Possess the Time:
The Formation and Character of Australian Intellectual Conservatism in the 1950s

Nicholas Brown

A thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
of the Australian National University.

September 1990
Declaration

Except where otherwise indicated
this thesis is my own work.

Nicholas Brown
September 1990
Antony       Be a child o' th' time
Caesar       Possess it, I'll make answer.

Abstract

This thesis studies intellectual conservatism in Australia in the 1950s and, by placing the emphasis on the cultural and institutional response to social change, examines realignments in social analysis rather than its ideological dimension. Commentaries on six issues are discussed to assess the range and character of conservatism, and its relationship to social change. These issues are: reactions to Asian nationalism; administrative priorities in Papua New Guinea; the economic policies recommended in times of prosperity; the decentralisation campaigns; post-war concepts of citizenship and 'personality'; and the social role of the universities. The argument of this thesis is that the reaction of the commentators to these issues, and their careers, values and strategies in analysis, indicate that intellectual conservatism at that time represented elements of a continuation of an earlier period of intellectual reformism and not a radical break with the past.
Acknowledgements

In the research for this thesis I received much assistance from the Librarians of the Rare Book Room of the Baillieu Library at the University of Melbourne, the Petherick Room of the National Library of Australia, and from the Archivists of the Melbourne University Archives and the Archives of Business and Labour at the Australian National University. I thank them for their help.

Many people have encouraged me in the long process of working on this thesis, and I owe a particular debt of gratitude to Joanna Bourke, Marivic Wyndham, Anne Boden and Robert Boden, Donald Denoon, Kosmas Tsokhas, Hank Nelson, Neville Cain and John Knott. In so many ways, my parents have supported me and given me confidence: that kind of gift will always be beyond any thanks I might try to make. From when I first thought of this topic through to making last entries in the bibliography, Alison Smith and Bruce Smith have kept me thinking that there might be something in this thesis, and helped me to see it through. For them, too, this thanks is far too little.

Barry Smith read this work in several stages, and I appreciate his efforts to help me see what mattered. To Manning Clark, I owe a great debt for his generosity and his commitment, and for many things said at the appropriate times.

Ian Hancock has borne with much in the course of supervising this work: I have admired his tolerance, envied his critical precision, and will always be thankful for his friendship.

For her care, her support, her good humour, and for her company all these years - my deepest thanks are to Susan Boden.

Because I have been stubborn on a number of counts, it is more than usually necessary that I add that all faults with this work are my own.
A Note on the Presentation of the Text

A brief biographical footnote follows the first reference by name to the main commentators discussed in this thesis. These footnotes consist of basic details of birth, education and career, and include date of death if the subject died within the period covered. These details are not intended to be evaluative, or to supply a full outline of individual achievement and association. To the extent that an assessment of an individual’s life, work and influence is appropriate, it is included in the text.

For the purposes of establishing a distinction in usage, the form ‘State’ is employed to describe the independent political units of the Australian federation - such as New South Wales or Tasmania; ‘state’ refers less specifically to the co-ordinated agencies of political organisation and civilian government, usually at the level of the Commonwealth government.
## Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AACF</td>
<td>Australian Association for Cultural Freedom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAES</td>
<td>Australian Army Education Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>Australian Capital Territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTU</td>
<td>Australian Council of Trade Unions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADB</td>
<td>Australian Dictionary of Biography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AEHR</td>
<td>Australian Economic History Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIF</td>
<td>Australian Imperial Forces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIIA</td>
<td>Australian Institute of International Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIPS</td>
<td>Australian Institute of Political Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AJPH</td>
<td>Australian Journal of Politics and History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANRC</td>
<td>Australian National Research Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANU</td>
<td>Australian National University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANZAAS</td>
<td>Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASOPA</td>
<td>Australian School of Pacific Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVCC</td>
<td>Australian Vice-Chancellor's Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIPPP</td>
<td>Bulletin of Industrial Psychology and Personnel Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAE</td>
<td>Council of Adult Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCF</td>
<td>Congress for Cultural Freedom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPD</td>
<td>Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRTS</td>
<td>Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSIR</td>
<td>Council for Scientific and Industrial Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSIRO</td>
<td>Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H of R</td>
<td>House of Representatives of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPA</td>
<td>Institute of Public Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPR</td>
<td>Institute of Pacific Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MHR</td>
<td>Member of the House of Representatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLA</td>
<td>Member of the Legislative Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIM</td>
<td>Pacific Islands Monthly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAIA</td>
<td>Royal Australian Institute of Architects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMH</td>
<td>Sydney Morning Herald</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UAP</td>
<td>United Australia Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Table of Contents

Declaration i  
Acknowledgements iii  
A Note on the Presentation of the Text iv  
Abbreviations v  
1. 'A Part of Asia' 18  
2. 'A Test of Our Quality as a Nation' 58  
3. 'The Milk Bar Economy' 93  
4. Decentralisation and the Organisation of Life 132  
5. Images of Self and Society 168  
6. 'A Community with a Climate of its Own' 205  
7. Bibliography 248
Introduction

In January 1951, the Bishop of Canberra-Goulburn, E.H. Burgmann, declared Australia to be a social and moral wasteland. It seemed clear, since the outbreak of World War One, that the 'old order of things' must end. Nothing, however, had developed to replace earlier certainties: no new force for social cohesion; no ethics appropriate to the technological transformation of life; no national objectives to balance against a sense of overwhelming international crisis. The twentieth century had been marked by the progression of war, depression, then war - followed by a superficial affluence. There was also the threat of further conflict, with the potential for unimaginable destruction. During the 1930s Burgmann had sought an alternative to capitalism in the name of 'Christian morality' and 'the nation'. In 1942 he insisted that 'man is worth saving', and looked towards a 'world-wide community' of peace and co-operation, and the basic 'human fellowship' to be rediscovered in 'the family unit'. By 1951, in these comments on the fiftieth anniversary of the nation, no equivalent foundations seemed to be available. 'We failed in the days of our poverty when we could have made them days of opportunity', Burgmann argued: 'now we are failing in the days of our prosperity'. 'Man', the Bishop concluded, 'is incorrigibly perverse and wilful'.

Other prominent commentators of the 'twenties and 'thirties expressed similar sentiments in the post-war years. Once associated with social reformism, by the late 1940s they found their ideals in danger of irrelevancy, or of being cast aside by developments which lacked coherent direction. Professor D.B. Copland, a leading member of a group of economists who had worked to associate their expertise with public policy between the wars, warned in 1952 that Australia was on the verge of 'a totalitarian age'. As a

---

1 Ernest Henry BURGMANN Born at Lansdown on the Manning River in 1885, Burgmann was educated at the University of Sydney and at the Australian College of Theology. In 1911 he was ordained Deacon, and Priest in 1912, becoming the Rector of Gundy in NSW. Between 1914 and 1915 he was a Curate at South Wimbeldon in London, returning to Australia as Rector of Wyong and, in 1918, becoming Warden of St John's Theological College at Armidale and then, after 1925, at Morpeth. Burgmann was consecrated Bishop at Newcastle in 1934, and enthroned at Goulburn later the same year. He wrote widely on matters of faith and national development, and edited the Anglican Review.


4 Australia: The Past 50 Years', ABC Weekly. 3 February 1951, pp.8-9.

5 Douglas Berry COPLAND Born at Timaru, New Zealand, in 1894, Copland was educated at Canterbury College and, in 1917, was appointed Lecturer in History and Economics, and Director of Tutorial Classes at the University of Tasmania. He became Professor of Economics there in 1920, and in 1924 moved to Melbourne as the Professor of Commerce - a position he held until 1944. While in Melbourne, Copland developed extensive links with government and business, and was one a small group of economists involved in advising on public policy during the Great Depression. From 1939 to 1945 he was Commonwealth Prices Commissioner, and from 1941 served as Economic Adviser to the Prime Minister. During the war he was also Commissioner of the Victorian Savings Bank. In 1946 Copland went to Chungking as Australia's Ambassador to China, returning from there in 1948 to become the first Vice-Chancellor of the Australian National University. He resigned from that position in 1953 to become Australian Ambassador to Canada.
consequence, Copland advised that there should be no further extension of the power of government.\textsuperscript{6} In 1953, diagnosing an age of 'intellectual confusion', Sir Frederic Eggleston\textsuperscript{7} observed that 'Australian democracy [was] under pressure'. The problem was not the consolidation of the Welfare State, which Eggleston nominated as a 'creative factor' in national development in the inter-war years, but the extent to which public affairs were increasingly open to 'organised selfishness' rather than 'good citizenship'.\textsuperscript{8} From these perspectives, the problem was not simply change, but that the institutions and the even the basic cultural conventions of society could not cope with its demands.

The first striking aspect of these reactions is their shared sense of pessimism. In their inter-war work, these commentators had defined their intellectual role and social objectives with reference to the development and management of an emerging national unity. As publicists, but also through their more specific status and expertise as a clergyman, an academic, and a lawyer and politician, they had sought to evoke an evolutionary consensus defined through the ministrations of the state or the abstractions of a common interest. Their post-war pessimism was prompted by a concern to consolidate what had been achieved by way of reform before it was eroded by popular demands. As Manning Clark\textsuperscript{9} has recalled of the years from 1945 to 1949, even in the midst of reconstruction idealism for the 'new order' of social and economic planning, 'that enthusiasm, that hope for better things guaranteed by men such as Curtin and Evatt, had grown perceptibly weaker'.\textsuperscript{10} Each expressing something of this disillusionment, and from the perspective of their own areas of interest, these commentators were not pre-occupied by a sense of a better past, but by the need to defend existing forms of society from potential corruption at the hands of the mass: that is, a population broken from categories of class and community into the amorphous individualised demands of prosperity.

It was on the basis of this anxiety that the second major element of their response gradually assumed the form which would characterize much intellectual discussion in Australia throughout the 1950s. With their earlier associations with forms of social analysis based on the management of evolving social wholes,
neither Burgmann nor Copland nor Eggleston was prepared to abdicate their sense of intellectual role, even though it was clear to them that society itself was changing. Their rhetoric of pessimism was far from a sign of retreat; what it indicated was the adoption of new strategies of intellectual engagement: new ways of conceptualising and addressing the subjects of social policy, and of defining objectives in development. These strategies, even as they were taken up and modified by a post-war generation of commentators, were not so much a reaction against the themes of earlier reformism, but an adaption of those themes to new circumstances, and a judging of social issues in terms of their departure from, or threat to, the assumptions which had informed earlier social analysis. This process of adaption, the formulation of these strategies under the influence of post-war pessimism, and an essential continuity of intellectual role, were to become the basic components of intellectual conservatism in Australia in the 'fifties.

These three commentators are not presented here as necessarily influential, but as indicators of the formation of intellectual strategies which were founded on the preservation of stability rather than upon an appeal to tradition. The strategies they articulated are significant not simply as 'responses' to change, but because they shaped the terms in which that change was comprehended and accommodated in attitudes, policies and institutions. One common element in these attempts to devise categories of analysis and ascribe functions in social activity was that the collective image of society, and of the 'creativity' of public policy, which formed central themes of their inter-war reformism, were replaced by a concept of 'the individual' in the late 1940s. Vulnerable and alienated, but invested with unprecedented economic and technological capacities, the 'individual' was caught in the midst of the polarities of mid-century 'modernity': between the expanding opportunities for the realisation of personal capacities and the consolidation of centralised authority.11 This concept of the individual required not so much a rejection of holistic conceptions, but an inversion of them. The assumed intellectual role of guidance persisted but, rather than assisting an evolving social unity, it became imperative to restrain the claims of a fractured population through strategies of more specific intervention. Where once abstractions of class, nation, the state, and even race had provided the terms of analysis, now there was a need to identify more precise aptitudes and latencies in the individual. For Burgmann, the new strategies of post-war social analysis were essentially negative, and based on the inherent instability of the individual personality. As an economist, Copland was particularly concerned with the legitimate extent of control in a society pulled by excessive consumerism on the one hand and potentially 'totalitarian' political forces on the other. For Eggleston, post-war strategies centred on a more constructive concept of 'citizenship'. Replacing the evolutionary and synthesising elements of inter-war reformism, citizenship provided him with a way of defining an intersection between 'certain human urges and influences' on the one hand, and an emphasis on the potential consensus of the 'community' on the other.12 Even so, this reconciliation was inherently static, resistant to the influence of 'organisation' and emphasising personal adjustment over initiated reform. Not only were these strategies based on a literal conservatism - that is, on the attempt to preserve an existing balance of authority and values. They also developed a range of concepts which would provide the basis for a much wider range of conservative commentary on Australian society in the 1950s: the attempt to subsume the individual within the conformity of 'community', to relate aspirations for change to irrationality, and to trace conflicts to departures from normality rather than to a process of change. The preceding evolutionary holism of reform thus provided the preconditions for a conservative holism of 'adjustment' and 'restraint' in the post-war years.


12Eggleston, Reflections, p.203.
The identification of a sense of pessimism among intellectuals in the post-war years is a familiar theme in Australian historiography, but the concomitant emergence of new strategies in social analysis is less often noted. Instead, such pessimism is equated with an element of resignation from social engagement among a generation of intellectuals. Consequently, interpretations of the post-war period often observe an apparent discontinuity: a break between the aspirations accumulating in the inter-war years and the features of inherent conservatism in the 1950s and 1960s. Two groups of factors are invoked to explain this observed discontinuity. First, there was the impact of external agencies, such as the climate of suspicion generated by the ‘Cold War’, and the political and cultural ramifications of a shift in Australian economic growth prompted by heavy multinational investment in local manufacturing. Second, there is the effect attributed to the ideological initiative of new groupings of private enterprise interests, symbolised by the election of the Liberal-Country Party government under Menzies in December 1949. The simple fact of Menzies’ longevity as Prime Minister from 1949 to 1966 seems only to confirm the significance of a break between these two distinct periods. It follows from these interpretations that intellectuals who had achieved a level of political involvement and influence between the 1920s and the mid-1940s were forced to be merely reactive by the 1950s. Post-war conservatism is also thus cast the basically uniform ideology of political and economic interests.

By emphasising this post-war discontinuity, it becomes impossible to explain the intellectual climate of those years in a way that allows an integration between intellectuals and social change. However sophisticated analyses might become in accommodating this break, they succeed only in accumulating evidence confirming the distinctiveness of groupings on either side. Concentrating on elements of ideology, these studies leave the transition between the periods as little more than a changing of the guard. For James Walter, the years of post-war reconstruction are presented as a site of contest in which opposing ranks of intellectuals, as ‘the bearers of ideas’, meet in a disembodied ‘political culture’, itself ‘constituted’ by their claims. On this site they attempt to secure victory for the separate interests - the ‘bureaucratic reconstructionists’ and the ‘business progressives’ - they represent. Even the image of the ‘armoury’ of ‘meanings’ wielded by these intellectuals seems only to confirm a confrontation in which they remain skilled hirelings. Consistent explanation also eludes Tim Rowse’s attempt to identify the ‘dominant discourse’ employed by Australian intellectuals as it spanned the twentieth century. While Rowse discusses intellectual practice in terms of a ‘relatively autonomous history’ of institutions and ‘genres’, capable of accommodating ‘a great many class contradictions’, his explanation of the late 1940s and early 1950s

---


14Robert Gordon MENZIES Born in 1894 at Jeparit, Victoria, Menzies was educated at the University of Melbourne and was admitted to the Victorian Bar in 1918. Between 1928 and 1929 he held the seat of East Yarra for the National Party in the Victorian Legislative Assembly, moving to the seat of Nunawading in 1929. From 1932 to 1934 he held the portfolios of Minister for Railways, Attorney-General and Deputy-Premier. In 1934 he won the Federal seat of Kooyong, and held the position of Commonwealth Attorney-General in the Lyons government from 1934 to 1939, becoming Treasurer in 1939 and succeeding as Prime Minister after Lyons death in 1939. Without steady support in his own party, and the subject of hostility from the Leader of the Country Party, Menzies resigned in 1941. Following the formation of the Liberal Party in 1942, Menzies became Leader of the Opposition in 1943, and in 1949 was elected Prime Minister.


lapses into themes of personal frustration and direct political and economic subversion of the 'intellectual field'.\textsuperscript{17} He describes a 'crisis of faith' among liberal intellectuals in the 1940s, as their 'social democratic imagery' was smothered by the Cold War and economic change: their 'discourse', then, collapses into personal defeat. Rowse's analysis goes into suspension for much of the 1950s. The 'discursive unity' he is concerned to define only re-emerges at the end of the decade among the 'new critics' in journalism and the universities - a grouping now reconciled to pluralism and more dispersed across media commentary, education and entertainment. His analysis defines two distinct ideological formations - one declining in the 1940s, the other consolidated by the 1960s - yet he is unable to assess the transition between them in a way that is continuous and consistent with the relative autonomy of intellectual 'practice' he seeks to isolate.\textsuperscript{18}

Nor is the limitation of this 'break' thesis one of explanation alone, for it also influenced the evaluation of this critical period in Australian history. Adopting themes of 'orchestration', and of an ideologically-induced fear and conformity in the 1950s,\textsuperscript{19} interpretations of post-war discontinuity have reinforced a sense of Australian culture - in the sense of accepted conventions and values - as derivative, shallow, and shaped by political interests in the narrowest sense of parties and pressure groups. This interpretation, presumably, can be extended to encompass the earlier period of 'reformist idealism', although that is rarely the case. Instead, intellectual integrity is more often seen to be lost in the new pressures of Cold War manipulation. To suggest, as an alternative assessment, that a process more genuinely responsive to change might have occurred at that time is not to claim for intellectuals the status of independent agents. Instead, this suggestion indicates that the careers, the institutions and the disciplines which informed and enabled their commentary might have internal histories which resisted complete manipulation. On this basis, the strategies of post-war social analysis are as significant as the pessimism of that time, and the tracing of the continuities from the inter-war to the post-war period has much to recommend it. Without denying the significance of the external influences of economic and political change, internal adjustments and strategic realignments are an integral part of the response of Australian intellectuals to those changes. If, as publicists, Burgmann, Copland and Eggleston were distant from the areas of expertise developing around concepts of 'personality', 'community' and 'citizenship' in the 1950s, their commentary nonetheless indicated a transition to that more specific analysis rather than a clear break. Some evaluation of this basic continuity is especially important given the enduring relevance of many of the issues addressed by such commentators in the late 1940s and the 1950s: the effect of economic growth and scientific advance on the patterns of social and personal life; the desirable balance between public intervention and private initiative in policy; the attempt to define basic elements of a social morality; even a simple preparedness to enter into public controversy on matters of commitment. The point of such an evaluation is not that the views of post-war commentators might convey a 'lesson', but that a study of the context in which these issues were defined, and the resources then available to assist the comprehension of their significance, touches on several fundamental areas of the cultural and institutional consolidation of modern Australia.

The main objective of this thesis, then, is to provide an account of the formation and character of Australian intellectual conservatism in the 1950s in a way which avoids the exclusive categorisation of

\textsuperscript{17}Rowse, \textit{Australian Liberalism}, pp.11, 186-7, 191, 13, 23-9.
\textsuperscript{18}Rowse identifies this transition in more precise terms of functionality in 'Political Culture: A Concept and its Ideologies' in Graeme Duncan (ed.), \textit{Critical Essays in Australian Politics}, Melbourne, 1978, pp.11-13, but still does not fully explain the change from an essentially educational premise of social rationality in inter-war analysis to a later emphasis on a basically managerial conception of social irrationality.
\textsuperscript{19}Alomes, Dober and Hellier, 'The Social Context', p.2.
reform and reaction. Instead, this period needs to be understood as it was experienced - at least at an intellectual level - not as a coherent departure from the past, an engineered consent, or an ideological coup, but as a series of demands made on established structures. From this perspective, the conservative elements of the responses to that experience can be better explained and evaluated. As Judith Brett has argued of Menzies' political rhetoric, Australian conservatism cannot be taken for granted, as either mute prejudice, or the unified 'hegemony' of vested interests: these assumptions neither account for its historical specificity, nor the complexity of its appeal.20 Similarly, as recent historians of welfare and labour relations in the 1940s have argued, an interpretation of the 'true believers' of Labor reconstruction being swept from power by a wave of electoral reaction, reduces to an ideological conflict the much more complex and formative processes of political alignment in that period.21 Bearing these counsels in mind, it is argued here that a study of the internal processes spanning from inter-war reformism to post-war reaction is more important in understanding the origins and character of Australian intellectual conservatism in the 1950s than a reliance on external interventions, simple dependence or ideological manipulation. Rather than studying the period in terms of an ideological contest, it is better understood as a period of adjustment which, while far-reaching, occurred within a basic continuity of cultural and institutional activity.

These internal processes were evident at two levels, often overlapping but with particular characteristics of their own. At an institutional level, they were associated with a degree of formality based on established bodies of practice and of knowledge. In the cases of Burgmann, Copland and Eggleston, for example, this association took the form of careers within defined agencies, such as the universities or the church, in patterns of consultation, including those between government and academics, and in the deployment of recognisable disciplines of enquiry - economics and psychology amongst them - in social analysis. At a cultural level, these processes related more to the attempt to address society in ways which were assumed to secure a degree of popular consent by integrating commentary with less formal but pervasive values and activities. The rhetoric of pessimism itself operated at this level, as did the evocation of 'citizenship' as opposed to 'selfishness'. To some extent, these levels were interdependent: while institutional processes exhibited the material interests or the 'consciousness' of specific interest groupings, the cultural form in which this consciousness was expressed was not a 'mere shell', but itself 'conditioned the development' of those interests.22 Both levels, as already suggested, shared a distinct alignment in inter-war commentary, as intellectuals associated themselves with concepts of developmentalism and reform-from-above in the interests of potential social unity. Given the nature of such an interdependence, the major influence on this intellectual alignment was not the political reaction of the Cold War and the election of 1949, but the experience of wartime mobilisation and then of reconstruction planning through the 1940s. If at first mobilisation appeared to confirm an alliance between intellectuals and the state, it did so in ways which were more inherently politicised than inter-war developmentalism. The period also prompted a shift from holistic evolutionary models in cultural analysis to those calculating the morale and efficiency of individuals in total war, and their aspirations in reconstruction. Cultural and institutional relignment to post-war circumstances of prosperity and insecurity gradually tended to emphasise themes of individual restraint and the limited role of public policy. It was these processes which were central to the formation and character of post-war intellectual conservatism.

---


22This point is based on Gareth Stedman Jones' essay, 'Rethinking Chartism', in Languages of Class: Studies in English Working Class History 1832-1982, Cambridge, 1983, p.95.
Conservatism is not discussed here as a unified ideology drawn from coherent principles or manufactured to represent the interests of political or economic groupings. Instead, the term is employed as an attempt to classify a tendency in commentary away from earlier reformist themes in social analysis. Three questions are raised by this approach. First, what might serve to identify conservatism in social commentary? Second, how was such conservatism evident in Australian social analysis in the 1950s? Third, if conservatism was more an emphasis than a doctrine in the work of a wide range of intellectuals, were there any particular areas of their commentary in which that tendency was most characteristic?

One of the major problems with conservatism as a political category relates to the definition of its content: to what extent does it describe an ideal, capable of summary in abstractions, and to what extent is it a tactic of reaction, an attempt to preserve what already exists. The problem is compounded because in Australia, throughout the fifties, there was little specific advocacy of either position. A review in the Age Literary Supplement in October 1950 observed that conservatism had become a decidedly 'unfashionable' political philosophy.23 In 1959, the Observer agreed that, since the end of World War Two, conservatism had seemed to to be a 'discredited, pre-war, Guilty Man kind of conspiracy' with which no one would voluntarily associate. The times seemed to demand a more active stand, the hope for a better future.24 The pressing issues of both domestic and international affairs were seen to relate to economic management, to the assertion of social rights and the defence of national integrity in international affairs, and to the changing role of the state in matters of welfare: they did not fall within the customary retrospective province of conservatism, with its evocation of prerogative and stability. If anything, a radical departure from previous complacency was regarded as imperative by commentators, or at least a recognition of the irrelevance of the past to the struggles against the extension of authority, whether that authority took the form of bureaucratic control, totalitarian infiltration, or the alienation of individuals from social values through the pace and nature of industrial development.25

Any articulation of a political position, however, inevitably draws upon some abstract premises in the attempt to assess what it is that needs to be defended, or to outline what needs to be attained. This dual reference - to circumstance and to premise - is more inherent in the case of conservatism than it is for other political positions which rely heavily on philosophical essences (individual freedom in the case of liberalism; social good in the case of socialism). Conservatism is inherently 'positional' and 'local in its practice'.26 It is in this sense that Edmund Burke is frequently cited as an exemplary conservative, both

---

23 'Progressive Doctrine for Conservatism', Age, 14 October 1950, p.9.
24 "The Gentle Fifties": Ten Years Which Didn't Shake The World', Observer, 26 December 1959, p.4.
25 Even in retrospect, few of the most active Australian intellectuals of the time, those who had been concerned to defend the integrity of their society, welcomed the appellation of 'conservative'. This observation is based on the author's interviews with B.A. Santamaria, Vincent Buckley, Frank Knopflmacher, Melbourne, July 1984; and Lloyd Ross and Richard Krygier, Sydney, December, 1984. In 1957 James Jupp argued that although conservatism seemed to be attracting some interest at an academic level, it lacked the obvious relevance and coherent influence of the five ideologies he considered to be appropriate for serious study, each of which related more directly to the role of the state in social development: liberal democracy, social democracy, communism, nationalism and corporatism. See James Jupp, 'A Course in Contemporary Ideologies', APSA News, vol.2, no.2, 1957, p.8.
because of his insistence on the maintenance of the constitutional, legal, religious and proprietorial foundations of eighteenth century British society, and because of his support for the cultural integrity of Indian society - 'their blood, their opinions, and the soil of their country' - against the imposed forms of British rule. Yet the very terms in which Burke defended these respective values suggests that he identified them with reference to more than the temporal and the contingent features of their societies. Nor did he rely on presumed essential or natural qualities in either the individual or society. Instead, Burke's critique - like much intellectual conservatism - was based on an identification and defence of institutional order as sanctioned by 'history' rather than 'nature'. Certain institutions are recurrent in that defence, and are held inviolable by time or circumstance because of their importance in the transmission of an historical inheritance. These institutions include beliefs in the value of the family, hierarchies of loyalty and codes of behaviour, or patterns of authority premised on an insistence that individuals find definition in such codes and hierarchies rather than through the exercise of an inherent reason or will. Even though, as Burke insisted, all 'commonwealths' are 'arbitrary combinations and ... productions of the human mind', this mind was subservient to a culture derived not from 'abstract rule' or 'principle' but from an historical inheritance drawing on 'wisdom greater' than that of the individual alone.

Faced with such elusive ultimate appeals, it has been contended that, 'conservatism is tenable only in criticism'. While conservative arguments can expose ethical or political weaknesses in the direction of social development, they cannot effectively identify an ideal, discrete historical period which was in itself unchanging. Equally, conservatism resists the investiture of agency or self-determination in spheres which are themselves seen to be defined by an historical inheritance. On this basis, as Alan Patience argues, conservatism 'established a profound ethical critique of the rationalist and individualist culture which capitalism has brought into being' and which, in its emphasis on economic initiative, threatened to disrupt established social forms. Whatever their disposition to maintain the familiar and the established,
conservatives are forced to create a medium through which to articulate their position, becoming 'reflective intellectuals despite themselves'.

It is in this sense - as a critique as much as an ideal - that the study of the conservative elements of a culture can be particularly valuable for a historian. The conservative response is intrinsically integrated with even those social processes that it finds antagonistic. If, for example, some conservatives have regarded the modern state and bureaucracy as the prime engines of political change and social intervention, others have sought to employ these agencies to secure social stability or at least to minimise the pace of change. On the one hand, the consolidation of the welfare state, and its extension by way of taxation or assistance into the private spheres of family, property and choice, has prompted some conservatives to seek a reconciliation with a form of economic individualism to counter the pace of bureaucratic centralisation. On the other, conservatives were also prominent in the emergence of the models and theories of sociological analysis. While the social sciences established a body of analysis which identified strategies for social intervention, this analysis also subordinated the individual to social conditions, identifying those institutions and values seen as crucial to social stability.

The character of post-war conservatism, as the Age review suggested, was not denoted by a grand evocation or by ideological syntheses, but was associated with less conspicuous notions of the observance of concepts of 'law' against the radicalism of either right-wing or left-wing politics. What 'law' might mean again straddled the claim to absolute values and a sense of pragmatic need, and related particularly to the resources available to meet contemporary challenges to social stability. Throughout the 'fifties, James McAuley frequently dismissed liberalism as 'unbiased between good and evil', and an abnegation of intellectual responsibility at a time when issues of culture, morality and fundamental human rights demanded firm commitment rather than relativism. In 1955, in a more academic context, P.H.

---


37See Nisbet, 'Conservatism', pp.80-117.

38James Phillip McAuley Born at Sydney in 1917 and educated at the University of Sydney, McAuley was employed as a school teacher until he was drafted into military service in 1942. He was appointed to the Australian Directorate and Civil Affairs, and trained personnel to assist in the defence and then post-war administration of Papua New Guinea. From 1946 to 1960 he taught at the Australian School of Pacific Administration, writing many articles on issues of government in the territory. McAuley's first book of poetry was published in 1946, and in 1956 he became foundation editor of Quadrant.

Partridge surveyed a twentieth-century stalemate in the concepts of political philosophy. He declared that, rather than search for a new line of critical research, there was a greater need for a 'traditional' programme which would attempt to consolidate the meaning of central terms such as 'freedom', 'equality', 'security', 'consent' and 'representation' as they had come to be accepted and understood. It was only in reclaiming the continuity and rationality of these principles that the issues of the day might be met. Such a project need not be conservative, Partridge assured, but what he implied, in common with much commentary in Australia in the 1950s, was a greater preparedness to draw values from established concepts, or accepted institutions and practices, than to seek for them in original theory or in the inherently changing forms of social activity. By the end of the decade, as the Observer noted, it was clear that the assumptions of the post-war jeremiahs - those such as Burgmann, who argued that the world would collapse into destruction or crisis - had been rendered obsolete by the 'responsible conservatism' associated with corporate entrepreneurs and managers, the 'new men' of the bureaucracies and the universities, who had quietly contained change. It could be added that the pessimism at the beginning of the decade had itself provided the foundations for precisely that concept of more specific social management at its end.

The specificity of these strategies of management is the most significant aspect of post-war conservatism, yet it is often overlooked in interpretations of ideological reaction. If intellectuals in that period turned to abstract themes of 'good' and 'evil', or sought to defend the values of society and its 'way of life', then it is also the case that those themes were defined less in terms of the maintenance of traditional social forms and more through increasingly specific interventions in areas of domestic life, in shaping the ethics of privacy, and in stabilising the individual personality. This tendency was true, as Brett argues, of Menzies' political rhetoric of 'one piece of earth with a house and garden which is ours', and of Burgmann's transition from reformist concepts of the 'nation' to those of the 'family' amid war and then to the 'wilful' individual psychology in prosperity. Such specificity was equally evident in analysis ranging from the post-war concern with juvenile delinquency to the interpretation of instability in Asian societies as tradition gave way to 'materialistic communism'. In these ways the conservatism of the fifties was very different from that of nineteenth-century Australia, which sought to transplant 'ancient and established institutions' to the colonies, or of the first decades of the twentieth-century, fighting to hold the line of property and representation against the demands of organised labour. Facing a challenge which seemed more fundamental, and which disturbed reformers as much as reactionaries, post-war conservatism might have used a rhetoric of abstract values, but, both culturally and institutionally, its practice extended far into newly-defined areas of individual and social life. Interpretations stressing political discontinuity and

---

40Percy Herbert PARTRIDGE Born at Hornsby, NSW, in 1910, Partridge was educated at the University of Sydney and in 1934 was appointed to a lectureship in Philosophy there, becoming Senior Lecturer in 1940, and for a period in 1947 was in charge of the Department of Political Science at the University of Melbourne. Partridge returned to Sydney to become Professor of Government and Public Administration, a position he held until 1951 when he was appointed Professor of Social Philosophy at the Australian National University.


42"The Gentle Fifties", pp.4-5.


'orchestration' overlook the extent to which these new strategies 'created' the subject of analysis within traditional assumptions rather than merely imposed a sense of how things once were and should be.

***

The preceding discussion has identified two main problems in the definition of intellectuals. If the emphasis of this study is on processes of realignment within established institutions and forms of commentary, what role do intellectuals play within this transition? Similarly, if conservatism is not so much a coherent ideology as a relative emphasis in commentary, a 'positional' response, do intellectuals have a significance which is in any way distinct from that of anyone else involved in these processes?

- The intellectuals discussed in this thesis are not defined by a qualitative assessment of thought, but by their relation and contribution to the strategies of post-war social analysis. In classifying these figures as intellectuals, or less formally as commentators, there is an assumption that their significance - at least for the purposes of this study - lies in their exercise of a specialised ability or role relating more to the conceptual development and articulation of policies, values and objectives, than to the direct application of them. The former ability may be a dimension of the latter capacity, yet it constitutes a specific area of historical attention in recognition of its social function. Most clergymen, for example, spoke to congregations in 1951, but they were not necessarily accorded the status of Burgmann's radio address, nor did they adopt an equivalently synoptic or rhetorical purpose. A similar point can be made about the occasion of Copland's comments in 1952, a social scientist as President of ANZAAS, or the vehicle for Eggleston's reflections - an essay by 'one of Australia's elder statesmen'.46 The distinguishing features of an intellectual role, then, would seem to centre around both an attributed social standing or expertise, and the internal formality of that activity. Such formality, in turn, relates to something more than the transmission of established values, and more than acting within conventional roles, but to a more 'creative' exemplification or development of those fields. Even leaving aside the question of a qualitative assessment of these fields, each of these areas is the subject of considerable historiographical debate. Without canvassing the broad range of this discussion, what follows is an attempt to the guidelines for the analysis of intellectuals in this thesis.

