March 2010; Wright, personal communication, 27 December 2009.
[247] Cavanagh, personal communication, 27 January 2010.
[248] Milne, personal communication, 17 November 2009.
[249] Eastley, personal communication, 9 December 2009.
[250] Farr, personal communication, 12 March 2010.

> mightn't report it as prominently as if it were on an exclusive basis … These
> are the sorts of things that get taken into account when announcements are
> made by politicians … They are more aware of these sorts of things than in
> the past.[251]

As many professional journalists have indicated that Perth's only daily newspaper, *The West Australian*, shows a "more serious commitment to the Liberals",[252] perhaps WA Labor politicians have been less likely to give exclusive news tips to this media organisation because they have been concerned their stories might be portrayed more negatively to readers.  While private prime ministerial briefings seemed more likely to occur during overseas trips, some other politicians still provided exclusive news tips and off-the-record information as an accepted practice to alert journalists to selected issues.

Journalists provided a wide range of opinions, from the positive to negative, regarding the quality and quantity of politicians' media statements.  A minority of respondents indicated they were satisfied with Australian Government media releases.[253]  Speers (Sky News) commented that the Howard and Rudd bulletins "show they are very sophisticated in their approach and they target the media with their messages".  For example, economic and political statements were released to the appropriate "serious" media; while family-related issues with widespread appeal, such as childcare or parental leave, would be publicised on talkback radio "when people will hear about them directly", Speers explained.  Referring to the expansion of news websites, Speers said:

> There is now a rolling deadline with continuous stories that have to be filed.
> This adds extra pressures, not only for reporters, but also for politicians as
> they try to keep ahead of the media cycle and find a new angle for
> journalists.[254]

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[251] Kennedy, personal communication, 18 December 2009.
[252] Henningham, "Journalists' perception of bias", p. 29.
[253] Correspondent A, confidential personal communication, 30 March 2010; Speers, personal communication, 30 March 2010.
[254] Speers, personal communication, 30 March 2010.

Correspondent A agreed that most politicians "have effective means to distribute statements and transcripts".[255]  These two journalists indicated Australian Governments were adept in releasing targeted information to news organisations.


Farr (*The Daily Telegraph*) said as a result of the "massive increase in information", contemporary reporters were more educated, sophisticated and well-informed than the journalists of 50 years ago.  He observed: "We need the young journalists, who have the nous and training to be able to absorb all of the information."  Yet Farr also stated, "[t]he major issue for us is media management" because "[s]o much information is withheld merely to suit the political strategy of the government – and this applies to all governments".  He added: "We're there to inform readers and there's a contest, a daily battle, with the [political] press secretary."[256]  Cavanagh (ABC Radio) described government media releases as "bland" and "uninteresting" because they lacked detailed "background" information.[257]  Despite the "plethora of written material" provided to journalists, "[t]he quality of information could be questioned", according to Eastley (ABC Radio).  He said some politicians focused too much on style rather than substance.  "The message giving is truly important," he explained.  "When people say politicians are 'on message', it means that we are bored senseless by hearing the same message."  Eastley added: "There is a particular spin put on every story by every apparatchik and every politician."[258]  Australian and US politicians' television "soundbites" seemed to be shrinking at about the same rate.  During the 1960s election campaigns, politicians' soundbites were an average of more than 40 seconds; however, these "quotable bites" fell to less than ten seconds in the 1990s.[259]  A 2007 Australian study concluded that the soundbites were an average length of

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[255] Correspondent A, confidential personal communication, 30 March 2010.
[256] Farr, personal communication, 12 March 2010.
[257] Cavanagh, personal communication, 27 January 2010; Wright, personal communication, 27 December 2009.
[258] Eastley, personal communication, 9 December 2009.
[259] Guido H. Stempel III and Jacqueline Nash Gifford, *Historical dictionary of political communication in the United States*, Greenwood Publishing Group, Westport, 1999, p. 135.

seven seconds.[260]   Chief of Staff C observed that as politicians became more knowledgeable on how to manage the media, "they are continuing the trend of trying to condense information to a five-second sound bite".  He suggested:

> … [i]t would be better if politicians are a bit more open in their
> communications to journalists.  There needs to be a balance, but the more
> information that is out there, the better it is for journalists.[261]

Wright (*The West Australian*) wrote that he was "neutral" about prime ministerial media statements.[262]   While some respondents indicated they would prefer to receive more substantive government bulletins,[263] Farr noted that the increased number of media statements was contributing to more professionalism in Australian journalism because skilled, educated reporters were needed to interpret the messages.[264]

**A founding father?**

To assess Curtin's mass media legacy, this thesis evaluated not only his innovative techniques that have endured, but also attempted to ascertain the level of modern journalists' knowledge about him and his impact.  One of the most significant purposes of the survey was to discover what journalists thought about Curtin.  If Curtin had a legacy, what did this look like in the minds of contemporary reporters?  Overall, most journalists were not aware of Curtin and did not know about his mass media strategies.  Many of his journalism precedents survived to this day such as his creation of a full-time prime ministerial press secretary, his initiation of confidential briefings and interactive media conferences, where he answered correspondents' questions, as well as his use of relatively new visual and electronic media.  In these

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[260] Sally Young, "Political discourse in the age of the soundbite: The election campaign soundbite on Australian television news", *Australian Political Studies Association Conference*, Brisbane, 6-9 July 2008, p. 19, retrieved on 19 January 2011 at <www.uq.edu.au/polsis/apsa2008/Refereed-papers/Young.pdf>.
[261] Chief of Staff C, confidential personal communication, 23 March 2010.
[262] Wright, personal communication, 27 December 2009.
[263] They were Cavanagh, personal communication, 27 January 2010; Chief of Staff C, confidential personal communication, 23 March 2010; Eastley, personal communication, 9 December 2009; Farr, personal communication, 12 March 2010.
[264] Farr, personal communication 12 March 2010.

areas, Curtin bestowed a significant legacy for successive prime ministers, political communicators and the press gallery, but this bequest was largely unknown to journalists.  Among a small minority of respondents, who were the more senior editors, Curtin was a former journalist and a founding father in their profession.[265] Yet many contemporary journalists do not see Curtin as being one of them and he was not a giant figure in the mass media.  The survey findings indicated that most journalists are not conscious of their own history and of their leading lights in the profession.  These findings support previously published research that there has not been much of a history of Australian journalism.[266]  Also it seems consistent with some prevailing news values that appear to emphasise entertainment rather than the impact of federal politics on people's lives.[267]  Thus this thesis contributes towards the development of this needed history.

In terms of modern government-media relationships, overall the journalists' responses seemed to be consistent with Foucault's theories of governmentality and the model of news in an administered society developed by Ericson et al.  According to Foucault, liberal democratic leaders will attempt to master new technologies to enable an "immense diffusion and consumption" of government information and to establish their power in political institutions, practices and rules.[268]  Ericson et al wrote that journalists' most significant role was to be "knowledge linkers" and "information brokers" between the government and public audiences.[269]  By developing Curtin's journalism strategies, successive leaders have secured news reporters' cooperation to support the prevailing government systems.

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[265] Editor B, confidential personal communication, 24 March 2010; Wright, personal communication, 27 December 2009; Wurth, personal communication, 24 November 2009.
[266] Cryle, "Australian newspaper history"; Curthoys, Schultz and Hamilton, "A history of journalism"; Van Heekeren, "Who's Gough Whitlam?".
[267] *The Sunday Times*, Perth, 25 July 2010, p.1; *The West Australian*, Perth, 24 and 26 July 2010, p. 1.
[268] Michel Foucault, "Technologies of the Self" [hereafter "Technologies"], in L.H. Martin, H. Gutman and P.H. Hutton (eds), *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault,* Tavistock Publications, London, 1988, p. 18; Foucault, "Truth and power", p. 131.
[269] Ericson, Baranek and Chan, *Visualizing deviance*, p. 11; Stephen Brent Mickler, Visualising Aboriginality: Image Campaigns and News Routines in the Western Australian Media [hereafter Visualising Aboriginality], PhD thesis, Murdoch University, Murdoch, 1996, p. 20.

**The Curtin model for prime ministerial journalism strategies**

The findings of the survey, together with the observations and insights from previous scholarly works, have enabled this thesis to build a picture of the legacy left by Curtin.  Based on my survey responses, this chapter has contributed to ascertaining Curtin's journalism legacy for contemporary government-media relationships.  This thesis thereby fills existing gaps in the academic literature about this former prime minister's influence on political journalism today.  While only a small minority of respondents knew about his legacy, they suggested that his associations with Canberra-based correspondents were "intimate" because he treated reporters as his "equals" and provided confidential, detailed, off-the-record briefings.  These current senior journalists described his development of news conferences, background briefings and personal press gallery relationships as being significant achievements in the area of prime ministerial communications.[270]  The responses were consistent with this thesis' earlier findings.  Yet the survey respondents seemed unaware of some other Curtin initiatives such as his creation of the role of a full-time press secretary, as well as his extensive use of the relatively new media of war newsreels and radio broadcasts.  Also they did not discuss any of his journalism strategies that extended beyond Canberra.  It appeared that although Curtin set many precedents in political communications, his creative use of fledgling electronic and visual media was not as well-known as his press strategies.  While there has not been a single comprehensive publication on past and present prime ministerial journalism methods, different case studies reveal that there has been a continuous history of the national leaders' use of the electronic media since Curtin.[271]  As a former journalist, Curtin seemed to enjoy revolutionising the ways that prime ministers interacted with reporters and, although his successors' use of new media did not develop evenly, some of his initiatives were vital strategies used by political leaders to communicate with national audiences today.

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[270] Cavanagh, personal communication, 27 January 2010; Correspondent A, confidential personal communication, 30 March 2010; Editor B, confidential personal communication, 24 March 2010; Wright, personal communication, 27 December 2009; Wurth, personal communication, 24 November 2009.

[271] Case studies of different prime ministers' electronic media strategies include the following: Crawford, "Modernising Australian elections"; Economou and Tanner, *Media*; Lloyd, *Parliament and the press*.

While many respondents spoke of changes in their relationships with successive Australian leaders,[272] the majority of this group also discussed favourable aspects of prime ministerial communications.[273]  For example, Speers (Sky News) said reporters' general associations with politicians were "fairly cordial, even friendly".[274]  Correspondent A commented that her parliamentary relationships had improved.[275]  The two reporters also approved of the quantity and content of government media statements; more respondents indicated they were generally satisfied with politicians' accessibility.[276]  Some respondents discussed the continuing practice of honouring confidential agreements with politicians.[277]  During my telephone interviews, several press gallery members praised individual prime ministers for their communications skills, well-managed press offices and sophisticated use of the media.[278]

At the same time, many survey respondents indicated their preference for politicians to hold more news conferences, provide more informative briefings and

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[272] They were Bolt, personal communication, 19 December 2009; Bongiorno, personal communication, 15 December 2009; Cavanagh, personal communication, 27 January 2010; Chief of Staff C, confidential personal communication, 23 March 2010; Eastley, personal communication, 9 December 2009; Editor B, confidential personal communication, 24 March 2010; Farr, personal communication, 12 March 2010; Kennedy, personal communication, 18 December 2009; Milne, personal communication, 17 November 2009; Welsh, personal communication, 4 December 2009; Wright, personal communication, 27 December 2009; Wurth, personal communication, 24 November 2009.

[273] They were Bongiorno, personal communication, 15 December 2009; Correspondent A, confidential personal communication, 30 March 2010; Farr, personal communication, 12 March 2010; Kennedy, personal communication, 18 December 2009; Milne, personal communication, 17 November 2009; Speers, personal communication, 30 March 2010; Welsh, personal communication, 4 December 2009.

[274] Speers, personal communication, 30 March 2010.

[275] Correspondent A, confidential personal communication, 30 March 2010.

[276] Bongiorno, personal communication, 15 December 2009; Farr, personal communication, 12 March 2010; Kennedy, personal communication, 18 December 2009; Speers, personal communication, 30 March 2010; Welsh, personal communication, 4 December 2009.

[277] Farr, personal communication, 12 March 2010; Kennedy, personal communication, 18 December 2009; Milne, personal communication, 17 November 2009.

[278] Bongiorno, personal communication, 15 December 2009; Farr, personal communication 12 March 2010; Speers, personal communication, 30 March 2010.

become more accessible to reporters.[279]   Some senior journalists said the relationships with the prime minister had grown increasingly distant because of historical, social and technological conditions that might have been beyond the leader's control.   Such factors included the bitter politics resulting from Australia's role in the Cold War and the Vietnam War, which sharpened divisions between the left and right factions and created more barriers between journalists and politicians.[280]   The opening of the new Federal Parliament House in 1988 and the accompanying expansion of the press gallery had contributed to more reserved associations between MPs and correspondents.[281]   Another factor has been the increase in a presidential-style government with a greater focus on a popular personality such as Curtin (from 1941 to 1945) and Menzies (from 1949 to 1966), the use of US-style televised debates and a proliferation of online communications. With the intensified competition among new media outlets, the pressure of rolling deadlines reduced the opportunities for leisurely interviews;[282] consequently journalists were less likely to withhold information from audiences.[283]   As a result, the prime ministers' media officers were more sophisticated, knowledgeable and skilled in using new communication technology to influence news agendas.[284] Journalists provided mixed responses about the effects of the accelerated media cycle.   For example, Peter Kennedy said correspondents' increasing information demands left politicians "at a disadvantage";[285] while Chief of Staff C stated the prime minister was better able to control "the message of the day".[286]

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[279] Bolt, personal communication, 19 December 2009; Cavanagh, personal communication, 27 January 2010; Chief of Staff C, confidential personal communication, 23 March 2010; Correspondent A, confidential personal communication, 30 March 2010; Eastley, personal communication, 9 December 2009; Editor B, confidential personal communication, 24 March 2010; Milne, personal communication, 17 November 2009; Speers, personal communication, 30 March 2010; Wright, personal communication, 27 December 2009; Wurth, personal communication, 24 November 2009.

[280] Editor B, confidential personal communication, 24 March 2010.

[281] Cavanagh, personal communication, 27 January 2010; Correspondent A, confidential personal communication, 30 March 2010; Farr, personal communication, 12 March 2010; Milne, personal communication, 17 November 2009.

[282] Bongiorno, personal communication, 15 December 2009; Speers, personal communication, 30 March 2010.

[283] Editor B, confidential personal communication, 24 March 2010.

[284] Bongiorno, personal communication, 15 December 2009.

[285] Kennedy, personal communication, 18 December 2009.

[286] Chief of Staff C, confidential personal communication, 23 March 2010.

In sum, these survey results indicated that modern political communications and news media coverage owed much to Curtin's journalism strategies.  Yet it seems to have been a relatively unknown legacy.  His innovations in media conferences, news briefings, confidential interviews, as well as the use of new audiovisual technology have become accepted conventions practised by politicians to communicate with journalists from his time to the present day.  Although some contemporary journalists indicated they would like improvements in the quality of, and access to, political statements, they also indicated that a relationship, such as the friendships that Curtin developed with the 1940s press gallery members, would not be at all possible today and perhaps not even desirable in the present competitive journalism profession.  During the survey, not a single journalist indicated a preference to return to the voluntary self-censorship system that was upheld by "Curtin's Circus" to guard wartime secrets and protect national security.

Successive Australian leaders have continued to use and develop many of Curtin's journalism initiatives to communicate more directly to public audiences. The central theories of Foucault's "governmentality" and Ericson et al's model of news in an administered society help us to interpret the significance of the survey responses.  When some journalists talked about the "massive increase" in politicians' media statements,[287] their comments illustrated Foucault's view of liberal democracy.  He observed that leaders attempt to master new technologies to enable an "immense diffusion and consumption" of government information and to establish their power in political institutions, practices and rules.[288]  Ericson et al's point that journalists have been "knowledge linkers" has been reflected in the survey responses. They showed that journalists can operate as "information brokers" between the government and public audiences.[289]  Many of the survey respondents indicated that they have cooperated with politicians and reported on them to support liberal democratic government systems.  Curtin provided valuable contemporary lessons on how politicians might successfully create egalitarian, open and well-informed

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[287] E.g. Eastley, personal communication, 9 December 2009; Farr, personal communication, 12 March 2010; Kennedy, personal communication, 18 December 2009.
[288] Foucault, "Technologies"; Foucault, "Truth and power".
[289] Ericson, Baranek and Chan, *Visualizing deviance*, p. 11; Mickler, Visualising Aboriginality, p. 20.

relationships with journalists, as well as on the importance of using new media to communicate directly and frequently to public audiences.

# Chapter 11

## Conclusion: John Curtin's legacy for the Australian mass media, 1941-2011

This thesis sought to determine how successful John Curtin was in persuading the predominantly conservative news media to promote his wartime views. It set out to accomplish the following objectives: to identify Curtin's journalism strategies as well as his use of mass media strategies that have overlapped to a significant extent; to demonstrate his success for initiating, developing and overseeing innovative mass communication strategies that made the best use of the latest media technology; and to argue that he bestowed a powerful legacy for political journalism, government-media relations and the current Canberra Parliamentary Press Gallery. This chapter will summarise the main findings of these research objectives.

As the nation's leader, Curtin created many precedents in the political use of media in Australia and other Allied countries. As prime minister, he elevated the press gallery from the political margins. As a result, the senior wartime journalists of "Curtin's Circus" became crucial allies in his fight to secure international support for defending Australia against Axis attacks. From the beginning of his leadership, Canberra reporters reacted positively to the collegial tone of his news conferences;[1] they were familiar with his unique background as the former newspaper editor and Western Australian press union president who, in 1919, organised Australia's first university classes for professional journalists.[2] During the anxious days leading to the Pacific war, Curtin used this crisis as an opportunity to implement fully his media

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[1] Supportive press editorials were published to announce Curtin's prime ministerial appointment in Australian metropolitan dailies including the following: *The Advertiser*, *The Age*, *The Argus*, *The Brisbane Telegraph*, *The Canberra Times*, *The Courier-Mail*, *The Daily Mirror*, *The Herald*, *The Mercury*, *The Sun*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The West Australian*. See *Scrapbooks compiled by the Prime Minister's office* [hereafter *Scrapbooks*], John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library [hereafter JCPML], Bentley, no. 1, JCPML acc. no. 00297/1, 4-9 October 1941.
[2] Clem Lloyd, *Profession: Journalist,* Hale & Iremonger, Sydney, 1985, pp. 165-167; Lloyd Ross, *John Curtin: A Biography,* The Macmillan Company of Australia, South Melbourne, 1977, p. 77.

initiatives, including his comprehensive news conference briefings, off-the-record interviews and the use of Australia's first designated full-time prime ministerial press secretary.  By applying these strategies, he alerted the journalists to top-secret military developments, signalling an imminent Japanese attack.  At his request, Canberra political correspondents passed on this information to their media organisations' editors.  Through a combination of mostly friendly, informal, two-way discussions with reporters and the use of wartime censorship, he secured their willing cooperation to protect national security and they mainly refrained from publishing confidential information.[3]  They respected Curtin for providing news tips and background information; since they wanted to maintain this relationship with the prime minister, they produced mostly prominent, favourable media coverage of his leadership during Australia's entry in the Pacific war.  Soon afterwards, US journalists reported on Roosevelt's decision to open a direct radio telegraph circuit between Australia and the US, not only to "facilitate the more rapid exchange of communications", but also to "serve notice on the Axis powers that the free peoples of this world are leaving nothing undone".[4]  As Curtin increased Australian prime ministerial communications to Allied countries, the news correspondents served, following Ericson et al, as "knowledge linkers" and "information brokers" to interpret his media messages to public audiences.[5]  This study found that no other Australian leader had given so many, nor such comprehensive news briefings as Curtin did during his prime ministership.  He generally conducted twice-daily media conferences, where he discussed war secrets and engaged in a dialogue with journalists, whom he treated as colleagues.

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[3] For example, Joseph A. Alexander, interviewed by Mel Pratt [hereafter "Alexander interview"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00551, 2 March 1971, transcript np; Harold Cox, interviewed by Mel Pratt [hereafter "Cox interview"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01060/1, 6 April 1973, transcript np; Frank Davidson, interviewed by Isla Macphail [hereafter "Davidson interview"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00127/1, 24 January 1996, transcript np.

[4] Cited in Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Letter to John Curtin", JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00266/2, 25 December 1941, pp. 43-44.  Also see (Anon.), "Roosevelt Opens Direct Wireless Link to Australia", *The Washington Post*, Washington DC, 26 December 1941, p. 19.

[5] Richard V. Ericson, Patricia M. Baranek and Janet B.L. Chan, *Visualizing Deviance: A Study of News Organizations* [hereafter *Visualizing deviance*], Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1987, p. 11; Stephen Brent Mickler, Visualising Aboriginality: Image Campaigns and News Routines in the Western Australian Media [hereafter, Visualising Aboriginality], PhD thesis, Murdoch University, Murdoch, 1996, p. 20.

Through his positive press relations, therefore, he generated mainly favourable news coverage about his foreign policies.  That such news executives as Keith Murdoch and the ABC's Charles Moses were politically conservative[6] did not hinder Curtin from initiating and maintaining a friendly, informal correspondence with them.[7]  Moreover, he appointed many media managers to government, war-related positions, which assisted him to develop fairly harmonious relationships with them.[8]  As a result, his foreign policy messages were repeated and accentuated in mainstream, metropolitan dailies.  This thesis has demonstrated that journalists cooperated with him to produce positive, morale-boosting media messages on Australia's wartime achievements.  The study shows that a selected sample of 11 Curtin addresses received mainly positive news coverage in *The Age*, *The Canberra Times*, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The West Australian.*[9]  At least 12 wartime journalists held him in high esteem;[10] they recalled he was a "superb wartime leader" because of his ability to deliver emotional speeches to "hold the Parliament [and] have them absolutely breathless";[11] his determination "that whatever he did was done for Australia without any personal cheers at all";[12] his candid press talks that revealed "he was a man of very sensitive feelings", who cared deeply about the Australians fighting in the war;[13] his aptitude for discussing literature with journalists,[14] showing "he was a tremendously well-read man"; and his "trust" in reporters that "was justified to an extraordinary extent" as they honoured his confidences.[15]  According to these oral histories, Curtin communicated well in the

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[6] Alexander, "Alexander interview"; Neville Petersen, *News Not Views: The ABC, the Press, & Politics 1932-1947* [hereafter *News not views*], Hale & Iremonger, Sydney, 1993, pp. 116, 130.

[7] John Curtin to Charles Moses, National Archives of Australia [hereafter NAA], Canberra, CA 12, M1415, 237, 22 January 1943, p. 77; Charles Moses, interviewed for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation [hereafter "Moses interview"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00408/3, 27 May 1982, transcript np; Keith Murdoch to Curtin, NAA, Canberra, CA 12, M1415, 237, 1943, pp. 141-142.

[8] Refer to Chapter 3.

[9] See Appendix 14.

[10] See Appendix 13.

[11] John Commins, interviewed by Mel Pratt, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01092/1, 22-26 May 1971, transcript np.

[12] Davidson, "Davidson interview".

[13] Alan D. Reid, interviewed by Mel Pratt [hereafter "Reid interview"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00501, 4 October 1972 and 28 February 1973, transcript np.

[14] Edgar George Holt, interviewed by Mel Pratt [hereafter "Holt interview"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01059, 23 May 1978, transcript np.

[15] Reid, "Reid interview".

parliament and press gallery by giving intelligent, compassionate speeches that focused on national, rather than imperial, concerns and by conversing with journalists in a straightforward, egalitarian manner about topics in which they shared mutual interests.

Along with his informal and official news briefings, Curtin transformed prime ministerial communications to public audiences, as examined in Chapters 6 to 9.  After broadcasting Australia's first independent declaration of war, when announcing the war against Japan on 8 December 1941, he expanded the fledgling radio services to talk frequently and directly to millions of people - audiences who were unprecedented in their size and extensive global locations.  For example, since he had recognised the power of radio in 1935, soon after becoming the ALP leader, he was the first Australian prime minister to broadcast a radio talk directly to US audiences and his words were transmitted by more than 700 American stations during the peak listening hour as well as reaching Canada, South America, Britain and Europe.[16]  As he used the radio to make direct announcements to listeners, rather than relying on the press, he influenced other Australian leaders to use innovative media technology to reach and interact with mass audiences.[17]  Moreover in 1943, he delivered the first national policy speech through a radio hook-up from Canberra; due to his personal popularity, he helped the ALP to achieve its greatest federal election victory at the time.[18]  In sum, his public media communications as a two-

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[16] (Anon.), "Pledge To U.S.A.", *The West Australian*, Perth, 16 March 1942, p. 5; John Curtin, "National Broadcast by Prime Minister" [hereafter "National broadcast"], *Digest of Decisions and Announcements and Important Speeches by the Prime Minister (Right Hon. John Curtin)* [hereafter *DDA*], no. 10, 8 December 1941, pp. 19-22; John Curtin, "Radio broadcast to the United States" [hereafter "US radio broadcast"], 14 March 1942, *DDA*, no. 22, pp. 9-13; Ian Ward, "The early use of radio for political communication in Australia and Canada: John Henry Austral, Mr Sage and the Man from Mars", *Australian Journal of Politics and History,* vol. 45, no. 3, 1999, p. 322.

[17] (Anon.), "A Lesson To Be Learnt", *The Sun*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 2, JCPML acc. no. 00297/2, 20 March 1942; Allan Fraser, interviewed by Mel Pratt [hereafter "Fraser interview"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00550, August 1972–January 1973, transcript np; Robert Menzies, "The Forgotten People", Menzies Virtual Museum, East Melbourne, 22 May 1942, retrieved on 18 May 2009 at <http://www.menziesvirtualmuseum.org.au/transcripts/ForgottenPeople/ForgottenCont.html>.

[18] David Black (ed.), *In His Own Words: John Curtin's Speeches and Writings* [hereafter *In his own words*], Paradigm Books Curtin University, Bentley, 1995, p. 226; Bobbie Oliver, *Unity is Strength: A History of the Australian Labor Party and the Trades and Labor Council in Western Australia, 1899-1999,* API Network, Bentley, 2003, p. 167.

term prime minister contributed to his party's popularity. Most significantly for this study, Curtin's distinctive role, therefore, was one of expanding the Australian public sphere as a space of national and critical deliberation, and cementing journalism's governmental function as its organising agency.

His widespread appeal can be partly attributed to his astute use of popular culture that attracted ALP supporters and traditionally anti-Labor voters, as we saw in Chapters 6 and 7. One of his significant media legacies was to sponsor a modern, first-class Australian film industry. Although Curtin's predecessors, Menzies and Fadden, had supported the Department of Information (DOI), established in 1939 to produce patriotic films, archival research revealed they did not make an extensive use of newsreels to communicate directly to cinema audiences. In contrast, Curtin appeared in a "vast" number of moving images and research suggested they were screened in other Allied countries.[19] Semiotic analysis from Chapters 6 to 9 found that he projected an image of being both a forceful, democratic leader and a common man of the people in his newsreels. Nonetheless, the apparent effortless and spontaneous motion pictures were the result of meticulous rehearsals. After Curtin practised different gestures, postures and words, the film teams edited series of eye-level close-ups and medium shots to convey an intimate, personal relationship between the prime minister and cinema audiences.[20] Through this cinematic depiction, film teams accomplished what Foucault has since described as masking national power.[21] As the cameras focused on such scenes as the harmonious combination of commonwealth flags displayed together, as well as Curtin conferring with powerful democratic leaders and signing a treaty on the same table used by

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[19] British Movietone Digital Archive, Surry Hills, 1939-1945, retrieved on 21 January 2011 at <http://www.movietone.com>; Carol Fallows, *War: Australian Memories in Black and White,* Murdoch Books, Sydney, 2005; National Film and Sound Archive, "Australian Prime Ministers" (fact sheets on John Joseph Curtin, Sir Arthur William Fadden and Sir Robert Gordon Menzies), Acton, 2008, retrieved on 31 July 2010 at <http://www.nfsa.gov.au/the_collection/collection_spotlights/apms>.

[20] For example, ScreenSound Australia, *Parliament in Session* (newsreel), JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00876/4, 1944.

[21] Teresa Bergman, "Can Patriotism Be Carved In Stone?: A Critical Analysis of Mt. Rushmore's Orientation Films", *Rhetoric & Public Affairs,* vol. 11, no. 1, spring 2008, p. 96; Michel Foucault, "Film and Popular Memory: An Interview with Michel Foucault", trans. Martin Jordan, *Radical Philosophy*, vol. 11, summer 1975, pp. 25, 27.

Queen Victoria to give her assent to the Australian federation, the films evoked his commitment to British political ideals and disguised the occasional tensions among the Allies.[22]

Although short films had been unpopular prior to the war, Curtin's strategy had been to increase production of these types of pictures for cinema audiences. Since 1939 the nation's filmmakers had created "several thousand shorts".[23]   This policy included the 1945 foundation of the National Film Board, which was responsible for training Australian film technicians and preparing for an increased production of documentaries.[24]  Moreover, his administration created a national films laboratory to process footage, along with transferring the Australian National Publicity Association to New York to maximise promotional opportunities.[25]  During his terms, Curtin supported the creation of films including the short documentaries, *Kokoda Front Line!* (1942),[26] *South-west Pacific* (1943)[27] and *Jungle Patrol* (1944);[28] as well as the full-length movie, *The Rats of Tobruk* (1944), which was released under the title, *The Fighting Rats of Tobruk* (1945), in the US.[29]  The government-sponsored team of *Kokoda Front Line!* won the nation's first Academy Award.  All of these films emphasised distinctively Australian characters and targeted a wide Allied audience; this was a breakthrough considering that in the mid-

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[22] For example, ScreenSound Australia, "Anzac Agreement Signed At Canberra", in *John Joseph Curtin 1885 – 1945* (newsreel)*,* JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00238/1, 1944.

[23] Alan Osbiston, "Australian Films Overseas" [hereafter "Australian films"], *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Sydney, 18 July 1944, p. 2.

[24] Arthur Calwell, "Appointments", *DDA*, no. 101, 1 May 1945, pp. 35-36; Arthur Calwell, "First Meeting", *DDA*, no. 104, 26 June 1945, p. 33.

[25] (Anon.), "Publicity: Relations with America: Australia Expands", *The Canberra Times,* Canberra, 31 October 1941, p. 4.

[26] Ken G. Hall (producer), *Kokoda Front Line!* (newsreel), The Australian News & Information Bureau, Australia, 1942.

[27] Ken G. Hall (director and producer), *South-west Pacific* (newsreel), Cinesound Productions, Australia, 1943.

[28] Tom Gurr (director), Jack. S. Allan (producer), *Jungle Patrol* (newsreel), Commonwealth Government of Australia, Ministry of Information, Australia, 1944.

[29] Charles Chauvel (director and producer), *The Rats of Tobruk* (movie)*,* Chamun Productions, Australia, 1944; Charles Chauvel (director), Charles Chauvel and Charles Munro (producers), *The Fighting Rats of Tobruk* (movie)*,* America and Canada, 1945.

1930s, Hollywood movie publicists considered Australia to be too obscure for US cinema fans.[30]

Furthermore, Curtin distanced himself from Menzies' "dyed-in-the-wool British" outlook by promoting a national identity in other areas of the media and the arts.[31]  He expanded the ABC's Australian-oriented programs, for instance.[32]  As part of his vision, Curtin directed the ABC general manager, Charles Moses, to broadcast more Australian voices, rather than the previously predominant, exaggerated English accents, as well as to devote more airtime to locally produced theatre, music and entertainment content.  *The Sydney Morning Herald* general manager, Rupert Henderson, recalled Curtin advised him that "he wanted a great national news service that would be objective, impartial and free".[33]  Therefore he demanded that Moses create more Australian alternatives to the US radio programs provided by Hollywood entertainers such as Bob Hope.[34]  Moreover, Curtin announced his subsidy for the creation of a national theatre, opera and cultural development on 19 March 1945.[35]  Consequently he instituted an independent Australian arts and cultural sector.

Curtin initiated a number of other groundbreaking strategies to promote Australia to worldwide audiences.  He transformed the News and Information

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[30] Mark McGinness, "Biography: The Swashbuckler from Hobart", *Quadrant online*, vol. 53, no. 6, June 2009, retrieved on 10 June 2010 at <http://www.quadrant.org.au/magazine/issue/2009/6/the-swashbuckler-from-hobart>.

[31] Robert Menzies, "Our American Allies", Menzies Virtual Museum, East Melbourne, 23 January 1942, transcript np, retrieved on 18 May 2009 at <http://www.menziesvirtualmuseum.org.au/transcripts/ForgottenPeople/Forgotten14.html>.

[32] David Pyvis, "When the AIR BEER CEER pushed the Aussie twang", *Issues in Educational Research*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1993, p. 4.

[33] Cited in Petersen, *News not views*, p. 233.

[34] Moses, "Moses interview"; Clem Lloyd and Richard Hall (eds), *Backroom Briefings: John Curtin's war* [hereafter *Backroom briefings*], National Library of Australia [hereafter NLA], Canberra, 1997, p. 235.

[35] John Curtin, "National Theatre", *DDA*, no. 98, 19 March 1945, pp. 13-14.

Bureau into an active publicity department based in the US,[36] which by 1944 was directly promoting Australia's role in the war to other Allied nations through the use of films and other media.[37]  Similarly he increased the RAAF's public relations team, arranged with the United Kingdom Ministry of Information to produce a film about the Australian air force activities in Britain[38] and directed his nation's army public relations unit to issue "supplementary information" about local troops to add a new dimension to General MacArthur's US-oriented communiqués.[39]  His post-war planning included new strategies for the DOI to promote Australian trade and tourism opportunities in media releases in a bid to attract more migrants.[40]  His professional journalism background might have influenced his decision to instigate public relations strategies; in this way, he resembled US President Roosevelt, the former *Harvard Crimson* student president and managing editor, whose investments in "opinion management" methods helped to create the mood of a "national consensus" on the US entry in the war on 8 December 1941.[41]

Likewise, Curtin facilitated a growing number of international exchanges among journalists.  He sponsored three Australian correspondents to visit Canada in 1944;[42] also he supported at least an additional five newsmen to travel abroad

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[36] R.G. Casey to H.S. Foll, Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Barton, vol. 4, 24 February 1941, retrieved on 18 February 2010 at <http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/[LookupVolNoNumber]/4~319>; Bridget Griffen-Foley, "'The Kangaroo Is Coming Into Its Own': R. G. Casey, Earl Newsom And Public Relations In The 1940s", *Australasian Journal Of American Studies*, vol. 23, no. 2, December 2004, pp.1-20.

[37] (Anon.), "Our Role In Pacific Overlooked", *The Argus*, Melbourne, 5 August 1944, p. 3; Lloyd and Hall, *Backroom briefings*, p. 200; Osbiston, "Australian films", p. 2.

[38] "Advisory War Council minutes", National Archives of Australia [hereafter NAA], Canberra, series no. A5954, control symbol 815/1, 14 October 1943, p. 3.

[39] (Anon.), "A.I.F. Activities Endorsed: Mr. Curtin Says Hazards Reduced", *The Canberra Times*, Canberra, 23 January 1945, p. 2; (Anon.), "Army Equipment Superior and Adequate", *The Canberra Times*, Canberra, 6 April 1945, p. 2; Department of External Affairs, "Binder of Cables outward from Australian Delegation, San Francisco (and London)", NAA, Canberra, series no. A4764,7, 1 May 1945, p. 287; *DDA*, no. 99, 5 April 1945, p. 13.

[40] Arthur Calwell, "Future Activities–Post-War", *DDA*, no. 91, 26 October 1944, p. 48.

[41] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1989, p. 192.

[42] The three Australian correspondents visiting Canada in 1944 were Allen Dawes of *The Herald*, Fred Smith of the Australian United Press, and Don Whitington of *The Daily Telegraph*.  See Don Whitington, *Strive to be Fair: An Unfinished Biography* [hereafter *Strive to be fair*]*,* Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1977, p. 92.

including Murdoch, who met Curtin in London on 12 May.[43]  The first Voice of America radio commentator, William Winter, received a positive welcome in Australia during the same year.[44]  In early 1945, he helped at least four Australian journalists to report on the United Nations (UN) meeting in San Francisco.[45] Australia's delegation played a significant role in drafting the UN Charter.[46]  Curtin explained his reason for instigating these types of correspondent exchange programs, when he reportedly informed "the Circus" that he wanted "a reasonably good press delegate" to help promote "a proper pageant of Australia", as well as to "educate the other delegates" and "focus attention on the Pacific war".[47]  As a result, Australian journalists developed more professional relationships with Allied correspondents.