One major theory dealing with the historical definition of intellectuals was developed by Antonio Gramsci, who emphasised that while all members of a society might be intellectuals in the sense of attributing meaning to their lives, they did not all 'have the function of intellectuals'.47 For Gramsci, this function was to coordinate and make conscious the shared economic and political interests of social groupings, legitimising those interests in civil society by means of an 'hegemony' operating across every level of social consciousness, from religion and morality through to taste and personal relations.48 Intellectuals, he argued, were 'created' in a close association with the rise of identifiable classes, either in an immediate political or 'organic' relation to a specific emergent class (as the lawyers, technicians and 'the organisers of a new culture' associated with that class), or existing in residual or 'traditional'

46See dust-jacket comments on Eggleston, Reflections.


attachment to 'historical class formations' (those intellectuals in literary or scientific fields).  

The value of Gramsci's theory is that it avoids giving 'absolute priority to the observing subject', as if things were seen more-or-less as they were according to the expertise and vantage of the individual. Instead, Gramsci relies more on the historical and material conditions which shaped the function of intellectuals as class 'deputies'. When applied to European societies, and in the study of clearly defined stages of economic growth and political consolidation, this concept of an 'organic' role can be effective in explaining the production of 'hegemony'. For 'new societies', however, inheriting technologies, institutions and immigrant populations at relatively advanced stages of formation, and for 'modern' societies, governed by extensive bureaucracies, educational and judicial systems, generating a web of civilian regulation, information and entertainment media, and of economic interests often competing within class boundaries, the Gramscian model of 'function' and 'hegemony' becomes too inflexible to comprehend a diversity of political power and representation. These interests intersect rather than determine a hybrid sphere of social analysis and political engagement, drawing together the public and private sector, and forms of expertise and social intervention, in the processes of technological and industrial change. An earlier stage of these processes, associated with concepts of national development, fostered the intellectual status of Burgmann, Copland and Eggleston, as they sought to shape social conflicts into evolutionary models of progress. A further post-war stage challenged their sense of role as that same complexity of development on so many levels eroded their holistic claims. When applied to these circumstances, an emphasis on function tends to become narrowly topical - to discuss Copland as an economist or publicist, for example - or vague in generality, treating intellectuals as assuming a function of their own as a 'new class', the interests of whom are defined by their possession of 'knowledge' alone. Neither option offers much prospect of an explanation of their response to post-war change, or of the strategies they developed in the course of that comprehension.

---

49 Gramsci, 'Intellectuals', pp.3-5.


52 See for example Head and Walter (ed.), Intellectuals in Australian Society. This collection of essays, while written within an Gramscian intent (at least on the part of the editors), scarcely connects with identifiable class interest groupings, but remains inherently topical and descriptive in it coverage of issues such as 'cultural nationalism', 'intellectuals as publicists', 'Catholic intellectuals', and the figures within the 'old' and the 'new' Left.

If the intellectual function is defined in terms of what it makes possible rather than as a vehicle for control, then that function can be seen to exist in the continuity of history rather than in the categories of class or of interests, and without sacrificing all traces of social determination in favour of the 'observing subject'. Neither hirelings nor autonomous agents, the intellectuals of the 1950s - as the examples of Burgmann, Copland and Eggleston indicate - sought to develop strategies of analysis which would continue to be relevant in post-war Australia and secure social stability. That relevance was identified at each of the two levels of intellectual alignment already identified: the cultural and the institutional. The many commentators who sought to comprehend and shape Australian society in the 1950s, worked not only in the rhetoric and values which seemed most appropriate to sustaining an audience; they also worked within the institutions, and the boundaries of disciplined social enquiry, current at that time. A study of intellectuals based on the inter-relation between these two levels might not lead straight back to class interests and the unified elements of a hegemony, but it will indentify something of the resources available in society in meeting the perceived economic and political challenge of the post-war period.

In defining these resources, the work of two writers has been found particularly useful. To begin with, Raymond Williams has insisted on the determination of social values within cultural processes played out in a wider context of political and economic development. The imperative in his analysis is to comprehend a society's culture not as a totality but as a process building on specific patterns of relations among 'works and institutions'. Drawing a distinction between an analysis which developed a sense of 'the components of a product' - the unified determination of the object of study - and his own interest in 'the conditions of a practice' - the kinds of activities which influence a sense of historical subjectivity - Williams' studies are materialist in their emphasis on the historical relations which surround the attempt to articulate meaning, rather than on the broad and epochal categories of class consciousness and economic mode which determine the general limits of that meaning. The concept of 'culture' stresses the 'affirmative moment' and 'the cognitive and the affective' level at which historical agents comprehend, participate in or challenge the elements of a shared social pattern. That pattern in turn exists not in thought alone, but in historically specific practices, groupings and localities. For Williams, the concepts of ideology and, to a lesser extent, of hegemony, are unable to comprehend these specific instances and residual and emergent activities of those at the fringes of a dominant culture, yet who are still integral to its processes and vital to its change, or its resistance to change. So while Burgmann, Copland and Eggleston might seem merely a

54 For a general critical appraisal of the concept of ideology in terms of 'interest theory' ('a struggle for advantage') or 'strain theory' ('an effort to correct sociopsychological disequilibrium'), see Clifford Geertz, 'Ideology as a Cultural System' in The Interpretation of Cultures, New York, 1975, pp.193-233.

55 For a clear application of these principles, see Raymond Williams, 'The Bloomsbury Fraction' in Williams, Problems in Materialism and Culture: Selected Essays, London, 1980, p.158.

56 For Williams' stress on the concept of 'pattern' in cultural analysis, see Raymond Williams, The Long Revolution, Harmondsworth, 1980, p.63.


59 Williams' clearest and most succinct essay on these questions is 'Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory'. For an extended exposition of this argument, see Raymond Williams, Marxism and Literature, Oxford, 1977.
passing generation in the early 1950s, their work still established the themes from which others would develop their own priorities.

In addition to this cultural emphasis, Michel Foucault has suggested ways in which forms of knowledge in themselves shape the possibility of social action through their engagement in the institutional processes of governing a diverse and changing society. For Foucault, like Williams, the intellectual function is also affirmative, but in terms of a process in which strategies for governing society do not simply control their subjects, but invest them with meaning which in itself provides a basis from which subjects resist or negotiate social determination in ways which are never the equivalent of mere powerlessness. In this way, the conditions of intellectual practice - their efficiency in meeting local objectives - are perhaps more formative than the interests or ideologies they serve. Foucault’s method is one in which structures of knowledge (‘discourses’) are defined by their internal organisation rather than by a sense of ‘origins’, external ‘events’ or objective interests. These structures are evident not only in literary forms, or in the provinces identified by academic disciplines or professions, but in the shared procedures of a composite field - the field of punishment, for example, in its moral, psychological, medical, political and even architectural forms. In these terms, the status of the modern intellectual, however ‘specific’ in their field of operation, was not as a sociological agent (as in the ‘new class’ formulation), but rather as a part of an expanding social regime and defined by the history of its institutional practices rather than by the abstractions of ideology or class interest. It is in this sense - the level at which commentators engaged with an identifiable order of knowledge and practice in their comprehension of issues - that my argument stresses both the cultural relationships identified by Williams and the significance of institutional alignments as suggested by Foucault.

Neither Williams’ nor Foucault’s work is without substantial critics. Williams’ ‘culture’ paradigm, it has been argued, lacks a social theory sufficiently structured to explain social change, and misreads ‘experience’ as ‘affirmative’ when it occurs in the categories provided by dominant agencies. Of Foucault’s work, it is similarly objected that he offers no unified explanation of the broad patterns of social change which are implicit in his studies. At one level, these criticisms are based on a political debate which it is impossible to address in the context of this thesis. The cultural emphasis is perhaps best defined

---

60 For a succinct summary of Foucault’s work, see Paul Patton, ‘Michel Foucault’ in Diane Austin-Broos (ed.), *Creating Culture: Profiles in the Study of Culture*, Sydney, 1987, pp.226-42. Jan Goldstein has also provided a suggestive account of Foucault’s contribution to the sociology of the professions. See Goldstein, ‘Foucault Among the Sociologists: The “Disciplines” and the History of the Professions’, *History and Theory*, vol.23, no.1, 1984, pp.170-92.


63 This of line criticism is most often associated with the ‘structuralist’ analysis developed by Louis Althusser. For a summary of the debate, see Hall, ‘Cultural Studies’, pp.64-9; Johnson, ‘Histories of Culture’, pp.60-70.

64 To these criticisms, Foucault responds with the part-pragmatic, part-philosophical suggestion that ‘history is the concrete body of a development, with its moments of intensity [and] its lapses ... only a metaphysician would seek its soul in the distant ideality of the origin’: Foucault, ‘Nietzsche, Genealogy, History’ in Rabinow (ed.), *Foucault Reader*, p.80.
as one response to the 'dialectic between conditions and consciousness', with a tolerance for human agency among intellectuals over structural determination. At an institutional level, the complexity of post-war society so challenged established interests, and dispersed the locations and reshaped the exercise of political power, that a search for the consistent imprint of a dominant agent seems simplistic. To extract a few representative and all-encompassing 'thinkers' from this complexity of policy and circumstance would only distort a comprehension of the range of post-war intellectual activity. Similarly, as assessment of a few select texts, divorced from their context of practice and the formation of knowledge, can at best outline the elements of an abstract ideology in what was possibly a far from unified pattern of analysis. This present approach to Australian intellectual conservatism in the 1950s, in terms of the conditions which shaped the response to this complexity, is one of emphasis: in no sense does it deny the interpretative value of other models.

***

This thesis is organised into six chapters, each of which surveys the conservative response to issues in public debate. These issues are not chosen because they were the most crucial in the development of Australian society, or the most thoroughly discussed at that time or since, but because of their significance in revealing aspects of the cultural and institutional processes underlying the intellectual conservatism of the period. This coverage, therefore, is far from exhaustive, and it avoids dealing with issues of great controversy, or at least with those aspects of issues which provoked controversy. There is no systematic analysis of anti-communism, the Cold War or the Labor Split in these chapters. The intention has been to identify the context from which these major affairs drew their significance rather than offer another account of their course.

Chapter One examines the post-war perception that 'Australia is a part of Asia', and its purpose is to establish elements of the international and regional context for this thesis in terms of the search for allegiance and the forms of analysis characterising the Australian response to a changing world. The argument of this chapter is that an analysis of Asia stressing issues of political and economic development in more-or-less evolutionary terms was evident in the inter-war years among the small grouping of Australian intellectuals who followed international affairs. This perspective was largely an extension of their domestic interests in managed reform. In the 1950s a cultural emphasis replaced these earlier terms, as revealed in assessments of an 'Asian way of life' under threat, and of the need to ensure the stability of Asia over that of encouraging regional development. These assessments reflect the extent to which intellectuals moved from evolutionary precepts in social analysis to those of management and the restraint of political and economic change.

Chapter Two discusses the Australian administration of Papua and New Guinea as 'a test of our quality as a nation'. In the inter-war period, priority was given to restraining private development in the cause of 'native improvement' under official control, and this priority was given a more comprehensive footing in the 1940s. In the 1950s such improvement was defined more rigorously in terms of the imposition of European institutions and a fundamental ambiguity regarding the political future of the territory. That ambiguity reflected an uncertainty as to the relationship between social stability and political and economic progress similar to that discussed in Chapter One. The changing emphases of anthropological expertise provides a further way to connect a sense of local priorities to more general models of the conditions of social stability.

---

65 Hall, 'Cultural Studies', p.72.
One of the most striking areas of formal professional acknowledgement accorded Australian intellectuals in the inter-war years, in the terms already discussed, was in the area of economics. In Chapter Three, it is argued that the holistic reformism of the inter-war years shifted to a scrutiny of private interests in the 1950s. Copland’s diagnosis of the ‘milk bar economy’, in which private over-consumption and lack of governmental direction, was the antithesis of inter-war foundations of economic commentary. In meeting these new issues, in areas ranging from individual saving and investment to the psychological management of the individual worker, many of the earlier advocates of some form of planning rejected comprehensive public policy in the 1950s not simply because of a change in ideological temper, but because of the institutional limitations of both the governmental and academic environments in which they worked. The first decade of the Long Economic Boom was characterised by anxiety and imbalance for contemporary commentators, and the forms of analysis which developed to address issues gave greater priority to strategies of specific management rather than those of integrated development.

In the context of the shift from themes of community based on reform to those of citizenship, the role of the physical environment, as it defined social relationships, also came under scrutiny. Chapter Four is centred around an analysis of the decentralisation movement of the post-war years. This movement is interpreted as an effort to define an organisation of life which embodied the virtues of voluntary association, privacy, the nuclear family, and individual autonomy. These themes were evident not only in institutional formations, such as the New States Movements, and local government and decentralisation agencies, but also in more cultural forms, such as the discussion of public and domestic architecture and the depiction of rural life. These themes were also evident in the range of models under discussion, from reconstruction moves to improve access to social services in more open, planned communities, to an idealistic conservatism advocating substantial social restructuring around autonomous local units, and a pragmatic conservatism insisting on ‘smaller’ government.

In the inter-war years, images of Australian society in imaginative and analytical portrayals often depicted it in a state of conflict between classes within an emerging national culture. In Chapter Five it is argued that in the 1950s, images of self and society dealt more often with a mass of individual interests exhibiting aspects of a shared psychology. Wartime mobilisation and morale campaigns mark a transition between these two images. This chapter returns to the theme of post-war citizenship as it related to the influence of new techniques in mass communications, from the expanding role of radio to the impact of film and television, as it was to be addressed by programmes of adult education, and as it was comprehended in the emerging concepts of social psychology and ‘personality’. Across this broad range of concerns it is possible to identify recurring images of society, particularly in terms of a distinctive individual subjectivity and need for adjustment which was attributed to the population at that time.

Chapter Six offers a specific study of the ways in which one group of institutions - the universities as ‘communities with a climate of their own’ - adjusted to these changing cultural and political themes. In the 1930s Australian universities had faced a direct challenge to their relevance in the midst of a perceived social crisis, and of an increasing acknowledgement of the role of the developmental social sciences in providing appropriate expertise for social reform and public policy. By the end of the 1940s, however, this enthusiasm for government by experts was clearly waning. A strong theme in discussion in the 1950s related to how the universities might develop without compromising academic integrity in political involvement. There was also a move towards a social science agenda in research concerned more with social adjustment than national development. A particular study of the growth of the Australian National University, established in 1946 as a part of reconstruction programmes as a research-based university addressing issues of national relevance, offers an effective case study of this process.
Each chapter is an essay, largely complete in itself. Yet there are several themes in common, and the chapters are arranged to provide a exposition of these themes in various spheres of social analysis. The first two chapters examine concepts of society and of culture, either in relation to the interpretation of Asian instability and national defence, or in the context of developing social and political stability in New Guinea. In the following two chapters, these concepts are given a more specific relationship to individuals within society, either as economic agents or as citizens and members of a 'community'. Chapter Five offers a more detailed study of the strategies defining 'the individual' as a unit in analysis. In Chapter Six, the university is discussed as an institution which, as a desired form of community-in-itself in the 1950s, and as a central agent in defining bodies of knowledge, offers ways of integrating each of these levels in a sense of social role.

The central emphasis in each chapter is on the field of public debate and commentary. Evidence, then, is primarily drawn from published sources such as journals, magazines, newspapers, newsletters, pamphlets, reports, monographs and fictional writing. Few private papers or confidential documents were consulted, or personal interviews conducted in research. This emphasis was partly dictated by circumstance: the 1950s are sufficiently close to remain poorly represented in accessible collections of private papers. While it is a period which has recently been treated in a wealth of autobiographical literature, these sources and personal interviews were found, understandably, to reveal levels of self-justification and re-assessment which were not easy to accommodate in the analysis of this project. For much of the of the period during which research was conducted, government papers from the decade were covered by the thirty-year rule of closed access. Reliance on such sources, in any case, would have resulted in a very different study, with distinct strengths but another area of contribution.

The social character of the sources is intrinsic to their value for this analysis, both in the definition of 'intellectuals' and in the assessment of 'conservatism'. An attempt has also been made to convey something of the character of intellectual activity of the period - of the range of debate - rather than merely refer to those ideas and commentators that now seem to 'matter'. The 1950s, for example, was perhaps the last decade in which the pamphlet was a vital if declining forum in itself, and it seems worthwhile to convey something of that vitality, not simply in content but also in form. As A.F. Davies predicted in 1972:

In twenty years time, perhaps, students with delighted cries will exhume, like tiffany lamps, some of the odder pieces of the last generation: The Earth Our Mother, The Foundations of Culture in Australia, The End of Modernity, or those 'post-war reconstruction' pamphlets by ear-nose-and-throat specialists reforming the 'money system', which sold to the last copy.

This was not an exercise Davies recommended, for these ephemera seemed only to confirm for him that, in Australian intellectual life, 'the compelling and organising centres for such writing were far distant, and what local work their was limped along discontinuously at their very margin'. In terms of qualitative assessment, Davies may have been correct: many of the ideas and strategies discussed during the period covered by this thesis were borrowed and, practically, inconsequential. To leave judgement at this, however, merely reduces Australian society again to the impact of external influences, and reduces our ability to explain why and how certain themes are adapted, and to assess patterns of opportunity and suppression, tolerance and prejudice, in a time of significant change.

These comments are based on research in several collections of pamphlets: the Fergusson and Ross collections in the National Library of Australia, and the McLaren collection in the Bailleiu Library of the University of Melbourne. These collections are largely uncatalogued - itself perhaps an indication of the passing of the form.

Chapter 1
‘A Part of Asia’

It was through Asia that Australian intellectuals perceived the international dimension of the Cold War, and throughout the 'fifties Asia continued to dominate their discussion of international affairs. Proximity explained the fact of this interest. In the years following World War Two, as European powers withdrew from their colonies, much of the region was troubled by open conflicts of ethnicity, nationalism and subversion. Yet neither the proximity of these struggles, nor their suspected manipulation by communist powers, in themselves accounted for the form this interest assumed among commentators. The significance of events in Asia penetrated the conduct of Australian intellectual affairs at many levels. It was not only considerations of defence, diplomacy and trade that were engaged in a new regional awareness. Nor was this awareness unconnected to domestic pre-occupations. Questions of the stability, economic development, cultural rejuvenation, and even the ethical basis of Australian society were all in some way included in the sense, which was widely proclaimed in the 1950s, that Australia was ‘a part of Asia’. The terms in which the challenge of Asia were understood reveal much about the cultural and institutional resources available in Australia at that time; the ways in which that challenge was met in turn indicate some central elements of the formation and character of post-war intellectual conservatism.

Nothing made clearer that old political certainties - the inherent appeal of liberal democracy, of industrial progress, and the supremacy of what came to be known as ‘the West’ - were perhaps open to question in the post-war years than the pace of change in Asia. There were three levels at which the awareness of Asia among Australian intellectuals in the 'fifties became an integral part of a conservative critique. First, there was the basic sense that Australia was becoming increasingly isolated in a region no longer ruled by Europe. For some, the defeat of Japan in 1945 did not necessarily mean that 'the war itself, of Asia against the white man', was over.1 By 1959, in what seemed to be ‘the concluding decades of the decline and fall of the Western empire’, it was noted that ‘the pessimists (or should one say the "realists")’ were already preparing for the coming ‘Asian century’ of inherent totalitarianism.2 These were not times for innovation, but for the consolidation of an identity to be defended: a way of life. At a second level, there was the extension of that insecurity into the perceived right to intervene in Asia not only for the sake of domestic defence, but - at least in rhetoric - to preserve the necessary and legitimate features of Asian societies against turmoil. The struggle in Asia, as Menzies proclaimed in 1954, was a ‘moral contest’ - a ‘battle for the spirit of man’: a Christian, democratic nation had an obligation to defend these values wherever they were under threat.3 And there was also a more comprehensive conservatism, in which these two levels were integrated in a perception that Asia symbolised a shared condition. A sense of history, of tradition, of

2 ‘Assignment for Prime Minister’, *Age*, 1 December 1959, p.2.
balance and wise tutelage, was seen to be in danger of being cast aside by the extremism of populations alienated from the continuity of their past by false ideologies. In Asia, as Wilfred Kent Hughes argued, ‘we are fighting communism, which, in its essence, is gross materialism’; a part of that battle must be ‘to eradicate some of the gross materialism which exists in Australia today’. Each of these levels of response - the conservatism of insecurity, of intervention, and of consolidation - was based on a perception of the need to preserve in Australian society, as well as in Asia, those features of stability.

Without denying the complexity of events in Asia in this period, or discounting the influence of genuine fear and elements of entrenched racial prejudice among Australian commentators, this chapter offers an assessment of the Australian intellectual pre-occupation with Asia in terms of these reciprocal ties with domestic issues. The claim that ‘Australia is part of Asia’ was often marked by a conservatism deeply antithetical to political change, and pre-disposed to the erection of cultural stereotypes of social stability. At a time when commentary on international affairs moved from an essentially small and amateur circle of intellectuals to encompass new areas of academic specialism, bureaucratic expertise, political debate, journalism and public discussion, it was inevitable that the form of that commentary would show some signs of this change of audience, and perhaps of objective. Where once intellectuals might contemplate the management-from-above of subject populations, they faced in the post-war years the apparent need to secure the consent and to ensure the stability of societies. An awareness of Asia was an integral part of this realignment, it was also an awareness which provided a series of rationales for civilian and military intervention in Asian affairs.

These reactions were not the only responses to developments in Asia. For those on the Left, the struggle in the region was for independence, neutrality, and economic progress free from western capitalism. More equivocally, in noting the passing of the ‘comforters’ of the past, Manning Clark implied in 1956 that a sense of Australia as ‘an odd by-product of the Europeanisation of Asia’ might have much to offer in the search for new values. Nor were the conservative reactions to Asia in the 1950s merely the reflection of a swing to dependence on the United States of America. It was not until the large scale commitment of American troops to Vietnam in 1964 that the Australian government secured the scale of American

---

4Wilfrid Selwyn Kent Hughes Born at East Melbourne in 1895, Kent Hughes was elected Rhodes Scholar in 1914 and studied at Oxford University. He served with distinction during World War One, and represented Australia at the 1920 Olympic Games. In 1927 Kent Hughes was elected Victorian MLA for Kew, representing the UAP, and in 1934 he became State Minister for Labor and Transport. During World War Two he fought with the AIF in Malaya, and was held as a POW from 1942 to 1945. Returning to Australia, he served as Minister for Transport and Education in the Victorian Liberal-Country coalition from 1947, and as Deputy Premier from 1948 to 1949. Kent Hughes won the Federal seat of Chisholm for the Liberal Party in 1949, and in 1951 he became Minister for the Interior and Works, holding that portfolio until 1956. From 1951 he was Chairman of the Organising Committee for the Melbourne Olympic Games, held in 1956. Kent Hughes recorded his experiences of imprisonment by the Japanese in an epic poem of 60,000 words, published in 1946 as Slaves of the Samurai.

5Kent-Hughes, CPD, (H of R), vol.210, 21 November 1950, p.3498.

6The interpretative approach of this chapter owes much to Edward Said, Orientalism, Harmondsworth, 1985. Said’s study develops the proposition that the concept of the ‘Orient’ - which for his purposes refers mainly to Arabic societies - has functioned as an ‘integral part of European material civilisation and culture’, serving as ‘a sort of surrogate … self’. Through the various forms of scholarship, imagery and colonial bureaucracy, Said argues that the Orient ‘strengthened’ a sense of identity in the West and confirmed an ‘Orientalist reality’ which is both ‘anti-human and persistent’. See Orientalism, Introduction and Chapter One.

presence in the region that they had sought throughout the 1950s. Prior to that, few intellectuals worked within a certainty that American support would be extended to Australia, or that the American perspective on the region comprehended Australian interests. To a large extent, it is possible to see the Australian image of Asia in the 1950s as one which was distinctly reflexive rather than derivative. Intellectuals drew heavily on local resources in shaping this image. In 1952 it was observed that the Cold War in Europe was, 'understandable if not acceptable': that confrontation, in terms of 'realpolitik', was the major preoccupation of European and American international attention. In Asia, however, the Cold War was 'not a struggle for strategic areas, for material resources, or for more and bigger bombs; it is a struggle for the hearts and minds of men'. In addressing this struggle, then, basic values were seen to be open to scrutiny - an exercise in which conservatives maintained the initiative throughout the decade.

***

In the years between the two World Wars, perceptions of Asia among many Australian intellectuals were accommodated within the precepts of managing evolving social forms. These precepts were the corollary of their approach to domestic development, and reflected available institutional resources and the patterns of analysis appropriate in that context. Inter-war commentators on Asia had no access to an independent diplomatic service, and were concerned throughout the period to secure greater acknowledgement of specific strategic and economic interests within the wider framework of the British Empire. With no equivalent of the Foreign or Colonial Offices, or the American East Coast 'establishment' of Harvard, Yale and the Council of Foreign Relations, Australian commentary on Asia tended to abstractions, emphasising present dynamism and the undoubted future significance of the region. The intellectuals involved in this commentary were members of informal but readily identifiable groupings of private professionals (lawyers, bankers and stockbrokers), entrepreneurs, business managers, academics and politicians - all sharing common concerns with social progress, but scarcely institutionally integrated.

What they aspired to was an intellectual synthesis which would associate their diverse expertise with comprehensive reform. In their discussions of the region, they referred to it as 'the Pacific' rather than 'Asia': the symbol was of a neutral expanse, linking the nations which formed its coasts through trade and defence. 'Asia', on the other hand, was largely undifferentiated: it defined a racial totality from which only China and Japan emerged with an identity distinct from the colonial possessions, shaded on maps in the same colours as their European powers.

For these intellectuals, the region was - as it would continue to be after World War Two - more than geographically adjacent: it was also a purchase on a wider world of ideas and opportunities for intellectual engagement. One direction for these aspirations was provided by the work of the Institute of Pacific Studies.

---

8 'The Cold War', CAB, vol.10, no.6, 1952, pp.69, 75, 80.


11 An impression of the nature of this intellectual community is well conveyed in Leonie Foster, High Hopes: The Men and Motives of the Australian Round Table, Melbourne, 1986.
Relations (IPR) during the inter-war period. For the IPR, Asia was a challenge to social science expertise in engineering political stability while ensuring economic development. A private, unofficial agency, based in the United States and initially associated with the YMCA, the Institute in Australia had branches in Sydney and Melbourne, although its closest association was with the Department of History at the University of Sydney.\footnote{See ‘History and Organisation’, \textit{Institute of Pacific Relations: Honolulu Session} (30 June - 14 July 1925), p.8. For the NSW Branch, see Persia Campbell, R.C. Mills, G.V. Portus (eds.), \textit{Studies in Australian Affairs}, Melbourne, 1928; the Victorian Branch issued K.H. Bailey (ed.), \textit{The Peopling of Australia}, Melbourne, 1933.} The IPR’s research interests covered fields including biological differentiation, racial assimilation and migration, and disciplined industrialisation.\footnote{For an outline of research programmes, see W.L. Holland, \textit{The Study of International Affairs in the Pacific Area} (A Review of Nine Years’ Work in the International Programme of the Institute of Pacific Relations), New York, 1936, pp.2-5.} Australian members of the IPR subscribed to the Institute’s general conception of the region as a social laboratory in which nations could be engineered through programmes of economic growth calculated to meet their specific needs, while taking into account their position on an essentially evolutionary cultural scale. At the first IPR conference, held in Honolulu in 1925, Stephen Roberts\footnote{Stephen Henry ROBERTS Born at Maldon, Victoria in 1901, Roberts was educated at the University of Melbourne, where he worked as a Lecturer and Research Fellow from 1920 to 1925, then leaving Australia for further study in London and Paris. In 1929 he was appointed Challis Professor of History at the University of Sydney, becoming Vice-Chancellor there in 1947. Roberts was a Trustee of the NSW Public Library and a member of the Committee of the Mitchell Library. He wrote widely on Australian history and on contemporary European issues.} expressed the hope that some expertise on Pacific affairs could be encouraged among the ‘thinking classes’ of Australia: local issues might then be seen as more than the projection of sectional interests but in terms of national and regional development. One example of the value of such expertise, Roberts suggested, might be in closer study of the assumptions underlying the concept of ‘White Australia’ which, he argued, hampered industrial growth, fostering higher wages and an uncompetitive labour market.\footnote{Stephen Roberts, ‘Australia’s View of Pacific Relations’, \textit{Honolulu Session}, pp.59-63. For a record of the conference by other Australian delegates, see H. Duncan Hall and J.B. Condliffe, \textit{What of the Pacific?: A Search-Light on its Problems}, Sydney, 1925.} Christianity and ‘science’ provided the IPR with the prerogative to scrutinise Pacific societies in the name of progress to be engineered through local elites.\footnote{In the 1930s significant differences emerged in the research programmes adopted by the various National Councils of the IPR. A sociological emphasis was evident in the American projects, including a study of the problems of ‘resident orientals’ on the east coast. Within this emphasis were growing divisions between those who saw the role of the Institute in terms of the study of cultural and economic problems and those who emphasised political conflict; in the United Kingdom the focus was instead on diplomatic procedures and the issues of colonial administration; questions of trade figured highly in Japanese studies, and projects undertaken in other Asian and Pacific countries usually included topics of industrial growth and cultural adjustment. The increasingly political orientation of the American IPR prompted the scrutiny of a Congressional Subcommittee on Internal Security in 1951-52. See W.L. Holland, \textit{The Study of International Affairs}, pp.31-40; John N. Thomas, \textit{The Institute of Pacific Relations: Asian Scholars and American Politics}, Washington, 1974, esp.p.6.} In Australia, the themes of IPR-sponsored symposia related primarily to the need to correct misapprehensions about the prosperity of the nation, either in terms of supposedly fertile empty spaces or high standards of living. With impressive lists of academic credentials, and a wealth of advice from agencies such as the Bureau of
Census and Statistics, the Bureau of Meteorology and the Commonwealth Department of Health, the work of the Australian IPR lent support to programmes of economic and social management throughout the region, while also preserving their nation from the covetous eyes of its neighbours.

Emphasising the economic potential of a ‘Pacific’ sphere, including both Japan and America, a political element was also implicit in the IPR’s analyses of efficiency and the concept of ‘science’. Defined by developmental programmes, each nation at its own level, the region would be stable: any political unrest could be adjudged legitimate or otherwise through reference to rational objectives, however tempered by cultural heritage. Even travel writing showed signs of this thinking. A prominent Sydney publicist, Florence Taylor, recorded a tour through ‘Eastern Asia’ in the early ‘thirties with constant reference to themes of scientific guidance. In Japan, she noted, proud workers produced as many aeroplanes in a few weeks as Australia acquired in a year. In the Philippines, on the other hand, she reflected that:

Like the unionist in Australia who thinks he has a grievance against his employer, for the simple reason that he grudges him his affluence, the Filipino wants to tirade against America. He has overlooked the fact that, like the capitalist in Australia, the American is the benefactor and not the tyrant. When the American withdraws they will sink back into that semi-barbaric race they were only thirty-five years ago.

In 1939 an IPR study of *Australian Interests in the Far East* also stressed that the commercial potential of the region must first overcome the lingering immaturities reflected in political disturbance and an Australian racial paranoia.

Together with these progressivist themes, a more liberal, constitutional emphasis was also present in inter-war commentary on Asia. From its earlier formations, the grouping that established the Australian Institute of International Affairs (AIIA) in 1933 was the central organisation associated with this second line of interpretation. Like the IPR, the AIIA contributed to a pattern of analysis of Asian affairs which continued into the post-war years. If the strength of the IPR was in Sydney - the centre of trade with the Pacific - then the intellectual home of the AIIA was in Melbourne - the seat of Commonwealth parliament - and in Melbourne University’s Department of History. Closely associated with the British (later Royal)

---

17See for example the papers of a symposium convened by the NSW Branch of the IPR: Campbell, Mills and Portus (eds.), *Studies in Australian Affairs*, esp. the chapters by Griffith Taylor, pp.1-26; D.T. Sawkins, pp.27-48; E.T. McPhee, pp.138-55; R.S. Ross, pp.197-217. See also W.L. Holland, *The Study of International Affairs*, p.32.

18Florence Mary TAYLOR Born in England in 1879, Florence Parsons came to Australia in childhood, was educated at Sydney Technical College, and was credited with being the first woman architect and engineer in Australia, entering the profession in 1899. With her husband, George Taylor (who died in 1934) she edited a series of building and engineering journals, and both were prominent members of the NSW Town Planning Association.