**Cross-national affinities, 1941-1945**

This study suggests that Curtin devoted more time to cultivate positive relationships with journalists than did Churchill, Canada's Mackenzie King and Roosevelt, whose media strategies were discussed in Chapter 4.  While all four Allied leaders used their journalism skills and media experiences to further their political careers, once they became national leaders, their press interactions varied remarkably.  Of the four men, Curtin held significantly more news conferences because of his commitment to

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[43] Along with Murdoch, Curtin supported these editors and managers to travel overseas: William Dunstan and John Williams of *The Herald*; Rupert Henderson of *The Sydney Morning Herald*; Brian Penton of *The Daily Telegraph*; Wynne of the Australian Associated Press.  See Heather Campbell, "Diary of Labour Man" for 12 May 1944 [hereafter "Diary"], JCPML, Bentley, 2008, retrieved on 11 February 2010 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/diary/primeminister/1944.html>; Harold Cox, "Typescript reports, 1944-1964" [hereafter "Typescript reports"], NLA, Manuscript Collections, Canberra, NLA MS acc. no. 4554, 3 July 1944, transcript np; Lloyd and Hall, *Backroom briefings*, p. 209.
[44] (Anon.), "William Winter.  Coming to Australia", *The West Australian*, Perth, 9 May 1944, p. 2; Fitzpatrick to Evatt, JCPML, JCPML acc. no. 269/3, 5 October 1944, pp. 53-54.
[45] The four journalists covering the 1945 United Nations conference in San Francisco were Allan Carmichael of the ABC, Harold Cox of *The Sun News-Pictorial*, George McGann of Australian Associated Press, and Virginia Young of *The Daily Mirror*.  See Department of External Affairs, "Binder of Cables inward from Australian Delegation, San Francisco (and London)", NAA, Canberra, series no. A4764,6, 16 June 1945, pp. 126-127.
[46] Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, "United Nations: Our historical involvement", Canberra, 2008, retrieved on 21 January 2010 at <http://www.dfat.gov.au/facts/australia_and_un.html>.
[47] Cox, "Typescript reports", 16-17 February 1945.

twice-daily briefings on a regular basis.  In contrast, Roosevelt generally conducted twice-weekly interviews with the White House press corps while Churchill and King did not hold regular media conferences.  No other democratic wartime leader provided as much confidential information to journalists as did Curtin, who rarely travelled with a bodyguard and often walked in Canberra alone or with only one secretary.[48]  While King and Churchill discouraged impromptu questions, Roosevelt cautiously answered correspondents' queries, but would not discuss war secrets with them.[49]  During his briefings in Australia, Curtin discussed secret cables and shared Advisory War Council information with journalists and also provided news tips to them about an imminent Japanese attack.[50]  When he travelled to Canada, England and the US in 1944, he interacted with the media twice as frequently as Menzies did during his 1941 prime ministerial trip to these countries (see Appendices 10-11).[51] As demonstrated in Chapter 8, journalists from these Allied nations appreciated Curtin's informative, candid interviews.  For instance, Columbia Broadcasting System commentator, William Winter, said Curtin's San Francisco press conference in 1944 "was the most comprehensive ever held" in the city because his answers "were the frankest we [US journalists] have ever had".[52]  After his talk with Canadian correspondents, they remarked it was "one of the most useful conferences

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[48] (Anon.), "John Curtin gets ready for London trip", *The Australian Women's Weekly*, Sydney, 1 April 1944, p. 9; Frederick McLaughlin, "Prime Minister's visit to England via USA, Itinerary and engagements 1944" [hereafter "Travel itinerary"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00129/1, pp. 3-4; Alan Reid, "Plain John Curtin Who Led Australia Through Darkest Days", *The Sun*, Sydney, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00964/165, 5 July 1945.

[49] (Anon.), "Canada At War", *Time*, New York, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01222/15, 12 June 1944, p. 16; C.J. Lloyd, *Parliament And The Press: The Federal Parliamentary Press Gallery 1901-88* [hereafter *Parliament and the press*], Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1988, p. 126; Richard M. Perloff, *Political Communication: Politics, Press, and Public in America,* Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, New Jersey and London, 1998, p. 39; Donald Kilgour Rodgers, interviewed by Mel Pratt [hereafter "Rodgers interview"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00497, 29 April 1971, transcript np.

[50] Alexander, "Alexander interview"; Cox, "Typescript reports".

[51] Curtin's overseas journalism contacts were recorded in Campbell, "Diary" for 1944. Menzies' international media interviews were described in: A.W. Martin and Patsy Hardy (eds), *Dark and Hurrying Days: Menzies' 1941 Diary* [hereafter *Dark and hurrying days*], NLA, Canberra, 1993, particularly pp. 60-132.

[52] Theo Moody, "Triumph For Mr Curtin At Press Talk" [hereafter "Triumph for Curtin"], *The Argus*, Melbourne, 21 April 1944, p. 1.

ever held in the Ottawa [Press] Gallery".[53]  In London, newspaper journalists praised Curtin's ability to establish "excellent personal relations" with Churchill; his "incisive presentation of the facts"; and his "fresh mind and language" during his radio broadcast to Britons on 8 May 1944.[54]  Thus Curtin's interviews were well-known among Allied correspondents as being the most comprehensive in giving war information and the most extensive in the time allocated to answer journalists' questions.  As a result, he generated favourable news coverage in *The New York Times*,[55] *The Washington Post*[56] and *Time* magazine.[57]

Moreover, Curtin communicated more frequently to radio listeners than did FDR, who was recognised for his ready acceptance and use of relatively new media technology.  This study compared Curtin's major radio talks with those given by Roosevelt as the US president.  The full texts of 37 of Curtin's radio broadcasts have been lodged at the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library.[58]  In addition, this study identified nine other broadcasts given by Curtin during this same period between 7 October 1941 and 5 July 1945 (see Appendix 12).[59]  Therefore this thesis has calculated that he made about 12 significant prime ministerial radio addresses each year.  In contrast, Roosevelt delivered his 110 presidential radio speeches from 4

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[53] Department of External Affairs, "Visit of Mr. Curtin to USA & UK in connection with Prime Ministers' Conference London" [hereafter "Curtin's visit"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00768/2, May 1944, pp. 10-22.

[54] Cited in (Anon.), "Australia Has British Mandate In The Pacific", *The Canberra Times*, Canberra, 9 May 1944, p. 2; (Anon.), "Press Comment: 'Need Have No Doubt'", *The West Australian*, Perth, 9 May 1944, p. 3.

[55] *The New York Times*, 5, 20, 22, 24-27 April 1944; 5, 19, 22, 31 May 1944; 1, 2, 8 June 1944.

[56] *The Washington Post*, 26 December 1941; 6, 25 April 1944; 12, 15 May 1944; 18 July 1944.

[57] *Time*, 13 October 1941; 5, 12 January 1942; 2, 23 March 1942; 12 October 1942; 23, 30 August 1943; 31 January 1944; 17 April 1944; 12 June 1944.

[58] JCPML, "Index to John Curtin's speeches in the Digest of Decisions and Announcements and Important Speeches by the Prime Minister, 1941-1945" [hereafter "Index to John Curtin's speeches"], Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01148/1, 2007.

[59] See Australian Commonwealth Government, "Prime Minister's Itinerary" [hereafter "Election speech itinerary"], NAA, Canberra, CA12, A461, R4/1/12, p. 117; Australian Department of External Affairs, "Curtin's visit", pp.10-22; British Movietone (producer), "Commonwealth Premiers Honoured", in *Newsreels of Curtin, 1942-1945* (newsreel), JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00734/1, 1944; Campbell, "Diary", 19 and 30 April, 7 May, 26 June 1944; William Lyon Mackenzie King, "The Diaries of William Lyon Mackenzie King", Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, 30 May-1 June 1944, retrieved on 11 February 2010 at <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/king/index-e.html>.

March 1933 until 12 April 1945.[60]  Thus Roosevelt made about nine radio talks each year during his presidential terms.  This calculation illustrated a significant finding: even though Curtin was often away during his last two years, he delivered more national broadcasts than did FDR, who was credited as being a highly successful radio communicator.[61]  As Australian public opinion polling was new, records were not available to find out exactly what people thought of each one of Curtin's radio speeches.[62]  Yet the frequency of his broadcasts, the largely positive reception towards them in the selected newspapers, the mass audiences of devoted wartime listeners and two national polls suggested he used radio skilfully.[63]

To help explain the success of his rhetoric, this study examined the accessibility and reading ease of a selected sample of 11 Curtin addresses.  Ideally an accessible public document should have a Flesch Reading Ease score that is between 60 and 70, with a lower number indicating more complicated language.  Based on this measurement, the Curtin addresses had an average Flesch Reading Ease score of 50.76, which meant it was more complicated than the ideal level (see Appendix 15). Five of these selected addresses were detailed parliamentary speeches, which contributed to the overall complexity of Curtin's language.[64]  In this sample, his four

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[60] Elvin T. Lim, "The Lion and the Lamb: De-mythologising Franklin Roosevelt's Fireside Chats" [hereafter "Fireside chats"], *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*, vol. 6, no. 3, 2003, p. 441.

[61] Thomas Bonner, *Our Recent Past,* Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, 1963, p. 213; Arthur S. Link, *American Epoch: A History of the United States Since the 1890's,* Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1955, p. 383; Daniel Scroop, "The Making of FDR: The Story of Stephen T. Early, America's First Modern Press Secretary", *Times Higher Education,* London, 21 November 2008, retrieved on 10 December 2008 at <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?storyCode=402574&sectioncode=26>.

[62] As discussed in Chapter 5, Roy Morgan Research was founded in 1941.  Michele Levine and Gary Morgan, "The Power of Newspaper Editorial & Advertising", *Country Press Association 106th Annual Conference*, Sydney, 2006, retrieved on 20 June 2009 at <www.roymorgan.com>.

[63] (Anon.), "Curtin and Poll", *Time*, New York, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01222/11, 23 August 1943, p. 34; (Anon.),"Mr. Curtin's Job Pleases People", *The Courier-Mail,* Brisbane, 14 August 1942, p. 4; Lloyd, *Parliament and the press,* p. 140; Petersen, *News not views*, p. 170.

[64] The five selected Curtin parliamentary speeches were: John Curtin, "Attack On Darwin", *DDA*, no. 19, 19 February 1942, p. 9; "Naval Engagement – Coral Sea" [hereafter "Coral Sea speech"], *DDA*, no. 28, 8 May 1942, pp. 4-5; "State Of The War", *DDA,* no. 47, 10 December 1942, pp. 17-24; *Commonwealth of Australia: Parliamentary Debates* [hereafter *CPD*], vol. 173, 11 February 1943, pp. 592-596; "Meeting of Prime Ministers – Australian Prime Minister's Report" [hereafter "Prime ministers' meeting"], *DDA*, no. 84, 17 July 1944, pp. 28-44.

radio broadcasts were slightly more accessible to public audiences and registered a score of 54.375 (a higher number meant a simpler document).[65]  These Curtin speeches were somewhat more difficult than Roosevelt's "fireside chats", registered to be an average of 57.5.[66]  Moreover, this study calculated the Flesch-Kincaid Grade, indicating a school grade level.  On average, Curtin's selected addresses, including his parliamentary speeches, were suitable for eleventh-grade students.  His four radio talks were slightly simpler because they were generally appropriate for tenth-grade listeners.  Although the prescribed standard was for a public document to be targeted to an eighth-grade student, it appeared that he still aimed major radio broadcasts to a predominantly lower secondary school level.[67]  Due to the unavailability of many recorded speeches, this study was able to calculate Curtin's speech rate in only three broadcasts from the selected sample.[68]  He spoke an average 139.46 words a minute, faster than the recommended levels of 100 to 125 words.[69]  According to different scholarly estimates, FDR's average pace was between 105 and 117 words per minute in his "fireside chats".[70]  As this sample of Curtin's radio talks showed that they were generally aimed at a lower secondary school level, the evidence indicates that they were not beyond the comprehension of working-class listeners.  In 1941 the statutory school leaving age was 14 years old (or year nine) in

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[65] The four selected Curtin radio talks were: Curtin, "Broadcast by the Prime Minister from London" [hereafter "London broadcast"], *DDA*, 8 May 1944, no. 81, pp. 53-56; "General Election ALP Policy Statement" [hereafter "Election policy statement"], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00421/2, 26 July 1943, transcript np; "National broadcast", pp. 19-22; "US radio broadcast", pp. 9-13.

[66] Lim, "Fireside chats", pp. 445-446.

[67] Trevor Day, "Twelve Writing Tips for Administrative Staff", University of Bath, Bath, 2008, retrieved on 27 September 2009 at <www.bath.ac.uk/learningandteaching/resources/TwelveWritingTipsRevisedTD.pdf>.

[68] See Appendix 15.  The three recorded radio talks were: Curtin, "Election policy statement"; "National broadcast", pp. 19-22; "US radio broadcast", pp. 9-13.

[69] Peter Kenny, *A Handbook of Public Speaking for Scientists & Engineers*, IOP Publishing Ltd [Institute of Physics Publishing], London, 1988, p. 20; Lim, "Fireside chats", pp. 446, 458 endnote 42; Cynthia J. Pasquale, "Talking at the speed of confound", *The Denver Post*, Denver, 29 June 2006, retrieved on 10 September 2009 at <http://www.denverpost.com/ci_3991442?source=rss>; Public Broadcasting Service, "All About Public Speaking", Falls Church, 2009, retrieved on 27 September 2009 at <http://www.pbs.org/standarddeviantstv/transcript_public.html>.

[70] Earnest Bradenburg and Waldo W. Braden, "Franklin Delano Roosevelt" [hereafter "Roosevelt"], in Marie Kathryn Hochmuth (ed.), *History and Criticism of American Public Address,* Longmans, Green and Co., New York, vol. 3, 1958, pp. 520, 522; Lim, "Fireside chats", p. 446.

each Australian state.[71]  Australians born before 1930 achieved 9.3 years of education on average.[72]  According to *The Age* editorial writer, Australian radio listeners enjoyed his "periodical talks to the nation" because they liked to "hear his voice, weigh his words and generally maintain that personal contact with the head of the Government which is eminently desirable".[73]  His use of diction and quoting of poetry have been somewhat at odds with his media image as a "man of the people" and therefore it is useful to consider other reasons to explain the popularity of his radio talks.[74]

At the beginning of Curtin's broadcasts, it was clear that he was talking to "the people" – rather than to other politicians and Allied leaders – and he frequently used "we", "us," and "our" that conveyed his inclusive tone (see Chapters 6 to 9).[75] This strategy resembled the approach taken by Roosevelt in his declaration of war on Japan and in his "fireside chats", which always began with some variant of a greeting to "My Friends".[76]  Also Curtin appeared to take care to make impersonal references to "Japan", "the enemy" and the war, consistent with US official policy.[77]  He appealed to a sense of unity when he affirmed, "the common cause of preserving for free men and free women not only their inheritance, but every hope they have of decency and dignity and liberty".  Throughout his prime ministership, he balanced his crisis war rhetoric with invocations of "freedom", "liberty" and "democracy".

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[71] S.R. Carver, *Official Year Book Of The Commonwealth Of Australia, 1941*, Canberra, Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, no. 34, 1942.

[72] Jonathan Kelley and M.D.R. Evans, "Trends In Educational Attainment In Australia", *WwA: Worldwide Attitudes*, 26 August 1996, pp. 1-8, retrieved on 27 September 2009 at <http://www.international-survey.org/wwa_pub/articles/hst-ed5.htm>.

[73] (Anon.), "The Steersman Returns To The Helm", *The Age*, Melbourne, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 4, JCPML acc. no. 00297/4, 22 January 1945.

[74] 20th Century Fox-Movietone News (producer), *Nation Mourns John Curtin* (newsreel), JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00033/1, 1945; ScreenSound Australia, "A Great Australian Passes …", in *John Joseph Curtin 1885 – 1945* (newsreel), JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00238/1, 1945.

[75] For example, Curtin, "National broadcast", pp. 19-22.

[76] Lim, "Fireside chats", p. 453; Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Joint Address to Congress Leading to a Declaration of War Against Japan", Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, Hyde Park, 8 December 1941, retrieved on 1 August 2010 at <http://docs.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/oddec7.html>.

[77] Hal Brands, "Rhetoric, Public Opinion, and Policy in the American Debate over the Japanese Emperor during World War II", *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*, vol. 8, no. 3, 2005, p. 434.

These ideals could be attained only through the practice of "duty", "responsibility" and "sacrifice", as he told public audiences.[78]  By 1944, his tone became more optimistic as he invited Australian people to share his vision of a hopeful future, international cooperation and establishing a national "purpose" in the "new world order".[79]  This analysis of keywords suggested that Curtin managed to strike the right chord with national audiences, appealing to the wartime mood of social unity and civic duty, as well as inspiring Australians to work together and forge the same "purpose".

In other ways, the Churchill, King and Roosevelt news management systems might have influenced Curtin to adopt some journalism and media strategies.  For example, after FDR appointed the first US full-time presidential press secretary, Stephen T. Early, in 1933, Curtin perhaps heard about the success of this initiative, which possibly encouraged him to employ Rodgers as Australia's first designated prime ministerial press secretary in 1941.[80]  Similarly the extensive wartime newsreels about Churchill, King and FDR might have helped persuade Curtin to rehearse carefully for his appearances in short films, as well as to expand Australian movie production for international audiences.[81]  His parliamentary rhetoric, including his use of the loaded pause, a cleverly timed comeback and gestures such as striking the desk in front of him, resembled Churchill's style of debating opposition MPs.  It is likely that Curtin developed these persuasive techniques when he trained himself to be an orator in front of large audiences at street corners, town halls and beachside gatherings.

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[78] Curtin, "Coral Sea speech", pp. 4-5; "London broadcast", pp. 53-56; "National broadcast", pp. 19-22.

[79] Curtin, "London broadcast", pp. 53-56; "Prime ministers' meeting", pp. 28-44.

[80] Diana Knott Martinelli and Jeff Mucciarone, "New deal public relations: A glimpse into FDR press secretary Stephen Early's work", *Public Relations Review,* vol. 33, no. 1, March 2007, pp. 49-57; Rodgers, "Rodgers interview".

[81] Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, "Audio/Visual Collections at the Library", Hyde Park, 2010, retrieved on 1 August 2010 at <http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/archives/collections/avcollections.html#motion>; Library and Archives Canada, "Mackenzie King on the Air Waves and the Silver Screen", Ottawa, 2002, retrieved on 1 August 2010 at <http://www.lac-bac.gc.ca/king/023011-1070.09-e.html>; Jonathan Sikorsky, "From British Cassandra to American Hero: The Churchill Legend in the World War II American Media" [hereafter "Churchill"], *Finest Hour*, The Churchill Centre, no. 108, autumn 2000, pp. 30-36.

Yet differing from the aristocratic style of the other three leaders, he cultivated the image of a down-to-earth Australian, who "like any other man ... reads a few of the better type wild-Western stories for relaxation",[82] enjoyed watching movies[83] and had "never been a fancy dresser".[84] Allied audiences responded positively to these messages and US magazine companies used his image in their advertisements including New York subway car posters.[85] Curtin, like his three Allied colleagues, was greatly assisted by his wartime censorship system. Mackenzie King in Canada and Churchill in London had learned that journalists worked better with censors who were from similar professional backgrounds.[86] Also Roosevelt made sure that the US Office of Censorship's director was a long-time newsman, Byron Price, who would be sympathetic to the principle of a free press.[87] In Australia, Menzies' 1940 appointment of Murdoch as the director-general of information was not a success due to the hostility of rival press proprietors.[88] Careful to avoid repeating this mistake, Curtin gave the director-general's position to the news editor, Edmund Bonney, in 1941 and used his news conferences to build relationships of trust with journalists, who generally agreed to cooperate with the

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[82] (Anon.), "Slick U.S. Magazines Use Curtin To Boost Sales" [hereafter "Slick US magazines"], *The Daily Mirror*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 2, 9 October 1942.

[83] (Anon.), "John Curtin gets ready for London trip", *The Australian Women's Weekly,* JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00964/111, 1 April 1944; Arthur Augustus Calwell, "Biographical notes re John Curtin", JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00652/3/2, 1944.

[84] (Anon.), "Clothes would not worry Curtin", *The Sunday Sun*, Sydney, 14 June 1942, retrieved on 26 September 2009 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/behindthescenes/pms/text/curtin.html>.

[85] (Anon.), "Slick US magazines".

[86] George D. Kerr, "Skirting the Minefield: Press Censorship, Politics and French Canada, 1940", *Canadian Journal of Communication*, vol. 8, no. 2, 1982, pp. 47-48; Charles Edward Lysaght, "Brendan Bracken: 'The Fantasist Whose Dreams Came True'", *Finest Hour,* The Churchill Centre, no. 113, winter 2001-2002, p. 18; The National Archives*,* "The Art of War", Surrey, 2005, retrieved on 11 December 2008 at <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/theartofwar/inf3.htm>.

[87] William H. Hammond, "Book review: Secrets of Victory: The Office of Censorship and the US Press and Radio in World War II" (Michael S. Sweeney), *The Journal of Military History,* vol. 65, no. 3, 2001, pp. 840-841.

[88] Bridget Griffen-Foley, "Political opinion polling and the professionalization of public relations: Keith Murdoch, Robert Menzies, and the Liberal Party of Australia", *Australian Journalism Review,* vol. 24, no. 1, 2002, p. 43; Geoffrey Serle, "Murdoch, Sir Keith Arthur (1885 – 1952)" [hereafter "Keith Murdoch"], *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, vol. 10, 1986, pp. 622-627, retrieved on 22 January 2008 at <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A100610b.htm>.

"voluntary self-censorship".[89]   Thus Curtin did not directly copy the other Allied leaders' media policies, but he developed initiatives that reflected his deep commitment to journalists, his egalitarian, labour-oriented philosophy and his aim to promote Australia to the world.

He also oversaw the inclusion of more women in the public sphere.  Differing from the Churchill administration's policy, Curtin did not object to women war correspondents and consequently more female newspaper and radio journalists worked in Australian newsrooms than ever before.[90]   In 1943 his election policy speech was directly targeted towards female voters; during his campaign, he gave a talk to 300 women in South Perth, answering their questions.  This was a landmark election for bringing the first female politician to each House of the Federal Parliament.[91]   Moreover, Elsie Curtin pioneered direct relationships between an Australian prime minister's wife and correspondents and this was probably inspired by Eleanor Roosevelt's achievements.  She held question-and-answer interviews in Australia and the US, where she generated positive news coverage in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and other newspapers.[92]   During her Washington DC meetings, she was supported by Eleanor Roosevelt, who conducted a record 350

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[89] Alexander, "Alexander interview"; J.A. Alexander, "Papers 1833-1957", NLA, Manuscript Collections, Canberra, NLA acc. no. MS 2389, particularly 5-8 December 1941, transcript np; Cox, "Cox interview"; Cox, "Typescript reports", 1944-1945; John Hilvert, "Bonney, Edmund Garnet (1883 – 1959)", *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, vol. 13, 1993, p. 215, retrieved on 31 July 2010 at <http://adbonline.anu.edu.au/biogs/A130247b.htm>.

[90] Australian Women's Archives Project, "The Women's Pages: Australian Women and Journalism since 1850", Nowra, 2008, retrieved on 28 December 2008 at <http://www.womenaustraliainfo/exhibit/cal/intro.html>; Audrey Tate, *Fair Comment: The life of Pat Jarrett 1911-1990,* Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1996, p. 79.

[91] Labor's Dorothy Tangney of WA became Australia's first woman senator and Enid Lyons won the Tasmanian seat of Darwin.  See Black, *In his own words,* p. 228; Oliver, *Unity is strength,* p. 168.

[92] Positive US press statements appeared in: (Anon.), "Australian Leader's Wife Real Person", *Republican,* Waterbury, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00964/124, 5 May 1944; (Anon.), "Impression of U.S.A.: Mrs Curtin Interviewed", *The West Australian*, Perth, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00964/119, 28 April 1944; (Anon.), "Mrs. Curtin Buys Gloves, No Nylons; Prime Minister's Wife Compares Shopping Conditions Here and in Australia", *The New York Times*, New York, 26 April 1944, p. 20; (Anon.), "Mrs. Curtin Honor Guest At Luncheons", *The Washington Post*, Washington DC, 12 May 1944, p. 12; (Anon.), "Shepherdstown AAWU Hears Mrs. Curtin and Lady Dixon", *The Washington Post*, Washington DC, 15 May 1944, p. 3; (Anon.), "Not Like Movies", *Valley News,* Tarentum, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00964/127, 6 May 1944.

women-only press conferences during her residence in the White House.[93]   In Australia, male and female newspaper readers wrote letters to the editor as, in Hartley's terms, "citizens of media"[94] because they rejected conservative views in some press editorials and shared their reasons for supporting Curtin.[95]   These examples showed the letters to the editor section could be a distinctive site, "where the governed are invited to take a governmental posture towards society",[96] and that newspaper readers were not "mice" because they did not unquestioningly accept media owners' opinions.[97]   By substantially increasing the prime minister's communication of policy decisions to public audiences and working to break down the male gender exclusivity of journalism, Curtin expanded the very concept of the public sphere to include the democratic, liberating function of active, astute citizens of the popular media.   As a result of Curtin's media strategies, previously conservative, Canberra-based journalists and other Australians changed their allegiances by voting for Labor for the first time and they continued to support the prime minister after the 1943 election.[98]   With the use of media tactics, including his frequent discussions with journalists and his broadcasts that signified he was directly talking with "the people", Curtin managed to persuade these journalists to support his leadership and promote mainly favourable news coverage of his foreign policies.

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[93] Maurine H. Beasley, "Eleanor Roosevelt's Press Conferences: Case Study in Class, Gender, and Race", *The Social Science Journal*, vol. 37, no. 4, October 2000, pp. 517-528; Eleanor Roosevelt to Elsie Curtin, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00330/1, 17 April 1944, p. 24; US Library of Congress, "Women Come to the Front: Journalists, Photographers, and Broadcasters During World War II", Washington DC, 2006, retrieved on 21 January 2009 at <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/wcf/wcf0002.html>.

[94] John Hartley, *Popular Reality: Journalism, Modernity, Popular Culture* [hereafter *Popular reality*], Arnold, London and New York, 1996, pp. 71, 72, 234.

[95] A.C. Button, "Australia & Britain", *The Age*, Melbourne, 16 March 1942, p. 2; Ena Creelman, "Reply To Sir Keith Murdoch", *Camperdown Chronicle*, Camperdown, 20 August 1943, p. 2; J.J. Mulligan to John Curtin and to The Sydney Morning Herald editor [hereafter "Letter to *The Sydney Morning Herald*"], NAA, Canberra, CA 12, M1415, 237, 31 December 1942-1 January 1943, pp. 102-103; Mark Talpley, "Tribute From An Elector" [hereafter "Letter to The Age"], *The Age*, Melbourne, 11 December 1942, p. 4.

[96] Mickler, Visualising Aboriginality, p. 28.

[97] Hartley, *Popular reality*, pp. 71, 72, 234.

[98] See Alexander, "Alexander interview"; Cox, "Cox interview"; Holt, "Holt interview"; Mulligan, "Letter to The Sydney Morning Herald"; Talpley, "Letter to The Age"; Whitington, *Strive to be fair*, pp. 55, 59, 82, 84.

**Present-day perspectives**

Curtin established productive relationships with journalists, initiated creative mass communication strategies and expanded media technology to communicate to more international audiences.  This study aimed to ascertain the extent of his legacy for the modern Canberra Parliamentary Press Gallery and wider government-media relationships.  For this purpose, contemporary journalists were asked to share their views about Curtin's influence, particularly for the press gallery. Of the political journalists participating in this survey, only a small minority of senior editors knew about Curtin's extraordinarily frank press conferences and none of the respondents was aware of his expanded use of radio and film.[99]  Yet information about this prime minister is readily available in the public sphere.  Televised films have portrayed him as a tough, self-assured war leader while wartime journalists have written commentaries and provided oral histories on his mass communication strategies.[100] The contemporary press gallery's general sense of indifference towards a dominant, historic leader in politics, journalism and the media was consistent with previously published research suggesting that some educated, professional Australian reporters were unable to identify some of their nation's previous prime ministers.[101]  Taken together, these findings reveal serious gaps in some journalists' knowledge (journalists who we would reasonably expect to be knowledgeable) and also indicate a lack of desire to find out about the nation's political history.  This apathetic mood has pervaded some mainstream Australian journalists' news values, or in other words, what they deem to be an important event deserving the public's attention.  For example in July 2010, Channel Ten and Seven executives forced a change in the traditional timeslot of the federal election debate, involving Prime Minister Julia

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[99] For the survey methodology, see Appendix 8.  As discussed in Chapter 10, the few senior editors who spoke about Curtin's journalism legacy were: Editor B, confidential personal communication, 24 March 2010; Shane Wright, personal communication, 27 December 2009; Bob Wurth, personal communication, 24 November 2009.

[100] These televised films include: Apollo Films (producer), *Curtin* (telemovie for Australian Broadcasting Corporation), Australia, 2007; ScreenSound Australia, *John Curtin, Memoirs* (documentary), JCPML, JCPML acc. no. 00791/1, Bentley, 1965.  These wartime journalists wrote about Curtin's relationships with journalists: Tom Mead, *Breaking The News: The events which changed life in Australia through the eyes of a man who worked at the front line of journalism and politics,* Dolphin Books, Sydney, 1998; Whitington, *Strive to be fair.* See Appendix 13 for the oral histories.

[101] Margaret Van Heekeren, "Who's Gough Whitlam? What journalism graduates don't know about the past and what news editors want them to know", *Australian Journalism Review*, vol. 27, no. 1, 2005, pp. 209-218.

Gillard and Liberal opposition leader Tony Abbott, because it interfered with popular cooking and dance competition shows.[102]   In Perth newspapers, debate reports were overshadowed by large, colourful, pictorial, front-page advertisements of the *MasterChef* television final.[103]   Yet an understanding of Australia's current and past political leaders gives significant insights into how to resolve today's challenges. Curtin, for instance, provided relevant lessons on how to communicate honestly, informatively and regularly with journalists to gain their support for Australia's role in a global war.   Moreover, he showed the value of using radio, film and other available popular culture media to communicate frankly with public audiences. While the survey findings indicated many reporters were unaware of Curtin's achievements, it is argued that they also revealed Australian journalism's lack of knowledge about itself.

This ignorance about Curtin's legacy contrasted with journalists' knowledge of the legacies of Churchill, FDR and Mackenzie King.   In the US, contemporary reporters praised Roosevelt's "fireside chats" and often likened his communication strategies with those of President Barack Obama.   Since FDR was presented as an important leader in the mainstream media, public opinion polling indicated Americans respected him as a wartime president.   Likewise, Churchill's fighting rhetoric, forceful newsreel appearances and press articles were idealised in the British media.[104]   London journalists deplored the results of a 2008 survey that indicated some British teenagers thought Churchill was a mythical figure.[105]   The

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[102] Amanda Meade and Sally Jackson, "Worm returns as MasterChef cooks up a heated debate", *The Australian*, 22 July 2010, retrieved on 2 August 2010 at <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/worm-returns-as-masterchef-cooks-up-a-heated-debate/story-fn59niix-1225895503476>.

[103] *The West Australian*, Perth, 24 and 26 July 2010, p. 1; *The Sunday Times*, Perth, 25 July 2010, p. 1.

[104] Acorn Media (producer), *Churchill's Bodyguard* (documentary), 2006.

[105] Robert Hardman, "Winston Churchill's extraordinary relationship with the founding fathers of the Mail", *Daily Mail,* London, 8 February 2008, retrieved on 11 December 2008 at <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-512982/Winston-Churchills-extraordinary-relationship-founding-fathers-Mail.html>; Aislinn Simpson, "Winston Churchill didn't really exist, say teens", *The Telegraph*, London, 4 February 2008, retrieved on 11 December 2008 at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1577511/Winston-Churchill-didn%27t-really-exist%2C-say-teens.html>; David Wooding, "Two-finger salute to Churchill", *The Sun Online,* London, 13 July 2007, retrieved on 11 December 2008 at <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1865231/posts>.

wartime media often portrayed Churchill and Roosevelt as being celebrities and heroes; the nations' memories of these two leaders were not irretrievably damaged by private notes they left behind and they did not preserve a diary. While Canada's King became an honorary member of the Ottawa Press Gallery in 1944, later journalists analysed his diary notes that became publicly available after his death. In 1978, the former wartime *Ottawa Journal* reporter, Richard Jackson, explained on a Canadian public television program that: "The press gave the prime minister a lot more respect than it does now." Jackson added: "Now, they go after him [the prime minister) like a pack of howling dogs."[106]   King was also an innovative communicator; for example, when Britain declared war against Germany on 3 September 1939, he delivered a radio talk to the largest worldwide audience listening to a Canadian broadcast at the time. Yet as Curtin did not keep a secret diary and most contemporary reporters did not publicise his achievements, his legacy seems to have been largely forgotten by the Australian journalists who have benefited from his media strategies. While a prime ministerial library and museum are devoted to his memory, it appears that many journalists have yet to inform themselves about his leadership of Australia during World War II.

Nonetheless Curtin's legacy is significant because his journalism and media precedents have become accepted practices today. His system of interactive, question-and-answer media conferences has been used by his prime ministerial successors.[107] As a result of this initiative, contemporary journalists expect politicians to be responsive to their enquiries. As ABC Television political journalist, Peter Kennedy, said:

> Politicians used to be able to make a statement one day and then think they
> didn't have to deal with an issue for the rest of the day ... There is a much

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[106] Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (producer), *Front Page Challenge* (television broadcast)*,* Toronto, 27 March 1978, retrieved on 10 December 2008 at <http://archives.cbc.ca/version_print.asp?page=1&IDLan=1&ID.C.lip=7244&IDDossier=0 &IDCat=335&ID.C.atPa=260>.
[107] For example, ABC Television (producer), *National Press Club Address – Julia Gillard (Prime Minister)* (television program), Canberra, 15 July 2010.

faster flow of information [now], particularly during election campaigns in regard to the control of the news flow.[108]

Also Curtin instituted the practice of giving confidential information to reporters and today's journalists still abide by this type of off-the-record agreement. *The Daily Telegraph* chief political reporter, Malcolm Farr, explained this procedure: "if he [a politician] has told something to you in confidence, then you keep the confidence. You don't exaggerate …. You accept responsibility for whatever you've written".[109] While different politicians have shown varying degrees of commitment towards giving confidential interviews and media conferences, these practices have become a part of current institutional news processes.  The modern press secretary role created by Curtin has flourished under his successors, who have greatly expanded the number of media advisers.[110]  Many Australian leaders have adopted the use of new technologies to enable what Foucault describes as an "immense diffusion and consumption" of government information and to establish their power in political institutions, practices and rules.[111]  Curtin's enthusiastic use of the relatively new media of radio and wartime newsreels is similar to the use of expanded online communications by Prime Ministers Kevin Rudd and Julia Gillard.[112]  His innovative broadcasts influenced more Australian politicians to give radio talks, to expand the media coverage of parliamentary debates, to engage with television and online audiences, as discussed in Chapter 10.  Sky News political editor, David Speers, commented that John Howard and Rudd "are very sophisticated in their approach and they target the media with their messages".[113]  Also Curtin made a positive impact on other democratic nations' media systems.  When government delegates

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[108] Peter Kennedy, personal communication, 18 December 2009.

[109] Malcolm Farr, personal communication, 12 March 2010.

[110] Greg Barns, *Selling the Australian Government: Politics And Propaganda From Whitlam To Howard*, University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 2005, p. 10.

[111] Michel Foucault, "Technologies of the Self", in L.H. Martin, H. Gutman and P.H. Hutton (eds), *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault,* Tavistock Publications, London, 1988, p. 18; Michel Foucault, "Truth and Power", trans. Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham and Kate Soper in C. Gordon (ed.), *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, The Harvester Press, Brighton, 1980, p. 131.

[112] For a discussion of the Rudd and Gillard prime ministerial online communications, see Gwyneth Howell and Bruce Da Silva, "New media, first time voters and the 2007 Australian federal election", *Public Communication Review*, vol. 1, 2010, pp. 27-33; Courtney Trenwith, "Social networking spills the beans", *brisbanetimes.com.au*, Brisbane, 25 June 2010, retrieved on 30 July 2010 at <http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/technology/social-networking-spills-the-beans-20100624-z2v0.html>.

[113] David Speers, personal communication, 30 March 2010.

held news briefings for journalists at the 1945 UN meeting in San Francisco, they were so successful in promoting Australia's views that US officials were influenced to adopt the same type of background media conferences.[114]  North American wartime correspondents portrayed Curtin's open, informative talks as a model for other leaders to emulate;[115] his press, radio and film strategies remained relevant for prime ministerial-journalism relations.