21The AIIA developed from the Bureau of Social and International Affairs, a facility established by E.C. Dyason in Melbourne in the late 1920s, and which also provided assistance and accommodation to associations, including the ‘Round Table’ and the League of Nations Union. The Bureau was funded from private sources and, later, from the Rockefeller Foundation. See Warren G. Osmond, *Frederic Eggleston: An Intellectual in Australian Politics*, Sydney, 1985, p.180; Foster, *High Hopes*, p.57; W.D. Forsyth, ‘The Pre-War Group of the AIIA: Some Personal Recollections’, *Australian Outlook*, no.1, vol.28, 1974, pp.44-9.
Institute of International Affairs in London (RIIA), the AIIA drew its models more from the elements of sociology and an interest in the problems of government and empire than from the developmental social sciences. In 1937 the Victorian Branch of the AIIA launched the *Austral-Asiatic Bulletin*, 'the first Australian journal solely devoted to international affairs', edited by F.W. Eggleston, E.C. Dyason, W. Macmahon Ball, P.D. Phillips and Ernest Scott. Rather than outlining the research programmes of the IPR's publications, the *Austral-Asiatic* was to be a vehicle for informed discussion at a time when 'publicists everywhere are studying the condition of nations, diagnosing national ambitions, dissecting motives and passing censorious judgement upon policies'. The focus of the *Austral-Asiatic* grouping was in two main areas. First, most writers for the journal rejected 'benevolent colonialism' and insisted on a sense of regionalism and a preparedness to allow emerging nations - such as Japan - to 'fulfil a duty in the modern world to show a reasonable degree of political sense'. Sentiments of 'one world' were regarded as 'fatuous': 'Australia's place is in the Pacific'. It was insisted that 'the thesis that the expansion of progressive nations is of benefit to others needs again to be stated'. There was a basic trust in a process of

---


23In his Obituary Notice for Norman Harper, Paul Bourke offers an account of such of the intellectual influences current in Melbourne in the 1920s relating to 'Australia as a country in the Pacific rim' - *Historical Studies*, vo.22, no.88, 1987, p.465.


25Edward Clarence Evelyn DYASON Born in 1886 at Bendigo, and educated at the University of Melbourne, Dyason developed strong associations with the Melbourne business community, working as both a mining engineer and stockbroker, and serving as President of the Victorian Chamber of mines from 1918 to 1925. Building on these interests, Dyason also developed close ties with the Commonwealth government, serving on several unofficial committees advising on economic problems in the 1920s and early 1930s. A commitment to 'militant pacifism' attracted him to the discussion of international affairs, and he was a founding member of the AIIA and a patron of academic research on 'social conflict and prejudice'. He died in 1949.

26William Macmahon BALL Born at Casterton, Victoria, in 1901, Ball was educated at the University of Melbourne, were he in 1923 was awarded a Research Scholarship in Psychology. Between 1929 and 1931 he studied Political Science at London University, and toured Germany, Italy, and France under a Rockefeller Fellowship, and from 1938 to 1938 toured Europe and the USA under a Carnegie award. Ball was appointed consultant to the Australian delegation at the San Francisco Conference in 1945, and on a mission to the Netherlands' East Indies later the same year. He represented the British Commonwealth on the Allied Council in Japan from 1946 to 1947, at the same time serving as Australian Minister there. In 1948 Ball lead an official Australian Good Will Mission to East Asia, and in 1949 he was appointed Professor of Political Science at the University of Melbourne.

27Philip David PHILLIPS Born at Armadale, Victoria, in 1897, Phillips was educated at the University of Melbourne and admitted to the Victorian Bar in 1922, while also lecturing in sociology and various fields of law at the University. He was a prominent member of legal organisations, and between 1934 and 1937 was a member of the Victorian Transport Regulation Board.

28Ernest SCOTT Born in 1867 at Northampton, England, Scott worked as a journalist before migrating to Australia in 1892 and joining the staff of the Melbourne *Herald* and editing the *Australian Theosophist*. He began to develop an interest in the history of European discovery and exploration of Australia, and in 1910, after becoming a Hansard writer in 1895, he published his first major work of history. Scott was invited to apply for the professorship of History at the University of Melbourne, to which he was appointed in 1914. He died in 1939.


growth towards political and constitutional legitimacy - a process which would be impaired by premature
judgementalism, yet assisted by 'commercial and cultural infiltrations'.31 Second, this tolerance itself
implied the reciprocal demand that Australians develop a more critical, informed sense of their own place
in the region. Macmahon Ball was one of the group's most fervent campaigners in the 1930s, calling for
'an intelligent and civilised spirit of patriotism, a social philosophy which is bent not on finding occasions
for suspecting foreigners, but on increasing the welfare of Australians'.32 Like Asia, Australia must work
towards a civic identity, a national consensus.

Both the IPR and the AHA framed their analyses around an essentially evolutionary concept of Asian
society, yet where the IPR emphasised rational economic development, the AHA stressed the unfolding of
constitutional nationalism. As the most powerful nation in Asia, Japan was central to the AHA's analysis:
there technology was integrated with planned national advance as 'steel pylons bring electric light to the
humblest village'.33 While their emphases were distinct, close relations developed between these two
associations, despite some distrust in the AHA of the American links of the IPR.34 They shared a common
area of systematic interest in international affairs, enjoying the mutual benefits of access to the research
material and funding which each attracted from its parent body. The shared evolutionary model itself was
an expression of the common intellectual orientations of the period: issues were understood as they related
to the coherence of the social whole. On the one hand, the image of Asia for these Australian intellectuals
was one of economic potential; on the other, it was one in which political reform would be conceded by
states once an identifiable 'society' was seen to be constituted. Both images reflected a disposition among
intellectuals to guide societies through programmes rather than to arouse popular movements. International
tolerance and the ideal of collective security were their central themes, informing J.G. Crawford's35
argument in 1938 in favour of 'economic appeasement' of Japan, or W.C. Wentworth's36 attitude of

31See for example the Editorial comment on a letter from Reginald Carruthers, vol.1, no.2, 1937, p.22;
review of Griffith Taylor, *Environment and Nation*, vol.1, no.6, 1938, p.3.

32W. Macmahon Ball, 'The Australian Press and World Affairs' and 'Broadcasting and World Affairs'
in Ball (ed.), *Press, Radio and World Affairs*, Melbourne, 1938, esp. pp.13, 16, 20-23, 31, 129; Ball,


34See Foster, *High Hopes*, p.57.

35John Grenfell Crawford Born in 1910 at Hurstville, Sydney, Crawford was educated at the
University of Sydney and was then awarded a fellowship at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute in 1933. He
returned to Sydney as a Lecturer in Agricultural Economics in 1934, and studied in America from 1938 to
1940. From 1935 to 1946 Crawford was Economic Adviser to the Rural Bank of NSW, and in 1942 was
appointed an Adviser to the Department of War Organisation and Industry, moving from there in 1943 to
become Director of Research in the Department of Post-War Reconstruction. At the end of war, Crawford
was made the director of the Commonwealth Bureau of Agricultural Economics, and in 1950 became the
Secretary of the Department of Commerce and Agriculture.

36William Charles Wentworth Born at Sydney in 1907 and educated at Oxford University,
Wentworth joined the NSW Public Service, and then became Publicity Officer and Financial Adviser to
B.S.B. Stevens during the latter's Premiership of NSW. He served with the AIF from 1940 to 1943, and in
1949 won the Federal seat of Mackellar for the Liberal Party.
friendliness’ towards Russia. This tendency to perceive regional issues in terms of emerging nationalism also meant that regimes were accepted on the basis of their sheer dynamism rather than on the legitimacy of their practices or the depth of their popular support. Bertram Stevens, for example, who had recently resigned as the United Australia Party Premier of New South Wales, argued in 1940 that ‘mutual trading interests’ would resolve regional differences in which political righteousness had little place: ‘Japan’s political democracy has never been very deep or congenial; it was copied from the West; just as aggressive imperialism was copied from the West’. No further scrutiny seemed necessary. Within a pattern of analysis shaped by aspirations to a reformist synthesis, yet with little integration with defence or diplomatic systems, by the 1940s Australian intellectuals were not disposed to a more critical assessment of emerging national forms in Asia.

Few of these inter-war commentators possessed formal training, linguistic or otherwise, in areas which related specifically to Asia. The role for intellectuals implied by their commentary was one of educational inculcation and management, and ‘the Pacific’ was one of many areas of reform in which they ventured opinion. Nonetheless, with the outbreak of war, many were drawn into administrative and intelligence operations which appeared to acknowledge their expertise. In this mobilisation, the constitutional priorities of the AHA emerged as more appropriate to wartime contingencies than the precepts of the IPR. The legitimacy of government, understandably, was a more diplomatically-useful concept than developmentalism in the attempt to restore peace to populations emerging from colonialism. It was this aspect of inter-war commentary which was most directly handed on to post-war discussion, mediated by attempts to devise plans for the reconstruction of the region through international agencies. Yet the war also challenged the prevailing concept of ‘the Pacific’ as a region which framed Australian interests within evolutionary models. ‘Asia’, that density of countries, personalities and movements which would demand attention in the 1950s, was only beginning to emerge in the immediate post-war years around names such


38Bertram Sydney Barnsdale STEVENS Born in 1889 at Sydney, Stevens trained as an accountant and in 1927 was elected MLA for Croydon, representing the Nationalist Party. He became Under-Secretary of Treasury and Director of Finance, and in 1929 Treasurer and Minister for Railways. By 1932 Steven was the Leader of the UAP Opposition, and in 1932 became Premier and Treasurer of NSW, holding that position for a then record term until 1939.


40Macmahon Ball was one of the first to join a war-related organisation, being appointed by Menzies as the Controller of Short-Wave Broadcasting in 1940; in 1941 Eggleston was appointed the first Australian Minister to China, and those members of the AIIA who already held positions in the Department of External Affairs began to experience the extensive changes their new Minister, H.V. Evatt, saw as appropriate to Australia’s international role after the war. See Forsyth, The Pre-War Group of the AIIA, pp.44-8; Osmond, Frederic Eggleston, ch.8.

41For one account of these themes, see Osmond, Frederic Eggleston, pp.236-43.
as Gandhi, Sun Yat Sen and Chiang Kai Shek. These developments were not easily accommodated in the prevailing themes of analysis.

***

The intellectual orientations of inter-war commentators on Asia had predisposed them to accept the necessity of authority within models of economic and constitutional development. In the post-war years, the complexity of regional instability forced a fundamental re-appraisal of this developmental emphasis, but - if anything - consolidated a conviction that the maintenance of authority in the region was vital to stability. Evolutionary models were replaced by emphases on political stability defined in terms of cultural values. Once the criteria of 'progress' became more evasive to apply in more volatile circumstances, the problem became one of how to determine the legitimacy of that authority. ‘Co-prosperity’, after all, had been the promise of the Japanese; economic assistance was the lure offered by Soviet and then Chinese communism. Whereas Australian commentary of the 'twenties and 'thirties had emphasised the potential of the Pacific region, the answer to the post-war challenge was sought in the preservation of the inherent qualities of Asia. To isolate these qualities would be a selective process, but the categories of 'nationalism' and of 'cultural' evolution had already been established, and needed only to be applied to circumstances which placed greater stress on an ability to contain change than to direct it. Some reassurance might be offered in the case of China - by Douglas Copland in 1948 before the revolution and by C.P. Fitzgerald in 1951 after Mao’s victory - that political turmoil there was fully justified and contained with a tradition of class alliances between scholars and peasants, or basic continuity in structures of government. Yet other nations in the region, after division by treaty or the incorporation of ethnic diversity, were less characterised by such a depth of internal history. In these instances, concepts of culture and nation were more difficult to apply, and the reformist precepts of Australian commentary in the inter-war years, linking authority to development, gradually became more inherently conservative, emphasising stability.

Such a conceptual reassessment from economic change to cultural stability was not peculiar to Australian commentators. John Foster Dulles, the United States Secretary of State from 1952 to 1959, who advocated carrying anti-communism to the political and geographic brink of confrontation, was one of many who moved from a philosophical outlook based on a form of economic determinism in the 1930s to one dominated by a sense of spiritual determinism in the late 1940s: the contest in international affairs was one Dulles saw between the integrity of religious faith and atheistic materialism. In America this rhetoric could draw on an expanding range of social science expertise in universities which, in association with the

---

42For a personal account of this changing awareness of the specificity of Asia, see Donald Horne, *Confessions of a New Boy*, Ringwood, 1985, pp.95-6: ‘I had never heard of South-East Asia. It was a new idea that this was a region. Now I could learn off facts on an area about which I had known almost nothing - beginning with names: 'Thailand' instead of 'Siam', 'Malaya' instead of 'Malay States', 'Indo-China' instead of 'French Indo-China', ‘Indonesia’ instead of ‘Dutch East-Indies’.

43Charles Patrick FITZGERALD Born at London in 1902, Fitzgerald lived in China from 1923, for a period from 1935 to 1939 as a Leverhulme Fellow, and then as an official British representative from 1946. In 1951 he was appointed Reader in Far Eastern History at the ANU, becoming Professor in that area in 1953.


military-industrial complex', would inform new strategies of 'adjustment' and 'guidance' in Asia. In
Australia, however, while the institutional base of commentary on Asian affairs similarly shifted from
publicists to academics in the post-war years, it lacked integration with either the technical capacity or the
intellectual sophistication to calculate strategies of intervention. Australian commentary on Asia in the
'fifties and well into the 'sixties rarely escaped from the institutional and cultural limitations informing
strategies to conserve a sense of the 'integrity' of Asia. While this characteristic gave Australian
commentators some room for a more flexible appraisal of regional responsibilities in Asian affairs than was
offered by the rigid boundaries of the Cold War in the early 1950s, the conservative nature of this emphasis
meant that commentary lacked the economic or political emphases of inter-war interpretations.

Following the Japanese surrender in 1945, and before the European colonial powers could resume
authority in South-East Asia, the region appeared to be inspired by a nationalism different in temper from
that which had been sanctioned in inter-war commentary. Journalists such as Pearl Buck, Robert Payne and
Edgar Snow proclaimed 'the greatest single event in human history - the revolt of Asia' - a revolt in which
liberalism and rational economic development were seen to be rejected in movements of the people, intent
on reclaiming culture and tradition. Indonesia in 1945 provided one example of a general pattern. Leaders
who were often educated at European universities, respected if imprisoned by colonial authorities, and then
promoted by the Japanese, issued manifestoes which asserted the new unity of Asia in defiance of Europe.
In the excitement generated by these stands, the pre-conceptions of social management among inter-war
commentators gave place to a more diverse support of nationalism evident among groupings including the
trade unions and elements of the Labor Party. If the Left continued to draw inspiration from the demise of
colonialism in Asia throughout the fifties, the very terms in which Asia was seen to announce its identity
provided the basis on which conservative commentators, concerned to stem the tide of revolution, were also
to make their case. Building on inter-war models of intellectual synthesis, a cultural stereotype of 'Asia'
became the basis on which to make an assessment of the legitimacy of change.

There was no easy intellectual transition to the circumstances confronting Australia in the region in the
wake of the war. A series of pamphlets published by the AIIA towards the end of 1945 was intended to
engage a new enthusiasm for the issues of foreign policy, yet they also revealed how slowly older
perceptions were changing. Most authors covered questions such as the principles of trusteeship for the
people of Pacific islands, or dealt with the problem of grafting inherently European political and economic
institutions onto the troubled societies of China and Japan. The last of the series, prepared collectively by
the Melbourne Research Group of the Institute, offered a study of alternative policies for the defence of
Australia after the cessation of hostilities. The Imperial alliance, it was admitted, was at best a partial
solution; nor had any international body yet taken shape to police global affairs. In recognition of this
situation, the basis of future policy was recommended to be a 'regional scheme for the Western South
Pacific' involving the erection of a defensive shield spanning through 'the Netherlands' East Indies,

46The classic essay in this area is Noam Chomsky, 'Objectivity and Liberal Scholarship' in American


48The fullest account of these issues is Margaret George, Australia and the Indonesian Revolution,
Melbourne, 1980.

49See A.H. MacDonald, Fact and Fiction in Japanese Imperialism (no.2); R. Ormsby Martin, Tradition
and Transition in Chinese Politics (no.3); J.W. Burton, Brown and White in the South Pacific (no.3); Julius
Stone, Trusteeship (no.4).
Portugese Timor, Australia, New Caledonia, New Zealand and the British Pacific Islands'. Clearly, this scheme was regional only in the sense that it would preserve Australian territorial integrity. Nor was an end to colonialism foreshadowed: the negotiations and commitments were to be with European powers presumed to be still in control of the region. Asia itself remained beyond the periphery. Australia's isolation from European centres was seen as no cause for concern given the potential for self-sufficiency demonstrated during wartime and especially as promised by 'new developments in the field of electronics'\(^{50}\).

To a large extent, Australian foreign policy under the direction of H.V. Evatt,\(^{51}\) Minister for External Affairs from 1941 to 1949, provided no clearer guidelines in addressing these new regional demands. Bias and inconsistent manipulations in staffing and policy marked his years in that portfolio with fitful idealism rather than consistent development. A keen advocate of Australia’s future status as the representative of the ‘smaller powers’ in international negotiations, Evatt seemed unable to resolve the gap between such a role in principle and Australia’s own lack of the material resources, and inflexibility in other areas of policy such as immigration and defence agreements.\(^{52}\) Specific appraisals of policy did not seem to interest him, but broad programmes of full employment, international equality, collective security and justice dominated his thinking. Within this framework, regional issues were dealt with in terms of the obligations defined by trusteeship provisions for the populations of the Pacific islands: there a White Australia was ‘anxious to help her neighbours in their [presumably inevitable] progress towards self-government and democracy’.\(^{53}\)

In the Department of External Affairs itself, the recommended course for the ‘South East Asia Area’ was a ‘liberal settlement’ defined in terms of ‘meeting the legitimate demands of the native peoples whilst at the same time preserving some order and stability by permitting the return of the previous administration, experienced and skilled in handling these peoples’\(^{54}\).

The influences on commentators on Asian affairs in the late 1940s were not only the pace of change in the region, but also a re-appraisal of their own intellectual role in a domestic context. If the inter-war image of ‘the Pacific’ was based on assumptions of reciprocal developmentalism, so in the late 1940s the attempt to comprehend the new significance of Asia was also integrated with responses to the changing form of

---

\(^{50}\)Melbourne Research Group, *Post-War Defence of Australia* (no.6), esp. pp.18, 22, 28-9, 37.

\(^{51}\)Herbert Vere EVATT Born at East Maitland in 1894 and educated at the University of Sydney, Evatt was admitted to the NSW Bar in 1924. From 1925 to 1930 he was Labor MLA for Balmain. He was then appointed a Justice of the High Court of Australia, a position he held until 1940 when he resigned to contest the Federal seat of Barton. Elected to parliament, Evatt held the portfolios of Attorney-General and External Affairs from 1941 to 1949, and in 1946 he became Deputy Prime Minister. He led the Australian missions to Washington (1942) and London (1943), and to San Francisco in 1945, and over the following years was active on many commissions of international reconstruction, culminating in his presidency of the UN General Assembly for the 1948-1949 session. Following Chifley’s death in 1951, Evatt became the Leader of the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party and Leader of the Opposition. In 1960 he resigned these positions and was appointed Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of NSW.


Australian society. In 1947, in the first edition of the *Australian Outlook*, a larger journal replacing the *Austral-Asiatic Bulletin*, the AIA President, R.J.F. Boyer, argued that in the era of 'total war', 'the day has long since passed when the issues covered by the Institute were matters of intellectual and group concern only'. More than ever, the Institute's role was 'to fit the common man for his new and terrifying responsibilities' at a time when 'passion and prejudice' were unredeemed by an earlier faith in an inherent tendency to progress. The experience of wartime mobilisation itself had necessitated, first, that a much wider section of the population grasp the issues of international conflict and, second, that those issues become matters of expertise rather than informed comment alone. In both areas, the Institute moved quickly to achieve its aims. From serving a small group of intellectuals, the AIIA sought to consolidate a level of community support for discussion, and achieved an increase in membership figures which was distinctive to the 'fifties. At branch meetings in major cities, regular addresses - with a 'primary emphasis' on Asia - were given by a widening circle of academics, members of the judiciary and the professions, parliamentarians, the representatives of foreign legations and senior Australian diplomats. In addition, the AIIA sought to expand its own capacity for full-time research projects through funding from the Rockefeller and the Carnegie Foundations. Close ties, it was suggested, should be developed with universities, and appropriate areas of inquiry might be suggested for advanced research students. If a 'civilised spirit of patriotism', assisted by energetic journalism, had been for members of the AIIA in the 1930s the essence of Australia's reciprocal participation in regional affairs, then the emphases of the post-war years were more attuned to citizenship and to scholarly analysis. This new sense of audience and method shaped their strategies in analysis around more conservative themes of achieving a social consensus both in Asia and at home.

Considerations of the defensibility of Australia assumed a heightened importance in the years immediately following the war, and gave a new emphasis to issues of national development. The scale of the post-war immigration programme, itself largely prompted by the need for adequate defence resources, was a major theme in discussion of regionalism. Earlier concerns with the 'scientific' appraisal of racial difference were replaced by a greater emphasis on guaranteeing cultural homogeneity. G.L. Wood argued

---

55Richard James Fildes BOYER Born in 1891 at Taree, NSW, and educated at the University of Sydney, Boyer then served with the AIF at Gallipoli and in France before returning to Australia to farm near Charleville, Queensland. He served as President of the Graziers' Federal Council from 1941 to 1942, and was a member of several pastoral and public and international affairs associations, representing these bodies at major conferences in Australia and overseas. Between 1941 and 1945 he was the Honorary Director of the American Division of the Department of Information, and in 1945 was appointed Chairman of the Australian Broadcasting Commission, of which he had been a Commissioner since 1940.


58Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Commonwealth Council, 16-17 August 1947, pp.3-4.

59Gordon Leslie WOOD Born at Launceston in 1890, Wood was educated at the University of Tasmania and then entered the State Education Department. In 1919 he was appointed Master of St Peter's College, Adelaide, and then Associate Professor of Commerce at the university of Melbourne. Wood became Professor there in 1925, developing a particular interest in economic geography. He was active on several official economic committees in the 1920s and 1930s, and was a member of the Commonwealth Grants Commission after 1936.
in 1946 that ‘the need for defence ... coincides very closely with the needs for the cultural advancement of the Australian people’ which must centre on ‘the necessary changes in the social and economic system in order that emphasis be laid upon breeding and educating a greater proportion of superior types’.  

If such open eugenicism seemed extreme for domestic application, it was nonetheless advocated as a strategy for export to Asia itself. W.D. Borrie argued in many papers for the AIIA in the early 1950s that if Australia’s contribution to its region would be in manufacturing, then that prospect in turn was contingent on racial exclusion in immigration to foster a homogeneous industrial nation at home, and controlled fertility in Asia itself to build more prosperous economies. With its exclusive classification of European ‘types’ and its central principle of assimilation, the immigration programme was presented in a way that implied a reciprocal relationship to the contemporary needs of Asia. In 1954 Gordon Greenwood suggested that, just as ‘the new forces of an aroused Asia called for political adaptation of a high order, so the assimilation of many migrants of diverse nationality ... will demand a degree of effort [from ‘older Australians’] which had not been notably present in past dealings with immigrant peoples’. 

With this stress on ‘assimilation’, managed by social scientists like Borrie himself, post-war immigration was not only a programme of national development, but also the engineering of a social consensus from disparate elements. In this way, assimilation was supposed to be in some sense the equivalent of the processes occurring in Asia: it was based on the incorporation of racially compatible elements under a stable, cultural authority. Any analysis of issues of political conflict was effectively elided. The emphasis on ‘political adaptation’ shifted the developmental priorities which Australia shared with Asia from those of economic growth alone to those of social adjustment.

This emphasis on the necessity for cultural consolidation was confirmed by developments in Asia which indicated that no evolutionary paradigm of economic progress could accommodate the depth of contemporary volatility. Too many contending factors appeared to distract the fragments of former colonies from the rational path of modernisation. In Malaya, for example, the complexity of ethnicity meant that a Chinese majority at the ballot box was no guarantee of democratic stability; ‘the kris and the pistol, symbols and implements of the contagious revolutionary anarchy accompanying “political freedom”’, promised endemic violence; even technological advance and the ‘test tube’ offered social benefits on the

---


61Wilfred David BORRIE Born in 1913 at Waimate, NZ, and educated at the University of Otago and then at Cambridge, Borrie was appointed to a senior lectureship in Social History, attached to the Board of Social Studies, at the University of Sydney in 1944. In 1948 he was awarded a Research Fellowship at the ANU, and 1952 was appointed Reader in Demography there. He published widely in the areas of population prediction, immigration and ethnicity.


63Gordon GREENWOOD Born in 1913 at Terowie, South Australia, Greenwood was educated at Sydney and London universities, and was appointed to a lectureship in History at the New England University College in 1939, moving to a similar position at the University of Sydney in 1941. By 1949 he had become Acting-Professor, and then moved to a professorship of History and Political Science at the University of Queensland, becoming Dean of the Faculty of Arts there in 1951. He published widely on Australian-American relations, Australian foreign policy and constitutional reform, and Pacific affairs.

64Greenwood, ‘Introduction: Some Problems of Australian Foreign Policy’ in Greenwood (ed.), Australia, p.3.
one hand while threatening the economic future of rubber as an export commodity on the other.\textsuperscript{65} One question that recurred in discussion all through the 1950s was whether Western technology itself would not fragment Asian civilisation. If the adoption of the machine in the Pacific had been a paradox of modernisation in inter-war commentary, in the post-war years it was seen by some to be a dangerous contradiction within Asian societies that had only tradition to keep them from chaos or communism. Technology, as James McAuley argued in 1954, with reference to Asia, was the central agency in that 'loss of any metaphysical orientation [which] has deprived modernized individuals and societies of order' and in turn 'rendered impossible any international order based on law and justice'.\textsuperscript{66} This spiritual vacuum, as Geoffrey Fairbairn\textsuperscript{67} argued, was only exacerbated by 'nationalisms ... which cut across the true interests of ancient religious communities'. A crisis emerged from these conditions which materialistic communism was ready to fill.\textsuperscript{68} In the case of Japan, the atrocities of war suggested that modernisation alone could not erase, as Denis Warner\textsuperscript{69} put it, the 'fundamental Orientalism' of a 'cruel, barbarous race'.\textsuperscript{70} As such language itself made clear, Asia was being associated less with a future potential but with static images. These associations in turn implied that when Western guidance was seen to be necessary, it must take the form of political invention as well as economic assistance. Japan, especially, while traditionally seen as distinct from Asia in its qualities and capacities\textsuperscript{71}, nonetheless exemplified the problems Australian commentators faced in attempting to apply the residual liberal precepts of the 1920s and 1930s to Asian societies which now seemed characterised by latent dispositions to internal instability or external aggression - particularly when few other Western powers seemed to appreciate an Australian sense of vulnerability in the region.

Macmahon Ball's work on Japan provides one illustration of these difficulties of conceding nationalism to societies that were not seen to be predisposed to Western political forms. A period in Batavia in 1945, representing the Australian government, had convinced Ball that neither the return of European powers nor the premature grant of independent government to the nations of South-East Asia or the South-West Pacific would serve Australian interests or regional stability: 'collective responsibility and collective action is so urgent here'.\textsuperscript{72} The problem of Western 'guidance' seemed even more extreme in Japan. In 1948 Ball


\textsuperscript{66} James McAuley, 'Asia's Development and Human Values', \textit{Twentieth Century}, vol.9, no.4, 1954, pp.7-11. Several articles in this Melbourne Jesuit journal followed this theme throughout the 'fifties.

\textsuperscript{67} Geoffrey Forrester FAIRBAIRN Born at Melbourne and educated at Cambridge University, Fairbairn served during World War Two with the Royal Australian Navy in the South West Pacific. After a series of extended visits to Vietnam and South East Asia in the 'fifties, Fairbairn was appointed to a lectureship in History at the ANU in 1961.

\textsuperscript{68} Geoffrey Fairbairn, 'Toynbee and Asia', vol.10, no.3, 1956, pp.239-241 and vol.11, no.1, 1956, pp.18-23.

\textsuperscript{69} Denis Ashton WARNER Born at Hobart in 1917, Warner worked as a journalist and then served with the AIF in the Middle East and the Pacific during World War Two. From 1947 to 1949 he was the Editorial Manager of Reuter-AAP in Japan, and then became a roving correspondent for the Melbourne \textit{Herald} and the London \textit{Daily Telegraph}. From 1956 to 1957 he studied under a fellowship at Harvard University.


\textsuperscript{72} Ball to J.W. Burton, 22 November 1945 in Hudson and Way (eds.), \textit{Documents on Australian Foreign Policy 1937-49}, vol.8, pp.629-30.
produced a detailed study of the post-war situation there, reflecting on his period as the Commonwealth representative on the Allied Council from 1946 to 1947. Ball had been irritated by the triumphant simplicities of General Macarthur’s sense that the defeat of Japan had created a vacuum into which Western democracy could pour unobstructed. He argued instead that no nation, especially one capable of waging war with such passion, could so easily and fundamentally alter its values and assumptions. The American policy of developing Japan as a bulwark against communist expansion seemed to him to be only perpetuating those social and political elites which had brought Japan to war in 1941. Not only did this mean that there would be no change in the inherent authoritarianism of Japanese society, but, as Ball insisted, Japan continued to pose a threat to the region and to Australia. He began his study expressing disgust that Australian attitudes to the post-war Japanese settlement seemed to lead the ‘revenge school’, reaffirming his commitment to nationalism as a fundamental principle in social cohesion and international relations. On these premises, then, Ball was not arguing that the Japanese were inherently aggressive, but rather that their political structures made them so. On psychological as much as tactical grounds, he recommended complete Japanese demilitarisation under close Western - or, more specifically, American - scrutiny for at least a generation. A distinction had to be drawn, he concluded, between traditional Japanese institutions and the ‘Japanese masses’ who, lacking ‘political consciousness’, were ‘still sunk in the past’. When the true nationalism of the people took shape, shed of these institutions and following the channels authorised by enlightened Western guidance, then might Japan re-enter international society as its own nation. No doubt the Japanese settlement was particularly sensitive for Australians, and there were many who welcomed Ball’s book as justifying a controlling American presence in the region. Beyond the inherent conservatism of such insecurity, however, the book also demonstrated a more general ‘liberal impasse’ which would figure in much Asian scholarship over the following decades. No longer the product of a process of guided political and economic development, ‘nationalism’ was a concept in post-war Australian commentary on Asia that had to be guaranteed in terms which accorded with either ‘traditional’ culture or ‘Western democracy’ before legitimacy was extended.

As Ball implied, Australian intellectuals had no institutional resources sufficient to support any claim to assisting the ‘democratisation’ of post-war Asia: that form of intervention was to be left to the United States. Yet what they did develop were a series of concepts describing the relationship between culture, social stability and economic change which - through formulas not unlike Ball’s filleting of Japanese society - justified restraint rather than reform. One of the central influences on this intellectual orientation in Australian commentary was Arnold Toynbee, Director of Studies at the RIIA, and thus particularly well-known to members of the AIIA and readers of Australian Outlook. Toynbee’s reputation was

73He was also serving in Japan as Australian Consular Head. Ball resigned from these positions after finding it impossible to cope with Evatt’s self-agrandisment and his inconsistency in relations with Macarthur. See Macmahon Ball Papers, AA 1068/73/Y/377 and Rix (ed.) Intermittent Diplomat, Melbourne, 1988.

74W. Macmahon Ball, Japan: Enemy or Ally?, Melbourne, 1948, pp.17-18.

75Ball, Japan, pp.13, 29, 12, 20-25, 208. As Alan Watt records, by 1962 Ball seemed more prepare to concede that the fundamental influence on Japanese policy was more regional instability and industrial opportunity than an inherent ‘authoritarianism’: Alan Watt, The Evolution of Australian Foreign Policy 1938-1965, Cambridge, 1968, p.220.

76See for example E.W. Drury and A.C. Bird, CPD (H of R), vol.208, 21 March 1950, pp.2-3.