Thus Curtin's media strategies have led to positive changes in the ways that politicians communicate to journalists and public audiences.  Since Curtin's prime ministership, political leaders have recognised the need to generate evermore news coverage of their activities and therefore, to adopt the latest available technology to inform journalists and communicate with the public.  Indeed the interactive nature of the media has broadened dramatically from the 1940s newspaper letter columns, which used to be the only formal vehicle for readers to express their opinions, and there are more opportunities for voters to relate to their elected representatives. While some senior journalists have remarked on a massive expansion in the amount of information that is released by politicians,[116] survey respondents also have commented that parliamentarians now seem more distant from the press gallery.[117] While a few survey respondents praised Curtin's briefings for their frequency and their openness, however none of the journalists wanted to return to the voluntary self-censorship system that press gallery members practised during the war.[118]  Even as the nation moved away from the unified atmosphere that Curtin helped to produce

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[114] Joseph E. Johnson, "Oral History Interview with Joseph E. Johnson", interviewed by Richard D. McKinzie, Harry S. Truman Library & Museum, Independence, 29 June 1973, retrieved on 16 February 2010 at <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/oralhist/johnsonje.htm>.
[115] (Anon.), "Canada At War", *Time*, New York, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01222/15, 12 June 1944, p. 16; Moody, "Triumph for Curtin", p. 1.
[116] Tony Eastley, personal communication, 9 December 2009; Farr, personal communication, 12 March 2010; Kennedy, personal communication, 18 December 2009; Speers, personal communication, 30 March 2010.
[117] Michael Cavanagh, personal communication, 27 January 2010; Correspondent A, confidential personal communication, 30 March 2010; Editor B, confidential personal communication, 24 March 2010; Glenn Milne, personal communication, 17 November 2009.
[118] Editor B, confidential personal communication, 24 March 2010; Shane Wright, personal communication, 27 December 2009; Bob Wurth, personal communication, 24 November 2009.

and more Australians engaged in bitter, divisive politics,[119] successive prime ministers have generally understood the need to be responsive to the press gallery, develop positive relationships with journalists and continuously provide information through the channels of government media offices.


In mobilising the conservative media machine for his war objectives, Curtin demonstrated the success of his journalism strategies.  He contributed in a singular way to the expansion of the Australian public sphere with an important result that the public henceforth came to expect that political leaders would be regularly accessible to the media and comment on any matters that arise about society.  In sum, therefore, he extended the public sphere through the use of democratic mass communication strategies including: broadcasting and film technologies; the regular personal engagement with and appearance before the media; the inclusion of more women and female journalists; and the involvement of more working-class citizens.  He achieved this not only in an era that was dominated by several conservative media proprietors, but during wartime constraints and censorship pressures.  Curtin understood the governmental function of news in an administered society by adopting formal and informal institutional changes that made the backroom of politics and governance a more accessible, engaging sphere for journalists (and therefore the mass public).

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[119] Editor B, confidential personal communication, 24 March 2010; Oliver, *Unity is strength*, pp. 152, 219-221, 239.

# Appendix 1

## Wartime military service

### Australia

About one out of every seven Australians participated in military service.  More than 993,000 Australians were enlisted in the war services comprising the Australian Military Forces, the Royal Australian Air Force and the Royal Australian Navy.[1]  At this time, the nation's population was about seven million people.[2]

### Great Britain

About one in every ten Britons was involved in military service.  About 4.5 million Britishers (including English, Scottish and Welsh people) fought in the war.  In 1941, the population of England, Scotland and Wales was 46,908 million people.[3]  Ireland was not included in this analysis because this small nation did not fight in the war as part of a policy of neutrality brought about and enforced by Prime Minister Éamon de Valera.

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[1] National Archives of Australia, "Boer War to Vietnam", Canberra, 2010, retrieved on 6 June 2010 at <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/explore/defence/conflicts.aspx#section3>; Parliamentary Library, "Anzac Day 2010", Canberra, 1 April 2010, retrieved on 29 May 2010 at <http://www.aph.gov.au/library/pubs/anzac/stats.htm>; Roland Wilson, *Official Year Book Of The Commonwealth Of Australia, 1944 and 1945* (hereafter *Year book 1944-45*), Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, Canberra, no. 36, 1947, p. 1034, retrieved on 16 January 2010 at
<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/1301.01944-45?OpenDocument>.

[2] John Curtin, "Prime Minister's Review, May, 1944", *Digest of Decisions and Announcements and Important Speeches by the Prime Minister (Right Hon. John Curtin)* (hereafter *DDA*), no. 81, 4 May 1944, p. 30.

[3] Joe Hicks and Grahame Allen, "A Century of Change: Trends in UK statistics since 1900", research paper 99/111, House of Commons Library, London, 21 December 2009, pp. 6, 16, retrieved on 27 July 2010 at <www.parliament.uk/commons/lib/research/rp99/rp99-111.pdf>.

## Canada

About one out of every 12 Canadians was in military service. More than one million Canadians and Newfoundlanders served in the war.[4] Canada had a national population of 11,946,000 in 1944.[5]

## United States

Similarly to Canada, about one in every 12 US citizens fought in the war. About 12 million US men and women enlisted for military service.[6] The US population numbered 139,928,165 people by July 1945.[7]

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[4] Veteran Affairs Canada, "Canada and the Second World War 1939-1945", Ottawa, 1998, retrieved on 6 June 2010 at <http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/remembers/sub.cfm?source=history/secondwar/canada2/intro>.

[5] Newfoundland's population was not included in the Canadian census until 1949. Statistics Canada, "Estimated population of Canada, 1605 to present", Ottawa, 2009, retrieved on 6 June 2010 at <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/98-187-x/4151287-eng.htm#table2>.

[6] Kenneth Paul O'Brien and Lynn Hudson Parsons, "Introduction: The Home-Front War", in Kenneth Paul O'Brien and Lynn Hudson Parsons (eds), *The Home-Front War: World War II and American Society*, Greenwood Press, Westport, 1995, p. 4.

[7] U.S. Census Bureau, "Historical National Population Estimates: July 1, 1900 to July 1, 1999", Washington DC, 28 June 2000, retrieved on 29 May 2010 at <www.census.gov/popest/archives/1990s/popclockest.txt>.

**Appendix 2**


This study will analyse the wartime news coverage of Curtin's statements, as listed below.


| Dates | News coverage of major events during Curtin's prime ministership | Publication[1] |
|---|---|---|
| 8 December 1941 | Announcing Australia's declaration of war on Japan, Curtin broadcasts a nationwide speech on the ABC radio. | *Digest of Decisions and Announcements and Important Speeches by the Prime Minister (Right Hon. John Curtin)* (hereafter *DDA*), no. 10, pp. 19-22. |
| 27 December 1941 | The prime minister's New Year message on "Australia looks to America". | *The Herald* newspaper, Melbourne, p. 1, cited in David Black (ed.), *In his own words: John Curtin's speeches and writings*, Paradigm Books Curtin University, Bentley, 1995, pp. 193-196. |
| 19 February 1942 | Parliamentary speech to announce the Japanese attack on Darwin. | *DDA*, no. 19, p. 9. |
| 14 March 1942 | Curtin's radio broadcast to the United States. | *DDA*, no. 22, pp. 9-13. |

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[1] This study has used both the hard copy and digitised versions of Curtin's statements that are lodged at the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library. The digitised versions are exact duplicates of the bound volume references.

| Dates | News coverage of major events during Curtin's prime ministership | Publication |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 8 May 1942 | His parliamentary announcement of the Battle of the Coral Sea. | *DDA*, no. 28, pp. 4-5. |
| 10 December 1942 | The prime minister's public statements on the Kokoda campaign. | *DDA,* no. 47, pp. 17-24. |
| 11 February 1943 | Parliamentary speech in support of the Defence (Citizen Military Forces) Bill on conscription. | *Commonwealth of Australia: Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 173, pp. 592-596. |
| 26 July 1943 | Curtin's general election policy statement. | John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library, JCPML acc. no. 00421/2. |
| 14 December 1943 | The prime minister's speech to the Australian Labor Party federal conference. | *DDA*, no. 70, pp. 31-36. |
| 8 May 1944 | Curtin's radio broadcast in Britain. | *DDA*, no. 81, pp. 53-56. |
| 17 July 1944 | His parliamentary speech on war conduct. | *DDA*, no. 84, pp. 28-44. |

Since Curtin was frequently away from office in 1945 due to illness, this study will examine news coverage of the following two events:

| Dates | News coverage of major events during Curtin's prime ministership | Publication |
|---|---|---|
| 23 January 1945 | His return to office after his absence of nearly two months. | |
| 5 July 1945 | His death in office, announced by the Acting Prime Minister Francis Forde. | *DDA*, no. 104, p. 19. |

# Appendix 3[1]

Content analysis coding schedule:

John Curtin's media communications

**1. Identify the source of John Curtin's media communications:**

    a.     Parliamentary speech

    b.     Press statement

    c.     Press interview

    d.     Newspaper article

    e.     Radio speech

    f.     Film appearance

**2. What is the subject matter(s) of the article/report within the broader context of the war?**

    a.     Foreign policy (e.g. Overseas battle)

    b.     National news (e.g. Election)

    c.     Economy

    d.     Other

**3. Date-month-year**

**4. Headline/title (copy verbatim if applicable)**

---

[1] David L. Altheide, *Qualitative media analysis,* Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, 1996.

**5.** **If this is a press text, identify the article length (number of words)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|

**6.** **If this is a radio text, identify the duration of the radio text about John Curtin (in minutes)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|

**7.** **If this is a film text, identify the duration of film text about John Curtin (in minutes)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|

**8.** **Number of times each keyword appears in the text:**

 i.  Australia, country, nationhood

| |
|---|

 ii.  "We"/"us"/"our"/"the people"

| |
|---|

 iii.  Freedom, liberty, independence, democracy

| |
|---|

 iv.  Hope, future, vision, unity

| |
|---|

 v.  War, defence, security

| |
|---|

 vi.  Economy, jobs

| |
|---|

 vii.  "They"/"them"/"enemy"/Japan/Germany

| |
|---|

 viii.  Civilise/civilisation

| |
|---|

 ix.  Old country, mother country

| |
|---|

x.    New world order

☐

xi.    Britain, United Kingdom

☐

xii.    America, United States

☐

**9.    Identify which keyword appears in the following (if applicable):**

The headline/ title

☐

The opening sentence

☐

**10.    Miscellaneous:  Include relevant key phrases (about one to three sentences) that help with identifying keywords.**

**11.    What is the Flesch Reading Ease score for this text (if applicable)?**

☐

**12.    What is the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level for this text (if applicable)?**

☐

# Appendix 4[1]

## Asa Berger's semiotic film conventions

| Signifier (Shot) | Definition | Signified (Meaning) |
|---|---|---|
| Close-up | Face only | Intimacy |
| Medium shot | Most of body | Personal relationship |
| Long shot | Setting and characters | Context, scope, public distance |
| Full shot | Full body of person | Social relationship |

| Signifier (Film) | Definition | Signified (Meaning) |
|---|---|---|
| Low angle | Camera looks up | Power, authority |
| High angle | Camera looks down | Small, weak |
| Zoom in | Camera moves in | Observation, focus |
| Fade in | Image appears on Blank screen | Beginning |
| Fade out | Image screen goes blank | Ending |
| Cut | Switch from one image to another image | Simultaneity, excitement |
| Wipe | Image wiped from the screen | Imposed conclusion |

[1] David L. Altheide, *Qualitative media analysis,* Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, 1996; Arthur Asa Berger, *Media Analysis Techniques*, Sage Publications, Beverly Hills, London and New Delhi, 1982, pp. 38-39; Daniel Chandler, "The 'Grammar' of Television and Film", Aberystwyth University, Aberystwyth, 1994, retrieved on 27 December 2010 at <http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/short/gramtv.html>; Anders Hansen, Simon Cottle, Ralph Negrine and Chris Newbold, *Mass Communication Research Methods,* Macmillan Press, Houndsmill, Basingstoke, Hampshire and London, 1998, pp. 119, 207.

**Appendix 5[1]**


Content analysis coding schedule:

Film coverage of John Curtin



**1.      Identify the film company:**


⬜

      i.      Cinesound

      ii.      Movietone

      iii.      Another national company

      iv.      International company


**2.      Date-month-year**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |


**3.      Title (copy verbatim)**

……………………………………………………………………………………


**4.      Producer/director/narrator/camera operator (copy names and positions)**

…………………………………………………………………………………..

---

[1] David L. Altheide, *Qualitative media analysis,* Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, 1996; Arthur Asa Berger, *Media Analysis Techniques*, Sage Publications, Beverly Hills, London and New Delhi, 1982, pp. 38-39; Anders Hansen, Simon Cottle, Ralph Negrine and Chris Newbold, *Mass Communication Research Methods,* Macmillan Press, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and London, 1998, pp. 119, 207.

**5.   Length of film text about John Curtin (number of minutes)**

**6.   Type of article/item**

    i.      Feature length documentary

    ii.     Newsreels

    iii.    Interview (in above)

    iv.    Government announcement or prime ministerial address

    v.     Dramatic feature film

**7.   What is the subject matter(s) of article/report within the broader context of the war?**

    a.     Foreign policy (e.g. overseas battle)

    b.     National political news (e.g. election)

    c.     Economy

    d.     Other

**8.   Who is the principal source?**

    i.      The prime minister

    ii.     The political leader of another nation

    iii.    Government spokesperson

    iv.    Government politician

    v.     Opposition leader

    vi.    Another opposition parliamentarian

    vii.   Other politician

    viii.  Judiciary

    ix.    Legal groups

490

     x.       Civil service

     xi.     Military official

     xii.    Industry/business

     xiii.   Federal Reserve Bank governor

     xiv.   Union official

     xv.    Police (including intelligence)

     xvi.   Academic

     xvii.  Clergy

     xviii. News editor/ editorial writer (the media)

     xix.   Citizens

     xx.    Another principal source (identify name and position)

**9.    Is the prime minister setting the news agenda (for example, making an announcement and initiating a news story)?  Identify the agenda setter.**

Is the prime minister reacting to criticism from the opposition, media or others? Identify the source of criticism.

**10.   Who are the sources being directly quoted?**

     i.        The prime minister

     ii.      The political leader of another nation

     iii.     Government spokesperson

     iv.     Government politician

     v.       Opposition leader

     vi.      Another opposition parliamentarian

     vii.    Other politician

     viii.   Judiciary

     ix.      Legal groups

     x.       Civil service

     xi.     Military official

     xii.    Industry/business

xiii.  Federal Reserve Bank Governor

xiv.  Union official

xv.  Police (including intelligence)

xvi.  Academic

xvii.  Clergy

xviii.  News editor/ editorial writer (the media)

xix.  Citizens

xx.  Another principal source (identify name and position)


**11.  Who are the sources being cited or quoted indirectly?**



i.  The Prime Minister

ii.  The political leader of another nation

iii.  Government spokesperson

iv.  Government politician

v.  Opposition leader

vi.  Another opposition parliamentarian

vii.  Other politician

viii.  Judiciary

ix.  Legal groups

x.  Public servant

xi.  Military official

xii.  Business and industry

xiii.  Federal Reserve Bank Governor

xiv.  Union official

xv.  Police including intelligence agents

xvi.  Academic

xvii.  Clergy

xviii.  News editor/ editorial writer (the media)

xix.  Citizens

xx.  Another principal source (identify name and position)

**12. Identify keywords.**

**13. Number of times each keyword appears in the text:**

   i.   Australia, country, nationhood

       This keyword was used to support Curtin's statement and to portray him as a strong leader        **Yes/No/Neutral Response**

   ii.  "We"/"us"/"our"/"the people"

       This keyword was used to support Curtin's statement and to portray him as a strong leader        **Yes/No/Neutral Response**

   iii. Freedom, liberty, independence, democracy

       This keyword was used to support Curtin's statement and to portray him as a strong leader        **Yes/No/Neutral Response**

   iv. Hope, future, vision, unity

       This keyword was used to support Curtin's statement and to portray him as a strong leader        **Yes/No/Neutral Response**

   v.  War, defence, security

This keyword was used to support Curtin's statement and to portray him as a strong leader **Yes/No/Neutral Response**

vi. Economy, jobs

☐

This keyword was used to support Curtin's statement and to portray him as a strong leader **Yes/No/Neutral Response**

vii. "They"/"them"/"enemy"/Japan/Germany

☐

This keyword was used to support Curtin's statement and to portray him as a strong leader **Yes/No/Neutral Response**

viii.    Civilise/civilisation

☐

This keyword was used to support Curtin's statement and to portray him as a strong leader **Yes/No/Neutral response**

ix. Old country, mother country

☐

This keyword was used to support Curtin's statement and to portray him as a strong leader **Yes/No/Neutral Response**

x. New world order

☐

This keyword was used to support Curtin's statement and to portray him as a strong leader　　　　　　　　　**Yes/No/Neutral Response**

xi. Britain, United Kingdom

This keyword was used to support Curtin's statement and to portray him as a strong leader　　　　　　　　　**Yes/No/Neutral Response**

xii. America, United States

This keyword was used to support Curtin's statement and to portray him as a strong leader　　　　　　　　　**Yes/No/Neutral Response**

14.　**Identify if a keyword appears in the following:**

The headline/title

The opening scene/narration

15.　**Miscellaneous:  Include key phrases (about one to three sentences) that help with identifying reports.**

16.　**Is this a "follow-up" story related to an earlier article?**　　　**Yes/ No**

17.　**Was this story "spiked" and "killed" quickly?**　　　**Yes/ No**

18.　**Was this story re-reportable?**　　　**Yes/ No**

**19.** Using Asa Berger's semiotic film conventions, does John Curtin appear as a strong leader in the film? Refer to Appendix 4 for Asa Berger's semiotic film conventions.                                    Yes/No/Neutral Response

**20.** What is the Flesch Reading Ease score for this text? (if applicable)

<br>

**21.** What is the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level for this text? (if applicable)

<center>

**Appendix 6[1]**


Content analysis coding schedule:

Press coverage of John Curtin

</center>


**1.      Identify the newspaper:**

<div style="text-align: right; border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 80px; margin-left: auto;"></div>


*i.*       *The Advertiser* (Adelaide)

*ii.*      *The Age* (Melbourne)

*iii.*     *The Canberra Times* (Canberra)

*iv.*     *The Courier-Mail* (Brisbane)

*v.*      *The Daily Mirror* (Sydney)

*vi.*     *The Daily Telegraph* (Sydney)

*vii.*    *The Herald* (Melbourne)

*viii.*   *The Sun* (Sydney)

*ix.*     *The Sydney Morning Herald* (Sydney)

*x.*      *The West Australian* (Perth)

*xi.*     *The Sunday Times* (Perth)

*xii.*    Other newspaper (refer to masthead)


**2.      Date-month-year**


**3.      Headline (copy verbatim) and type size**


…………………………………………………………………………………………

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[1] David L. Altheide, *Qualitative media analysis,* Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, 1996; Anders Hansen, Simon Cottle, Ralph Negrine and Chris Newbold, *Mass Communication Research Methods,* Macmillan Press, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and London, 1998, pp. 119, 207.