77For a similar appraisal of Ball’s work, see Rex Mortimer, ‘From Ball to Arndt: The Liberal Impasse in Australian Scholarship on South-East Asia’ in Mortimer (ed.), Showcase State: The Illusion of Indonesia’s Accelerated Modernisation, Sydney, 1973, pp.108-10.
primarily associated with his twelve-volume work, *A Study of History*, which had commenced publication in 1934, the final volumes appearing in 1954. In a wide-ranging synthetic interpretation, Toynbee portrayed world history as the rise and fall of 21 civilisations, each a distinctive unit with its own internal patterns and values. 'The cultural element in a civilisation', Toynbee wrote in the fifth volume of the study, 'is its soul, life-blood and marrow, ... while the political and, *a fortiori*, the economic element are, by comparison, superficial, non-essential tribal manifestations of a civilisation's nature'.78 This emphasis was characterised by Oskar Spate79 in 1953 as 'liberal humanism in its later phase of doubt':80 no longer trusting in the creativity of individual reason as applied in technological and political initiative, Toynbee appealed to the collective unity offered by abstract cultural inheritances. To the irritation of many critics who argued that some of Toynbee's 'laws' of history were merely 'platitudes dressed up',81 he was something of an intellectual celebrity in Australia. In 1953 an *Australian Outlook* reviewer proclaimed him 'the greatest historian of our age'.82 During his lecture tour of the nation in 1956, the NSW Branch of the Institute recorded that 'being a world figure, [he] ... attracted Australia-wide interest which has resulted in a marked increase in ... membership'.83 Essentially, the appeal of Toynbee's interpretation was in rendering as static, cultural units those images of Asia which, in the 1930s, had been defined in evolutionary terms. Toynbee gave greater formality to the interpretation of instability in Asia, linking it to 'the process of conversion from its [own] hereditary civilisations to a secularised Western civilisation' precisely at the time that the West itself faced the 'spiritual crisis' of disjunction between technological capacity and ethical principle.84 For some commentators, Toynbee's line of thinking had the effect of providing an alternative to the contemporary political confrontations of the Cold War, relating conflict to a search for values rather external manipulation.85 Yet Toynbee's interpretations also encouraged a perception of political struggle in Asia as evidence of either corruption or of racial stereotypes. In this interpretation, themes of religious integrity and the challenge to civilisation were seen to be more appropriate in diagnoses of conflict than


79Oskar Hermann Christian SPATE Born at London in 1911, and educated at Cambridge, Spate lectured in Geography at the University of Rangoon from 1937 to 1941, and then served with the British South East Asia Command working on topographical surveys. In 1946 he was appointed Lecturer and then Reader in Geography at the London School of Economics, and then in 1951 Spate came to the ANU as Professor of Geography. During the 'fifties Spate specialised on the economic and regional geogrpahy of Asia.


85Such an approach was particularly evident in book reviews, a form of expression which allowed little scope for developed analyses. See for example an *Age* review of Spate's own geo-political study of India and Pakistan, in which Spate had ventured criticism of the caste system and the problem of over-population. Such "Western" liberal humanist and secular' interpretations, it was ambiguously suggested, might well be discarded when 'we shall be asked to look at India ... through quite different eyes'; M.C., rev. of Spate, *India and Pakistan*, *Age Literary Supplement*, 29 February 1955, p.1.
those of political or economic aspiration.86

There were many writers in Australia who showed signs of Toynbee’s influence, integrating a synoptic interpretation into specific appraisals of regional issues and into their own models of intellectual engagement with social change. In the late 1940s, Kurt Singer’s The Idea of Conflict was written under the patronage of a senior grouping of intellectuals at the University of Melbourne, and attempted to apply psychological models to an understanding of the cultural ‘legacies’ dominating global tension.87 For Singer, the human mind was more than a mass of ‘instincts and interests’ open to passing influences, but was a the product ‘of deep and intricate structures built up through the ages’. The conflicts of race or nation, class, sex or generation, were mediated through these structures - constituted in the West by the Nordic, Greek, Christian, Iranian and Archaic ‘civilisations’ - and crossed in the ‘inner fortress of the individual’ by Jungian and Freudian psychological characteristics.88 F.S.C. Northrop, Professor of History at Yale, and author of The Meeting of East and West, was discussed among members of the AIHA drawn to a more sociological approach to ideological divisions between cultural and religious groupings.89 Through these influences, a distinctive conceptual emphasis was available to Outlook commentators on Asia. E.C. Dyason sought the end of global insecurity in mixing ‘the aesthetic component of the Orient’ with ‘the theoretical component which is genius of the Occident’.90 In 1949, John Ward,91 the newly-appointed Challis Professor of History at Sydney, expressed admiration for Northrop’s ‘synoptic’ method, but questioned whether more formal guidance might be required to draw differing cultural traditions into the


87Singer was a refugee from anti-semitic persecution in Japan where he had taught from 1931. See Richard Storry’s Introduction to Singer’s Mirror, Sword and Jewel: A Study of Japanese Characteristics, London, 1973, pp.9-12; and Osmond, Frederic Eggleston, pp.257-8. After a brief period of internment, he was employed as the Research Fellow of the Foundation for the Study of the Psychology of Conflict, which Dyason had established in 1942 through a grant to the University of Melbourne, and which was administered by a committee of prominent academics, including K.H. Bailey, David Rivett, L.F. Giblin, and later A. Boyce Gibson and O.E. Oeser. See L.F. Giblin, ‘The Dyason Foundation’, Australian Outlook, vol.4, no.4, 1950, pp.77-9.

88Kurt Singer, The Idea of Conflict, Melbourne, 1949, pp.7-8. Some favourable comments were made of Singer’s erudite if idiosyncratic study, which nonetheless depended on established stereotypes of the tyrannous ‘Orient’ and the individualistic ‘Occident’ - Singer, The Idea of Conflict, p.163. Osmond, for example, provides a detailed account of Eggeston’s criticisms of Singer. See Osmond, Frederic Eggleston, pp.256-8. While Eggleston expressed hesitations about Singer’s manuscript, he reviewed the book favourably in Australian Outlook, vol.4, no.2, 1950, pp.130-2.

89Dyason had unsuccessfully approached Northrop to succeed Singer in Melbourne, yet Northrop did tour Australia in the late ’forties under Dyason’s sponsorship, meeting prominent academics, commentators and public servants, including Latham, Eggleston, Evatt, Bailey, E.H. Burgmann and H.F.E. Whitlam. In Northrop’s analysis, not only did communism confront capitalism, but Arabs, Jews, Catholics, Protestants, Mohammedans Hindus, Shinto and Buddhists all fundamentally rejected the essential values of the the other. For accounts of Northrop’s tour, see Giblin, ‘The Dyason Foundation’, p.77-9; Osmond, Frederic Eggleston, pp.260-1.


91John Manning WARD Born at Sydney in 1919, Ward was educated at the University of Sydney and worked as a journalist from 1939 to 1943, and from 1947 to 1952 he edited Australian Outlook. He was the Secretary of the University of Sydney Extension Board between 1946 and 1949, and was admitted to the NSW Bar in 1948. Ward was appointed Challis Professor of History at Sydney in 1949, and published in the field of colonialism and trusteeship in the Pacific.
kind of stability Northrop proposed. Endemic conflict was perhaps more likely to prevail, particularly if the roots of communist expansionism - for example - lay in the character of the Russian people. In 1951 McAuley considered it unwise for the West to advocate the economic development of Asia when its own culture had collapsed into immorality after the onset of industrialisation: the urgent task, he suggested, was the consolidation of traditional values, modes of production and political systems. Even Frederic Eggleston, who viewed with suspicion social theories which replaced the inherent creativity of humanity with static concepts, followed the logic of a 'sociological approach' to uncover an alliance between the calculated quasi-religious appeal of communism and the ingrained characteristics of the Chinese people. Little room was allowed here for interpretations which departed from cultural integrity or the inherent authoritarianism of Asia, or from a sense of the inevitable if painful progress of Asian populations towards the adoption of European political forms.

These examples seem to indicate the intellectual stalemate confronting Australian commentators who had formed an analysis of Asian affairs in terms of the management of evolving political and economic units. In the post-war years, less confident of these evolutionary models, they could only shift their priorities to cultural authority. Alternative propositions published in *Outlook* - such as Henry Mayer's argument that instability in Malaya had roots in the 'conflict between economic recovery and reform', or Gerald Packer's insistence that the only thing holding Asia together, amid insurrections and inflation, was a common hatred of the West - gave most Australian intellectuals little sense of relevance or security in the region, and little prospect of sustaining their own domestic role. The extension of Packer's argument was the necessity of closer ties with the United States. Mayer's diagnosis explicitly challenged British and Australian investments in Malayan industry, and touched on the debate over whether social reform and economic stability were compatible at a time when this question was particularly sensitive in Australia.

---


94 James McAuley, 'The Implications of World Economic Development', vol.5, no.1, 1951, pp.50-3.


97 Henry Mayer Born in 1919 at Mannheim, Germany, Mayer arrived in Australia as a refugee from Nazi Germany and studied at the University of Sydney. In 1950 he was appointed a Teaching Fellow in the Department of Government, rising to Senior Lecturer by 1955. He was Secretary of the Australian Political Studies Association from 1955 to 1962.


99 Gerald Packer Born at Melbourne in 1900, Packer attended the Royal Military College, Duntroon, and the University of Melbourne, and served in Army and Air Force Headquarters between 1939 and 1945. After the war he became a director of several companies and was appointed to official commissions on immigration and air transport.


itself. Resisting either option, a more common search in the early 1950s was for an image of Asia which conferred some status on intellectuals themselves as cultural guardians rather than reformers, and which measured society - their own as much as those in Asia - in terms of ‘political adaptation’ to established forms.102

***

These features of the cultural pattern of analysis were reinforced by the institutional accommodation of commentary on Asia in the universities, in press reporting and in policy and political debate. While the AIIA sought a new expertise in academic research, the universities themselves were largely unprepared for the post-war prominence of Asia.103 In course offerings in Melbourne and Sydney in the late 1940s, Asia was mentioned only as a chapter in the expansion of Europe. A Chair in Oriental Studies established at the University of Sydney in 1918, with some teaching responsibilities at the Royal Military College, Duntroon, fell vacant in 1949 and was not occupied again until 1955.104 Sydney’s History Department offered a first-year survey course on the Great Civilisations (including Toynbee’s Study on the reading list) and a unit on the ‘Expansion of Europe’ covering the ‘opening of America, Africa and the Orient’. A course on Asian and African history was added in 1950, primarily dealing with China, Japan and the South Pacific. In Melbourne, History was heavily European in its emphasis, yet units in Economic History, Economic Geography and Political Science dealt in part with China and Japan and the impact of Western expansion.105 In the 1940s a unit on International Relations in Melbourne was concerned only with the emergence of the European nation-state, but by 1950 it had been recast to cover Asia from China to Burma, Malaya and the Philippines within a conceptual framework of sovereignty, power politics, diplomacy and demography.106 In these terms, Asia was finding acknowledgement, but largely in courses applying inherently European concepts.

With the collapse of Oriental Studies in Sydney, the initiative passed to Canberra, to both the new National University and to the University College. Here, institutional priorities accentuated a shift from the evolutionary models of inter-war analysis to a more static conception of post-war Asia. The first Vice-Chancellor of the ANU, Professor Douglas Copland, had a keen interest in China dating from his period as Australian Minister in Chungking from 1946 to 1948. In his early appointments he sought those with personal or practical experience of Chinese society. On this basis, Copland, C.P. Fitzgerald (Reader then

102For a discussion of some of the ways in which discussion of foreign policy issues relate to domestic issues, see James Rosenau (ed.), Domestic Sources of Foreign Policy, New York, 1967.

103For a brief appraisal of facilities for the study of Asia in post-war universities, see John Legge, ‘Asian Studies: From Reconstruction to Deconstruction’, Australian Perceptions of Asia (Australian Cultural History), no.9, 1990, pp.94-96.

104The Chair’s first occupant, an historian, James Murdoch, was essentially a Japanese specialist, and had been engaged in ‘intelligence’ work during his several visits to that country; growth of trade with Japan was given as one of the main reasons for the founding of the Chair. See D.C.S. Sissons, ‘Australia’s First Professor of Japanese: James Murdoch (1856-1921)’, unpublished paper, RSPacS, ANU, 1982. Japanese was dropped from the Duntroon curriculum in 1938. A.L Sadler succeeded Murdoch in 1922, followed by J.K. Rideout from 1948 to ‘49: both specialised in classical Japanese and Chinese culture: SMH, 8 April 1953; A.R. Davis was appointed in 1955: Report of the Senate, University of Sydney Calendar, 1955, pp.1058-9.


106University of Melbourne, Arts Faculty Handbook, 1945, pp.62-3; 1950, pp.80-81.
Professor in Far Eastern History) and Michael Lindsay107 (Senior Fellow in International Relations) argued against the political simplifications and academic abstractions which surrounded the study of Asia - especially Toynbee’s sense of the inherent disruptiveness of Western technology.108 Fitzgerald’s main research interests, however, were cultural and literary rather than contemporary,109 and Lindsay found that he was unable to co-ordinate the resources appropriate for comprehensive study at an institution which emphasised the virtue of individual scholarship.110 At the Canberra University College, on the other hand, a School of Oriental Studies was established in 1952 following the advocacy of the Departments of Defence and External Affairs.111 In determining the courses which would be appropriate to the training of Public Service officers dealing with Asia, the School followed the recommendations of Professor Raymond Firth, Adviser to the ANU, that the School should abandon the American concept of ‘area studies’ on the grounds that such a programme tended to dissipate expertise in broad social science programmes.112 Similarly, the Australian Vice-Chancellor’s Committee in 1950 judged that a course in ‘Oriental Civilisations’ - ‘the history and culture of the countries concerned’ - must be included in the Canberra School’s offerings.113 Far from developing the claims of the social sciences in partnership with instrumentalist policy advisers, the academic emphasis in these Australian initiatives appears to have been strictly cultural. That the School was responsive to contemporary change was indicated in a shift to give priority to the teaching of Chinese over both Japanese and Russian, with the approval of ‘the Services’;114 but these general assumptions perpetuated a sense of Asia as a cultural and historical entity rather than a region of economic or political change.

Nor did the development of an independent Commonwealth Department dealing with international affairs and diplomacy during ‘the post-war expansion and ... the galloping expansion of the ’fifties’ offer an alternative centre of expertise.115 The growth of the Australian diplomatic service at least meant that

107Michael Francis Morris LINDSAY (Lord Lindsay of Birker) Born at London in 1909, and educated at Oxford, Lindsay worked on the South Wales Industrial Survey in 1936 before accepting a tutorship at Yenching University, Peking from 1937 to 1941. Between 1942 and 1945 he was a technical adviser to the Chinese 18th Army Communications Department. After lecturing at Harvard and University College, Hull, Lindsay was appointed a Senior Fellow in International Relations at the ANU, a position he resigned in 1959.

108See Copland, SMH, 29 January 1951, p.3; and Lord Lindsay of Birker, China and the West, pp.3-24.


111See Australian Archives A1361 AA49/5/2 ii, letter from R.C. Mills, Chairman of the Universities Commission, to the Secretary, Department of External Affairs, (n.d., 74A). The Advisorial Committee of the School included representatives from the Departments of Defence, Education, and External Affairs, and from the ANU.

112Archives papers as above, (n.d., 16A). Firth’s recommendation was also contrary to the Report of the Scarborough Commission in Britain which had argued in 1947 that Oriental Studies should strive for integration with other humanities and social sciences, including economics and anthropology. See summary of the Report in British Information Service, Oriental Studies in Britain, 1975, pp.8-9.

113Jock Weeden to Secretary, Prime Minister’s Department, 8 December 1950, (25A).

114Letter from Herbert Burton, Principal of the College, to Jock Weeden, Secretary of the Universities Commission, 8 December 1953, A1361 A/5/2 iii, (30A).

115W.R. Crocker, ‘Foreign Policy for Australia’ in David Pettit (ed.), Selected Readings in Australian Foreign Policy, Malvern, 1975, p.22.
Australian intellectuals had some sense of actual participation in the region, through a corps said to attract ‘a formidable array of men of high calibre’ lacking in other areas of government and business with interests in the region.116 Yet it was also the case that the Department of External Affairs developed as one Commonwealth Department among many, with its prescribed areas of specialism, rather than having the wider access to expertise associated with the United States’ Department of State. The skills cultivated by External Affairs have seemed to its critics to be exclusively those of diplomacy, and the careers of its senior officers reflected this emphasis in their mobility and lack of regional specialism.117 As such, the Department - for all its professionalism - was one dimension of a pattern of international commentary in Australia in the 1950s which was based on ‘foreign pre-occupations but virtually no foreign policy’.118

Within these limitations, however, significant efforts were made by External Affairs Ministers to formulate a more flexible range of concepts with which to deal with the region. These initiatives themselves reflected the limited range of response in a context of insecurity. While Percy Spender,119 Evatt’s successor in 1949, held the portfolio only until 1951, he gave it a distinctive ‘realist’ stamp.120 This ‘realism’, particularly evident in an emphasis on developing the Australian diplomatic presence in Asia,121 seems also to have been to an attempt to escape the conceptual and strategic stalemate which had prevailed in Australian foreign policy since the end of the war. While Evatt continued to insist in Opposition that the United Nations remained ‘the sole forum for the resolving of international disputes’,122 Spender’s first policy speech made it clear that the methods of approach and objectives in Australian foreign policy would follow a more specific and detailed diplomatic agenda.

The ‘preservation of peace and our way of life’, Spender stated, remained the ‘self-evident and

116 Charles Meeking, ‘Few Experts on Asia’, Eastern World, vol.11, no.12, 1957, p.30. Reacting against this exclusiveness in recruitment, J.M. Mullens, Labor MHR for Gellibrand, is often quoted for informing Commonwealth Parliament that he remained ‘inordinately suspicious of people named Algernon, Reginald or Percy’, the like of whom made up Australia’s official representation overseas - CPD (H of R), vol.205, 21 March 1950, p.956. See also Sol Encel, Equality and Authority, pp.279-80. Perhaps unfairly, Denis Warner, an experienced Australian journalist working in Asia, remarked that the expertise available to Australian diplomats in Asian postings, where they lacked a large staff and were themselves often incapable of speaking the language, amounted to little more than the second-hand, selective information distributed by the local British and American representatives. See Warner, ‘The Ugly Australian’, Observer, 14 November 1959, pp.16-17.


119 Percy Claude SPENDER Born at Sydney in 1897, Spender was educated at the University of Sydney and admitted to the NSW Bar in 1923. In 1927 he won the Federal seat of Warringah for the UAP, and in 1940 served as Treasurer and Minister for the Army in the Menzies government. Spender was a member of the Advisory War Council from 1940 to 1945, and when the Liberal Party formed government in 1949 he accepted the portfolio of External Affairs and Territories. In 1950 he was Chairman of the Columbo Conference, of the British Commonwealth Consultative Committee on Economic Aid, and was the Australian representative at the negotiations leading to the signing of the ANZUS treaty. In 1951 Spender resigned from parliament to become Australian Ambassador to the United States, and in 1958 became a Justice of the International Court of Justice at The Hague.

120 Alan Watt, The Evolution of Australian Foreign Policy, Cambridge, 1967, p.117.

121 An Embassy opened in Indonesia, for example, in March 1950 - Current Notes in International Affairs, vol.21, p.177; for the guidelines of the reorganisation, see Current Notes, vol.22, p.107.

122 CPD (H of R), vol.205, 16 March 1950, p.912
unchanging’ aims of Australian foreign policy. These aims were best pursued through co-operation with, in his ordering, Britain, the United States, the nations of the British Commonwealth, and through support for the United Nations. The objective of the Soviet Union, Spender insisted, remained ‘world communism’; but he equally affirmed that so long as communism abandoned expansionism, ‘there is no logical reason why Democracy and Communism ... should not be able to live together in peace’. If hypothetical, this allowance was nonetheless remarkable at a time when most American liberals accepted the premise that communism was expansionist of its nature and for the sake of its survival, basing their analyses on America’s ‘natural’ interests in Europe rather than on the unfamiliarity of Asia. Spender even implied sympathy for the recognition of Communist China, although Spender saw its potential for instability and subversion. From this acceptance followed the main emphasis of his statement, and that which attracted most comment. Australia, Spender argued, had a necessary commitment to the Asian region; and that commitment should most appropriately take the form of economic assistance for national development and political stability. To indicate Australia’s new role in Asia, Spender outlined proposals for a substantial aid programme and for a regional defence pact, and began negotiations for the Colombo Plan and the ANZUS and later the SEATO defence treaties.

If Spender’s principles were clear, parliamentary and press discussion illustrated that the new emphasis on Asia did not accord with old loyalties and entrenched prejudices. In so far as these responses reflected the domestic context of foreign policy discussion - the context which intellectuals themselves addressed - Asia was more likely to be accommodated in terms of conserving established associations than embarking on new directions. While no-one in the House of Representatives explicitly opposed Spender’s guidelines, few seemed to appreciate their inherent unity. Hasluck insisted that ‘power politics’ were the only way to solve international disputes, over-riding Spender’s economic regionalism and reflecting an enduring irritation with Evatt’s internationalism. Some speakers were too pre-occupied with the precarious nature of

---


125 *Current Notes*, vol.21, pp.153-64.

126 While central to an assessment of Australian foreign affairs in the 1950s, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to cover either the Colombo Plan or ANZUS and SEATO in any detail. While the treaties has been the subject of much analysis (see for example, Watt, *Australian Foreign Policy*, ch.5), the Colombo Plan has received little study. For an early, shrewd assessment of the Plan, however, see Creighton Burns, ‘The Colombo Plan and Australian Foreign Policy’, *Australian Outlook*, vol.12, no.1, 1958, pp.37-49.

127 *Paul Meernaa Caedwalla HASLUCK* Born at Fremantle in 1905, and educated at the University of Western Australia, Hasluck worked as a journalist from 1922, and a part-time lecturer in History at the University in 1939, and full-time in 1940. In 1941 he was seconded to the Department of External Affairs and worked in the Post-Hostilities Section, and over the following years attended several conferences on international reconstruction. Hasluck was appointed Counsellor-in-charge of the Australian mission to the United Nations Organisation in 1946, but and resigned from the Department in 1947 and was appointed Reader in History at the University of Western Australia. He won the Federal seat of Curtin for the Liberal Party in 1949 and in 1951 accepted the portfolio of Minister for Territories, holding it until 1963.
the Japanese peace settlement to look at more specific policies. Calwell\textsuperscript{128} insisted that the Indonesian leader, Soekarno, was a 'rotten reed' and not to be trusted; Roberton\textsuperscript{129} demanded the restoration of the Empire.\textsuperscript{130} Leslie Haylen\textsuperscript{131} spoke in agreement with Spender's position, but with the conviction that Australia shared with Asia an inevitable choice between socialism and anarchy.\textsuperscript{132} With an apprehension that remained with him until his death, J.B. Chifley\textsuperscript{133} feared the complexities of the region he still called 'the Pacific': Europe, he insisted, was 'the real storm centre of the world today'.\textsuperscript{134}

In the press there was greater antagonism to Spender's emphasis on the Asian region. The \textit{Sydney Morning Herald} argued that Spender had gone too far in calling Australia 'an Asian power': 'religious faith, our national philosophy, and our whole way of life are alien to Asia'.\textsuperscript{135} The \textit{Bulletin} insisted that Spender had ignored that 'the seething masses of Asia ... are at present incapable of aggression beyond their own boundaries', and should be of no concern to Australia.\textsuperscript{136} Yet while the \textit{Bulletin} insisted that 'Europe and the Atlantic coast of America' were the likely points of global conflict, the \textit{Sydney Morning Herald} followed Spender's tours through Asia with increasing interest, noting the support he appeared to be receiving not only from regional powers but also from Britain and America.\textsuperscript{137} Reflecting a widespread concern with these new directions, for example, a letter to the \textit{Herald} called for a return of 'the moral and political values' of the Empire, suggesting that the Minister 'should surround himself with men who have a lifetime of experience [in the Asian colonies, presumably] and keep away from the fresh young geniuses

\textsuperscript{128}Arthur Augustus CALWELL Born at West Melbourne in 1896, Calwell worked as a public servant in the Victorian Departments of Agriculture and Treasury, was elected President of the Victorian ALP in 1931 and an Alderman of the Melbourne City Council in 1931. Calwell was elected MHR for Melbourne in 1940, and served on several Parliamentary Committees, becoming Minister for Information in 1943 and for Immigration in 1945. Following Chifley's death, Calwell became Deputy Leader of the Opposition in 1951, and succeeded Evatt as Leader in 1960.

\textsuperscript{129}Hugh Stevenson ROBERTON Born at Glasgow in 1900, Roberton emigrated to Australia and became a grazier in the Riverina area. After serving with the 9th Division in the Middle East, Roberton became General President of the Farmers' and Settlers' Association of NSW. In 1949 he won the Federal seat of Riverina for the Country Party, and was Minister for Social Services from 1956 to 1965.

\textsuperscript{130} Hasluck, CPD (H of R), vol.205, 16 March 1950, pp.922-3; Calwell, 961-4, 968; Roberton, 22 March 1950, pp.1084, 1089

\textsuperscript{131}Leslie Clement HAYLEN Born at Canberra, Haylen worked as a playwright, novelist and journalist before being elected Labor MHR for Parkes in 1943. He served on the Commonwealth Literature Advisory Board, and represented Australia at an ILO conference at Paris in 1945.

\textsuperscript{132}Haylen, CPD (H of R), 16 March 1950, pp.970-73.

\textsuperscript{133}Joseph Benedict CHIFLEY Born at Bathurst in 1885, Chifley joined the NSW Government Railways and at 24 became the youngest First-Class locomotive driver in the service. In 1997 he represented the Railways Union before the State Arbitration Court, and after a period on the local Shire Council, Chifley was elected Labor MHR for Macquarie in 1928. In 1935 he was a member of the Royal Commission on Banking and Monetary Reform, and in 1941 was appointed Federal Treasurer in the Curtin government. Following Curtin's death, Chifley became Prime Minister in 1945, and died as Leader of the Opposition in 1951.

\textsuperscript{134} CPD (H of R), 22 March 1950, p.1177.

\textsuperscript{135} Australia Not a Part of Asia', \textit{SMH}, 22 January 1950, p.2.

\textsuperscript{136} Keeping Out of Asia', \textit{Bulletin}, 11 February 1950, p.6.

\textsuperscript{137} Danger and Defence', \textit{Bulletin}, 19 April 1950, p.6; see for example 'Realism in Our Foreign Relationships', \textit{SMH}, 10 March 1950, p.2
with their academic conceits'. Clearly, there was little preparedness to accept the image of Asia as Spender presented it - an economic and political challenge. In these more popular forums of comment, Australia was defined by a European inheritance to which Asia was at best irrelevant, and potentially a threat.

It was already evident, through the diplomatic manoeuvres and the press coverage of the 'Malayan emergency', that there was general political and press support for small-scale military commitments to the Asian region in an attempt to preserve a European presence. Like the later negotiations over military involvement in Vietnam, Menzies courted the opportunity to send troops to Malaya, partly for electoral purposes and partly with the belief that Australian soldiers would be more effective than the British in jungle combat. In April 1950 E.J. Harrison, departing to become resident Minister in London, argued that 'if the United Kingdom is not to give the lead' in Asia, then the role automatically fell to the 'Dominions'. The Labor Party disagreed on the grounds that it would be 'foolish' to 'assume the task of policing any ... colonial possession' just as the European powers themselves withdrew. Yet ties to Britain and clear economic interests in Malaya served to support Australian participation as an extension of established loyalties. There was greater hesitancy in press commentary, however, in endorsing either of the extremes of 'moral support' or 'military intervention' in the emerging states of the region which characterised the American approach to Asia - or at least that was the case until evidence of communist subversion served to suggest that no nation would be allowed to pursue its own course in Asia. The outbreak of war in Korea in late June 1950 provided both actual and symbolic proof of such subversion, and in turn exerted considerable influence on the terms in which unrest in Asia would be subsequently discussed. Before June it had seemed 'reasonable to assume that if the Koreans had been left alone' rather than divided at the end of World War Two, they would have created their own independent state', whether on 'Western democratic' lines or otherwise. No such allowance was possible after the North Korean attack on the South: democracy became the only option, as an American emphasis on

138 Roger Berkeley, SMH, 16 January 1950, p.2
139 For details of this support, see Alan Barcan, 'Australia and Malaya', Eastern World, vol.9, no.9, 1955, pp.19-20.
141 Eric John HARRISON Born in 1892 at Sydney, Harrison served with the AIF in France and in 1931 was elected MHR for Wentworth, representing the UAP. He held several portfolios during the 1930s, and was a member of the Economic Cabinet from 1939 to 1941. From 1944 Harrison was Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party, and from 1949 to 1950 was Minister for Defence. After a period as Resident Minister in London to 1951, he returned to become Leader of the House and Minister for Defence Production.
142 Australia and the Malayan Crisis', SMH, 21 April 1950, p.2.
143 Labour View on Malaya', SMH, 21 April 1950, p.3.
144 Australian investment in Malayan tin and rubber production amounted to £25 million in 1950, and private enterprise groupings were reported to lobby extensively for a commitment of Australian forces. See Neil Stewart, 'Quandary in Canberra', Eastern World, vol.4, no.8, 1950, p.17. See also 'Malaya', CAB, vol.6, no.7, 1950; D.C.S.S., 'Malaya and Nationalism', Australia's Neighbours, 3rd Series, no.1, 1950, pp.1-2.
145 U.S. Aid To Be Studied', SMH, 17 February 1950, p.3.
146 Korea: The Background', CAB, vol.6, no.11, 1950, p.190.
'containing' communism in Asia shifted to encompass the goal of 'liberation'.

The image of Asia fostered by the Korean commitment was not only one in which the complexities of the region were often reduced to the simplicities of war, but also one that was particularly congenial to conservative themes in commentary based on the exclusive choice: communism or the West.

Korea was the exemplary Cold War conflict, and its justification and press coverage established a pattern of analysis which persisted until the last stages of the Vietnam War. With no economic interests immediately at stake, the issues in Korea were of a symbolic kind. The war introduced a rhetoric of social discipline and national consolidation out of proportion to the scale of military commitment. This rhetoric did not seek to restrict or control private economic expansion as in World War Two, but rather made a virtue of the unfettered operation of a free economy, bolstered by the appropriate civic virtues. 'Production - Development - Defence' was the maxim of a nation-wide campaign to develop social cohesion; and as in America, the images of Korea were not so much scenes of battle, but of the latest in arms manufacture and technological hardware. Menzies demanded to know whether any Australians still thought 'that this communist enemy would hesitate to overthrow Western civilisation if the United States did not have the atomic bomb?' Without requiring extensive social or economic mobilisation, Korea brought the Cold War home: fought under United Nation's auspices, committing America to the region, the war confirmed Asia as an area of priority than extended beyond strategy alone.

Whereas Spender had attempted to give Asia some economic and political specificity, even for him Korea assumed a more abstract significance: the war provided an opportunity to cement American commitment to the region while also maintaining 'the prestige of British peoples and, indeed, of all English speaking peoples' in Asia. These abstractions were carried further in the media. On the same day in July that the Sydney Morning Herald conducted a street poll of young men, all ready to fight in Korea, it featured an article recording an Anglo-French committee's support for 'an atom bomb and germ warfare offensive which could lay Russia waste in a few hours'. The paper also carried a photographic essay titled 'The Korean - A Study of a Man in Peace'. Hunched in a paddy field, or a peasant in national dress, such Asian

---

147 See David Horowitz, From Yalta to Vietnam: American Foreign Policy in the Cold War, Harmondsworth, 1967, p.127.

148 Gavan McCormack provides a thorough political background to the Australian involvement in the Korean War in Cold War Hot War: An Australian Perspective on the Korean War, Sydney, 1983. McCormack's argument is that there was a clear shift from a Australian policy critical of the American position in relation to Korea in the 1940s to an essentially subservient attitude in the early 1950s. Without differing from McCormack in this political emphasis, the purpose here is to look at a more cultural dimension of this process. For a general military and diplomatic account of Australia's participation in Korea, see Robert O'Neil, Australia in the Korean War 1950-1953, vol.1, Strategy and Diplomacy, Canberra, 1981.

149 See 'The Gathering Clouds', an advertisement placed in the national press in October 1950 - for example, SMH, 15 October 1950; also Menzies' national broadcasts of the time, printed in Current Notes, vol.21, 1950, esp. pp.591-2; and the series 'Defence Call to the Nation', pp.659-669.

150 See Raymond Aron, The Imperial Republic: The United States and the World 1945-1973, Cambridge Mass., 1974, p.44. It is notable that even advertisements for civilian commodities in the Australian press at this time - for metal hardware and building materials, for example - often featured a symbol of military application as a testament to their quality.

151 'Defence Call to the Nation', SMH, 20 September 1950.

152 Spender, CPD (H of R), vol.208, 8 June 1950, p.4030. McCormack, Cold War Hot War, p.100
spirituality stood in stark contrast to impending materialistic communism.153 The same issue reproduced, with some outrage, several cartoons from British papers which failed to take the conflict seriously.154 Chifley lamely insisted in Parliament that 'the means of preserving culture, education, democracy and Christianity' lay in Europe; and that the West might only succeed in 'bleeding themselves white' if they attempted 'to close down on every nationalist movement for self-determination in the East'.155 Yet Korea quickly acquired the elements of a crusade: a conflict which fitted neatly with current pre-occupations with the battle of 'Christian civilization against the new barbarism of secular humanism'.156

If caution had characterised reaction to Spender's policy guidelines, there was no equivalent reluctance to support Menzies' much simpler message. While Chifley looked to Europe, Menzies speculated on the value of United Nations' troops crossing the 38th parallel into North Korea. The government moved to introduce conscription while the *Sydney Morning Herald* portrayed Korea as 'a stage in Russia's struggle to rule Asia'.157 In parliament, the House of Representatives was congratulated on its unanimity in support of the Korean campaign, yet there was a great deal of difference between the opinion of A.R. Downer,158 a Liberal backbencher, who insisted that 'in spite of what is said about rapid changes ... in the East, the mentality of the Asian peoples is still unchanged' and required leadership, and Calwell's reluctant, lame observation that 'events are rushing to conclusion' in Asia which reasoned argument could not prevent.159 Labor was hemmed in by internal divisions between Catholic sympathy for Korean priests and the success of missionaries there, and by the momentum of Evatt's ideal of the United Nations, now compromised under American leadership of the campaign.160 'As we have set our course in supporting the United Nations', Calwell argued, 'we must go forward on that course' - though a tone of isolationism was creeping into his remarks.161 The conflict confirmed the necessity to conceive of Asia in terms of both military strategy and a moral struggle with communism, denying debate the opportunity for subtlety in analysis. In a poem titled 'Korea, 1950', to take just one example, Vincent Buckley accented a sense of Christian outrage and the violation of innocence, calling his readers to witness 'the cry of the priests, the soft speech of the women'.162

---

153'I Will Be Ready To Go If This Business Gets Worse'; 'West Urged To Prepare For The A-Bomb'; 'The Korean': *SMH*, 9 July 1950, pp.3, 8.