4. **Reporter/author by-line (copy name and position e.g. Canberra correspondent)**

……………………………………………………………………………………..

5. **Article length, page number and section**

☐☐☐☐

6. **Type of article/item**

☐

i. Straight/hard news story
ii. World news section
iii. Editorial/ opinion
iv. Feature article
v. Letter to the editor
vi. Social news item
vii. "Insider" news item
viii. Special wraparound
ix. Special liftout
x. Editorial cartoon
xi. Other

7. **What is the subject matter(s) of article/report within the broader context of the war?**

☐

i. Foreign policy (e.g. overseas battle)
ii. National political news (e.g. election)
iii. Economy
iv. Other (identify topic)

8. **Who is the principal source?**

 

   i. The prime minister

   ii. The political leader of another nation

   iii. Government spokesperson

   iv. Government politician

   v. Opposition leader

   vi. Another opposition parliamentarian

   vii. Other politician

   viii. Judiciary

   ix. Legal groups

   x. Civil service

   xi. Military official

   xii. Industry/business

   xiii. Federal Reserve Bank governor

   xiv. Union official

   xv. Police (including intelligence)

   xvi. Academic

   xvii. Clergy

   xviii. News editor/ editorial writer (the media)

   xix. Citizens

   xx. Another principal source (identify name and position)

9. **Is the prime minister setting the news agenda (for example, making an announcement and initiating a news story)? Identify the agenda setter.**

10. **Is the prime minister reacting to criticism from the opposition, media or others? Identify the source of criticism.**

**11. Who are the sources being directly quoted? Write the(ir) names.**

☐

  i.      The prime minister

  ii.     The political leader of another nation

  iii.    Government spokesperson

  iv.     Government politician

  v.      Opposition leader

  vi.     Another opposition parliamentarian

  vii.    Other politician

  viii.   Judiciary

  ix.     Legal groups

  x.      Civil service

  xi.     Military official

  xii.    Industry/business

  xiii.   Federal Reserve Bank governor

  xiv.    Union official

  xv.     Police (including intelligence)

  xvi.    Academic

  xvii.   Clergy

  xviii.  News editor/ editorial writer (the media)

  xix.    Citizens

  xx.     Another principal source (identify name and position)

**12. Who are the sources being cited or quoted indirectly? Write the(ir) names.**

☐

  i.      The prime minister

  ii.     The political leader of another nation

  iii.    Government spokesperson

  iv.     Government politician

  v.      Opposition leader

  vi.     Another opposition parliamentarian

  vii.    Other politician

viii. Judiciary

ix. Legal groups

x. Civil service

xi. Military official

xii. Industry/business

xiii. Federal Reserve Bank governor

xiv. Union official

xv. Police (including intelligence)

xvi. Academic

xvii. Clergy

xviii. News editor/ editorial writer (the media)

xix. Citizens

xx. Another principal source (identify name and position)

**13. Identify keywords.**

**14. Number of times each keyword appears in the text:**

i. Australia, country, nationhood

☐

This keyword was used to support Curtin's statement and to portray him as a strong leader                              **Yes / No / Neutral Response**

ii. "We"/"us"/"our"/"the people" (in terms of Australia)

☐

This keyword was used to support Curtin's statement and to portray him as a strong leader                              **Yes / No / Neutral Response**

iii. Freedom, liberty, independence, democracy

☐

This keyword was used to support Curtin's statement and to portray him as a
strong leader **Yes / No / Neutral Response**

iv. Hope, future, vision, unity

☐

This keyword was used to support Curtin's statement and to portray him as a
strong leader **Yes / No / Neutral Response**

v. War, defence, security

☐

vi. Economy, jobs

☐

This keyword was used to support Curtin's statement and to portray him as a
strong leader **Yes / No / Neutral Response**

vii. "They"/"them"/"enemy"/Japan/Germany

☐

This keyword was used to support Curtin's statement and to portray him as a
strong leader **Yes / No / Neutral Response**

viii. Civilise/civilisation

☐

This keyword was used to support Curtin's statement and to portray him as a
strong leader **Yes/ no /neutral response**

ix. Old country, mother country

☐

This keyword was used to support Curtin's statement and to portray him as a strong leader **Yes / No / Neutral Response**

x. New world order

This keyword was used to support Curtin's statement and to portray him as a strong leader **Yes / No / Neutral Response**

xi. Britain, United Kingdom

This keyword was used to support Curtin's statement and to portray him as a strong leader **Yes / No / Neutral Response**

xii. America, United States

This keyword was used to support Curtin's statement and to portray him as a strong leader **Yes / No / Neutral Response**

15. Identify if a keyword appears in the following:

The kicker and headlines (including banners, deck heads and cross heads)

The lead sentence

The lead paragraph

Sidebar story

Breakaway and "pull-out quotes"

Miscellaneous: Include relevant key phrases (about one to three sentences) that help with identifying reports.

16. **Is this a "follow-up" story related to an earlier article?**      **Yes/ No**

17. **Was this story "spiked" and "killed" quickly?**      **Yes/ No**

18. **Was this story re-reportable?**      **Yes/ No**

19. **Does the article include a photograph or related political cartoon?**

1. Yes
2. No

20. **Using Asa Berger's semiotic film conventions, does John Curtin appear as a strong leader in the related photograph/editorial cartoon?  Refer to Appendix 4 to find a summary of Asa Berger's semiotic film conventions.**

1. Yes
2. No
3. Neutral

21. **What is the Flesch Reading Ease score for this text?**

22. **What is the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level for this text?**

<div align="center">

**Appendix 7[1]**


Content analysis coding schedule:

Radio coverage of John Curtin

</div>


**1.    Identify the radio station:**

             ☐

     i.      ABC National

     ii.    Local ABC station (identify the location)

     iii.   Local commercial station (identify the location)


**2.    Date-month-year**


**3.    Headline (copy verbatim)**

……………………………………………………………………………………


**4.    Reporter/author (copy name and position e.g. Canberra correspondent)**

…………………………………………………………………………………..


**5.    Length of radio text about John Curtin (number of minutes)**

---

[1] David L. Altheide, *Qualitative media analysis,* Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, 1996; Anders Hansen, Simon Cottle, Ralph Negrine and Chris Newbold, *Mass Communication Research Methods,* Macmillan Press, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and London, 1998, p. 119.

6. **Type of article/item**

   $\square$

   i. News report
   ii. Editorial statement
   iii. Opinion piece
   iv. Current affairs reports and features
   v. Interview
   vi. Prime ministerial address

7. **What is the subject matter(s) of article/report within the broader context of the war?**

   i. Foreign policy (e.g. overseas battle)
   ii. National political news (e.g. election)
   iii. Economy
   iv. His prime ministership in general
   v. Other

8. **Who is the principal source?**

   $\square$

   i. The prime minister
   ii. The political leader of another nation
   iii. Government spokesperson
   iv. Government politician
   v. Opposition leader
   vi. Another opposition parliamentarian
   vii. Other politician
   viii. Judiciary
   ix. Legal groups
   x. Civil service
   xi. Military official
   xii. Industry/business
   xiii. Federal Reserve Bank governor

xiv. Union official

xv. Police (including intelligence)

xvi. Academic

xvii. Clergy

xviii. News editor/ editorial writer (the media)

xix. Citizens

xx. Another principal source (identify name and position)

**9. Is the prime minister setting the news agenda (for example, making an announcement and initiating a news story)? Identify the agenda setter**

Is the prime minister reacting to criticism from the opposition, media or others?

Identify the source of criticism.

**10. Who are the sources being directly quoted?**

i. The prime minister

ii. The political leader of another nation

iii. Government spokesperson

iv. Government politician

v. Opposition leader

vi. Another opposition parliamentarian

vii. Other politician

viii. Judiciary

ix. Legal groups

x. Civil service

xi. Military official

xii. Industry/business

xiii. Federal Reserve Bank governor

xiv.    Union official

xv.    Police (including intelligence)

xvi.    Academic

xvii.    Clergy

xviii.    News editor/ editorial writer (the media)

xix.    Citizens

xx.    Another principal source (identify name and position)


**11.    Who are the sources being cited or quoted indirectly?**


i.    The prime minister

ii.    The political leader of another nation

iii.    Government spokesperson

iv.    Government politician

v.    Opposition leader

vi.    Another opposition parliamentarian

vii.    Other politician

viii.    Judiciary

ix.    Legal groups

x.    Civil service

xi.    Military official

xii.    Industry/business

xiii.    Federal Reserve Bank governor

xiv.    Union official

xv.    Police (including intelligence)

xvi.    Academic

xvii.    Clergy

xviii.    News editor/ editorial writer (the media)

xix.    Citizens

xx.    Another principal source (identify name and position)

**12. Identify the keywords:**

**13. Number of times each keyword appears in the text:**

i. Australia, country, nationhood

☐

This keyword was used to support Curtin's statement and to portray him as a strong leader **Yes/ No/ Neutral Response**

ii. "We"/"us"/"our"/"the people"

☐

This keyword was used to support Curtin's statement and to portray him as a strong leader **Yes/ No/ Neutral Response**

iii. Freedom, liberty, independence, democracy

☐

This keyword was used to support Curtin's statement and to portray him as a strong leader **Yes/ No/ Neutral Response**

iv. Hope, future, vision, unity

☐

This keyword was used to support Curtin's statement and to portray him as a strong leader **Yes/ No/ Neutral Response**

v. War, defence, security

☐

This keyword was used to support Curtin's statement and to portray him as a
strong leader                                 **Yes/ No/ Neutral Response**

vi.      Economy, jobs

☐

This keyword was used to support Curtin's statement and to portray him as a
strong leader                                 **Yes/ No/ Neutral Response**

vii.      "They"/"them"/"enemy"/Japan/Germany

☐

This keyword was used to support Curtin's statement and to portray him as a
strong leader                                 **Yes/ No/ Neutral Response**

viii.     Civilise/civilisation

☐

This keyword was used to support Curtin's statement and to portray him as a
strong leader                                 **Yes/ No/ Neutral Response**

ix.      Old country, mother country

☐

This keyword was used to support Curtin's statement and to portray him as a
strong leader                                 **Yes/ No/ Neutral Response**

x.      New world order

☐

This keyword was used to support Curtin's statement and to portray him as a strong leader                                                    **Yes/ No/ Neutral Response**

xi.    Britain, United Kingdom

This keyword was used to support Curtin's statement and to portray him as a strong leader                                                    **Yes/ No/ Neutral Response**

xii.    America, United States

This keyword was used to support Curtin's statement and to portray him as a strong leader                                                    **Yes/ No/ Neutral Response**

**14.    Identify if a keyword appears in the following:**

The headline/title

The opening sentence

Miscellaneous: Include key phrases (about one to three sentences) that help with identifying reports.

**15.    Is this a "follow-up" story related to an earlier article?          Yes/ no**

**16.    Was this story "spiked" and "killed" quickly?          Yes/ no**

**17.** **Was this story "re-reportable"?** Yes/ no

**18.** **What is the Flesch Reading Ease score for this text? (if applicable)**

☐

**19.** **What is the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level for this text? (if applicable)**

☐

**Appendix 8A**


Survey methodology



A questionnaire was posted to 32 senior Australian political journalists and news editors in November 2009.  An attached cover sheet included a brief statement to explain that one of the research aims in this doctorate project would be to ascertain John Curtin's legacy to political journalism in the present day.  Each journalist was invited to participate in the survey by sharing his or her views about past and present Australian Prime Ministers' mass media strategies and their relationships with news reporters.  The recipients of the cover letter were informed that some of the survey questions would focus on John Curtin as Australia's Prime Minister from 1941 to 1945 and his leadership during World War II.  Also they were assured that their answers would be confidential if they wished to be quoted anonymously in this thesis.  Thus the survey complied with Curtin University's ethics protocol.



Twenty-one journalists responded to the questionnaire, either by agreeing to talk about their views of Curtin or by giving reasons for declining to participate in the survey.  Only five respondents answered at least one of the historical questions about Curtin.  Of this small group, three journalists returned a completed questionnaire[1] and the other two respondents talked about their views of Curtin during telephone

---

[1] They were: Australian Broadcasting Corporation Radio Australia correspondent Michael Cavanagh, *The West Australian* economics editor Shane Wright, and another journalist, Correspondent A, who asked not to be named.

interviews.[2]  In addition, I conducted follow-up telephone interviews with nine senior news reporters and editors.[3]

During these discussions, the nine respondents answered my questions about prime ministerial media strategies and other politicians' journalism relations.  When I spoke to reporters, I slightly rephrased my questions to ascertain their views about the media strategies of other politicians beyond the federal level.  In sum, most of these journalists agreed to talk "on the record"; only one news reporter and two political editors required confidentiality.

Among the people who did not complete my survey, six journalists said they knew little about Curtin.  Responses included the following:  "Unfortunately I don't know enough about John Curtin to respond in any meaningful sense to the questions you have posed."[4]  "I know I'm no spring chicken, but I was not around in Curtin's day. Nor have I made a study of Curtin's relations with the media."[5]  Another journalist said she did not want to talk about John Curtin, but did not give a reason for this.[6] Although World War II press gallery correspondents emphasised Curtin's greatness as a prime minister in their oral histories,[7] there does not appear to have been a tradition among Australian parliamentary reporters of passing these stories to their younger colleagues.  As Steve Mickler and Niall Lucy have stated, an understanding

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[2] They were: the author and former Australian Broadcasting Corporation Radio news editor Bob Wurth, and another journalist, Editor B, who also requested confidentiality.

[3] The other nine survey respondents were: Andrew Bolt (*Herald Sun*); Paul Bongiorno (Network Ten); Tony Eastley (Australian Broadcasting Corporation Radio); Malcolm Farr (*The Daily Telegraph*); Peter Kennedy (Australian Broadcasting Corporation Television); Glenn Milne (*The Australian*); David Speers (Sky News); Les Welsh (Curtin FM); and another journalist, Chief of Staff C, who requested confidentiality.

[4] Personal communication, 11 November 2009.

[5] Personal communication, 14 December 2009.

[6] Personal communication, 11 November 2009.

[7] E.g. Joseph A. Alexander, interviewed by Mel Pratt, John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library [hereafter JCPML], Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00551, 2 March 1971, transcript np; Irvine Douglas, interviewed by Mel Pratt, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01061/1, 15-19 June 1972, transcript np; Edgar George Holt, interviewed by Mel Pratt, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01059/1, 23 May 1978, transcript np.

of the nation's past is essential for Australians to make progress in the future. "History, in short, *matters*," they wrote.[8] The seeming lack of knowledge about John Curtin and his wartime journalism strategies, as indicated by my questionnaire results, contrasts with contemporary British and US media images of Winston Churchill's famous wartime newsreels and patriotic broadcast speeches, along with Franklin Delano Roosevelt's popular radio "fireside chats".[9] The following sections show the questionnaire, cover letter and consent form that were sent to the journalists.

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[8] Niall Lucy and Steve Mickler, *The War on Democracy: Conservative Opinion in the Australian Press,* University of Western Australia Press, Crawley, 2006, p. 147.
[9] Caryn Coatney, "John Curtin and Franklin Delano Roosevelt: A Cross-National Case Study of Media Agenda Setting in the U.S.-Australian Alliance, 1941-1945", *Midwest Political Science Association: 68th Annual National Conference*, Chicago, 22 April 2010, retrieved on 15 May 2010 at
<http://conference.mpsanet.org/Online/Search.aspx?section=27&session=21>.

Sample cover letter

This letter was printed on Curtin University letterhead and sent to 32 senior political journalists at Australian news organisations

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Dear (journalist's name)

My name is Caryn Coatney and I am studying for a Doctorate in Journalism Studies at Curtin University. My topic focuses on the Australian news media during World War II. An aspect of my research is ascertaining John Curtin's legacy to political journalism in the present day.

As a highly regarded journalist, you are invited to complete the enclosed questionnaire related to my PhD research at Curtin University in Bentley, Western Australia. I would be honoured if you would share your views about past and present Australian prime ministers' mass media strategies and their relationships with news reporters. Some of the attached questions focus on John Curtin as Australia's prime minister from 1941 to 1945 and his leadership during World War II.

If you decide to complete the questionnaire and consent form, you may post them to me in the enclosed stamped, self-addressed envelope by 20 November 2009. Please let me know in the consent form if there is an opportunity to discuss your answers in a taped, telephone interview. Afterwards I will send the relevant transcript to you.

Along with my PhD research, I am a Journalism and Media Law Tutor at Curtin University. Also I have been a staff writer and sub-editor for *The Christian Science Monitor*, The West Australian Newspaper Group, as well as working in a number of other journalism positions.

---

If you require confidentiality, I would be happy to withhold publication of your name and news organisation. Otherwise I will assume that you have allowed me to use the information in my research and any resulting publications.

In accordance with university policy, the interview tapes and transcript will be kept in a locked cabinet for five years before being destroyed. If you would like more information about this survey, please contact me by:

| | |
|---|---|
| Telephone: | (08) 9266 2126 (Business) |
| | (08) 9316 4404 (Home) |
| Email: | c.coatney@curtin.edu.au |

This study has been approved by the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval Number MCCA 17/2009). If needed, verification of approval can be obtained by contacting:

Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee
c/- Office of Research and Development, Curtin University
GPO Box U1987
Perth, Western Australia 6845
Telephone: (08) 9266 2784
Email: hrec@curtin.edu.au

**Thank you very much for your time and for considering the enclosed survey questions.**

Yours sincerely

*Caryn Coatney*

Caryn Coatney

**Appendix 8C**

Sample consent form (attached to cover letter,

as shown in Appendix 8B)

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I have read the information in the attached letter.  Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.  I agree for my questionnaire answers to be recorded and if there is a telephone interview, the discussion will be taped.  The research gathered for this study may be included in a PhD thesis and any resulting publication.  I understand that my name and news organisation will be used unless I request confidentiality in the box below.  In accordance with university policy, all information will be securely stored for five years before being destroyed.


**Name, position and news organisation**:_____

_____

_____


**Signature**:_____


**Date**:_____


I require my name and news organisation to be kept confidential:   NO ☐

YES ☐

---

I can be contacted for a taped telephone interview on (Ph)_____and will be available at these times:_____



**Caryn Coatney**
Caryn Coatney

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**Please return this consent form and your questionnaire answers in the stamped self-addressed envelope by Friday, 20 November 2009.**

**Appendix 8D**

Sample questionnaire

This was printed on Curtin university letterhead and attached to the cover letter and consent form, as shown in Appendices 8B and 8C

1.     **In your opinion, what has been John Curtin's legacy for the Australian public?**

2.     **What has been John Curtin's legacy for Australian journalists and the news media profession?**

     a.     Although Curtin did not need to consider television interviews, can you make any comparisons between his use of newsreels and other films with the current prime minister's strategies on relating to the visual media?

     b.     What did Curtin set in place (including press and radio relations) that has been the forerunner of prime ministerial media strategies today?

     c.     For example, were you aware that Curtin was the first prime minister to employ a full-time press secretary?

3. **How would you compare the current prime minister's press gallery relationships with those of John Curtin in terms of his associations with the 1941-45 press gallery?**

   a.  If there have been any changes, what is the reason for these variations (e.g. the size of the press corps, the people involved or differing levels of trust)?

   b.  Do you think the present prime minister's relationship with the press gallery is similarly positive?  Why or why not?

4. **Outside of the Federal Parliamentary Press Gallery, how would you describe journalists' relationships with the present prime minister in comparison with those of John Curtin?**

5. **Since your entry in political news reporting, have you found that your professional relationship with the prime minister and his media advisers has improved, deteriorated or remained about the same?**

   Improved: ☐

   Deteriorated: ☐

   About the same: ☐

You are invited to write further comments below.

_____

_____

_____

**6.** **Please indicate whether you are satisfied with the following (in terms of the timing and overall quality):**

a)      General media access to the prime minister:

YES ☐ NO ☐ NEUTRAL ☐

Comments:

_____

_____

_____

b)      Prime minister's media conferences:

YES ☐ NO ☐ NEUTRAL ☐

Comments:

_____

_____

_____

c)     Confidential briefings by the prime minister and/or his media advisers:

YES ☐ NO ☐ NEUTRAL ☐

Comments:

_____

_____

_____

d)     Prime minister's media statements:

YES ☐ NO ☐ NEUTRAL ☐

Comments:

_____

_____

_____

**7.**    **Would you like to make any further comments about the current and former Australian prime ministers' media strategies and their relations with journalists?**

**Thank you for taking the time to answer this questionnaire.**

**Please post your answers and the consent form in the enclosed stamped, self-addressed envelope by Friday, 20 November 2009.**

# Appendix 9

Press circulation, 1941[1]

| Newspaper | Circulation (Number of Copies Sold) |
|---|---|
| *The Advertiser* | 110,931 |
| *The Age* | 99,400 |
| *The Argus* | 108,370 |
| *The Courier-Mail* | 85,426 |
| *Daily News* | 34,409 |
| *The Daily Telegraph* | 212,606 |
| *The Herald* | 232,131 |
| *The Mercury* | 23,915 |
| *The Daily Mirror* | 160,000 |
| *The Sydney Morning Herald* | 225,000 |
| *The Sun* | 188,319 |
| *The Sun News-Pictorial* | 258,959 |
| *The West Australian* | 77,613 |

---

[1] Henry Mayer, *The Press in Australia*, Lansdowne Press, Melbourne, 1968, p. 40. Although researchers did not publish *The Canberra Times* circulation statistics, the newspaper was distributed in the Australian Capital Territory, with an estimated population of 14,599 people in 1944. See Roland Wilson, *Official Year Book Of The Commonwealth Of Australia, 1944 and 1945*, Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, Canberra, no. 36, 1947, p. 461.

Relative share of population and circulation by Australian States, 1941[2]

(Showing each figure as a percentage of the Australian total)

P = Population.  M = Morning newspapers, circulation.  E = Evening newspapers, circulation.  D = All dailies, circulation.

**New South Wales**

P.       38.8

M.      37.3

E.       39.8

D.       38.4

**Victoria**

P.       28.2

M.      34.1

E.       43.8

D.       38.2

**Queensland**

P.       14.1

M.      7.4

E.       7.7

D.       7.5

---

[2] Source: Henry Mayer, *The press*, p. 43.

**South Australia**

P.      9.0

M.      11.3

E.      6.0

D.      9.1


**Western Australia**

P.      6.6

M.      7.8

E.      2.7

D.      5.6


**Tasmania**

P.      3.3

M.      2.1

E.      ---

D.      1.2

**Appendix 10**

The following list is a record of Prime Minister Menzies' direct associations with journalists during his visits to Britain, Canada and the US between 20 February 1941 and 17 May 1941. He directly interacted with media representatives 15 times during a period of 87 days. On average, he interacted with the media slightly less than once every six days. The information was based on Menzies' 1941 diary, edited by Allan Martin and Patsy Hardy.

1)       After arriving in England, Menzies was interviewed by film, radio and press journalists on 20 February 1941.[1]

2)       He conducted a "special interview" with the *Daily Herald* on 28 February 1941.[2]

3)       At a luncheon on 3 March 1941, Menzies spoke to the Foreign Press Association.[3]

4)       British and Australian press reporters interviewed him on 5 March 1941.[4]

5)       Menzies lunched with "Empire press correspondents" on 6 March 1941.[5]

6)       He visited the "Press Club" on 7 March 1941.[6]

---

[1] A.W. Martin and Patsy Hardy (eds), *Dark and Hurrying Days: Menzies' 1941 Diary* (hereafter *Dark and hurrying days*), National Library of Australia, Canberra, 1993, p. 60.
[2] Martin and Hardy, *Dark and hurrying days,* p. 69.
[3] Martin and Hardy, *Dark and hurrying days,* p. 71.
[4] Martin and Hardy, *Dark and hurrying days,* p. 82.
[5] Martin and Hardy, *Dark and hurrying days,* p. 83.
[6] Martin and Hardy, *Dark and hurrying days,* p. 83.

**7)**     On 15 March 1941, he delivered "a broadcast for America".[7]

**8)**     Another broadcast was made from "a battered BBC House" in London on 10 April 1941.[8]

**9)**     With characteristic haste, Menzies wrote a diary note, "Dine the press-men", on 28 April 1941.[9]

**10)**    After arriving in Ottawa, he conducted "press interviews" on 7 May 1941.[10]

**11)**    Another press interview was held in Washington DC on 9 May 1941.[11]

**12)**    Menzies noted his "[l]ong talk with leading columnists, especially Walter Lippman of N.Y. [New York] Times" on 10 May 1941. [12]

**13)**    He spoke to "the Press Club" in Washington DC, as he recorded in a diary note dated 11-12 May 1941.[13]

**14)**    In New York, he delivered a radio broadcast, as he wrote in a note dated 13-14 May 1941.[14]

**15)**    In the same note, he wrote of his Chicago radio talk.[15]

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[7] Martin and Hardy, *Dark and hurrying days,* p. 89.
[8] Martin and Hardy, *Dark and hurrying days,* p. 110.  Menzies also made a press statement and broadcast for Australia on 22 April 1941.  Furthermore he made an Anzac Day address, published in *The Times* on 26 April 1941.  In this calculation, I did not include Menzies' and Curtin's speeches, nor their communications to journalists in Australia.  See Martin and Hardy, *Dark and hurrying days,* pp. 116, 118.

[9] Martin and Hardy, *Dark and hurrying days,* p. 120.
[10] Martin and Hardy, *Dark and hurrying days,* p. 123.
[11] Martin and Hardy, *Dark and hurrying days,* p. 125.
[12] Martin and Hardy, *Dark and hurrying days,* p. 126.
[13] Martin and Hardy, *Dark and hurrying days,* p. 126.
[14] Martin and Hardy, *Dark and hurrying days,* p. 126.
[15] Martin and Hardy, *Dark and hurrying days,* p. 126.

**Appendix 11**

The following list is a record of Prime Minister Curtin's direct media associations with journalists during his visits to Britain, Canada and the US between 19 April 1944 and 11 June 1944. He directly interacted with the mass news media at least 17 times during a period of 54 days. Therefore, on average, he communicated with media representatives slightly more than once every three days during his trip; this was twice as much as Menzies' media interactions during his Prime Ministerial visit to these countries in 1941. The information was based on Heather Campbell's "Diary of a Labour Man", published by the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library. Other sources were Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King's diaries, newspapers, newsreels and John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library archives.

1)    On 19 April 1944, Curtin arrived in San Francisco at 10am and held a press conference at the Fairmont Hotel at 12 noon.[1]

2)    After travelling to Washington DC, he held a press conference for 80 leading journalists at Blair House on 24 April 1944.[2]

3)    From the prime minister's suite at Blair House, he delivered a radio broadcast on 26 April 1944.[3]

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[1] Heather Campbell, "Diary of a Labour Man", 19 April 1944, (hereafter "Diary"), John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library [hereafter JCPML], Bentley, 2008, retrieved on 11 February 2010 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/diary/primeminister/1944.html>; Great Britain Foreign Office, "Political situation: consular reports", JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00779/13, 28 April 1944, pp. 1-3.

[2] (Anon.), "Curtin Puts Aside Questions Of Bases; Reciprocal Matter Best Left to Peace Conference, Says Australian Premier", *The New York Times*, New York, 25 April 1944, p. 5; (Anon.), "Curtin Wants Yank Settlers in Australia", *The Washington Post*, Washington DC, 25 April 1944, p. 2; Campbell, "Diary", 24 April 1944.

[3] (Anon.), "He And President Agree, Says Curtin; Australian Finds Full Harmony on Pacific Strategy and Post-War Problems", *The New York Times*, New York, 27 April 1944, p. 4; Campbell, "Diary", 26 April 1944; John Curtin, "Broadcast in America", *Digest of Decisions*

**4)**      Arriving at Croydon aerodrome, south of London, Curtin was interviewed by reporters on 29 April 1944.[4]

**5)**      He met the Australian press at the Savoy Hotel in London on 1 May 1944.[5]

**6)**      At the Ministry of Information in London, he held a "general press conference" on 4 May 1944.[6]

**7)**      Curtin broadcast "the postscript to the news bulletin" over the BBC and ABC in London on 7 May 1944.[7]

**8)**      He made another broadcast from London on 8 May 1944.[8]

**9)**      Media representatives covered his visit to the Boomerang Club at Australia House, London, to meet RAAF personnel on 8 May 1944.[9]

**10)**     He spoke into a movie microphone and was filmed when receiving the "Freedom of City of London" at Guildhall on 10 May 1944.[10]

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*and Announcements and Important Speeches by the Prime Minister (Right Hon. John Curtin)* [hereafter *DDA*], 26 April 1944, no. 81, pp. 49-52.

[4] British Movietone (producer), "Empire Premiers Assemble", in *Newsreels of Curtin, 1942-1945* (newsreel) [hereafter *Newsreels of Curtin*], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00734/1, 1944; Campbell, "Diary", 29 April 1944.

[5] Campbell, "Diary", 1 May 1944.

[6] Campbell, "Diary", 4 May 1944.

[7] Campbell, "Diary", 7 May 1944.

[8] John Curtin, "Broadcast by the Prime Minister from London", *DDA*, 8 May 1944, no. 81, pp. 53-56.

[9] (Anon.), "Curtin Defends RAAF: Australian Fliers in Atlantic Zone Resent Tag of 'Jap Dodgers'", *The New York Times*, New York, 22 May 1944, p. 10; (Anon.), "Mr. Curtin Farewells Bombers", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks compiled by the Prime Minister's Office* [hereafter *Scrapbooks*], no. 4, JCPML acc. no. 0297/4, 20 June 1944; (Anon.), "Mr. Curtin Told Grievances: Airmen Resent Term 'Jap-dodgers", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Sydney, cited in *Scrapbooks*, no. 4, 22 May 1944.

[10] British Movietone (producer), "Commonwealth Premiers Honoured", in *Newsreels of Curtin*, 1944; Campbell, "Diary", 10 May 1944.

**11)**    Sir Keith Murdoch met Curtin in London on 12 May 1944.[11]

**12)**    Curtin attended the "Press Club" in London on 17 May 1944.[12]

**13)**    Another "Empire broadcast" was delivered by Curtin in London on 24 May 1944.[13]

**14)**    At Lords cricket ground, British Movietone filmed Curtin on 27 May 1944.[14]

**15)**    After arriving at the Ottawa train station on 30 May 1944, he was interviewed by journalists and spoke into a movie microphone.[15]

**16)**    In Ottawa on 31 May 1944, he held a press conference at the House of Commons.[16]

**17)**    Curtin gave a speech to the National Press Club at a luncheon in Washington DC on 5 June 1944.[17]

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[11] Campbell, "Diary", 12 May 1944.

[12] Campbell, "Diary", 17 May 1944.

[13] Campbell, "Diary", 24 May 1944; John Curtin, "Text of broadcast from London on Empire Day", *DDA*, JCPML, Bentley, no. 81, JCPML acc. no. 00110/86, 24 May 1944, pp. 74-75.

[14] British Movietone (producer), "Lord's", in *Newsreels of Curtin*, 1944; Campbell, "Diary", 27 May 1944.

[15] Australian Department of External Affairs, "Visit of Mr. Curtin to USA & UK in connection with Prime Ministers' Conference London" [hereafter "Curtin's visit], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00768/2, May 1944, pp. 10-22; Campbell, "Diary", 30 May 1944; William Lyon Mackenzie King, "The Diaries of William Lyon Mackenzie King"*,* Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, 30 May 1944, retrieved on 8 December 2008 at <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/king/index-e.html>; ScreenSound Australia, *Prime Minister Welcomed In Canada* (newsreel), JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01052/1, 1944.

[16] Australian Department of External Affairs, "Curtin's visit"; Campbell, "Diary", 31 May 1944.

[17] Campbell, "Diary", 5 June 1944; John Curtin, "Speech to National Press Club, Washington", 5 June 1944, *DDA*, no. 73, pp. 84-91.

# Appendix 12

The following section is a list of John Curtin's major radio broadcasts during his prime ministerial terms from 7 October 1941 to 5 July 1945.[1]

1)  "Text of broadcast summary of the 1941-42 budget statement", 29 October 1941.

2)  "Text of broadcast (by radio-telephone) over the British Broadcasting Corporation network, introducing Australia's new Labor Government and messages of support for the British people", 31 October 1941.

3)  "Text of national broadcast on recruiting campaign", 19 November 1941.

4)  "Text of national broadcast on the war with Japan", 8 December 1941.

5)  "Text of national broadcast on the new war situation", 26 December 1941.

6)  "Text of national broadcast for Australia Day", 24 January 1942.

7)  "Text of broadcast to America", 14 March 1942.

8)  "Text of national broadcast promoting the National Savings Campaign", 15 April 1942.

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[1] The following 37 speeches were cited from: John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library [hereafter JCPML], "Index to John Curtin's speeches in the Digest of Decisions and Announcements and Important Speeches by the Prime Minister, 1941-1945 [hereafter "Index to John Curtin's speeches]", Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01148/1, 2007.

9)    "Text of broadcast over the BBC in Britain, on possible invasion of Australia, and Australia as part of the British Empire", 29 April 1942.

10)   "Text of broadcast on national radio on consumer rationing", 8 May 1942.

11)   "Text of national broadcast to promote subscriptions to the Second Liberty Loan", 17 June 1942.

12)   "Text of national broadcast launching Austerity Campaign", 3 September 1942.

13)   "Text of national austerity loan broadcast", 4 October 1942.

14)   "National broadcast marking the eve of Armistice Day", 10 November 1942.

15)   "Text of broadcast over national network. Review of the past year of war and involvement required for the second year of war with Japan", 6 December 1942.

16)   "Broadcast for Australia Day over Australian national and commercial stations and USA stations", 26 January 1943.  Also this broadcast was made available to the BBC.

17)   "Text of broadcast over the national network on the Third Liberty Loan", 11 April 1943.

18)   "Broadcast over the national network on Australia's current war position, the future, and seeking support", 18 April 1943.

**19)** "Text of broadcast on victory and the North African campaign", 16 May 1943.

**20)** "Text of radio broadcast to people of America", 5 July 1943.

**21)** "Text of Prime Minister's election policy speech", 26 July 1943.[2]

**22)** "Text of broadcast over national network on the Fourth Liberty Loan", 24 October 1943.

**23)** "Text of national broadcast to promote subscriptions to the Fourth Liberty Loan", 3 November 1943.

**24)** "Text of broadcast arranged through United States Office of War Information to mark the second anniversary of the arrival in Australia of General MacArthur", 17 March 1944.

**25)** "Broadcast launching the First Victory Loan", 27 March 1944.

**26)** "Text of broadcast from Washington", 26 April 1944.

**27)** "Text of broadcast from London", 8 May 1944.

**28)** "Text of broadcast from London on Empire Day", 24 May 1944.

**29)** "Text of broadcast over the national network on the Constitutional Referendum", 25 July 1944.

**30)** "Text of broadcast on the national network on the Constitutional Referendum", 9 August 1944.

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[2] David Black (ed.), *In His Own Words: John Curtin's speeches and writings*, Paradigm Books Curtin University, Bentley, 1995, p. 226.

**31)** "Text of broadcast on the national network on the Constitutional Referendum", 16 August 1944.

**32)** "Text of broadcast over the national network opening the Second Victory Loan", 25 September 1944.

**33)** "Text of broadcast over the national network promoting the Second Victory Loan", 25 October 1944.

**34)** "Text of joint broadcast with Mr Menzies and Mr Fadden, over the national network, promoting the Second Victory Loan", 29 October 1944.

**35)** "Text of radio broadcast on the national network on the Third Victory Loan", 12 March 1945.

**36)** "Text of radio broadcast over national and commercial stations canvassing support for the Third Victory Loan", 22 April 1945.

**37)** "Text of broadcast in Britain (a recorded message) on the occasion of Empire Day", 24 May 1945.

In addition, this study identified more John Curtin radio talks:

**38)** A one-hour national radio broadcast at Melbourne Town Hall from 8pm to 9pm on 6 August 1943.[3]

**39)** A second election radio broadcast at Fremantle Town Hall from 7.15pm to 8.15pm on 18 August 1943.[4]

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[3] Australian Commonwealth Government, "The Prime Minister's Itinerary", [hereafter "Election speech itinerary"], National Archives of Australia, Canberra, CA12, A461, R4/1/12, 1943, p. 117.
[4] Australian Commonwealth Government, "Election speech itinerary".