158Alexander Russell DOWNER Born at Adelaide in 1910, Downer was educated at Oxford University and admitted to the South Australian Bar in 1935. He was with the AIF at Singapore and was imprisoned by the Japanese at Changi for over 3 years. In 1949 he was elected Liberal member for Angas, South Australia, and served on the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee from 1952 to 1958. Downer was Minister for Immigration from 1958 to 1963.

159Downer, *CPD* (H of R), vol. 208, 6 July 1950, pp.4857; Calwell, 4030-31, 4857.


Yet the eagerness of the Korean commitment shocked several intellectuals across a range of political allegiance: it seemed ironic that a government which spoke of developing closer relations with Asia should seize the first opportunity for military intervention, associating itself with the rigidity of American anti-communism. The Round Table remarked that America, and by implication, Australia, should be 'more sensitive to Oriental and world opinion about the quality of regimes in Asia'.163 Certainly, Dr Syngman Rhee, the President of South Korea, proved an embarrassing ally and obdurate puppet.164 By the end of 1950, Keith Officer,165 Ambassador to France, wrote to Alan Watt166 that Australia had perhaps been over-zealous in committing itself to a war in Korea in which it had forfeited any control of its own forces, and which some in 'high circles' had come to think 'should never have taken place'.167 Copland, among a number of academics at that time, pleaded the case of China, of its integrity, its independence, and its justifiable retaliation to American harassment.168 In terms of policy and public attitudes, however, Korea confirmed a commitment to Asia in which military intervention was made acceptable, and justitified through an image which placed political change in an almost inevitable opposition to the need to maintain the cultural integrity of stereotypical 'Asian' peoples.169

Together with the commitment to Korea, the Australian government gave close diplomatic, political and military attention to other areas of Asia in the early 1950s. The Department of External Affairs followed the emergence of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia from French Indo-China in the late 'forties and 1950s, recognising them as autonomous states within the French Union in the hope that this might 'encourage moderate nationalist leaders'. By 1953 Australia was offering facilities to French officers to help them build up the military resources they needed to suppress insurrection in all three countries. Troops were withdrawn from Japan in May 1950, but in June ships of the Australian Navy were commited to Korea.

163 'Two Views on Korea', Round Table, vol. 164, September 1951, pp.325-9. For the expression of similar concerns, see also A.G.L. Shaw, 'Some Principles of International Relations', Australian Outlook, vol.6, no.3, 1952, pp.137-44; C.P. Fitzgerald, 'Australia and Asia' in Greenwood and Harper (eds.), Australia in World Affairs 1945-1955, p.212. The Editor of the Australian Intercollegian, the journal of the Student Christian Movement, argued in response to the outbreak of war in Korea that 'it is not for Christians to fall into that manner of opposing Communism which has become so characteristic of many American and Australians'; 'Korea', vol.53, no.6, p.1.

164 For some indication of Rhee's unpopularity in Korea, and of his attempts to manipulate the outcome of the war, see Horowitz, From Yalta to Vietnam, pp.121-35.

165 Frank Keith Officer Born at Toorak in 1889 and educated at the University of Melbourne, Officer was Associate to Justice Higgins from 1913 until he enlisted in 1914, serving with distinction. From 1920 to 1924 he was Political Officer in Northern Nigeria, then joining the Australian Department of External Affairs. He served at London from 1933 to 1937, and in Washington from 1937 to 1940, and then in Tokyo until 1941. During the war Officer represented Australia at Moscow and Chungking, and after the end of conflict at Taiwan, The Hague and Paris. He retired in 1955.

166 Alan Stewart Watt Born at Croydon, NSW, in 1901, Watt was educated at the University of Sydney and then as Rhodes Scholar at Oxford. He joined the Department of External Affairs in 1931, and represented Australia in Washington from 1940 to 1945, and in Moscow from 1947 to 1948. Watt became Secretary of the Department in 1950, and in 1954 was appointed Australian Commissioner in South East Asia, attending the conferences on Indo-China and Korea at Geneva in 1954.

167 Officer Papers, NLA Mss.2629, Series 1, 1107, 19 December 1950.

168 For some indication of Rhee's unpopularity in Korea, and of his attempts to manipulate the outcome of the war, see Horowitz, From Yalta to Vietnam, pp.121-35.

169 J.F. Cairns, then a member of the Federal Opposition and a frequent commentator on Asian affairs, was to remark, in retrospect, that Korea had been a 'monumentally stupid advance of communism' gaining nothing other than a confirmation of Cold War reaction. See Cairns, 'Ourselves and Our Neighbours' in Ernest Bramsted (ed.), Living With Asia, Sydney, 1963, p.69.
followed by an RAAF fighter squadron and then Army forces. In the same month a squadron of heavy bombers was dispatched to Malaya. The international background of the Cold War intensified at the same time: the Sino-Soviet Pact was announced; Russian planes were shot down in Korea; diplomatic and political assassinations occurred throughout Asia; Maclean and Burgess defected; the B52 long-range bomber was brought into production.\textsuperscript{170} In 1952 the Sydney Morning Herald counselled that official policy should be to consolidate military forces in Asia as these would provide the most readily accommodated symbol of nationalism in what were inherently authoritarian cultures, giving ‘teeth to Asian democracy’.\textsuperscript{171}

In Australia itself, Korea prompted the rhetoric of defence preparedness, but more in terms of civilian discipline than actual programmes of mobilisation. While in the United States close ties developed between issues of defence capability, tactical planning, industrial progress and administration, exerting considerable influence on academic research and social science priorities,\textsuperscript{172} there was an absence of equivalent ties in Australia. The perceived scale of Australian engagement in an Asian war, in partnership with a greater power, would not require a mobilisation of society, but rather the more efficient operation of its component parts. Certainly, Menzies’ announcement of the probability of major war within three years prompted moves towards rearmament and, perhaps most significantly, the establishment of a National Securities Resources Board in December 1950. These initiatives, however, were neither extensive nor systematic. Comprising senior civil servants and prominent figures in private enterprise under the Chairmanship of the Prime Minister, the Resources Board was to advise on the priorities in national development under the threat of large-scale conflict. Yet the Board never approached its potential to become a ‘true central planning organisation’.\textsuperscript{173} Compulsory military training was also reintroduced in 1950, but its emphasis seemed to be ethical rejuvenation: ‘healthy living, ... a sound mental outlook and right thinking’.\textsuperscript{174} As noted above, the rhetoric of Korea was one, as Menzies put it, of ‘order without orders’:\textsuperscript{175} war in Asia was not total war, but a challenge to social values, demanding personal discipline without a return to planning which merely ‘opened the door wide to socialist control’.\textsuperscript{176} Schemes of civil defence, advocated by government back-benchers and members of the armed services in an attempt to prepare society for nuclear

\textsuperscript{170}This survey is based on the summaries appearing in Current Notes, vols.21-26, 1950-1955.

\textsuperscript{171}SMH, 22 January 1952, p.2.

\textsuperscript{172}The central essays on this development are C. Wright Mills, The Power Elite, New York, 1956; and Noam Chomsky, American Power.


\textsuperscript{174}Schwartz, CPD (H fo R), vol.210, 30 November 1950, p.3456. It was in the debate over national service that Kent-Hughes commented on the need to combat the ‘materialism which exists in Australia today’, quoted earlier in this chapter. B.D. Beddie observed that despite the claims of danger, defence expenditure actually fell from ‘£203 million in 1952-3 to fluctuate between £170 million and £200 million until 1962-3’ - Beddie, ‘Some Internal Political Problems’ in John Wilkes (ed.), Australia’s Defence and Foreign Policy (AIPS Summer School), Sydney, 1964, p.137; T.B. Millar noted that, after its introduction in 1950, the National Service scheme ‘was gradually reduced in scope and, from 1957, disbanded’. See Millar, Australia’s Defence, Melbourne, 1965, p.28.

\textsuperscript{175}Quoted in Mendelsohn, ‘The Allocation of Resources’, p.184.

\textsuperscript{176}See for example the public criticism of the provisions of Defence Preparations Bill (1951) - SMH, 12 July 1951.
attack, drew little support at senior level on the grounds of expense and forced regimentation.\textsuperscript{177} This limited extent of practical action can be related to a politically expedient reliance on allied support, and also to a level of exaggeration in political rhetoric. It can also be seen to reflect a sense that Australia's contribution to allied strategy was, as the one Report of the Security Resources Board suggested, to be in agricultural production rather than military personnel - in itself accentuating the ties between domestic organisation and regional commitment.\textsuperscript{178} In terms of the institutional and cultural context for the discussion of foreign policy and the threat from Asia, this gap between rhetoric and institutional organisation only entrenched a tendency for commentary to address issues largely divorced from the context of political or economic appraisals, and hence distant from the possibility of critical analysis. War in Asia would not prompt reform, merely the rhetoric of social restraint.

The nature of military engagement - as 'assistance' rather than intervention - in itself extended the range of commentary further into the survey and direction of the domestic affairs of Asian nations. In 1952 Spender's successor as Minister for External Affairs, R.G. Casey,\textsuperscript{179} argued that military struggle was only one element (and perhaps of decreasing importance) in the Cold War. 'Political and economic confrontation' figured instead as the key points of regional vulnerability, as 'international Communism' sought to destabilise traditional authority.\textsuperscript{180} This perceived shift in tactics made it all the more crucial that the character of Asian regimes be understood, and Casey added to Spender's realism a kind of impressionistic diplomacy which was geared to making such assessments. In 1947, for example, recollecting his period as the British Governor of Bengal from 1944 to 1946, Casey frequently referred to the temperament of 'the Bengali', or noted of Gandhi that 'he is 'of the East and I am not'. 'Dominion status', he wrote, 'is rather an artificial creation as far as people of another race are concerned': it took 'the British tribal instinct to make it work'.\textsuperscript{181} Implicit in this conservatism, however, was a sensitivity to the complexity of problems in the region. To these stereotypes Casey added his trust - developing from his education as engineer - in the rational calculation of efficiency and the application of 'modern science and modern methods of development' to ameliorate social conflict and poverty.\textsuperscript{182} Here were the traces of an inter-war developmentalism, overlaid by concepts of immutable culture: in this mix, Casey was to symbolise both the residual strengths and the inherently conservative limitations of Australian commentary on Asia in the 'fifties.

\textsuperscript{177}See for example the campaign to increase financial assistance for these schemes by Kent-Hughes, then Minister for the Interior, W.C. Wentworth, Liberal back-bencher, and Brigadier A.W. Wardell - "Wait and See" Policy on Civil Defence', Age, 4 July 1955, p.2.


\textsuperscript{179}Richard Gardiner CASEY Born at Brisbane in 1890, Casey was educated at the University of Melbourne and at Cambridge. After serving during World War One, Casey became Australian Liaison Officer at London from 1924 to 1931, and in 1931 he won the Federal seat of Corio for the UAP, becoming Treasurer in 1935. From 1937 he also held the portfolios of Scientific and Industrial Research and Supply and Development. In 1940 Casey resigned to become the first Australian Minister to the United States, and from 1942 he served on the British War Cabinet, as Minister of State in the Middle East, and, from 1944 to 1946, Governor of Bengal. He returned to Australia and won the Latrobe for the Liberal Party in 1949, and became Minister for External Affairs in 1951.


\textsuperscript{182}Casey, \textit{An Australian in India}, pp.26-8.
Casey's diplomacy has been defined by his 'style', yet the components of that style were complex. Placing greater emphasis on trusted counsellors and personal reaction than on theories, Casey had difficulty in accepting the entrenched hatreds of the Cold War until open hostilities made up his mind for him, or until he felt confronted by disloyalty. Menzies' sense of a British heritage did not pre-occupy him: like Spender, Casey valued ties to America not simply in defence but as an economic alliance. Among the first to suggest that Australia accommodate American bases, Casey was also irritated that America regarded Australia as only a minor partner in international affairs. These were the characteristics he brought to his dealings with Asia. In 1951 the region seemed to him to be prey to 'dark forces': it 'is close to us, and ... disturbed in a dozen different directions'. Yet throughout his period as External Affairs Minister, Casey travelled extensively throughout Asia, writing to Keith Officer in 1952 that he was becoming 'more and more obsessed with the situation' he perceived. During his first tour in July-August 1951 he came to believe that Australia could make a distinctive contribution to the region, independent of America and the United Kingdom. He also began to suspect that political disturbance, even if communist-inspired, had deeper roots in popular suffering and aspiration, and marvelled at the reports of the dedication of communist soldiers in battle (even noting that autopsies had revealed 'no sign of dope'). The conflict in Vietnam was, he conceded, essentially a civil war, conducted with some advice and aid from Moscow and Peking but no external manipulation, against a regime which left him unimpressed. 'The best information available', he recorded, 'is that Chinese communism has made a very considerable change for the better in the condition of China and the well-being of the Chinese people'. Remaining staunchly anti-communist in principle, personal impressions tended to swing him to trust his interlocutors in diplomatic negotiations - even in discussions with Chou En Lai in Geneva in 1952.

In short, Casey was no quiet companion to American policy, particularly as Dulles shifted the emphasis in 1954 from regional defence to 'deterrence' and the capacity 'to retaliate, instantly, by means and at places of our own choosing'. Menzies had followed Dulles' logic in 1955, asserting that 'if there is to be a war


184 Hudson, Casey, pp.242-46.

185 For a similar appraisal, see Watt, The Evolution of Australian Foreign Policy, pp.29-41, 301-2. J.A.C. Mackie observed in 1955 that Casey appeared not to believe in diplomacy in any formal sense, 'in the politics of nations being influenced significantly according to differences of principles held by people of different countries'; J.A.C. Mackie, 'Understanding Asia', Meanjin, vol.14, no.1, 1953, pp.80-81.


187 Hudson, Casey, p.227.

188 Officer Papers, 25 February 1952, item 1419.


190 Casey, Australian Foreign Minister, pp.26, 127-8, 30.

191 See for example, Casey, Australian Foreign Minister, pp.35-6.

192 Hudson, Casey, pp.251-2.

for our own existence, it should be carried on as far from our own soil as possible'. 194 Casey was uncomfortable with such a rigid outlook, and unsuccessfully attempted to persuade his fellow Ministers to more moderate courses - asking them, for example, to at least to consider closer relations with China. 195 Political expediencies, however, only widened the gulf between the intricacies of the situation in Asia as Casey perceived it, and the total confrontation of the Cold War. Nor was Casey alone in facing this realisation. Keith Officer had written to S.M. Bruce from Nanking in 1949 that ‘French Indo-China ... is almost beyond praying for’. Yet in 1952 Officer advised Casey that the campaigns in Korea and Vietnam must go on, if only to retain a sense of Western unity and purpose. 196 Specific Asian nations were to host conflicts the significance of which lay elsewhere.

In the mid-fifties Casey’s moderation seemed to be supported by the general climate of international relations. The Bandung Conference of 1955 had generated an atmosphere in which it was possible to talk of co-existence with communism in Asia without appearing naïve or a stooge to expansionism. Casey made the most of the opportunity to secure good-will in Asia, and his party was even reported to be edging towards recognition of China, so long as the security of Formosa could be guaranteed. 197 ‘With almost dramatic suddenness’, correspondents enthused early in 1956, ‘the Australian outlook on Asia ... has changed from reserve ... into a desire for understanding’ - a desire which seemed to be reciprocated. 198 In 1955 the Commonwealth government sponsored the largest trade mission of any Western country to South-East Asia to assess market potential and establish permanent trading agencies. 199 Outside Malaya and Korea, and despite attempts to formulate aggressive strategies against China, 200 there had been no field of action into which Menzies could apply his policy. Casey continued his extensive tours of the region, as Asian destinations became more popular for Australian travellers. 201 As the commentary of the AIIA also indicated, there was a sense that a basic continuity with pre-war principles had been re-established, especially in the form of a potentially viable concept of the British Commonwealth of Nations (multi-racial, though still based on ties of ‘sentiment’ and ‘material interest’), and not dependent on the vagaries of

195Hudson, *Casey*, pp.251-4
196Officer to Bruce, 19 May 1945, Officer Papers, item 1106; Officer to Casey, 30 December 1952, item 1536.
198Spokesmen such as Sir John Kotelawala, Prime Minister of Ceylon, for example, assured Australian audiences that ‘you Australians have the good will and confidence of the free peoples of the East’. See Charles Meeking, ‘Australia’s New View of Asia’, *Eastern World*, vol.10, no.1, 1956, p.15.
200In 1955, for example, Menzies had suggested in a memorandum to the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff that a nuclear strike should be considered against China in the event of any threat to Malaya. A preventative intervention in southern Thailand - without consultation with the Thai government, was also contemplated in an attempt to combat any Chinese advance down the Malayan peninsular - see Peter Hastings, ‘Menzies Wanted US Nuclear Bombs Dropped On China’, *SMH*, 18 January 1986, pp.1, 27.
201For comment on the increase in Australian tourist traffic to Asian ports, see C.P. Puzey, ‘Australia’s Economy and Asia’, *Eastern World*, vol.8, no.8, 1954, p.40.
American strategy.202

The Suez conflict in 1956, although occurring outside the Asian region, brought the differences between Menzies and Casey almost to breaking point,203 and coincided with if not explaining a ‘stereotyping’ of Australian foreign policy for the rest of the decade.204 General Nasser’s ‘nationalisation’ of the Suez Canal on 20 July 1956, following the collapse of aid negotiations between America, Britain and Egypt, involved issues of political and economic nationalism similar to those current in Asia.205 Whereas Casey perceived a ‘community of interest in this matter between Australia and the countries of Asia’,206 Menzies referred to Australia’s sense of isolation as a nation ‘east of Suez’.207 Rejecting Egyptian nationalism, Menzies saw the Soviet Union as the perpetrator of the crisis, and supported - on the basis of an incomplete disclosure of vital information - an ineffectual Anglo-French invasion of the canal zone, even offering to commit Australian forces to the area.208 Whereas Anthony Eden, the British Prime Minister, resigned in humiliation over the incident, there was little criticism of Menzies’ role. Casey unsuccessfully attempted to secure a Cabinet motion against the use of force, although it was reported that several of his colleagues at least sympathised with his position, and felt that Menzies had assumed control of an issue which Casey, by reason of personal and professional expertise, had a better claim to negotiate.209 Nonetheless, in public commentary there was little opposition to Menzies invocation of traditional loyalties to Britain over


204See Watt, quoting Greenwood, The Evolution of Australian Foreign Policy, pp.302.

205Nasser, the Egyptian President, sought finance for the construction of the Aswan Dam on the Nile. Following the failure of these negotiations, Nasser determined to use the revenue generated by canal revenue to fund the Aswan project. The British reaction was uncompromising. Not only did nationalisation jeopardise substantial British investments and a major trade route, but it seemed to Sir Anthony Eden, who had recently succeeded Churchill as Prime Minister, that Nasser was re-enacting the rise of the European dictatorships of the 1930s. There would be no appeasement in 1956: Eden developed an obsession to ‘break Nasser’. Plans for an Anglo-French invasion of Egypt were quickly formulated - plans which later covertly included Israel. See Sidney Aster, Anthony Eden, New York, 1976, pp.141-5. The American position opposed any such intervention: whereas Eden was determined to maintain British influence in the Middle East, Dulles and Eisenhower were primarily concerned that any transition from a level of colonialism to independence must not be forced into communist hands through rough handling by Western powers. See Hoopes, The Devil and John Foster Dulles, p.318 and ch.20-23.


209See Hudson, Casey, pp.270-6; also ‘Boomerang from Canberra’, The Economist, 15 September 1956, p.865.
regional sensitivity or the international arbitration of disputes.210

From 1957 until his retirement in 1960, Casey continued as Minister for External Affairs, but Menzies increasingly dominated Australian diplomacy, briefly taking the portfolio as his own after 1960. Menzies no longer by-passed Asia, taking time to develop contacts there - although he often seemed an uncomfortable figure in these settings.211 The Prime Minister's inflexible manner was more appropriate at the end of the decade, as a reliance on American policy and on interventionalist precepts became more evident in discussion of Asia. When Dulles arrived in Canberra 'like a benevolent old uncle' for a SEATO conference in 1957, the tarmac reception was described by the Age in terms that made deference to the United States quite clear: 'Australia's Mr Casey looked at him [Dulles] with the air of a terrier surveying a grizzly bear and happy to find it in a good mood.'212 Casey had attempted to develop an element of regional initiative in Australian foreign policy which was not reducible to American priorities. In the early 'fifties it had been possible to mix lingering British sentiment and the ambiguity of ties to America with an image of Asia as a sphere, defined in terms of personalities, cultural traditions and emerging nations, in which Australian might have uncertain but distinctive interests. However naively, Casey emphasised the need for Australians to know their region to the extent of urging schemes such as Australia-Asia Associations, to be established in every capital city 'to encourage study of Asian cultures, promote travel in Asia, facilitate exchange of cultural visits and generally support the activities of government'.213 For Casey, the image of Asia was one that did not justify intervention under the first pressure, yet nor did it challenge those stereotypes of cultural stability which seemed to render illegitimate any aspiration for political change, and which preferred the statis of a 'way of life' in Asia just as in Australia.

***

While foreign policy was marked by the largely unsuccessful attempts of Spender and Casey to frame guidelines in dealing with Asia around developmental or regional premises, commentators on Asia in the AIIA and the universities by the middle of the decade were advanced in their own search for an intellectual role which might reconcile inter-war liberal reformism and a post-war pre-occupation with social stability. Edward Said notes that an 'administrative' approach characterised American Middle Eastern scholarship after World War Two, linking the demands of economic, technological and strategic expansion to the need

---

210 In November, after United Nations forces had intervened to stabilise the canal zone, Menzies maintained that these forces had effectively abetted Nasser rather than acted as 'a fighting body': Statement of 30 November 1956 in Current Notes, vol.27, 1956, pp.748-9. Casey, while also objecting to the severity of the General Assembly's indictment of the British and French action, argued that Suez had developed out of long-standing tensions in the Middle East (Statement of 1 December 1956, pp.828-9), and later expressed admiration for the United Nations' responsibility in assuming 'charge of so many basic issues in this troubled area': Statement (n.d.), Current Notes, vol.28, 1957, p.49.

211 'Asia is not Mr Menzies field', Bruce Grant wrote in the Age of Menzies visit to Indonesia in 1959: 'It is too hot for a start, but also too emotional for a man with an ironic and conservative judgement'. Grant, 'Malaya Was "Pleasant, Docile" After Indonesia', 14 December 1959, p.2.

212 "Like A Benevolent Old Uncle" From A Sky Thick With Storms', Age, 11 March 1957, p.2. Later, Harold Holt's relationship with President Johnson during the Vietnam War was to be seen in a very similar way - despite the fact that the Australian government was initially more committed to involvement in that conflict than the United States. See Paul Rodan, 'Harold Holt's Foreign Policy 1966-1967', AJPH, vol.25, no.3, 1979, pp.310-18.

213 "Build Up Good Will To Asians" - Mr Casey', SMH, 23 January 1957, p.6
to negotiate with a sense of 'the tissue of relations in which men are wedded'.

This approach was based in the specialisation offered by the 'field studies' model in the social sciences, developed in association with government agencies in the United States, but avoided in Australia. Instead, Australian intellectuals, lacking any more specific mediation between their 'expertise' and social change, continued to align themselves with more abstract concepts of social unity, now defined less in terms of reformism and more as adjustment. For commentators in Australian Outlook, irritated by the 'depressing familiarity' of 'popular' discussion of 'the Asian upheaval which everybody finds so quaint and exciting', there was a need to reassert the role of intellectuals in consolidating Asian societies - and perhaps in managing their own. This task was defined in 1957 as: 'to encourage and make possible the work of cultural elites and to provide adequate forms and channels of popularisation for the masses'. Clearly, guidance must come from above, however much the added emphasis suggested that some effort must be made to contain popular aspirations. The implication was also that the responsibility of 'expertise' was to establish those forms, whether cultural, political or economic, and then withdraw to let the process work an apparently natural course. An article in the same issue, representing the strictly anti-communist views of the Victorian Branch of the AIIA, expressed the hope that a negotiated cease-fire in Indo-China 'may well mark the end of the last mass interference by Western armies on the Asian mainland'. While the hope might be admirable, it was premised on the containment of unrest from above by authorities recognised as legitimate from an external perspective.

In the universities, and in Melbourne in particular, there were signs of a greater degree of political tolerance in academic analysis of Asia. Nevertheless, commentary was still marked by intellectual aspirations to participate in social reform geared to a sense of an Asian culture merging into Western forms. 'To the political scientist, the lawyer, and the geographer', a Melbourne University magazine suggested in 1955, 'the Indonesian republic represents the problems of a new state adopting or creating new institutions, procedures and legal systems to meet new needs'. The Indonesian republic was seen to have found a cultural synthesis between past and present, primarily through according great status to intellectuals in a way that was 'typically Asian in approach, opposed to European exclusiveness and rigidity'. The identification of these developments might be within imposed categories of pluralism, bureaucratisation and democracy, but it was at least acknowledged that these were issues of political development rather than cultural heritage. By 1960 a possible major in Indonesian Studies had been introduced in Melbourne, as a mixed language and area study course, covering Indonesian history, politics and economic organisation. Macmahon Ball defended the integrity of nationalist movements in the region, their ideals

---


215 Peter Russo, rev. of Brian Harrison, South-East Asia, Australian Outlook, vol.9, no.2, 1955, p.131.


of self-determination and social and political equality. These movements demanded recognition, Ball maintained, and Western governments should extend to them substantial long-term aid while also reconsidering policies that would only create antipathy in Asia: issues such as the Korean campaign, Australia’s immigration restrictions, its tacit sanctioning of South African racial discrimination, and its denial of Indonesian claims to West New Guinea.

Views such as these represented the sense of a ‘new dynamism in Asia’ which provided commentators on the Left with a powerful image of independence, nationalist reformism and international neutrality. As a leaven to the limitations of domestic politics and cultural life, there was a sense in which Asia provided a vehicle for intellectual self-affirmation. Prompted by the presence of Colombo Plan students, the universities in the 1950s were especially receptive to a new image of Asia. Student newspapers devoted much coverage to topics such as ‘The Asian Mind Today’, or issued manifestoes demanding that Australians must appreciate Asian culture as ‘a different quality of life’ before ‘the Western world’ swept it away. ‘Asia Week’ at the University of Melbourne in 1956 featured Toynbee as guest speaker, and prompted Peter Russo to proclaim that ‘if you’re under thirty, and haven’t yet nailed your slogans to the mast, you have a far better chance of understanding what Asia is going to mean to us’. Several literary anthologies of the period sought to integrate Asian and Australian writing, indicating both ‘the life and spirit’ of these new nations, yet also the need to preserve ‘national integrity’ within this exchange. In these cultural evocations, Asia was essentially unified, an essence to be appreciated rather than the scene of internal political and economic change. As such, it was a poor medium for Leftist criticism, but served a conservative insistence on social stability very well.

For the advocates of Moral Rearmament, including prominent Labor parliamentarians, industrialists and members of the armed forces, the Christian ‘ideology’ was the solution to hatred and uncertainty in Asia. Catholic intellectuals in particular saw in Asia potential for a new triumph of the faith: the possibility of defeating communism in a context which remained reverential of matters of spirituality and

---

222W. Macmahon Ball, Nationalism and Communism in East Asia, Melbourne, 1955 edn., pp.2-3.


225Honi Soit, 24 August 1953. pp.4-5.


227‘Asia Week’, Farrago, 16 July 1956, pp.3-4; Russo, ‘Asia is a Challenge to Youth’, 5 March 1956, p.7


the communal aspects of life. In 1959 V. D'Cruz, a member of the Melbourne University Asian Group (the membership of which was overwhelmingly Australian), argued that Australia must develop the necessary 'radicalism' to reform Asia since Europe had fallen into introversion and sloth. Christianity, D'Cruz observed, flourished only in village societies, not in the cities: this was as true in Australia, as B.A. Santamaria's National Catholic Rural Movement advocated, as it was in Asia. Village life provided balance between the spiritual and the material, the responsibility of the individual to the group, and between authority and innovation. That village life might represent only a stage in economic development, and that it might itself be manipulated to serve political ends, as it was by Ngo Dinh Diem in Vietnam, did not seem to occur or matter to D'Cruz. When Diem toured Australia in 1957, it was the depth of his Catholic faith which was seen in press coverage to translate into an indication of the integrity of his authoritarian rule.

As idealised as this writing may seem, it drew upon an image of Asia which was deployed with great initiative by conservatives. Doubting that America could be relied upon to guarantee Australian security, B.A. Santamaria proposed the establishment of a 'Pacific Confederation' that would unite Australia with the 'free' nations of Asia and the South Pacific in a military and economic pact. Not only was the economic growth of Asia seen as crucial to international equilibrium, but such an alliance would demand social restructing in Australia in terms of a 'closely woven pattern' of defence policy, land settlement, and investment and consumption priorities. According to Santamaria, closer involvement with Asia necessitated a reallocation of Australian resources towards an emphasis on primary production - agriculture especially - which would end the superficial materialism of Australian life. There was no suggestion that Australia should reject its European heritage: on the contrary, the challenge to Chinese communism would

---


231 Bartholomew Augustine SANTAMARIA Born at Brunswick, Victoria, in 1915, and educated at the University of Melbourne, Santamaria became Assistant-Director (1937) and then Director (1947) of the National Secretariat of Catholic Action, and from 1943 to 1957 was President of the National Catholic Rural Movement, and then of the National Civic Council. Through these agencies, Santamaria maintained a steady, prolific programme of publicity and propaganda on a wide range of issues relating to the social principles of Catholicism.


236 There is no justification', Santamaria argued in this connection, 'for higher production of motor cars, television sets, and other products which are stimulated by hire-purchase with its concomitants - usury and wasteful advertising'. See Santamaria, 'A Pacific Confederation', *Quadrant*, vol.6, no.1, 1962, pp.33-4. As already noted, the practical aspect of such a proposal had already been suggested in 1953 by the National Security Resources Board in recognition of the importance 'our Allies' had placed 'on expanded Australian production of foodstuffs' to feed 'the troops and peoples of Asia' in time of war. See *Defence and Development*, p.25.
demonstrate 'the moral superiority of the Christian way of life'.

Towards the end of the 1950s such an image of Asia offered an alliance between the three forms of conservatism - defensive, interventionist and that of social consolidation - identified at the beginning of this chapter. By the early 1960s, provoked by Indonesian acquisition of Dutch New Guinea and antagonism to the creation of Malaysia, the attitude of many Australian commentators to the region began to be informed by a consideration of the need for greater national defence preparedness, particularly in the area of the 'South-East Asia gap' between Singapore and Manila, which no alliance filled. As the founders of the Australian Association for Cultural Freedom realised early in the 'fifties, Australian intellectual anti-communism would be derivative until it broke from a European focus and emphasised Australia's regional significance in the struggle for 'freedom'. In the late 'fifties the Association was keen to cultivate relations with other groupings associated with the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF) in Asia, and especially India. Ties to the Congress also provided Australian members of the Association with the chance to travel through Asia and to survey the strength of the opposition there to communist subversion. Returning from an CCF sponsored tour of India in 1961, James McAuley demonstrated the selectivity of the analysis fostered by an organised itinerary and prevailing assumptions. Indian neutrality was seen against a background of a culture unable to comprehend the ethical centrality of 'the human person': McAuley described India as a place where Buddhist 'cliches in stone' and 'stereotypical Islamic mosques' were inappropriate to a society which needed to acknowledge both individual values and the need to take a political stand in regional affairs.

Not even more pragmatic commentators at the end of the decade escaped the legacy of these stereotypes.

---

237 Santamaria, 'A Pacific Confederation', p.27. See also Santamaria, 'The Holt Stereotype', Quadrant, vol.9, no.4, 1967, pp.54-63. It is worth stressing the extent to which such foreign policy proposals were integrated with domestic social critiques in a fairly dynamic way, rather than simply assuming that they were Cold War expedients, as has been suggested by Humphrey McQueen, 'Living With Asia', Arena, 26, 1971, pp.21-2.


239 The character of the commentary offered by the AACF in its early years - often little more than material reprinted from European journals - can be assessed in its first bulletin, Free Spirit. Some essays by Australian writers on European themes include W.C. Wentworth 'Recent Trends in the Communist Line', vol.2, no.8, 1956, pp.3-4; James McAuley, 'Reflections on Poznan', vol.2, no.11, 1956, p.2. My comments on the establishment of the Australian Association are based on a survey of the AACF's papers, NLA Mss 2031. The Paris-based Congress for Cultural Freedom itself, as evident in its journal, Encounter, found in Asia a clear opportunity to wed its commitment to 'culture' to that of 'freedom'. For a history of the Congress, see Peter Coleman, The Liberal Conspiracy: The Congress for Cultural Freedom and the Struggle for the Mind of Post-War Europe, New York, 1989, esp. pp.146-53.

240 Asia figured prominently among the topics of discussion groups organised by the Association; it was also the subject of frequent articles in the Association's journal, Quadrant; in the mid-1960s the Association entered into negotiations with both the Congress and the University of New South Wales to establish an Asian Institute of International Relations - see AACF Papers, Box 45, Folder titled 'Executive Correspondence'.

241 As Humphrey McQueen later disclosed, the funding for these tours, and for other activities of the CCF, came from the United States' Central Intelligence Agency. See McQueen, 'Quadrant and the CIA' (1977) in McQueen, Gallipoli to Petrov: Arguing With Australian History, Sydney, 1984, 180-95.

'The great internal strain of our future may be between the Asianists and the traditional Westernists', Donald Horne suggested in an early issue of his 'radical conservative' Observer, launched in 1958: that at least, he argued, would replace the anachronism of the Capital-Labour debate in a society which had become completely managerial. While insisting that the very notion of 'Asia' was a creation of those 'who have taken up old colonialist prejudices and turned them inside out', the Observer also recommended that the complexities of the region were so great that the best the West could do was play 'power politics' and support the most 'vigorous dictators'. In the journal's frequent vignettes of Asia, the options seemed to be either Western industrial modernisation or chaos: efficient policing or endemic brutality. Dismissing sentimentality on the one hand, the old stereotypes of East and West were upheld on the other:

Perhaps it would help us to get over the idea that there is something odd about Asian countries if we begin to think of ourselves as pioneers in this part of the world in the art of liberation.

In comments such as these, the culturalist conservatism of the beginning of the 'fifties provided the necessary foundations for the interventionist conservatism emerging at the decade's end. In a 1966 symposium on the Vietnam War, Horne juggled both rationalism and a kind of Orientalism in justifying continued intervention. Faced with uncertainties, he argued, 'we have probably become altogether too intellectually tricky in our approach to the problems of South-East Asia'; 'Asia being what it is', any commitment based on principle must in turn 'involve some sense of calculation about killing'.

Among the most frequent commentators on Asian affairs form the early 1950s into the final days of the Vietnam War, Geoffrey Fairbairn also sought to strip away much of the sentimentality that surrounded accounts of the region. Drawing on personal experience, he exposed the atrocities perpetuated by communist guerillas in Malaya. Rejecting an earlier interest in Toynbee's thesis that Western technology was responsible for social decay in Asia, he insisted that knowing something of warfare in the region proved that technology in Asian hands was perfectly capable of achieving Asian objectives. Fairbairn had no doubt that Western colonialism had created the instability that communism in Asia exploited, and that Western puppet regimes only fed discontent; yet he was convinced that Western democracies should maintain a basic humanitarian responsibility not to aid the 'emergence of Asia' but simply to ensure social stability. Again, the crucial issue was how that stability was to be defined, and amid the military escalations of the Vietnam War the conservative cultural stereotypes of the 'fifties were still present.

---

243 Donald Richmond HORNE Born in 1921 at Sydney, Horne was educated at the University of Sydney, and after serving in the AIF from 1941 to 1945, and a brief period as a Diplomatic Cadet, he moved into journalism. From 1945 to 1949 he worked for the Daily Telegraph in Sydney, and then moved to London until 1954. He returned to Sydney to edit the Weekend until 1961, and the Observer from 1958 to 1961.

244 'Has Australia Got a Chance?', Observer, 31 May 1958, p.228.


247 Horne, 'Living With Asia', 7 March 1959, p.143.


Fairbairn expressed admiration for the Indian radical, Jaraprakesh Narayan, a prominent member of the Indian Congress for Cultural Freedom, who attempted to scale industrialism to the norms and institutions of a local culture in 'a calmly critical rejection of certain elements of Western civilisation, particularly its imprisonment in fetters of urban growth'. For Fairbairn, Diem's 'strategic hamlets' policy in Vietnam also recognised 'that some kind of alternative society, conceived in terms of the Asian traditional society', was a 'necessity' in the war against communist subversion. A large part of Fairbairn's attraction to Asia was as an alternative social ideal to his perception of the bankruptcy of Western liberalism: that was what he advocated troops should go to defend. As the Vietnam War dragged on, that image of Asia, shared in some form by many Australian commentators in the 1950s, collapsed into yet another indictment of the West.

***

In early 1968 Fairbairn travelled again to Vietnam, leaving with the realisation that 'a huge miscalculation may have been made'. He felt he should be there among 'those young men who had never heard of Vietnam until people like me talked about it'. Other commentators who had urged Australian involvement in Asia through the 1950s also began to reassess the situation in the years of the Vietnam War. In 1948 Denis Warner had spoken of the ties throughout Asia of a 'fundamental Orientalism', and written a series of popular books on the Indo-Chinese War proclaiming that 'Asia can be saved'. In 1969 he admitted that 'South Vietnam was not a domino in 1954, but a termite ridden half-country ready to crumble'. The Australian people, Warner added, had been consistently misled and underinformed by their Government; Australian soldiers had fought with great skill and determination in a war that was fundamentally miscalculated. While not all conservatives went through similar reappraisals, 'cold analysis' became more characteristic in the understanding of international affairs than the 'impressionism, even allegory' Fairbairn had suggested to be more appropriate in 1954. The basic terms of commentary, however - of securing authority in Asia - were slower to change. The presence of Asia in Australian intellectual life in the 1950s provides one revealing index to the themes which will recur in this thesis: the forms of Cold War insecurity; the widespread collapse of liberal values in social analysis into abstractions of social stability; a changing perception of Australia's place in the world. Responses to change in Asia can be seen to relate, directly or indirectly, to a process of realignment among intellectuals themselves, in which an inter-war tolerance for reform initiated from above, was reassessed in the context of what seemed to be the greater need to ensure cultural stability in society. In making these reassessments, intellectuals drew on assumptions about the nature of authority, the relation of political or economic change to social stability, and about the threat or the opportunities represented by 'Asia', all of which were defined in the context of their own societies as much as with reference to the region. In 1968 F.K. Crowley, dismissed the notion of Australia as 'a part of Asia' as one of 'that ample basket of meaningless slogans which have from time to

251 See Coleman, The Liberal Conspiracy, pp.150-1.
252 Fairbairn, Revolutionary Warfare, p.77.
254 Letter sent to Angela Mercer, Fairbairn's sister, dated 11 February 1968, and lent to the author.
255 'Our Great Contribution', Herald, 29 December 1969; 'Blunders We Should Not Have Made', 30 December 1969
256 Fairbairn, 'Aspects of Post-War Burma', p.20
time been put into circulation'. Yet such slogans serve purposes and reflect beliefs. Australia's Asia in
the 1950s, for all its abstractions, was one product of the ways in which intellectuals and commentators
attempted to adjust to enormous changes in the world they knew.

Kensington, 1968, p.20
Chapter 2

'A Test of Our Quality as a Nation'

Australian commentary on Asia in the 1950s reflected the difficulties many intellectuals experienced in attempting to comprehend the dynamics of political change in a region which threatened national security. The discussion of the priorities for the Australian administration of Papua and New Guinea,1 on the other hand, related more directly to the values and institutions recommended for another people who were considered to be the responsibility of the Australian government, and under its control. The image of Asia was one of cultural stereotypes, and the conservatism of that image was expressed through the defensive manipulation of concepts of tradition and authority in an attempt to secure regional stability. In the case of commentary on New Guinea, a more constructive conservative element was implicit in the definition of those aspects of modern society - and of Australian society in particular - which were seen to be fit for a people whose traditions seemed incapable of meeting the demands of the modern world. The general themes of commentary in these two areas were similar. In both it was assumed that cultural forms must be shaped to contain the effects of economic development and political conflict - as if they were not the product of those processes. For Asia, these forms were framed by the necessity of political authority. In Papua and New Guinea, they related more basically to the units of social life: to education, social organisation, to law, to economic relations, and to permitted aspirations. Reflecting on over a decade of participation in the discussion of these forms, in 1961 James McAuley declared the challenge of New Guinea in these terms:

How were the New Guinea people going to step out of a decayed primitive culture, and embrace and make their own, in knowledge and habit, in inward acceptance and institutional result, those things that seem to be essential.2

In devising answers to these questions, it seemed to McAuley that 'New Guinea is a test of our quality as a nation'.3

---

1The official title of the administrative entities in the eastern half of the island of New Guinea - the area of Australian responsibility - changed in the period covered by this chapter. 'Papua', in the south-eastern quarter, was a British protectorate after 1884, and was transferred to Australia in 1902 (although this authority was not legally formalised until 1906). 'New Guinea', in the north-eastern quarter, a German colony also since 1884, was captured by an Australian Expeditionary Force in 1914, and in 1920 it was confirmed as an Australian mandate under the League of Nations. Until 1920 'Papua' and 'New Guinea' were administered separately. In 1949, post-war civilian administration was restored, and continued the dual administration of both territories established during wartime. The territory was known as 'Papua and New Guinea' until 1971, when 'Papua New Guinea' was formally adopted. 'Papua', 'New Guinea' and 'Papua and New Guinea' will be employed to refer to the specific governmental entities. For the sake of brevity, 'New Guinea' will be employed when the area is being discussed in a rather more abstract sense as an area of Australian responsibility.


By the end of World War Two the Australian administration of New Guinea extended back nearly half a century, and had established a ‘tradition’ based on the ‘protection’ of the ‘natives’ from the disruption of extensive contact with Europeans. While this tradition continued to influence post-war practice, it came under increasing pressure from three directions. First, there were the claims represented by another, less formal but pervasive tradition, dating from first European settlement in New Guinea, and expressing the ambitions of private enterprise groups for access to the territories. Second, there was the heightened awareness of the strategic significance of the area following the Japanese advance in 1942. Third, the Australian administration was gradually included in the increasing international scrutiny of colonialism and the insistence on the rights to self-determination of subject peoples. Each of these factors meant that discussion of New Guinea in the 1950s, while not the equivalent in scale of commentary on Asia, nonetheless touched on a range of significant issues of development and international obligation. As the Sydney Morning Herald argued in early 1950, ‘responsibility to the native peoples’ provided ‘incentive enough’ for Australian involvement in New Guinea; ‘national security’, however, was a more pressing concern, together with the intention of the Menzies government to ‘encourage private enterprise and foster production’. These three imperatives in commentary, coupled to the pervasive sentiment that the territory had become an ‘area ... sacred to Australia’, meant that the discussion of New Guinea in the 1950s drew responses from potentially conflicting areas, united only by the conviction that if New Guinea was to change, it should be in terms which preserved Australian interests and, if more abstractly, acknowledged Australian values. From these perspectives, New Guinea provides a revealing case study of the formation of post-war conservatism.

If discussion of Asia tended to abstractions of culture lacking clear strategies of application outside military intervention, then commentary on New Guinea, emphasising ‘inward acceptance and institutional result’, was more specific in its themes and objectives, and more closely associated with established agencies. These agencies were drawn into the realignments of wartime mobilisation, reconstruction planning, and the new political and economic pressures of the ’fifties. In this process, they can be associated with the conceptual realignment from ‘reformism’ to ‘adjustment’ discussed in this thesis. The scale of the process was small enough that personalities could dominate it, and give a clear direction to policy. Such a strong personal imprint was the case with Paul Hasluck’s term as Minister for Territories from 1951 to 1963. Further, much of the discussion of New Guinea reflected the orientations of a distinct body of knowledge, developing its own emphases in an Australian context: the discipline of anthropology. Each of these features contributed a focus to the discussion of New Guinea which was less evident in commentary on Asia, but similarly related to a fundamental uncertainty as to the relationship between social stability and economic and political change in the post-war period, and a desire to impose a cultural uniformity rather than to accept the inevitability of political differences in developing societies.

***

4SMH, 19 March 1950, p.2; 14 April 1950, p.3

5O’Sullivan, CPD, (Senate), vol.208, 13 June 1950, p.4062. Neil O’Sullivan was Minister for Trade and Customs, and Leader of the Government in the Senate.
In 1930 W.K. Hancock suggested that Australian responsibility for Papua and New Guinea had demonstrated a transition from colonial status to a level of national maturity. That maturity, he added, was underscored more by an ‘intense racial self-consciousness’ than by benevolent ideals or economic calculation. Much commentary on the territories in the inter-war years bears out his point. There was considerable pride among intellectuals, for example, in the ‘enlightened administration’ exercised by Australia in the area of ‘native policy’. The same commentators who interpreted Asia in terms of an evolutionary liberalism, looked to Australia’s role in Papua and New Guinea in terms of a controlled process in which racial characteristics, demographic change, social hygiene and monitored economic expansion, could be drawn into an intellectual synthesis, and managed by a reformist state. If ‘native peoples’ in New Guinea, unlike Asian societies, were seen to lack a dynamism or authority of their own, then great care was to be exercised in devising a pace of change which was appropriate to them. Australia’s administrative priorities had not slipped to crude exploitation - as some had feared they would - but ‘consistently taken the higher view ... that natives are something very much more than an asset - they are a grave responsibility’. Observations such as these reinforced an intellectual role of guidance, to be exercised in relation to government. As Hancock suggested, however, the premises informing a projected social unity in New Guinea could seem ‘insular’, and to suggest a defensive pre-occupation with stability for its own sake. While New Guinea might have been a laboratory for reform for inter-war intellectuals, it was perhaps also subject to the cultural and institutional limitations of that reformism, based on management rather than development. It could be added that even private interests, opposed to government controls, seemed to favour smaller scale enterprises over the more extensive exploitation of human and material resources.

The central focus for commentary in the 1920s and 1930s was inevitably Hubert Murray, who had come to British New Guinea (Papua) as Chief Judicial Officer in 1904, and who served as Australian Lieutenant-Governor of Papua from 1908 to 1940. Murray arrived just as an Australian administration looked to the acquisition of responsibility for Papua with expectations of developing its agricultural and mineral wealth. The British had treated the territory, it seemed, as an ‘extensive and expensive ethnological museum’: Australian could not afford this luxury, and nor was such a strategy seen to be of benefit to white

6William Keith HANCOCK Born in Melbourne in 1898, and educated at the University of Melbourne and at Oxford, Hancock was appointed Professor of Modern History at the University of Adelaide in 1924. He left there in 1933 to take the Chair in History at the University of Birmingham, and then the Professorship of Economic History at Oxford in 1944. In the late 1940s Hancock was one of four academic advisers in the planning of the A.N.U., but he remained in Britain, becoming the Director of the Institute of Commonwealth Studies in London in 1949. Then in 1957 he was appointed the Director of the Research School of Social Sciences at the A.N.U., holding that position until 1961.


10‘Australian Administration in Papua’, Round Table, vol.15, June 1925, pp.573-82.

11Hancock, Australia, p.241.

12John Hubert Plunket MURRAY Born in Sydney in 1861, educated at Oxford and at the Inner Temple, Murray returned to Australia in 1886, and worked as a barrister, judge’s associate and parliamentary draftsman, before his appointment to British New Guinea. He died in 1940.
settlers or to the Papuans themselves. For Murray, the concept of a 'dual mandate', addressing the interests of natives and settlers alike, provided a balanced model for policy. Yet while clear in principle, such a model proved difficult to apply. Because Papuan resources often duplicated commodities more accessible elsewhere, the territory did not invite comprehensive forms of economic exploitation. With a small staff, a white population which stabilised for the inter-war period at around 1,000, and a strictly limited budget allocated from a section in the Prime Minister's Department dealing with external territories, Murray was restricted in what he could achieve as Governor in either area of the 'mandate'. He argued that there could be no extension of European settlement into areas which were not under government influence and regular policing, and therefore safe for both Europeans and Papuans. By force of circumstance rather than by any exclusive policy, Murray came to be seen by some settlers as obstructing rather than furthering their ambitions in the development of the territory.

It was on this basis that Murray established the policy guidelines which appealed to many intellectuals as 'entirely original'. His approach confirmed the themes of their reformism: a sense of the inherent instability of a private economy, and of the need to define structures of local responsibility from above. The essential element of his guidelines was the 'protection' of Papuans from the potential disruption of village economies and customs through labour recruitment to serve European plantations. This protection, however, was coupled to the imposition of European forms of government onto the village unit. With a perception of the extreme backwardness of Papuan society, Murray confided in 1913 that 'any white community left with absolute power over "natives" would resort to slavery within three generations'. While he was attracted by the principles of 'indirect rule' developed by Lord Lugard in Africa, in which aspects of colonial authority were delegated to traditional leaders, the same sense of backwardness meant that any such delegation in Papua would be restricted, and extended to 'village constables' selected by the authorities in the absence of more clearly defined figures of traditional authority. Protecting the Papuans meant that except in those practices, such as cannibalism and sorcery, which were opposed to fundamental European principles, the direction of economic and social development should be based on preserving village society.

What most specifically impressed commentators on Murray's administration was that he sought to base his priorities around a disciplined form of academic enquiry: anthropology. Here was a senior

---


15Nelson, 'Murray', p.647.

16West, Hubert Murray, pp.87-8.

17'Australian Administration in Papua', p.576.

18Quoted in West, Hubert Murray, pp.138, 143.

19See West, Hubert Murray, ch.8; J.D. Legge, Australian Colonial Policy: A Survey of Native Administration and European Development in Papua, Sydney, 1956, pp.137-9. Murray's interpretation of Papuan circumstances was confirmed in reports on New Guinea submitted to the Mandates Commission, which identified the situation there as, in Lord Hailey's words, 'radically different' from the administration of other 'native peoples'. See Introduction to L.P. Mair, Australia in New Guinea, London, 1948, p.xi.
governmental official not only outlining programmes congenial to the assumptions and interests of intellectuals, but actively seeking to integrate an academic discipline within those programmes. Anthropology provided a formal body of knowledge which was not confined to specific strategies, but outlined a more general role for intellectuals in social analysis. Far from favouring the 'preservation' of 'primitive' societies, Murray saw a need to assess the impact of European values and techniques on the stability of Papuan communities in essentially functionalist terms. Unlike the evolutionary precepts informing much nineteenth century anthropological enquiry, assessing cultures with reference to an unfolding process of 'civilisation', functionalists understood culture as a pattern of organised and inter-related institutions and practices, reflecting either biological or derived needs, or structural continuities in society. In this way, anthropology would provide an analysis assisting the management and control of societies in the process of adaptation. To oversee this process, Murray not only maintained his own interest in the discipline, but successfully campaigned for the appointment of a Government Anthropologist - a position filled in 1922 by F.E. Williams.

Williams worked in Papua until his death in 1943, and was one of the formative influences on a distinctly Australian emphasis in anthropology, adapting functionalist theory to an assimilationist practice. He encouraged the 'fair knowledge of social anthropology' which was noted among Papuan patrol officers, some of whom 'contributed ... not infrequently [to] anthropological journals'. Williams, like Murray, was committed to the 'practical' application of his discipline. Assisting in the government of a population with little internal political structure of its own, and nothing other than its labour with which to trade, Williams insisted that 'culture' mattered only to the extent that it could be managed through a process of 'maintenance', 'expurgation' and 'expansion' as natives were gradually introduced to European society. While the English language, for example, must become common usage, Williams criticised the intrusion of agencies and practices which assumed that Papuans might participate more-or-less immediately in European forms, including in that criticism Christian missionaries and the

---


21Francis Edgar WILLIAMS Born in Adelaide in 1893, Williams was educated at the University of Adelaide and then as a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford after serving in France and the Middle East from 1915-1918. Throughout his time in Papua, Williams maintained an active research programme and compiled an extensive list of scholarly publications. He died in an aeroplane accident in Papua in 1943.


24Murray was generally not inclined to place expertise over local experience in appointing his staff. See Mair, Australia in New Guinea, p.12; also West, Hubert Murray, pp.216-8; and Elkin, 'Obituary - F.E. Williams', p.92. A collection of Williams major anthropological essays is available in Williams, The Vailala Madness and Other Essays (E. Schwimmer, ed.), St Lucia, 1976.

'Europeanisation' of customs in cases such as the wearing of uniforms by Papuan functionaries. It was clear to him that basic racial differences would never be overcome. In 1928 he cautioned against beliefs in the 'eventual equality' of Papuan with European on the basis that 'we cannot shut our eyes to racial antipathy' between 'British' settlers and 'natives'. While Williams was prepared to envisage the formation of native elites, 'native protection' was based on the containment of change within the 'sober Toryism' of gradualism and imposed European forms.

In 1930 the status of anthropology in Australia itself was significantly enhanced in the launching of Oceania, 'a journal devoted to the study of the native peoples of Australia, New Guinea and the islands of the Pacific'. Oceania was one indication of the professionalism and extent of anthropological fieldwork then being conducted in Australia and the region. The institutional centre of this work was the Department of Anthropology, established at the University of Sydney in 1925, partly to offer training to New Guinea patrol officers. In 1926 the Australian National Research Council established an anthropology committee, subsidised by the Rockefeller Foundation, which already sponsored research and funded the Sydney Chair. At one level, this recognition of the discipline reflected a growing interest in its subject matter. As a part of a more general consciousness of the 'social problems' of a modern nation, anthropology should be seen in the context of the campaigns of publicists against the living conditions of Aborigines. At another level, this recognition also suggested an attraction to the methods or assumptions of the form of inquiry itself. Support for Murray and Williams in the 'twenties had already indicated a predisposition among intellectuals for functionalist precepts of managing social change through the

26Griffiths, 'The Career of F.E. Williams', pp.54, 66, 97. In the 1943 Official Handbook of the Territory of New Guinea, Canberra, 1943, the role of the Governor Anthropologist was defined in these terms: 'freedom of conscience is guaranteed to the native under the mandate ... the native is no more coerced by the Administration into civilisation than he is into civilisation. Such native practices as are not repugnant to public order and morals ... are not to be interfered with by the Administration .... In this connection, the Anthropologist plays an important part, though he does not devote himself solely to the more academic phases of his science': p.287.

27F.E. Williams, 'The Blending of Native and European Cultures', 1928 ANZAAS address, quoted in Griffiths, 'The Career of F.E. Williams', p.104.

28Griffiths, 'The Career of F.E. Williams', p.149.

29John Mulvaney records that the inclusion of anthropology as a foundation section at the 1888 inaugural meeting of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science was 'unduly optimistic'. Early papers, often presented by missionaries, were little more than 'ethnological gleanings'; yet Mulvaney describes the period 1890-1905 as something of a 'golden age' of 'intensive regional fieldwork and publication which impinged upon European intellectual history' - especially that of Emile Durkheim and James Frazer. See D.J. Mulvaney, 'Australian Anthropology and ANZAAS: "Strictly Scientific and Critical"' in Roy MacLeod (ed.), The Commonwealth of Science: ANZAAS and the Scientific Enterprise in Australasia 1888-1988, Melbourne, 1988, pp.200-202. See also A.P. Elkin, 'A New Anthropological Society', Oceania, vol.29, no.3, 1959, pp.227-8.


selective manipulation of cultural forms. *Oceania* was explicitly based on this model as an intellectual strategy not necessarily confined to 'native' societies:

Any culture is an integrated system constituting an adaptive mechanism by means of which a portion of the human species secures for itself a possible and more-or-less satisfactory existence in a given environment. The function of any element of culture, of any institution or custom or belief, is the specific part it plays in this adaptive system.32

'Every people', the Editorial continued, 'has its own collective life as a group, its social, economic, intellectual and spiritual life'. With direct reference to 'the administrator and educator amongst native peoples', it was argued that they 'are engaged in modifying a culture':

Only when we have a fair understanding of how the culture works as a functioning system can we know how to set about producing any particular modification that may be desired or avoid bringing harm or even disaster to the people themselves by our interference.

In continuity with Williams' assumptions, there was no implication of the static 'primitive' society in *Oceania*. Of Aboriginal society it was accepted that it might well be 'doomed to extinction as a race' and must be documented for posterity; anthropologists in New Guinea, on the other hand, might provide lessons to be applied in similar situations throughout the region.33 Change was inevitable; it had to be controlled.

For many participants in this institutional consolidation of anthropology, it seemed that the 1930s provided a great opportunity to 'ameliorate the appalling conditions of Australian aborigines'.34 In rhetoric at least, Aborigines were seen as one among many underprivileged groups in a society challenged to improve both its welfare services and, more pragmatically, the efficiency of its resources. Within the broad span of developmentalism, Aborigines might, in certain areas, be attributed the value of 'machinery';35 racial eugenicism also incorporated them as a component in the nation's 'health'. In this frame of reference, policy could claim the backing of anthropological 'science' without having to deal with the politicisation of objectives which would arise during wartime and reconstruction, and the increasing impingement of Aboriginal communities on urban society in the 1950s and 1960s. For reformist commentators, anthropological models in the 1930s contributed their own emphases to an intellectual role of management from above. Through this emphasis, enquiry was steered in distinct directions. The institutional dominance of A.P. Elkin,36 Professor in Sydney from 1934, was reflected in a marked preference for individual projects in social anthropology rather than for interdisciplinary studies of the forms of aboriginal culture or history.37 These studies of specific groupings under pressure of contemporary change did not challenge

---


34See for example Ronald Berndt, 'The Changing Face of Aboriginal Studies; Some Personal Recollections' in Grant McCall (ed.), *Anthropology in Australia: Essays in Honour of Fifty Years of 'Mankind'*, Sydney, 1982, p.51

35See the use of this term of those Aborigines whose labour was crucial to the Northern Territories cattle industry in *The Aboriginals and Half-Castes of Central Australia and North Australia* (Report by J.W. Bleakley), Melbourne, 1929, p.7.

36Adolphus Peter ELKIN Born in Sydney in 1891, and educated at the University of Sydney and then the University of London. Trained as an Anglican Minister, Elkin was Warden of St John's Theological College from 1919-1921. He received an ANRC Fellowship from 1927-1931 for fieldwork in north-west and South Australia, and was Chairman of the ANRC's Committee of Anthropology from 1933 to 1948. Elkin edited *Oceania* from 1933 to his death in 1979. During his academic career, he was prominent in the Association for the Protection of Native Races, Aborigines Welfare Board, Social Science Research Council, Australian Museum, and the Senate of the University of Sydney.

assimilationist principles, especially as they were incorporated into the more co-ordinated policy guidelines of State and Commonwealth authorities dealing with Aboriginal groupings evaluated by 'caste' or 'blood'. Many academic and philanthropic groups involved in aboriginal welfare in this period accepted that the future of aborigines was inevitably one of incorporation into white society. An ahistorical assumption that aborigines must eventually abandon their 'collapsed' culture thus subsumed critical analysis of whatever role internal diversity, economic opportunity or cultural adjustment might play in shaping relations between Aboriginal and European groupings.

New Guinea added a greater element of formal administration to these anthropological models. Given the lack of extensive economic development, even in the limited areas where Europeans were established, Papua offered anthropologists conditions less dominated by the assumption of one culture dying out to another. Even so, their role was not uncontroversial in its mediation between official policy and economic development. In a series of articles in the *Sydney Morning Herald* in 1932, Ian Hogbin, then a Lecturer in Anthropology at the University of Sydney with extensive research experience in Papua, praised the new scientific professionalism of anthropology as applied in the Australian territories. 'The anthropologist believes', Hogbin argued, 'that the wisest plan is to retain much of this old culture and replace it very gradually'. Hogbin's assessment drew a sharp response from J.T. Bensted, Director of Public Works in Port Moresby and a member of the Papuan Executive Council. 'Actually Papua has nothing to learn from Anthropology', Bensted insisted; development was hindered by 'the domineering attitude taken up by its votaries'. Bensted's department trained its own 'natives' in useful skills rather than preparing them for some vague future: 'our trainees, while knowing nothing of geometry, could use a hammer and a chisel'. Bensted claimed to at least recognise 'the limitations of the native mind'.

Such clashes were common as anthropologists in both Australia and New Guinea commented on patterns

---

38 The clearest expression of this co-ordination was the proceedings of a conference convened by the Commonwealth government in Canberra in 1937, attended by representatives from the Commonwealth Department of Territories and the Chief Protectors and relevant boards dealing with aborigines from all states - except Tasmania - and the Northern Territory. See Hasluck, *Shades of Darkness*, pp.66-8.


42 *Herbert Ian Priestley HOGBIN* Born in Yorkshire in 1904, and educated at Fort Street Boys' High School, Sydney, and then at the University of Sydney and the University of London, Hogbin was appointed Lecturer in Anthropology in Sydney in 1931. He participated in several anthropological expeditions in the south-west Pacific and New Guinea, and served in the Solomon Islands and then in New Guinea with the A.I.F. as an adviser on rehabilitation. In 1946 Hogbin was appointed as an instructor at the Australian School of Pacific Administration until 1948, when he returned as Reader to the University of Sydney.

43 Ian H. Hogbin, 'Anthropology and the Native Problem', *SMH*, 15, 17 September 1932, pp.8, 12; Bensted, 24 September, p.8; Hogbin, 28 September, p.8.
of labour, law and custom which had developed between Europeans and 'natives' often under pressure of
necessity and expediency. While it may have been characteristic of European anthropologists in Africa in
the 1920s and 1930s to express criticism of colonial interference with local communities, such criticism
was much less evident among Australian anthropologists. In New Guinea they were dependent on
government, often working within official guidelines. Among Aborigines they seem to have accepted
some form of conviction that, as a threatened race, their subject needed either drastic 'preservation' or
steady incorporation into white society. As Hogbin’s exchange with Bensted suggested, the critical
orientation of Australian anthropologists was perhaps more to the conflicts between the role of the
administration and claims of private interests, than it was to the relationship of the subject society to its
administrators. This association was from unusual among Australian intellectuals at that time, who looked
to the state for reform, and this conceptual association with social management was to become even closer
in the 1940s when Elkin’s Department became a centre attempting to co-ordinate the application of
sociological technique to the engineering of wartime morale.

If official policy and anthropology were areas in which Australian intellectuals could see some
application of reformist ideals, they were not the only areas of Australian involvement in New Guinea in
which distinctive intellectual syntheses were generated. There was also another less formal but pervasive
interpretation of Australia's responsibility in the territories, generating its own intellectual formulations of
the relationship between race and social change. As a settlement on the periphery of its parent culture, the
form of European society in Papua and New Guinea reflected back an exaggerated but penetrating image of
Australian society itself. For private settlers, a racial categorisation in terms of utility was more relevant
to their interests than an evolutionary model. Both forms of analysis, however, confined analysis to the
extremes of 'native' and 'European', with nothing other than their own interests to mediate between them.
In the 1920s, expatriates in Port Moresby secured themselves in an increasingly comprehensive legislative
segregation from Papuans in terms of amenity, conduct and rights, at once insecure and apparently unaware
of the implications of European presence in the territory. As the novelist, Beatrice Grimshaw, portrayed
them, expatriates were 'White Australian to the roots of [their] soul[s]', and far removed from the base
sexuality of the 'brown races'. After World War One, New Guinea was seen as a 'prize' for Australian
settlers, and in 1930 a Sydney journalist, R.W. Robson, launched the Pacific Islands Monthly to express his

---

44 For example, in 1944 Ronald and Catherine Berndt were appointed as anthropologist-welfare officers
by the British-based firm Vesteys, which relied extensively on Aboriginal labour on large cattle stations in
the Northern Territory. As it became clear that the Berndt's findings on the working conditions of
Aborigines were likely to be unfavourable, their relations with Vesteys deteriorated. They resigned in 1946
following a request that they recruit aborigines for the firm. Without being 'radical' themselves, it seems
that the nature of their inquiry could only be inherently critical. See Berndt, 'The Changing Face of
Aboriginal Studies', pp.52-4.

45 Wendy James, 'The Anthropologist as Reluctant Imperialist' in Talad Asad (ed.), Anthropology and

46 Donald Denoon offers a suggestive consideration of this proposition in Denoon, 'The Isolation of

47 Amirah Inglis, Not A White Woman Safe: Sexual Anxiety and Politics in Port Moresby 1920-1934,
Canberra, 1974.

48 For a critical study of Grimshaw, see Eugenie and Hugh Laracy, 'Beatrice Grimshaw: Pride and
faith in the future for trade, mining and agriculture in the region. Over the next three decades and beyond, the Monthly provided a consistent voice for private enterprise, for the small company or self-employed planter against the claims of 'soul-less corporations'. As 'the natives become Europeanised', the Monthly projected, 'they provide a growing market for European foodstuffs and manufactured goods'. Further, 'as a semi-circle of good ports and handy bases', the region was 'essential to the future safety of the South Pacific section of the British Empire'. In these terms, however, the political future of the islands was ambiguous. While patriotic in sentiment, and in the 1950s an advocate of the incorporation of the territories as an Australian state, in the 1930s the Monthly also anticipated proposals for an independent Melanesian federation. Such 'close association', free from the 'evils associated with over-government', would unite Pacific settlers on the basis of common interests. These propositions scarcely involved the islanders or New Guineans themselves in any direct sense: they qualified only as 'cheap labour' and sometimes as 'savages'.