Although copies of some speeches were not preserved, John Curtin probably delivered broadcasts at the following locations:

- Fairmont Hotel, San Francisco, 19 April 1944.[5]

- BBC interview, England, 30 April 1944.[6]

- London, BBC and ABC "postscript to the news bulletin" broadcast, 7 May 1944.[7]

- Guildhall, London, on 10 May 1944.[8]

- The central train station in Ottawa, Canada, 30 May 1944.[9]

- Both Houses of the Canadian Parliament on 1 June 1944.[10]

- Brisbane, Australia, 26 June 1944.[11]

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[5] Heather Campbell, "Diary of a Labour Man for 19 April 1944" (hereafter "Diary"), JCPML, Bentley, 2008, retrieved on 11 February 2010 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/diary/primeminister/1944.html>; John Curtin, *Digest of Decisions and Announcements and Important Speeches by the Prime Minister (Right Hon. John Curtin)* (hereafter *DDA*), no. 81, 19 April 1944, p. 18; Great Britain Foreign Office, "Political situation: consular reports", JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00779/13, 28 April 1944, pp. 1-3.

[6] Campbell, "Diary", 30 April 1944.

[7] Campbell, "Diary", 7 May 1944.

[8] British Movietone (producer), "Commonwealth Premiers Honoured", in *Newsreels of Curtin, 1942-1945* (newsreel), JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00734/1, 1944; Campbell, "Diary", 10 May 1944.

[9] Australian Department of External Affairs, "Visit of Mr. Curtin to USA & UK in connection with Prime Ministers' Conference London" [hereafter "Curtin's visit], JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00768/2, May 1944, pp.10-22; Campbell, "Diary", 30 May 1944; William Lyon Mackenzie King, "The Diaries of William Lyon Mackenzie King", Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, 30 May 1944, retrieved on 8 December 2008 at <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/king/index-e.html>; ScreenSound Australia, *Prime Minister Welcomed In Canada* (newsreel), JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01052/1, 1944.

[10] Australian Department of External Affairs "Curtin's visit"; Campbell, "Diary", 1 June 1944.

[11] Campbell, "Diary", 26 June 1944. The following newsreel appeared to include an excerpt from Curtin's Brisbane media conference: ScreenSound Australia, "A Great Australian Passes", in *John Joseph Curtin 1885 – 1945* (newsreel), JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00238/1, 1944.

**Appendix 13**

The following Australian wartime journalists, including reporters and editors, praised Curtin's leadership in their oral histories. They are:

1. *The Herald* Canberra bureau head, Joseph Alexander.[1]

2. *The Courier-Mail* editor, Theodor Charles Bray.[2]

3. *The Sun News-Pictorial* federal political journalist, Frank Chamberlain.[3]

4. Australian Broadcasting Commission federal political journalist, John Commins.[4]

5. *The Sun News-Pictorial* Canberra representative, Harold Cox.[5]

6. Frank Davidson, *The Mirror* editor (1935-1941), officer in charge of the Department of Information in Western Australia (1941-1944), editor-in-chief of the Western Press (including *The Sunday Times*, *The Mirror* and *The Call* newspapers, 1944-1957).[6]

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[1] Joseph A. Alexander, interviewed by Mel Pratt, John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library [hereafter JCPML], Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00551, 2 March 1971, transcript np.
[2] Theodor Charles Bray, interviewed by Mel Pratt, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00512, 5 March 1971, transcript np.
[3] Frank Chamberlain, interviewed by Mel Pratt, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00552, August 1972-January 1973, transcript np.
[4] John Commins, interviewed by Mel Pratt, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01092/1, 22-26 May 1971, transcript np.
[5] Harold Cox, interviewed by Mel Pratt, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01060/1, 6 April 1973, transcript np.
[6] Frank Davidson, interviewed by Isla Macphail, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00127/1, 24 January 1996, transcript np.

7. Australian Associated Press London-based deputy editor, Irvine Douglas. He was also the United Australia Party's Commonwealth Government publicity officer from 1934 to 1938 and Prime Minister Joseph Lyon's private secretary from 1936 to 1938.[7]

8. *The West Australian* journalist, Peter Ewing.[8]

9. *The Daily Mirror* Canberra chief political correspondent, Allan Fraser. He was the Labor Member of the Federal House of Representatives for Eden-Monaro, New South Wales, from 1943 to 1966 and from 1969 to 1972.[9]

10. *The Daily Telegraph* Canberra political journalist, Edgar Holt. Later Holt was the Liberal Party's director of public relations and senior political adviser.[10]

11. *The Sun* Canberra bureau chief, Alan Reid.[11]

12. *The Daily Telegraph* Canberra bureau head, Don Whitington.[12]

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[7] Irvine Douglas, interviewed by Mel Pratt, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01061/1, 15-19 June 1972, transcript np.
[8] Peter Ewing, interviewed by Bill Bunbury, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00492/2, 15 December 1999, transcript np.
[9] Allan Fraser, interviewed by Mel Pratt, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00550, August 1972–January 1973, transcript np.
[10] Edgar George Holt, interviewed by Mel Pratt, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 01059, 23 May 1978, transcript np.
[11] Alan D. Reid, interviewed by Mel Pratt, JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00501, 4 October 1972 and 28 February 1973, transcript np.
[12] Don Whitington, *Strive to be Fair: An Unfinished Biography*, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1977, p. 82.

**Appendix 14**


Evaluation of news reports and press opinion on

John Curtin[1]


1)    Newspaper coverage of Curtin's declaration of war on Japan (radio broadcast),
      8 December 1941[2]

| *The Age* | *The Canberra Times* | *The Sydney Morning Herald* | *The West Australian* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive |

2)    The prime minister's press article on "Australia looks to America", published
      in *The Herald* on 27 December 1941.[3]

| *The Age* | *The Canberra Times* | *The Sydney Morning Herald* | *The West Australian* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Positive | Positive | Negative (later this changed to a positive editorial tone) | Positive |

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[1] This was based on the Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism formula that a news article was deemed "positive" if two-thirds of the statements appeared to support a national leader.  Other research methods included an analysis of Curtin's keywords, and the repetition of these terms in newspapers, as examined in Chapters 6 to 9.  See Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism, "Winning The Media Campaign: Methodology", *Journalism.org*, 2008, retrieved on 26 September 2009 at <http://www.journalism.org/node/13314>; Public Broadcasting Service (producer), *The Online NewsHour* (television program – transcript),Washington DC, 24 June 2009, transcript np, retrieved on 26 September 2009 at <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/media/jan-june09/obama_06-24.html>.
[2] John Curtin, "National Broadcast by Prime Minister", *Digest of Decisions and Announcements and Important Speeches by the Prime Minister (Right Hon. John Curtin)* [hereafter *DDA*], no. 10, 8 December 1941, pp. 19-22.
[3] John Curtin, "The Task Ahead", *The Herald*, Melbourne, cited in John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library [hereafter JCPML], Bentley, 27 December 1941, retrieved on 25 January 2011 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/pmportal/text/00468.html>.

**3)** His parliamentary speech to announce the Japanese attack on Darwin on 19 February 1942[4]

| *The Age* | *The Canberra Times* | *The Sydney Morning Herald* | *The West Australian* |
|-----------|----------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive |

**4)** Curtin's radio broadcast to the United States, March 1942[5]

| *The Age* | *The Canberra Times* | *The Sydney Morning Herald* | *The West Australian* |
|-----------|----------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive |

**5)** His parliamentary announcement of the Battle of the Coral Sea on 8 May 1942[6]

| *The Age* | *The Canberra Times* | *The Sydney Morning Herald* | *The West Australian* |
|-----------|----------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive |

**6)** The prime minister's public statements on the Kokoda campaign on 10 December 1942[7]

| *The Age* | *The Canberra Times* | *The Sydney Morning Herald* | *The West Australian* |
|-----------|----------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| Positive | Negative (this later changed to a positive tone) | Positive | Positive |

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[4] John Curtin, "Attack On Darwin", *DDA*, no. 19, 19 February 1942, pp.8-9.
[5] John Curtin, "Radio broadcast to the United States", 14 March 1942, *DDA*, no. 22, pp. 9-13.

[6] John Curtin, "Naval Engagement – Coral Sea", *DDA*, no. 28, 8 May 1942, pp. 4-5. This study considered two separate announcements made by Curtin in the parliament on 8 May 1942. In the transcripts of the same date, the *DDA* also included texts of two communiqués, which were not included in this analysis.
[7] John Curtin, "State Of The War", *DDA,* no. 47, 10 December 1942, pp. 17-24.

**7)** Curtin's parliamentary speech in support of the *Defence (Citizen Military Forces) Bill* on conscription on 11 February 1943[8]

| The Age | The Canberra Times | The Sydney Morning Herald | The West Australian |
|---------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive |

**8)** The prime minister's general election Australian Labor Party (ALP) policy statement (a radio speech), 26 July 1943[9]

| The Age | The Canberra Times | The Sydney Morning Herald | The West Australian |
|---------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive |

**9)** Curtin's speech to the ALP federal conference on 14 December 1943[10]

| The Age | The Canberra Times | The Sydney Morning Herald | The West Australian |
|---------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive |

**10)** Curtin's radio broadcast in Britain, 8 May 1944[11]

| The Age | The Canberra Times | The Sydney Morning Herald | The West Australian |
|---------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive |

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[8] John Curtin, *Commonwealth of Australia: Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 173, 11 February 1943, pp. 592-596.
[9] John Curtin, "General Election ALP Policy Statement", JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00421/2, 26 July 1943, transcript np.
[10] John Curtin, "State Of The War", *DDA*, no. 70, 14 December 1943, pp. 31-36.
[11] John Curtin, "Broadcast by the Prime Minister from London", *DDA*, no. 81, 8 May 1944, pp. 53-56.

**11)**   Curtin's parliamentary speech on 17 July 1944[12]

| *The Age* | *The Canberra Times* | *The Sydney Morning Herald* | *The West Australian* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive |

**12)**   Newspaper coverage on 23 January 1945 that reported on Curtin's return to the parliament after his absence of nearly two months due to illness

| *The Age* | *The Canberra Times* | *The Sydney Morning Herald* | *The West Australian* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Positive | Positive | Neutral, leaning towards positive | Positive |

**13)**   Newspaper coverage on 5-6 July 1945 after Curtin's death

| *The Age* **(Melbourne)** | *The Canberra Times* **(Canberra)** | *The Sydney Morning Herald* **(Sydney)** | *The West Australian* **(Perth)** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Positive | Positive | Positive | Positive |

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[12] John Curtin, "Meeting of Prime Ministers – Australian Prime Minister's Report", *DDA*, no. 84, 17 July 1944, pp. 28-44.

Readability and speech rate statistics for

Curtin's selected addresses

**1 Curtin's declaration of war on Japan (radio broadcast), 8 December 1941[1]**

| Flesch Reading Ease score | 57.4 |
|---|---|
| Flesch-Kincaid Grade | 9 |
| Speaking rate | 119.4  words a minute |

**2 The prime minister's press article on "Australia looks to America", published in *The Herald* on 27 December 1941.[2]**

| Flesch Reading Ease score | 46.8 |
|---|---|
| Flesch-Kincaid Grade | 11.2 |

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[1] John Curtin, "National Broadcast by Prime Minister", *Digest of Decisions and Announcements and Important Speeches by the Prime Minister (Right Hon. John Curtin)* [hereafter *DDA*], no. 10, 8 December 1941, pp. 19-22.

[2] John Curtin, "The Task Ahead", *The Herald*, Melbourne, cited in John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library [hereafter JCPML], Bentley, 27 December 1941, retrieved on 25 January 2011 at <http://john.curtin.edu.au/pmportal/text/00468.html>.

**3    His parliamentary speech to announce the Japanese attack on Darwin on 19 February 1942[3]**

| Flesch Reading Ease score | 58.8 |
|---|---|
| Flesch-Kincaid Grade | 9.2 |
| Speaking rate | Unavailable |

**4    Curtin's radio broadcast to the United States, 14 March 1942[4]**

| Flesch Reading Ease score | 69.4 |
|---|---|
| Flesch-Kincaid Grade | 7.4 |
| Speaking rate | 150 words a minute |

**5    His parliamentary announcement of the Battle of the Coral Sea on 8 May 1942[5]**

| Flesch Reading Ease score | 54.8 |
|---|---|
| Flesch-Kincaid Grade | 11.1 |
| Speaking rate | Unavailable |

**6    The prime minister's public statements on the Kokoda campaign on 10 December 1942[6]**

| Flesch Reading Ease score | 45.3 |
|---|---|
| Flesch-Kincaid Grade | 12.6 |
| Speaking rate | Unavailable |

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[3] John Curtin, "Attack On Darwin", *DDA*, no. 19, 19 February 1942, pp. 8-9.
[4] John Curtin, "Radio broadcast to the United States", *DDA*, no. 22, 14 March 1942, pp. 9-13.

[5] John Curtin, "Naval Engagement – Coral Sea", *DDA*, no. 28, 8 May 1942, pp. 4-5.  This study considered two separate announcements made by Curtin in the parliament on 8 May 1942.  In the transcripts of the same date, the *DDA* also included texts of two communiqués, which were not included in this analysis.
[6] John Curtin, "State Of The War", *DDA,* no. 47, 10 December 1942, pp. 17-24.

**7**      **Curtin's parliamentary speech in support of the *Defence (Citizen Military Forces) Bill* on conscription on 11 February 1943[7]**

| | |
|---|---|
| Flesch Reading Ease score | 55.5 |
| Flesch-Kincaid Grade | 11.1 |
| Speaking rate | Unavailable |

**8**      **The prime minister's general election Australian Labor Party (ALP) policy statement (a radio speech), July 1943[8]**

| | |
|---|---|
| Flesch Reading Ease score | 40.3 |
| Flesch-Kincaid Grade | 12.9 |
| Speaking rate | 149 words a minute |

**9**      **Curtin's speech to the ALP federal conference on 14 December 1943[9]**

| | |
|---|---|
| Flesch Reading Ease score | 36.9 |
| Flesch-Kincaid Grade | 13.7 |
| Speaking rate | Unavailable |

**10**      **Curtin's radio broadcast in Britain, 8 May 1944[10]**

| | |
|---|---|
| Flesch Reading Ease score | 50.4 |
| Flesch-Kincaid Grade | 11.4 |
| Speaking rate | Unavailable |

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[7] John Curtin, *Commonwealth of Australia: Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 173, 11 February 1943, pp. 592-596.

[8] John Curtin, "General Election ALP Policy Statement", JCPML, Bentley, JCPML acc. no. 00421/2, 26 July 1943, transcript np.

[9] John Curtin, "State Of The War", *DDA*, no. 70, 14 December 1943, pp. 31-36.

[10] John Curtin, "Broadcast by the Prime Minister from London", *DDA*, no. 81, 8 May 1944, pp. 53-56.

## 11 Curtin's parliamentary speech on 17 July 1944[11]

| Flesch Reading Ease score | 42.8 |
|---|---|
| Flesch-Kincaid Grade | 13.7 |
| Speaking rate | Unavailable |

**Average Flesch Reading Ease Scores**

| John Curtin's average Flesch Reading Ease score for all 11 addresses | 50.76 |
|---|---|
| Average Flesch Reading Ease score for John Curtin's four radio broadcasts | 54.375 |
| Recommended standard[12] | 60-70 (a higher number indicates a simpler text) |
| Average Flesch Reading Ease score for Franklin D. Roosevelt's radio "fireside chats" | 57.5 |
| Average Flesch Reading Ease score for Franklin D. Roosevelt's other public addresses | 59.4 |
| Average Flesch Reading Ease score for Harry S. Truman's radio talks | 63.8 |

[11] John Curtin, "Meeting of Prime Ministers – Australian Prime Minister's Report", *DDA*, no. 84, 17 July 1944, pp. 28-44.

[12] The recommended standard, as well as the statistics relating to Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman, were cited in Elvin T. Lim, "The Lion and the Lamb: De-mythologising Franklin Roosevelt's Fireside Chats" [hereafter "Fireside chats"], *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*, vol. 6, no. 3, 2003, pp. 445-446.

**Average Flesch-Kincaid Grades**

| | |
|---|---|
| John Curtin's average Flesch-Kincaid Grade for all 11 addresses | 11, meaning the addresses were suitable for an eleventh-grade reading level on average |
| Average Flesch-Kincaid grade for John Curtin's four radio broadcasts | 10.175, about a tenth-grade reading level |
| Recommended standard[13] | 8, or an eighth-grade level |
| Average educational attainment for Australian people born before 1930[14] | 9.3, or about the ninth grade |

**Average speaking rates**

| | |
|---|---|
| Average speaking rate in the three selected, available radio broadcasts by John Curtin | 139.46 words a minute |
| Recommended standards[15] | 100-125 words a minute |
| Average speaking rate in Franklin D. Roosevelt's radio talks[16] | 105-117 words a minute |

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[13] Trevor Day, "Twelve Writing Tips for Administrative Staff", University of Bath, Bath, 2008, retrieved on 27 September 2009 at <www.bath.ac.uk/learningandteaching/resources/TwelveWritingTipsRevisedTD.pdf>.

[14] Jonathan Kelley and M.D.R. Evans, "Trends In Educational Attainment In Australia", *WwA: Worldwide Attitudes*, 26 August 1996, pp. 1-8, retrieved on 27 September 2009 at <http://www.international-survey.org/wwa_pub/articles/hst-ed5.htm>.

[15] Peter Kenny, *A Handbook of Public Speaking for Scientists & Engineers*, IOP Publishing Ltd (Institute of Physics Publishing), London, 1988, p. 20; Lim, "Fireside chats", pp. 446, 458, endnote 42; Cynthia J. Pasquale, "Talking at the speed of confound", *The Denver Post*, Denver, 29 June 2006, retrieved on 10 September 2009 at <http://www.denverpost.com/ci_3991442?source=rss>; Public Broadcasting Service, "All About Public Speaking", Falls Church, Virginia, 2009, retrieved on 27 September 2009 at <http://www.pbs.org/standarddeviantstv/transcript_public.html>.

[16] According to Earnest Bradenburg and Waldo W. Braden, Roosevelt had a mean speaking rate of 105 words to 110 words in his radio broadcasts. Lim wrote that Roosevelt spoke an average 117 words a minute in his "fireside chats". See Earnest Bradenburg and Waldo W. Braden, "Franklin Delano Roosevelt", in Marie Kathryn Hochmuth (ed.), *History and Criticism of American Public Address,* Longmans, Green and Co., New York, vol. 3, 1958, pp. 520, 522; Lim, "Roosevelt's fireside chats", p. 446.

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