This commentary justified an Australian presence in terms that combined protection with private developmentalism. Rather than generating formal programmes of expatriate cultural or political independence, or of systematic exploitation of New Guinean labour, European agricultural ownership was defended against the intrusion of government and large industry. This ideal was significant in that post-war reformers would briefly attempt to shift much the same model of small farming - with all its political and economic limitations - across to New Guinean villagers themselves. One of Papua's most redoubtable publicists in the inter-war years, Lewis Lett, sought the preservation in the territory of 'the pioneering spirit' which was in danger of being 'smothered by a commercial age'. It was to be a frontier of character and values rather than of economic growth. Similarly, in the mid-1930s, the Pacific area was still being presented as an 'educational crusade' in journals such as Walkabout, launched by the Australian National Travel Association in 1934. In its pages, prominent writers implicitly appraised opportunities for

---

49Francis West has suggested that the Monthly was 'a popular and in some quarters influential organ of news and opinion'. See West, 'Robson, R.W.' in P. Ryan (ed.), Encyclopedia of Papua and New Guinea, vol.2, Melbourne, 1972, p.1017. Improved communications and transport, Robson argued, meant that Europeans might increasingly 'enjoy the benefits of climate, soil fertility, cheap labour and the charm of sunshine and colour' with no disadvantage to either their social or their business lives: Editorial, Pacific Islands Monthly, vol.1, no.1, 1930, p.1.

50Its first campaign was mounted in defence of 'the sweat and hopes of industrious men' whose copra plantations, hard hit by the Depression, were being bought out by Unilever. See 'Opportunities in New Guinea', vol.1, no.1, p.8. See also R.W. Robson, 'Why and How I Established the Pacific Island's Monthly', vol.25, no.12, 1955, p.4.


52Lewis LETT Born in Yorkshire in 1878, Lett was qualified as a marine and civil engineer. He arrived in Papua in 1910 with the British New Guinea Development Company, and published seven books from 1935 to 1949 during a varied professional career as an engineer, an oil prospector, a company director, and a correspondent for Reuters, the Blackwoods and Cornhill magazines, and in 1963 for the Australian Encyclopedia.

53Lewis Lett, Papuan Achievement, Melbourne, 1942, p.7. Lett's papers in the National Library include a mass of notes, essays, short stories, anthologies of quotations and reading lists relating to a highly intellectualised sense of Australia's mission in Papua. See Lett Papers, NLA Mss 2039, esp. Folder 9. The last of his books was a hagiographic biography of Murray; earlier works included histories of exploration, guides to resources, and a collection of stories recording 'savage' life before it was 'overlaid by at least a superficial layer of civilised habit'. See H.M. Green, A History of Australian Literature, vol.2, Sydney, 1985, p.1255.

54Chas Lloyd Jones, 'The Why and the Wherefore', Walkabout, vol.1, no.1, 1934, p.7
national expansion. Of the Aborigines living in the Kimberleys, Ion Idries observed ‘he is killing himself off very rapidly’: ‘soon that wild country ... will know him no more’. The Mount Hagen people of New Guinea, on the other hand, although ‘a warlike and primitive people’, were praised for their orderly gardens and villages and the domestication of animals: an impression of economic potential. Subsequent articles in Walkabout reinforced these stereotypes, and even official publications emphasised that the welcome tourist would meet ‘stalwart young Australians’ and ‘pleasant-spoken natives’, keen to trade. In contrast to Aborigines, who would die and pass the possession of their country in its grandeur to Europeans, New Guineans invited development in the terms set by their racial character.

For all their differences, Murray, the anthropologists and the settlers supported an Australian presence in New Guinea in terms of very gradual developmentalism. If reform was their objective, then that would occur through a slow guided evolution from ‘native’ society to European forms, though equality or independence were not foreseen. If economic gain mattered more, an ethic of ‘pioneering’ justified small plantations. Throughout the inter-war years there was nothing to challenge, and little to support, either objective: assumptions settled into familiar patterns. Murray expressed deepening frustration both with the general indifference among senior Commonwealth politicians to the territory, and with the poor quality of public servants with whom he dealt. The meagre grants made by the Australian government compounded the economic limitations inherent in local conditions. In contrast to changing theories of colonial practice elsewhere, the early promise of Papua as ‘an example of enlightened rule’ had been lost by the end of the 1930s, and seemed to some international observers to have come to resemble ‘police rule’ rather than ‘indirect rule’ in its fixation on stability. The impact of external events in the 1940s ended the extent of political indifference to the territories, yet the entrenched intellectual formulations of the inter-war years were not completely swept aside in this process.

***

The Japanese invasion of New Guinea in January 1942 had two effects: it consolidated an emphasis on administrative control, and greatly increased the extent to which village life was disturbed by either a Japanese or Australian presence. These two features had wide-ranging consequences, whether in terms of the conscription of labour in unprecedented numbers to assist soldiers, an immediate confrontation of villagers with modern technology, or a much greater popular Australian interest in the future of the

55Ion L. Idries, 'The Kimberleys', vol.1, no.1, p.33.

56Editor, 'Undiscovered New Guinea', vol.1, no.1, pp.17-19. In other examples of this pattern of analysis, Charles Chauvel evoked an atmosphere of sexual allure in Tahiti, the undertone of which was that Tahitians themselves were doomed in the racial mixing of ‘white’ with ‘yellow’. See Charles Chauvel, ‘Tahiti To-day’, vol.1, no.1, p.35. Yet the Maoris, who ‘stood up for themselves’ and possessed a strength of ‘faith, custom and culture’, had earned a place in the economic and political future of New Zealand. See Eric Ramsden, ‘The Maori - Yesterday and To-day’, vol.1, no.1, p.39.


59For an assessment of these limitations, particularly in relation to the attempt to establish plantations, see Amarshi et al, ch.2.; also Michael J. Trebilcock, The Role of the Private Sector in the Economic Development of Papua New Guinea, Port Moresby, 1983, p.5.

60Mair, Australia in New Guinea, pp.xvi, 12-13, 45.
In all areas, an expectation of continued change resulted from these experiences. At an intellectual level, the major effect of the war was the inclusion of policy for Papua and New Guinea in the agenda of post-war reconstruction. In that reformist context, commentary revealed a search for priorities in social management, state responsibility, and political and economic direction. Shortages of resources, however, and the legacy of the inter-war years, were not easily overturned.

As the Japanese withdrew, the operations of the body established to assist the military campaign as the first combined administration of the two territories, the Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit (ANGAU), began to address needs in areas from medical services to education. Yet ANGAU was essentially a product of the war, and neither it, nor the pre-war bureaucracy, little changed despite reorganisation as a separate Department of External Territories, was seen to be appropriate to address the longer-term policy issues arising from the disturbance of war or from reconstruction idealism. In 1943 the Directorate of Research and Civil Affairs was established to advise on issues of policy and planning outside the established channels of consultation. The Directorate, the first co-ordinated attempt to analyse and recommend priorities for the territories, was one clear example of an intention to sustain the wartime mobilisation of expertise into peacetime reform. As such, it offers a particularly effective case study of the effect of post-war intellectual realignments on social analysis.

The Directorate was heavily academic in its personnel, including anthropologists (Hogbin, Stanner and

---

Peter Ryan estimates that between 40,000 and 55,000 adult males were under contract of service to the Australian Army at the height of the war, obviously drawn from only the unoccupied areas of population. See Ryan, 'ANGAU' in Ryan (ed.), vol.1, p.22. The consequences of this disruption were severe and enduring, but it is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss them in detail. For general surveys, see Mair, *Australia in New Guinea*, ch.10; Legge, *Australian Colonial Policy*, ch.13.


Camilla Wedgwood), 64 economists and lawyers (K.S. Isles, Julius Stone and J.R. Kerr). 65 In 1943, Hogbin and Wedgwood insisted that the interests of the 'natives' must be upheld, and that institutions of native authority should be identified and accorded more responsibility in government. Anthropological models must be applied 'without delay' to the issues of 'development and welfare'. 66 Stone added a 'politico-legal' dimension to this discussion. It was inevitable, he argued, that colonial and mandated territories would be drawn into an international search for markets and resources. In strict accordance with principles of trusteeship, then, it fell to a responsible power to balance protecting the interests of 'native peoples' while exercising sufficient guidance so that 'a "liberal" colonial settlement' did not leave such peoples open to the exploitation of others. 67 In 1945 Stone returned to the theme of the need for political influence in the Western Pacific without necessarily seeking 'aggrandisment': 'The withdrawal of imperialist pressures is one thing. The Balkanisation of the Pacific is another'. 68 In these terms, a commitment to the welfare of New Guineans was made in the context of long-term Australian control. A more specific inspiration was the British Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940, which had established substantial funds to be allocated to specific economic and social projects in the colonies. The Directorate similarly based its thinking on an expectation of unprecedented levels of funding and a governmental commitment to the

64 William Edward Hanley STANNER Born at Sydney in 1905, and educated at Parramatta High School, the University of Sydney (M.A.) and the University of London (PhD). Stanner worked in the Anthropology Department in Sydney from 1932 until 1936, when he returned to London to the School of Economics. From 1938 to 1939 he was a member of an Oxford expedition to Kenya, and then served with the A.I.F. in Europe and Borneo from 1942 to 1946. Between 1946 and 1947 he worked as a researcher for the Institute of Pacific Relations in Papua-New Guinea, Fiji and Western Samoa. In 1947 Stanner was appointed the first Director of the Makerere Institute of Social Research in Uganda, and in 1949 he moved to the ANU as a Reader in Comparative Institutions. He was the Chairman of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies Conference in 1961. Camilla Hildegarde WEDGWOOD Born in England in 1901, conferred M.A. by Cambridge University in 1927, in the following year she accepted a lectureship in anthropology at the University of Sydney. In 1930 Wedgwood went to Cape Town University, conducting fieldwork in Bechuanaland, and then on Manam island, east of New Guinea. She returned to Australia in 1934. From 1934 to 1943 she was the Principal of the Womens' College of the University of Sydney, during which time she also worked to assist European refugees. In 1944 she was commissioned into the Directorate, and joined ASOPA as a lecturer in anthropology in 1946, and then in education in 1948. Wedgwood represented the South Pacific Commission at a UNESCO conference in Paris in 1951. She died in 1955.

65 Keith Stanley ISLES Born in Tasmania in 1902, and educated at the University of Tasmania and at Cambridge. He held several academic positions in the United Kingdom before serving in the Australian CMF, attached to the Directorate from 1944 to 1945. He returned to the U.K. as the Professor of Economics at the Queen's University, Belfast, in 1945. Julius STONE Born at Leeds in 1907 and educated at Oxford, Leeds and Harvard Universities. In 1942 he was appointed the Challis Professor of International Law and Jurisprudence at the University of Sydney. In the late 'forties he was closely associated with the establishment of the Social Sciences Research Council, and represented Australia at the UNESCO General Conference in 1951. During the 'fifties Stone held visiting professorships at Columbia, Harvard and The Hague. John Robert KERR Born at Sydney in 1914, Kerr was educated at Fort Street High and the University of Sydney, and was admitted to the NSW Bar in 1938. Between 1942 and 1946 he served with the 2nd A.I.F. on secondment to the Directorate. He was appointed the first Principal of the Australian School of Pacific Administration in 1946, and was the Organising Secretary of the South Pacific Commission in 1948. In the same year he returned to the Bar, maintaining an interest in New Guinea through the South Pacific Council and the Council on New Guinea Affairs.


67 Julius Stone, Colonial Trusteeship in Transition ('Australia in a New World' - no.4), Sydney, 1944, pp.19, 24, 28.

eventual economic and political autonomy of New Guineans.69

These recommendations were met with alarm by established private interests in the territories which saw a clear threat to their enterprises. Nor were the moves by the Directorate to consolidate its influence on policy successful in integrating the planners and bureaucrats in Canberra with the practical application of their measures in Port Moresby. Plans for a Pacific Territories Research Council of senior public servants and academics, and even the appointment (from low on a list of applicants) of Colonel J.K. Murray,70 a member of the Directorate, as the first post-war Administrator of the combined territories,71 did not survive the relatively low political priority of New Guinea and a chronic shortage of staff.72 While the Commonwealth grant to the territories increased dramatically in the post-war years, most policy measures were based either on principles already accepted in British colonies, or on a sense of the need to restrain the pace of change.73 As one example of these 'catch-up' measures, in October 1945 all labour contracts between settlers and New Guineans were cancelled, with the intention of ending the indenture system. Yet this measure did not challenge the existing structures of the European plantation economy, or address 'areas of possible conflict between the European and the native economies'.74 What it did signal, however, was the preferred model of small-scale cash-crop farming which was to become central to policy debates in the 1950s,75 and which exacerbated an already pressing labour shortage for larger agricultural projects, let alone for technological advance.

Motivated by a desire to encourage levels of economic participation, these schemes also established political and conceptual boundaries to such activity. Cash-croppers were perhaps less likely to challenge Australian political or economic investments in the territory than a larger labour movement.76 Official encouragement was given to the foundation of producers' and consumers' co-operatives in villages as a


70Jack Keith MURRAY Born at Brighton, Victoria, in 1889, Murray was educated at the University of Sydney. After a series of positions at regional agricultural colleges, he was appointed to the Chair of Agriculture at the University of Queensland in 1927, and became a Fellow of the Australian National Research Council. As a Lieutenant-Colonel in the A.I.F., he was seconded to the Directorate. He served as Administrator of the territories until 1952.


73The grant increased from £252 700 in 1945-6 to over £3 million in 1948-9. On the other hand, there were 1,174 officers employed in June 1949 whereas the peak strength of ANGAU in 1945 had been more than 2000. See Jinks, 'Provisional Administration', p.980.

74Legge, Australian Colonial Policy, p.204. Mair suggests that the effect of these changes was to benefit larger firms which might recruit labour from a wider area, thus increasing periods of absence from villages: Australia in New Guinea, pp.213-6; Legge argued that, despite these reforms, 'the white capital and coloured labour antithesis inevitably tends to maintain the divisions between racial groups and to perpetuate the superiority of the one and the inferiority of the other': Australian Colonial Policy, p.210.

75For an indication of the persistence of this preference for 'a series of indivisible, individual (or biological family) holdings', see Downs, The Australian Trusteeship, pp.166-7.

76See Jinks, 'Provisional Administration', p.981; Amarshi, Development or Dependency, p.177.
stage in fostering economic skills. These co-operatives, however, also provided a focus for local aspirations which could be more easily controlled.\textsuperscript{77} A system of village councils introduced to encourage experience of local government did so within an imposed democratic form rather than through a process of adaptation from traditional society.\textsuperscript{78} The context for these reforms was not so much one of theoretical revision among administrators, but one in which many village leaders, drawing upon official rhetoric and their own wartime experiences of Australian values and practices, had begun to organise their own community ventures in the expectation of securing status and rewards equivalent to their Australian 'brothers'.\textsuperscript{79} While economic development was officially encouraged, political participation was conceded only within assumptions of long-term European management.\textsuperscript{80} Further, these policies met the resistance of settlers, the ambivalence of some patrol officers, and the limit/extent to which application was possible.\textsuperscript{81}

To some extent, then, post-war reforms took place within inter-war structures, provoking competition for resources rather than redistributing them. If the Directorate did not succeed in overcoming these obstacles in policy advice, it met more success in the educational field. In 1945 the Australian School of Pacific Administration (ASOPA) was established,\textsuperscript{82} beginning by offering three month training courses for administrative and patrol officers in Law, Anthropology, Government and Geography. To a large extent it was staffed by those with some experience in ANGAU and with the Directorate itself, and it inherited the suspicions of 'socialist' leanings which had been directed at those bodies by private interests in New Guinea.\textsuperscript{83} Elkin saw ASOPA as an affront to established methods and assumptions in anthropological training. Not only did the School threaten to usurp his department's own established role in training patrol officers, but its orientation was at variance with the paternalistic themes evident in Elkin's programme for post-war development in the South-West Pacific.\textsuperscript{84} ASOPA stressed its academic nature, requiring both teaching and research of its staff, and even anticipated incorporation with the proposed Australian National University.\textsuperscript{85}


\textsuperscript{78}Legge, \textit{Australian Colonial Policy}, pp.216f; 219-23.


\textsuperscript{82}ASOPA was initially known as the Land Headquarters School of Civil Affairs, and was based at Duntroon in Canberra. As ASOPA it moved to Mosman, Sydney, in 1947.

\textsuperscript{83}See for example: \textit{Pacific Islands Monthly}, vol.15, no.11, 1945, p.17.

\textsuperscript{84}For an indication of these themes, see Elkin, \textit{Wanted - A Charter for the Native Peoples of the South-West Pacific}, published in 1943; also Wise, \textit{The Self-Made Anthropologist}, pp.151-62.

\textsuperscript{85}For a succinct history of the School, see Ian Grosart, 'ASOPA', in Ryan (ed.), \textit{Encyclopedia of Papua}, vol.1, p.51. Kerr, the first Principal of the School, noted in 1946 that future plans envisaged 'a permanently established academic institution of university standard, specialising in teaching, training and research in colonial affairs': \textit{Monthly Notes and the School}, \textit{Monthly Notes}, vol.1, no.1, 1946, p.1 (ASOPA's journal was titled \textit{Monthly Notes} until September 1947, when it became \textit{South Pacific}). For the role of the Directorate in the foundation of the ANU, see Chapter Six. For a brief account of the School, see D. Wetherall and C. Carr-Gregg, \textit{Camilla: C.H. Wedgwood 1901-1955: A Life}, Kensington N.S.W., 1990, ch.10.
From the start it was clear that ASOPA saw the administration of New Guinea in the context of modern British colonial practice. Writing in the first issue of the School's journal in 1946, J.K. Murray insisted that 'the interests of the natives are paramount in any administrative sense': ASOPA's role was to educate officials in accordance with that principle. Early accounts of the School's position indicated that it went beyond official policy in favouring 'native' interests. Yet this reformist programme, drawing so explicitly on international models, was significantly modified in the 1950s as ASOPA faced an uneven flow of recruits, a reaction against its critical line of analysis, and a much more limited role following academic realignments in the course of the decade.

Early teachers at the School - McAuley, Wedgwood, A.T. Timperley, D.M. Feinburg (later Fenbury) and J.H. Wootton were prominent among them - were inspired by the concept of 'trusteeship', and by contemporary British moves to extend a level of self-determination to colonial populations. The School's journal, South Pacific, frequently carried contributions from prominent British scholars on African affairs. Beyond practical guidelines, ASOPA fostered a clear political critique. Welcoming the 'unspectacular revolution' in British colonial policy, McAuley observed the end of 'liberal capitalist theory' in favour of smaller schemes of economic development in the control of the people themselves. Wedgwood argued that 'native education' must break down 'essentially individualistic' expectations of technical skill and encourage a sense of welfare and community sufficient to meet the Western presence. Interpreting both the successes and failures of African examples, several articles argued for cautious labour and agricultural policies, attempting to find a mode of production which was not socially disruptive yet remained economically viable. From this scrutiny developed an almost unanimous advocacy of co-operative models. Already favoured in official policy by the Co-operative Societies Ordinance, passed in 1948, the system was described in a supplementary 'Law Review' to South Pacific as based on the Rochdale model, developed among Lancashire weavers to end the alienation of labour under capitalism. To save New Guineans from disruption was one thing; but the assumptions informing the discussion of co-operativism in the early 1950s indicated that the reformist desire to preserve 'native interests' could also encompass more conservative ideals of the form of social unit, and even ethical values, most appropriate to their perceived needs, and to the established assumptions of the Australian administration.

McAuley was South Pacific's most prolific advocate of co-operative models, associating them not just

87Stanner, The South Seas, p.104 and fn.28, p.111.
88David Marburg FENBURY Born at Perth in 1916, Fenbury worked in New Guinea as a patrol officer from 1937 to 1941 after graduating from the University of Western Australia. He joined the 2nd A.I.F. in 1942 and served in ANGAU with military distinction. From 1946 to 1949 he was seconded to the British Colonial Service in Tanganyika and London, returning to New Guinea to supervise the introduction of elected local government councils. In 1955 he was appointed Executive Officer in the newly-created Department of the Administrator, and was later promoted to Secretary. From 1958 to 1959 he represented Australia in the Trusteeship Bureau of the United Nations.
with economic strategy, but with a general social critique. A Master of Arts in English and Philosophy from the University of Sydney, McAuley had served as a patrol officer with ANGAU before joining the School, and exemplified the diverse expertise brought to bear upon New Guinea affairs in the immediate post-war years. His two-year course in Government at ASOPA included units on the problems of culture contact, underdevelopment and economic policy, constitutional law, local government, education, co-operatives, land, labour and agricultural policies, and relations with missions. In seeking such a synthesis, New Guinea prompted an 'intellectual crisis' for McAuley in the late 1940s:

I found myself at a sort of cross-roads, trying to pull together conclusions from sociology and anthropology ... but applying them ... to the understanding of, say, labour and land tenures or legal, administrative problems of economic development, and why it was so difficult to get them [New Guineans] to develop the kind of economic motivation and organisation that we would regard as the rational and necessary things.

An enthusiastic and dedicated teacher, McAuley's 'sympathy' for the 'New Guinea people' was beginning to lead to a deeper commitment to their assimilation into an inherently Western, Christian 'civilisation'.

In a 1948 article, 'Agricultural Development in New Guinea', McAuley outlined a comprehensive plan for economic modernisation which also indicated the political and social assumptions informing his concept of co-operatism. Opposing the plantation system's threat to village society, as he was elsewhere to reject the mooted introduction of a white 'yeomanry' of small-scale, soldier-settler farmers, McAuley offered a system of 'vertical co-operation' which would 'bring capital and managerial and technical skill on the one side into partnership with the small cultivator and his family on the other'. Methods of production were to be tailored to these social forms, and he conceded that even careful alterations in technique must have substantial consequences:

We may even suspect that sudden change of this sort can result in a profound psychic injury or dislocation with evil consequences for many generations - we are not certain that Europeans themselves are not suffering from some such traumatic shock as a result of the onset of industrialism.

Despite this dramatic reservation, McAuley observed that all Melanesian societies were so close to 'helpless decay' that only a complete acceptance of 'a new way of life' could save them from material and cultural impoverishment. He made such a point consistently throughout the 1950s, becoming more vehement as regional threats and his awareness of a 'power vacuum to our north' intensified. McAuley pronounced in 1953 that 'the direction of cultural change in Papua New Guinea must be a one-way assimilation of native life to Western culture as represented by Australia'. There was no room amid

---

93See the description of the course in the School's Handbook.

94James McAuley, interviewed by Catherine Santamaria for the National Library of Australia Oral History Programme, 5 May 1976, TRC 576/12, p.36.

95McAuley's effectiveness at ASOPA is conveyed in testimonies from both colleagues and students. See Peter Lawrence, quoted in Hank Nelson, Taim Bilong Masta, p.41; also James Sinclair, Kia: Australian Patrol Officers in Papua New Guinea, Sydney, 1981, p.14.


97See McAuley, 'White Settlement in Papua New Guinea', South Pacific, vol.5, no.12, 1952, pp.251-3. Here McAuley argued that the need was for more capital investment in large-scale production rather than for more people.


99McAuley, 'Agricultural Production', p.81.
competing nationalisms for another small, mendicant state 'in a painfully sensitive strategic region'.

However idiosyncratic in his emphases, McAuley offered one formulation of themes widely current in discussion at that time. For a few commentators, such as Cyril Belshaw co-operatives might be integral to 'the development of a new way of life', but were not an internally prescriptive social form: they would accommodate, and be transformed by, 'the native genius of the people'. Official policy guidelines, however, were closer to McAuley's idea of a more fundamental adaptation to European forms. The preference for the 'small cultivator and his family' was often expressed in discussions in the Department of Territories in 1950 in which 'the family unit' was described as integral to the 'preservation of the social framework pending gradual transition'. As Donald Denoon has observed, such policy not only sought to impose an inappropriate concept of the family upon New Guinean village society, but also expressed 'a social conservatism so profound that it left little scope for the development of capitalist relations of production' which were perhaps necessary to develop at least some structures for political advancement. The avoidance of capitalist exploitation and alienation was clearly McAuley's intention, but that defence had consequences not only on economic development, but also on political reform. In 1952 McAuley also opposed the collective ownership of property and extensive mechanisation of village production in an effort to maintain - or manufacture - the stability of the family unit. If fundamentally European economic forms were to be conceded gradually from above, then McAuley began to suggest that co-operatives were not in themselves capable of sustaining a 'complete political economy': inevitably, public and/or private systems must develop around them. To meet this need, as early as 1948 he had begun searching for alternatives to Papuan political independence:

British solutions, however instructive, are not necessarily applicable ... because the relation of New Guinea to Australia, geographically and politically, finds no parallel in the relation of any of the colonies to the United Kingdom. One is tempted to think that the old French dream ... of a unified polity and economy shared equally by the French citizens of whatever colour or origin, is the conception most suitable for application to New Guinea.

In 1961, McAuley reflected that it was in remarks such as these that he had 'initiated' discussion of the
political future of New Guinea, albeit 'in a rather unreceptive atmosphere'.\textsuperscript{107} The clearest his thinking came on this issue was in the principles he outlined in 1953:

the only effective future union open to New Guinea is union with Australia ... [as] a new state ... [with] the extension of citizenship and full political rights to all inhabitants.\textsuperscript{108}

New Guinea was an odyssey for McAuley, prompting his conversion to Catholicism, and providing the models of cultural analysis which were crucial to his emerging conservatism. The legacy of 'Western modernism', he cautioned, was often a 'psychic bewilderment ... which ... schooling and training do not prevent but may rather increase'. In 1955 in \textit{South Pacific} he insisted that the need in New Guinea policy was 'not for any sort of syncretism or equivalentism but for the loyal development from within' of traditions which gave unity to their societies. McAuley was aware that his position might be understood as expressing 'indifference to the physical wretchedness of millions of people', but he emphasised the need to keep societies from cultural disintegration.\textsuperscript{109} All that Australia had contributed to New Guinea in the past might have been 'police, gonorrhoea and Christianity';\textsuperscript{110} even so, the process could not be stopped mid-stream. Western modernity might offer alienation, but at least the traditional forms of Christian society suggested the 'possibilities of a reconciliation between liberty and authority, human freedom and divine decision, technical advances and social stability'.\textsuperscript{111} There are clear connections between this critique and the image of Asia, each sanctioning a form of intervention. In Asia this intervention was in the form of supporting authoritarian regimes; in New Guinea it served to suppress the emergence of co-ordinated political and economic organisation. In each case, the shift from reconstruction reformism to cultural themes reflected a general re-appraisal of the prospects for stable political change, and of the relations between economic and social agencies in such a process.

Whereas at the end of the war British colonial models had been held in favour by McAuley and his colleagues at ASOPA, it was clear by early 1950s that this enthusiasm had passed. At the same time, under the principled gaze of organised international opinion, and hoping to avoid escalating conflict, European nations sought to extricate themselves from their colonies. In devising the procedures for this withdrawal, Margery Perham, a prominent British scholar of Africa, distinguished the 'larger unities' of Asia, with their strength of culture and history, and their economic ties to the West, from Africa, where a past of 'primitive poverty' and 'tribalism' had to be replaced by a relationship with the West which was 'assimilative in the broadest sense'. The strategy adopted under these circumstances, she suggested, should stress the development of appropriate political forms for independence.\textsuperscript{112} This was a process followed with interest by Australian commentators, who saw it as another dimension of the 'challenge to the West' to bring 'statesmanship', 'courage and imagination' to issues of racial conflict.\textsuperscript{113} Yet such was the nature of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{107} McAuley, 'My New Guinea', p.170.
\item \textsuperscript{108} 'Australia's Future in New Guinea', p.254.
\item \textsuperscript{109} McAuley, 'What Must Be Developed?', vol.8, no.1, 1955, pp.3-5; see also 'The Distance Between Government and Governed', vol.7, no.8, 1954, pp.817-20.
\item \textsuperscript{110} McAuley, 'The Distance Between Government and Governed', p.5.
\item \textsuperscript{111} McAuley, 'The Clash of Cultures', \textit{Twentieth Century}, vol.11, no.1, 1952, p.36.
\end{itemize}
strategic threat, and of a sense of ‘mission’, that McAuley was far from alone in defining assimilation for New Guinea in more comprehensive terms than Perham intended. The proposal to incorporate the territory within the Australian nation was an extreme formulation of a wider tendency which drew on the idealistic conservatism of cultural preservation and the more pragmatic insistence on the necessity of Australian control.

Other contributors to South Pacific in the early fifties also demonstrated a steady qualification of the terms in which the future of ‘natives’ might be defined. In 1950 Lucy Mair, a British commentator who became interested in New Guinea following an invitation to lecture at ASOPA in 1945, insisted that for Africans ‘good government’ could no longer substitute for ‘self-government’: colonial authorities could only ensure political stability through offering solid educational foundations to emerging elites.114 South Pacific’s surveys of contemporary colonial developments, however, began to note the troubled context of this process, and to reassess its relevance to New Guinea. Attention was directed to the exploitation of power by minorities in Nigeria and the Gold Coast, the activities of the Mau Mau in Kenya, and the need to deal with emergencies in situations where the traditions of ‘independence and liberal democracy’ had come to seem wholly inappropriate.115 While K.E. Read, newly-appointed from the University of London, argued the case for encouraging local leaders, he also noted the absence of conditions necessary for their emergence.116 Ian Downs, one of the most experienced officers in New Guinea and Papua and later a prominent representative of private interests, insisted that the village must be maintained as the basic unit in an attempt to check personal ambitions and ‘premature nationalism’.117 The emphasis of most articles in South Pacific rested with the development of a cash-crop economy on co-operative lines imposed upon traditional society, and with little political or economic integration beyond the village itself. Rather than independence, the coverage of the overseas press in South Pacific began to show an interest in concepts of ‘racial harmony’ between Europeans and Africans in the proposed Central African Federation. Moves to end segregation between ‘Negroes’ and ‘White’ children in the American education system were also followed in the mid-1950s, suggesting that models - or at least assumptions - of domestic incorporation were favoured over political guidance.118 ASOPA began to support the notion of the ‘special nature’ of the problems to be met in New Guinea.119

Other frameworks for the political future of the territory avoided such explicit counsel of restraint by appealing to concepts of a Melanesian unity or ‘federation’ to be gradually engineered under Western

114Mair, ‘Self-Government or Good Government?’, vol.4, no.6, 1950, pp.94-7; see also Mair’s earlier article on this theme - ‘British Colonial Policy: Complementary or Conflicting Aims?’, vol.2, no.4, 1947, pp.65-70.


guidance. Nevertheless, political advance remained almost inconceivable in the intellectual climate of the time. In 1947 J.M. Ward suggested that the future in the South-West Pacific lay in ‘the growing reliance on skilled professional services in dealing with native peoples and the realisation that defence, political and welfare problems are closely inter-related’. Under such tutelage, it was speculated in 1950 ‘the vast scattering of islands may achieve a sense of unity’, expressing the ‘common will of the South Pacific peoples’. These convictions were the basis of the South Pacific Commission, which had been established after a conference held in Canberra in 1947 between the major powers with responsibilities in the region: Britain, France, the Netherlands, America, Australia and New Zealand. This regionalism was premised on research and technical assistance in the areas of health and economic development. Political change or self-determination was another issue. Drawing on his own experiences in Africa, and after extensive research in the Pacific, W.E.H. Stanner argued in 1953 that concepts of ‘a homogeneous regional grouping’ lacked foundations in either ethnographic or political reality. A programme of strictly ‘social development’ was Stanner’s advice, based on the conviction that European authorities were ‘obliged to offer, sometimes even to insist on, the means of development’. Only ‘muddled analysis’ saw it as ‘ethical’ to grant autonomy to the first local elite to demand it. In 1952 Stanner had evoked a British ‘mystique’ evident in a ‘permissive colonialism’, based on experience rather than theory, and on vigilance rather than withdrawal. A staunch defender of ‘native peoples’ from abuse, Stanner nonetheless argued throughout the ‘fifties that the situation in New Guinea was one of ‘crisis’: fundamentally different cultural structures were in confrontation, and ‘natives’ were unable to adapt, either functionally or politically. Stanner was ultimately pessimistic about the capacity of administrators to manage, or anthropologists comprehend, the trauma of the colonial experience.

While there were more critical analyses of administrative policies in New Guinea at that time, most commentary emphasised the necessity for restraint. In a series of articles in *Australian Outlook* in 1951-52, Cyril Belshaw, who had served as a District Officer in Samoa before studying anthropology in London and then joining the ANU as a Research Fellow, argued that a significant minority of self-educated Papuans

---


122 Given the size of Australian commitments, it was inevitable that Australia should appear the major participant in the agreement, contributing 30% of the Commissions funding; John Kerr, having resigned as Principal of ASOPA, acted as the Secretary-General of the Commission until W.D. Forsythe, from the Department of External Affairs, was appointed in 1948. See Agreement Establishing the South Pacific Commission, Canberra, 1949, p.7; J.M. Ward, ‘South Pacific Commission Session’, *Australian Outlook*, vol.2, no.2, 1948, p.250.


124 Stanner, *The South Seas*, pp.419, 422.


126 In 1946, for example, he suggested the adoption of the American Indian reservation model in an attempt to save Australia’s ‘full-blooded native population’: Stanner, ‘“Vanishing” Indians’, *Talk*, vol.1, no.2, 1946, pp.40-1.

with 'some conception of world affairs' was developing in the territory, capable of dealing with issues such as racial equality, tribal inter-marriage, higher education and political responsibility. But Belshaw's suggestion that the existence of this group in itself justified greater Papuan access to bureaucratic and political roles, based on study of the few communities already integrated with a European economy, was overshadowed by the gradualist themes of Stanner's analysis or by the prevailing paternalist assumptions implicit in concepts of regionalism. Even with its trust in managed development, Outlook also found space for McAuley's jeremiads:

Is there any good reason for believing that economic development will bring material well-being to the peoples of the under-developed countries? The uncertainties are much greater than is generally admitted.129

If practical difficulties of terrain and resources supported such scepticism of cultural stability, then it was also true that the themes of these re-considerations were familiar in a wide range of less specialised commentary in which New Guinea still served as a kind of intellectual synthesis of issues. In 1952 the Current Affairs Bulletin argued that New Guinea was unlikely to repay economic investment for some time, yet was crucial to Australia's defence both as 'a friendly and numerous population ready if necessary to fight on our side' and as an example of Australian good-will in the region. Only those New Guineans who were 'deracinated' threatened political unrest. Unlike political change, military mobilisation would presumably not threaten a social stability defined in terms of culture, even 'race'. While any political programme must have its consequences, 'possibly the best choice we could make ... would be the eventual creation of a new state in the Australian commonwealth'.130 In 1953 it was suggested that Christian values could assist in reconciling spiritual and material conflicts in the 'South Seas'.131 The implied and unhesitating commitment to long-term Australian tutelage in New Guinea was presented as equally beneficial to a shallowly materialistic society:

If we succeed in interweaving our fate with theirs, a population which already forms more than three in every twenty persons controlled by the Government of Australia must have a very definite contribution to make to our culture. In some fields, perhaps including the arts, we may be the students and they the leaders.132

Although it is impossible to assess the influence of comments such as these, there was a correlation between the issues of cultural stabilisation identified in New Guinea and the anxieties concerning cultural breakdown among commentators on domestic issues. In 'the deep and mysterious waters of native mass psychology'133 commentators found in New Guinea another form of the mass society upon which they attempted to impose the necessary conditions of restraint rather than of development: faith, the family and tradition.


131'The South Sea Islands', vol.11, no.7, 1953, pp.207-8.


If political development and managed reform seemed discredited in the 1950s, private enterprise groupings had their own interpretation of the required structures to secure the region from instability. In the early 1950s New Guinea seemed to offer an 'unsteady prosperity', promoted by increases in government expenditure, and associated with oil exploration and with proposals for other ventures including wool growing in the highlands, and the cultivation of coffee, tea and tobacco. In 1952 the Financial Review proclaimed that 'private individuals and companies' might realise 'vast development opportunities' in the territory. An economic presence was one counter to the regional insecurity provoked by Indonesian nationalism and an uncertainty whether American strategy extended further south than the Phillipines. Spender, as Minister for External Territories, endorsed these aspirations, and was supported by coalition members keen to develop New Guinea lest it be lost, relying on local initiative rather than control from Canberra. With its customary contempt for planners of 'the Bloomsbury variety', the Pacific Islands Monthly celebrated the release of New Guinea from the 'lamentable ... dose of Australian socialism' it had endured for seven years. The region should be cast open for economic initiative, and the Monthly outlined the benefits of replacing the one-year indentured labour system with eighteen month contracts including government compensation for unsuccessful employees. In the Bulletin M.H. Ellis emphasised the role of New Guinea as 'our buffer state', hoping that this concept of the territory would form part of a more realistic attitude of regional confrontation rather than idealistic internationalism.

These demands, however, threatened a level of disturbance which seemed to some to amount merely to the further destabilisation of the territory. One of the most articulate, and certainly the most influential, representatives of this concern was Paul Hasluck, who in May 1951 became the first Minister in the new portfolio of Territories, which covered both the Northern Territory and Papua New Guinea. Whereas Australian foreign policy had a symbolic figure in Casey, territorial administration acquired an intellectual

---

134 SMH, 10 March 1950, p.2.
135 See 9 February 1950, p.2; 13 March 1950, p.2; 26 November 1950, p.4; 12 August 1951, p.7. At the end of World War Two a Report was prepared for an American research body, the Refugee Economic Corporation, on the 'possibilities for white settlement in north-eastern New Guinea'. While stressing the need for more extensive resource surveys, the Report was favourable. At the time of writing, I have been unable to determine what the consequences of the Report were, if any. See Robert G. Bowman, Prospects for Settlement in North-Eastern New Guinea, n.p., 1947, Mitchell Library Mss. 1450.
137 See SMH, 5 January 1950, p.3; 16 January 1950, p.2; 1 February 1950, p.2.
140 'Reforms Likely in PNG', January 1950, p.10; 'Many Changes Are In Sight', May, 1950, p.9. It was probably not coincidental that it was only in January 1950 that R.W. Robson, the Monthly's editor, was allowed permission to enter the territories - January, 1950, p.6.
The force of his character was reflected in his dominance of the Department until 1963, and in the principles he provided for policy. Prior to his election to parliament in 1949, Hasluck’s career had been marked by both academic and diplomatic success, and as Minister he was greeted with the hope that New Guinea would continue in its liberation from ‘the semi-paralysis into which it has been allowed to fall’.

Hasluck impressed many with his speech to parliament in June 1950, initiating the first comprehensive discussion of Aboriginal affairs at the federal level since before the war. In the 1930s he had been prominent among the groupings already referred to, campaigning to increase public awareness of the condition of Aborigines. When he resigned from External Territories in 1949 to accept a Readership in History at the University of Western Australia, it was partly with an intention to return to an earlier academic interest in Aboriginal policy. His perspective then, consistently maintained well into the 1980s, was that ‘the chief difficulty’ to be addressed in devising policy ‘was not one of racial dissimilarity but of social acceptability’. Rather than protect cultural integrity through policies of separation, Hasluck argued that assimilation was the only realistic and humane course, assuming that ‘the future of Aborigines was to be in association with the Australian community’ in habit, interest and opportunity. In 1942 he wrote:

The idea of ‘civilising’ primitive people, though it smells in some nostrils, may not be wholly bad.... If civilised man chose to apply his skill and his knowledge, it is possible that he would do a great deal to alter the life of the primitive man for the better, and not necessarily destroy it.

For Hasluck, son of a Salvation Army officer, such care was guided by a sense of ‘Christian duty’ and a trace of nineteenth-century evangelism stressing the need for individuals to seek their own destiny. Much of his writing was marked by a sceptical regard for what ‘some proud men called ”progress”’ and by a respect for tradition and ‘Nature’, coupled to an emphasis on personal dignity and conduct. He saw a need for the close management of the process by which ‘primitive societies’ were to be brought to a reasonably full participation in the values and institutions of a Christian, English-speaking society.

In an address to ASOPA in November 1951, Hasluck outlined his objectives in New Guinea which remained fairly constant over the following years. They differed in significant ways from Spender’s emphases, and from Hasluck’s own assumptions in Aboriginal policy. He was insistent that Australia’s role in New Guinea had little to do with colonialism, at most allowing that it involved ‘a colonising process

---

142 Even in its most unfavourable comments on his policies, for example, the Pacific Islands Monthly was still prepared to find Hasluck ‘a man of ability, culture and charm’. See ‘Islands Development and Visionary Ministers’, PIM, May 1955, p.14.

143 SMH, 28 July 1950, p.2.

144 CPD (H of R), vol.208, 8 June 1950, pp.3976-3981. See also comments by Gilmore, p.3982; Beazley, pp.3982-4; McBride, pp.3894-6.

145 Hasluck, Shades of Darkness, p.23; also Mucking About, pp.209, 217.

146 Hasluck, Shades of Darkness, p.68.

147 Hasluck, Black Australians: A Study of Native Policy in Western Australia 1829-97, Melbourne, 1942, p.12.

148 Hasluck, Black Australians, p.207; Shades of Darkness, pp.129-30.

which is taking place after the colonial age has ended’. His preferred description was of ‘the experimental stage of something which the world has not yet seen and which it may not be possible to create anywhere else ... - an attempt at co-operation and mutual service between two people’. Hasluck understood colonialism as a faded stereotype, denying the innate rights of human beings, and in doing so he divorced himself from the diversity and sophistication of theory which was developing around the formal recognition of unequal economic and political relations in European colonies. Accordingly, Hasluck described New Guinea in these terms:

It is a society still awaiting the full effects both of the techniques and mechanical strength of Western civilisation, the blessings of Western medicine and society, the ferment of ideas of civilised man, and the possible damage from the vices and stupidities peculiar to civilisation.\textsuperscript{150}

If the problem confronting Aborigines was essentially one of social assimilation defined in individual terms, the problem in New Guinea was, as Hasluck presented it, one of ‘race relations’, entailing ‘finding a way in which two peoples at different but slowly converging standards of living and cultural habit can live in harmony with each other’. Given the delicacy and perceived uniqueness of the project, Hasluck argued that it was ‘inevitable ... that the administration will become increasingly centralised in Australia’ so as to maximise the ‘advantages of modern scientific knowledge, skill and equipment’.\textsuperscript{151} ‘Race’ would seem to justify an intervention more intensive but objectives more remote than those applying to Aborigines: for Aborigines, opportunities were seen to exist if they would take them; for New Guineans, opportunities might be withheld in a comprehensive ‘scientific’ process.

Clearly, Hasluck believed that New Guinea society must develop in essential conformity with traditional Western forms. These forms would not emerge from existing communities, but would be manipulated into acceptance in place of them - an extension, to some extent, of the Murray tradition but in the context of greater intervention. In 1958 Hasluck reaffirmed his conviction ‘that a deep-seated social change, in the sense of a change which leads to the construction of a new society’, was fundamental to the attainment of Australia’s responsibilities in New Guinea. Both ‘Christianity and the English language’ were to be the ‘two great unifying forces’.\textsuperscript{152} Given these premises, it did not matter that administration was centralised in Canberra, or that it sought to avoid encouraging a local elite. New Guineans were to be educated up through a slow and steady conformity to a system provided for them before they would be seen as capable of self-determination - if that was to be the aim. In legal and economic affairs the same concepts were applied: a legal system insisting on British-derived precepts; a policy of economic development which reduced possibilities for private European land acquisition for the sake of preserving the interests of the people, but which also came to favour private ownership over co-operatives. The rationale for this preference, as Hasluck expressed it, was that private ownership encouraged the ‘exceptional native’ who would then benefit his community, a practice Hasluck took to be preferable to ‘economic paternalism’.\textsuperscript{153} Yet this assumption also gave a greater formality to the imposed concept of small-holder agriculture, in turn breaking down community ties without being accompanied by the forms of social and political status


which New Guineans assumed might follow. \(^{154}\) ‘Exceptional natives’ who did emerge in a context of community support tended to be suspected of fostering irrational ‘cargo cult’ demands leading to political instability. \(^{155}\)

Hasluck’s emphases in policy were accompanied by substantial welfare programmes in health, technical training, agricultural assistance and education, and a commitment to improving the position of women in New Guinea societies. He was enthusiastic about the economic potential of the territory, and encouraged co-operation between his Department and the CSIRO in determining the viability of cash crops and the establishment of a timber industry partially under government control. \(^{156}\) Valuable though these initiatives were, a conceptual flaw underlay them. In 1951, for example, three ‘natives’ were elected to the Legislative Council, but at that stage there was no structure of organised interest groups to support them or by which their representativeness might be assessed. \(^{157}\) While generous provision was made for education, the objective of ‘universal literacy’ opposed the early emergence of local elites while setting a programme of provision so broad as to be almost impossible to fulfill. By 1961 only 2400 New Guineans were attending secondary school, and none had been admitted to university study. \(^{158}\) In 1959 a United Nations Visiting Mission had commented with concern on these weaknesses and their consequences in delaying any possibility of political or economic independence. Over the following years several international reports reiterated these criticisms. \(^{159}\) From a very different perspective, Hasluck also faced criticism from private interests and members of his own government. Backbenchers jostled him in parliament, restless for an expansion into New Guinea unhindered by official controls, for settlement schemes, for defence utilisation and the training of a local army, and for clearer guidelines for the political future of the territory. They wanted to know what place Hasluck had in a party supposedly advocating free enterprise. \(^{160}\) It was more often from Labor ranks that Hasluck drew support: from Calwell, who also favoured extreme gradualism and possible ‘incorporation’; and from Bryant, who praised Hasluck’s ‘humanitarian outlook’. \(^{161}\)

There have been many detailed critiques of Hasluck’s administration. Hasluck himself has recalled his period as Minister for Territories with considerable frustration with a public and parliamentary ignorance of the central issues raised in New Guinea. \(^{162}\) His critics have identified narrow assimilationist principles coupled with intensive controls, the insularity of practices from models developing in contemporary

---


\(^{158}\)Trebilcock, *The Role of the Private Sector*, p.8.

\(^{159}\)Trebilcock, *The Role of the Private Sector*, pp.8-9.


colonial situations, and Hasluck's own strict authority in directing his Department and its policies. He approached the task with intellectual integrity and commitment, and neither strategic anxieties nor entrepreneurial zeal dictated his objectives. There were two levels at which Hasluck's priorities expressed a distinctive conservatism overlapping into contemporary Australian society. First, his thinking demonstrated an inability to comprehend the potential stability of structures and values which did not fit familiar, local forms. Second, he saw the relationships between social, political and economic change as inherently unstable rather than an integral part of development. A pre-occupation with uniformity, a disjunction between centralised policy and strategies designed to individualise economic interests, and a restraint of industry: these were features of Hasluck's conservatism which were not so much a break with earlier reformism, but an adaption of that concern with management to more limited objectives.

The institutional element of this realignment was evident in the fact that by the early 1950s, ASOPA was no longer challenging the direction of policy, although it did maintain a comparative line of analysis and favoured development through co-operatives. Short-staffed, coping with irregular training programmes, it nonetheless provided an academic and sometimes a consultative focus for officers in the field; perhaps not least, it fostered social links for officers and teachers who felt excluded from departmental and administrative circles. Hasluck initially supported the proposal to move the School to Canberra, associating it with the Canberra University College and the Australian National University. Yet by 1955, he unflatteringly declared that 'the ASOPA is a service training institution in the sense that its purpose is to train public servants to serve in the Territories of the Australian Commonwealth'. As such, it was to make no attempt to duplicate courses of a more academic nature already offered by the universities. Existing neither in a research structure nor an independent bureaucratic context, the status of the School was uncertain. While efficiency might dictate such downgrading, that efficiency was itself based on very different assumptions from those of critical, political reform which had led to the foundation of ASOPA in 1946. In 1960 the Principal of the School was sternly reminded that, as public servants, 'staff ... are definitely not free ... to participate in public discussion of any kind touching on governmental policy'. The move, it was elsewhere reported, followed the offence expressed by Dutch diplomats at articles in *South...*

---


164 David Fenbury, the officer in charge of establishing elected local councils in the territory in the early 1950s, has provided an extensive account and critique of policy formation and assumptions which covers these issues in great detail. See *Practice Without Policy*, esp. ch.8-9.


167 Hasluck, 'The Future of the Australian School of Pacific Administration', *South Pacific*, vol.8, no.1, 1955, pp.21-6.

168 ASOPA seemed to Stanner, for example, to have become a 'Reconstruction remnant' - note on copy of 'The Future of ASOPA', Stanner Papers.
Pacific critical of the administration of Dutch New Guinea. Then followed the closure of South Pacific and its replacement by a journal called Australian Territories, intended to serve ‘wider purposes’. The new bulletin featured more photographs than text, often showing the Minister in the company of smiling Aborigines and New Guineans.

***

Expatriate society in the territory had its own understanding of priorities to be addressed, and its own sense of responsibility to the ‘natives’. As Maslyn Williams described them, during a tour in 1956 to prepare for a documentary film, Australians in New Guinea lived as if in small Australian country towns, though perhaps with a stronger and more introverted sense of community, scarcely aware of the ‘natives’ as anything other than servants, and certainly not thinking of themselves as colonists. An outsider, however, saw the ambiguities of a stage of development at which a few Papuans negotiated the separate worlds of their villages and the white economy while most continued to live, with limited contact with Europeans, in conditions in which a single dose of penicillin might cure a life’s disfigurement from yaws overnight, and seem like magic.

The Pacific Islands Monthly continued to offer a diet for these settlers of mostly Australian news and social notes, indicating a life of relative affluence for Europeans, served by ‘natives’. In 1949 the Monthly looked with interest to South African, where Dr Malan strengthened apartheid, but the journal seemed uncertain whether to support assimilationist principles or to favour segregation. Given the official discouragement of ‘unions between whites and natives’, the Monthly recommended that any ‘half-caste’ child born in the territory should be ‘taken early into proper care and training and given a chance to develop European status’. Loyalty to the King must replace ‘disintegrating tribal loyalties’ - a transference disrupted by missionary and official pampering, ‘encouraged by semi-official sociologists’, and prompting ‘big-heads’ to ‘yelp for self-government’. By 1953 the only threat to private economic progress seemed to be that of communism as channelled through the anti-colonial and nationalist rhetoric of the new Afro-Asian nations, and of Indonesia in particular. To meet this threat, the Monthly recommended intensive Australian armament, the more extensive European settlement of New Guinea, and a preparedness for ‘strong and ruthless political action’ going beyond piecemeal military assistance in the region to the

---


170 Of Wau, Williams observed that: ‘It has all the activities of an Australian country town - clubs for golf, tennis, drama, agricultural show, RSL, women’s, etc. With such a small population it means that the same people are in everything. They like their town and are quite content to stay in it. They are also quite content to take no notice of anybody from outside. Everybody has a little house, garden, job, and social interest’. See Williams, Journal 1955-56, ML Mss 1760/1, pp.4, 8, 19. See also Hank Nelson, Taim Bilong Masta, esp. p.11.

171 Williams, Journal, pp.1, 30, 46.

172 In the Monthly’s pages, domestic appliances were advertised as ‘so simple to use - your native servant need only plug them in and turn them on’; there were no ‘fancy gadgets’ to be ‘played with’ or ‘broken’.


establishment of selected governments'. In 1957 the Monthly regretted that Casey had declined to endorse the R.S.L.'s call for the annexation of the territory, yet it also recorded the bitter resentment of settlers as the Commonwealth moved to end their tax exemption.

On the mainland, New Guinea figured most frequently in commentary in terms which related less to the managerial or developmental themes of the 1930s, but expressed a more popularly-based interest in the culture of the territory. Building on the familiarity with 'natives' engendered during war, this commentary conveyed a concern with the maintenance of 'ways of life' which was an integral part of post-war conservative rhetoric. In the 1930s an interest in Aboriginal cultures had developed among writers and artists keen to identify a distinct Australian nationalism, and in the 1940s and early 1950s a few artists found in images of Aborigines a way to express a sense of the injustice of Australian society. Through most of the 1950s, however, an interest in both Aboriginal and New Guinean cultures tended to be associated more with concepts of heritage and tradition than those of political criticism. In 1950 A.P. Elkin announced a tour of New Guinea to identify a cultural medium between Europeans and the 'natives'. In 1951 Eugene Goossens speculated that an Australian music might develop from New Guinean influences, while the composer, Alfred Hill, was already drawing inspiration from Aboriginal themes. Aboriginal art had become a 'world vogue', according to the Sydney Morning Herald in 1954: John Antill's ballet score, 'Corroboree'; the new decorations of Sydney's Central Station; the contribution of Aboriginal artists in many fields as the equivalent to the emergence of 'the American negroes'; and many art courses at technical colleges, were given as local examples of such interest. Walkabout continued to dignify Aborigines in their passing while offering a biological classification of the 'racial types' of New Guinea to assist those who would deal with them in the future. All Australians had an interest in 'Aboriginal lore', the Bulletin insisted: but that interest was seen more often to relate to the need to conserve or appreciate cultural unities than to acknowledge change and opportunity in the midst or on the fringes of European society.

---


178 For some comments on the utilisation of Aboriginal themes in Australian post-war culture, see Humphrey McQueen, Suburbs of the Sacred: Transforming Australian Beliefs and Values, Ringwood, 1988, pp.90-5.

179 SMH, 29 August 1950, p.2.

180 ‘What is Australian Music?’, Talk, 15 September 1951, p.4.


The influence of academic anthropology on this popular discussion is difficult to assess, partly because the discipline itself was divided between those for whom culture was the medium for social change and those for whom it constituted the conditions of social stability. On the one hand, A.P. Elkin, always a vigorous publicist, had consolidated a role for the discipline during the period of war and reconstruction in advising on the necessary features of a social morale. As a 'community', rather than as a 'society' or a 'race', Elkin's subject was defined by individual participation rather than political, economic or even genetic characteristics. For Elkin, this sense of 'community' and of individual 'socialisation' lent support to programmes of welfare and reform, but could not in itself accommodate dynamic elements. Instead, abstractions were employed in qualitative assessment, and in Elkin's case these were represented by precepts such as: 'individual harmony, peace and unity of action'.184 In the 1949 Edgeworth David Lecture, 'Man and his Cultural Heritage', Elkin explicitly identified social change with static cultural phases within a teleological process:

When we have passed through the present phase of fanatical political ideologies, man may again express a culture developed around great ideas and enshrining a life-giving myth - a heritage enriched with philosophies of life, great art and literature, on the basis of social order and integrity.185 The practical application of such an interpretation was to assume that these groupings were incapable of dealing with external challenges without a fundamental alteration in their values. Similarly, in later papers, when Elkin stressed the importance of maintaining 'self-esteem' in communities, the emphasis was on psychological stability rather than cultural adjustment.186 In a review of 1959, he saw the contribution of post-war anthropology (as distinct from inter-war formulations) to be as applicable in Europe as it was in Melanesia: it must cast aside 'symbolic functionalism', with its interest in dynamic cultural relations, and face the 'task of rebuilding the fabric ... of life on the basis of continuity in structural relations'.187

Much anthropological work in Australia in the 1950s and early 1960s, owing some debt to Elkin's considerable institutional influence, can be seen to exhibit similar assumptions, particularly in the interpretation that Aboriginal cultures were incapable of withstanding the European challenge with any meaningful continuity.188 In their academic essays, for example, Ronald and Catherine Berndt189 emphasised the need for the 'successful adjustment' of Aborigines to European forms, however much they expressed a 'moral' anxiety that the information given to them, of sacred rituals and 'intimate personal

---


185 Elkin, 'Man and His Cultural Heritage', printed in *Oceania*, vol.20, no.1, 1950, p.27.

186 See for example Elkin, 'Delayed Exchange in the Wabag District', *Oceania*, vol.23, no.3, 1953, p.201.

187 Elkin, 'Malinowski: Man and Culture', *Oceania*, vol.29, no.3, 1959, p.218. Compare this argument with the tendency of Stanner's interpretation of cargo cults, as discussed above.

188 See Morris, 'From Underemployment to Unemployment', pp.500-2, 512-3.

189 Ronald Murray BERNDT; Catherine Helen BERNDT Ronald Berndt was born at Adelaide in 1916, and Catherine Webb in 1918 at Auckland. He was educated in South Australia and then at the University of Sydney, proceeding from there to the London School of Economics (PhD). She studied at the University of Otago, then at Sydney and London with Berndt, whom she married in 1941. During the early fifties Catherine conducted fieldwork in both New Guinea and Central Australia. In 1954 Ronal was appointed a lecturer in Anthropology in Sydney, and moved to the University of Western Australia as a Senior Lecturer (1956) then Reader (1958). In 1963 he became the foundation Professor of Anthropology in Perth. Both Catherine and Ronald worked with the Aborigines of North Australia, and were prolific publishers in this field.
thoughts and experiences', advanced an 'anthropological theory' which saw those practices as doomed.190 In their more popular work, however, the Berndt's assumption worked the other way. They emphasised that Aboriginal cultures might offer Australians an 'enriching' understanding of deeply-held social values,191 while at the same time justifying a belief in the necessity of assimilation.192

Not all anthropologists shared Elkin's themes of social crisis, but nor did they share Elkin's more public standing. If ASOPA faced steady compromises of its functions, one other outcome of reconstruction idealism had more success in consolidating a reformist analysis of Pacific issues. Elkin had been excluded from the discussions in the 1940s which led to the establishment of the Research School of Pacific Studies at the Australian National University, and an informal agreement allocated the ANU's research priorities to Papua New Guinea while Elkin's Department continued to concentrate on Aborigines.193 Raymond Firth, a New Zealand born anthropologist who studied under Malinowski in the 1920s and became Professor at the London School of Economics in 1946, was engaged as an adviser on the development of the ANU School, and for a short time in the early fifties he was its Acting-Director. In that period he visited New Guinea, though without entering the Highlands,194 to survey possible areas of research. The basic premise of Firth's outlook was that the people of the South Pacific were 'without exception, committed to the material civilisation which is the hallmark of the West': they were prepared to recast their social frameworks in fundamental but considered ways so that they might participate in economic development. From this perspective, Firth suggested a 'moderated conservatism' in which access should be encouraged to positions of responsibility and enterprise.195 Firth was one of the leaders of a reaction in post-war British anthropology against structuralism, with the objective of reinstating a conception of the active individual in analysis.196 Whereas Elkin emphasised individual 'socialisation', Firth stressed participation. During a tour of New Guinea in 1951, Firth's attention was drawn to the lack of employment for capable New Guineans in skilled work and in political fields. The 'cargo cults', often seen as evidence of social disintegration, seemed to Firth to have 'creative aspects' as expressions of aspiration in 'social, political

192 See Berndt, 'The Changing Face of Aboriginal Studies', pp.57, 61. Ronald Berndt frequently insisted that Aboriginal painting should not be understood only in terms of the work of the Hermansburg artists: 'The art of Namitjira and his colleagues, expressive and beautiful though it may be, has not yet delved deeply enough into the rich background of Aboriginal; life' - rev. of Rex Batterby, *Modern Australian Aboriginal Art in Oceania*, vol.22, no.1, 1951, p.79. On the basis of his study of Aboriginal art, Berndt commented more generally in 1958 that 'internal change can have little encouragement, and enforced alien change can only result in increasing disorganisation' - Berndt, 'Some Methodological Considerations in the Study of Aboriginal Art', *Oceania*, vol.29, no.1, 1958, p.41.
193 See Wise, *The Self-Made Anthropologist*, pp.161-2; 202-3; Berndt, 'The Changing Face of Aboriginal Studies', p.55. It should be noted that this was not exclusively the case: for example, scholars attached to Elkin's department also worked in Italian communities which supplied Australian immigrants, and in Hindu cultures - 'Notes and News', *Oceania*, vol.24, no.1, 1953, p.78.
194 See Firth's 'Foreword' to Belshaw's *The Great Village*, pp.v-vii.
196 See Adam Kuper, *Anthropologists and Anthropology: The British School 1922-1972*, London, 1973, pp.160f. As noted in the previous chapter, Firth had also recommended against an interdisciplinary concept of 'area studies' as the basis for Oriental Studies at the Canberra University College: specific disciplines had there own field of expertise and their own role.
and symbolic fields'.

S.F. Nadel, who became Professor of Anthropology at the ANU in 1950, holding the Chair until his death in 1956, was another central figure in this reappraisal. In his inaugural lecture in Canberra, he insisted that social structures were continually affirmed and mediated by individuals, rather than totally defining them. Given that his own fieldwork had all been conducted under official government request, Nadel welcomed the inevitable if 'equivocal' association between anthropology and colonial administration. In this way, he sought to secure an intellectual role as expert advisers on matters of policy rather than as populist commentators on social psychology. The danger of an association with government would be limited by concentrating the anthropologist's work on the functions served by specific practices within society rather than on an abstract sense of that society as a totality. With a commitment to present application, Nadel attempted to incorporate into the ANU Department an equal interest in sociology - a commitment maintained by his successor, Professor J.A. Barnes.

These contrasts between Elkin's emphasis on defining individuals with reference to a social totality, and the concern developing at the ANU to allocate individuals an active role within a social system, is illustrative of the institutional and cultural processes which are central to this argument. Elkin's conservatism lay in his stress on individual adjustment, and such was very much a part of a post-war Australian pattern in commentary. At the ANU, in a more strictly academic and internationally experienced context, social reformism maintained a measure of acceptance - however much that acceptance distanced the institution from close integration with policy. As the world's first Professor of Pacific History, J.W. Davidson saw his subject as an inexricable part of modern history. As such, it must attempt to generate

---


198 *Frederick Stephen Siegfried NADEL* Born in Vienna in 1903 and educated in Vienna and at Cambridge and London Universities. Nadel was appointed the Government Anthropologist in the Sudan between 1938 and 1941, and from 1945 to 1946 he worked for the British Military Administration in Tripoli. He then lectured at the University of London and at Durham University. He was appointed Professor of Anthropology at the ANU in 1950, and died at Canberra in 1956.


200 See also W.E.H. Stanner, 'The Need for Departments of Sociology in Australian Universities', *Australian Quarterly*, vol.24, no.1, 1952, pp.60-72. There is perhaps a contrast to be noted in that the University of Western Australia established the second teaching Department of Anthropology in Australia in 1956, appointing R.M. Berndt as Senior Lecturer and drawing Elkin's rather paternal praise; whereas Nadel attempted to develop a sociological dimension in Canberra, the Perth Department was sponsored by K.H. Walker, the Professor of Psychology, who also fostered the study of industrial psychology discussed in the following chapter - see A.P. Elkin, 'Anthropological Advance: Western Australia', *Oceania*, vol.26, no.3, 1956, pp.231-2. For Barnes commitment to the tasks of 'social anthropology', see Barnes, 'Future Developments in Anthropological Studies', *Australian Journal of Psychology*, vol.12, no.1, 1960, pp.21-33.

201 *James Wrightman DAVIDSON* Born in Wellington in 1915, Davidson was educated at Victoria University College, Wellington, and then at Cambridge. After working in the New Zealand and then British civil service, he joined British Naval Intelligence (1942-1945), and then held fellowships at Oxford and Cambridge before his appointment to the ANU in 1950.
‘multi-cultural’ and transdisciplinary perspectives. Further, Davidson argued that the study of colonisation was a vital adjunct to the consideration of social reform, since ‘in a colony a very large part of the whole range of governmental activities is a subject of controversy at the same time’. Yet these themes were not unquestioned at the new university: W.R. Crocker, as Professor of International Relations, insisted that racial difference must be reinstated as a fundamental principle in international analysis. In studying race, Crocker argued, universities might define the scientific basis for divisions which were none-the-less real for having been expressed in jingoism or pious philanthropy, or ridiculed by the false ‘equalitarianism’ fostered by ‘the progress of socialism or the semi-socialism of the welfare state’. How Crocker would have applied such an outlook is unclear, for his period at the ANU was brief and unhappy; in 1952 he accepted the position of Australian High Commissioner to India.

In the early 1950s Paul Hasluck was keen to utilise the resources of the ANU, commissioning in 1953 a report on New Guinea by Professor Spate (Geography), Dr Belshaw (Anthropology) and Professor Swan (Economics) which advised that ‘a prosperous ... economy can be built on the foundations of native society’. Yet any suggestion that such an economic capacity might have political consequences was less acceptable. In the second half of the decade relations between the University and the Department of Territories seem to have soured. There was less willingness to encourage or allow academics to undertake fieldwork in New Guinea and evidence of an attempt to impound the results of that work if it strayed too far into criticism of the administration. In this general intellectual context, academic interest in New Guinea was diverse in its disciplinary basis but remained concerned with ‘small scale problems among local peoples’ - a focus defined as much by intellectual limitations as by the fragmented nature of the New Guinea population. ‘In short, while thinking about [New Guinea] was often of a high quality, it was ... "people-" rather than "territory-" oriented: piece-meal and essentially applied in focus’. It was only in the early 1960s that restraint appeared to give way as the political future of New Guinea was acknowledged, firstly by the Prime Minister in June 1960, to involve independence ‘sooner rather than

202 Davidson, The Study of Pacific History, Canberra, 1955; Davidson gave particular mention to the Bernard Smith’s study, then underway in his Department, of the impact of the Pacific on European thought and expression not in terms of an ideal exchange but of prejudices, assumptions and images: p.22.


204 Walter Russell CROCKER Born in Adelaide in 1902, Crocker was educated at Adelaide University, Oxford and Stanford University. He served with the Colonial Political Service in Nigeria in 1930, and then transferred to work with the League of Nations after 1934. Crocker served with distinction in the British Army from 1940 to 1946, and then returned to farm in Parnaroo, South Australia. In 1949 he was appointed to the ANU, staying there until 1952 when he accepted the first of a series of appointments as Australian High Commissioner and Ambassador.


206 Quoted in A Time for Building, p.141.

207 The most famous of these incidents involved the denial of entrance to the territory to Professor Max Gluckman of the University of Manchester, a colleague of both Nadel and Firth in early seminars. Gluckman was implicated as a communist, and in his memoir Hasluck attributes the incident to bureaucratic mishandling. See A Time for Building, p.406; also articles in Vestes, vol.3, no.3, 1960. The impounding of the PhD thesis of an ANU scholar, A.M. Healy, seems to have had Hasluck’s support. See Brian Martin (ed.), Intellectual Suppression, Sydney, 1986, p.165. See also the case of Brian Cooper, discussed by S. Murray-Smith, ‘Black Men - and a White Conscience’, Overland, no.20, 1961, pp.32-3.

Academic studies, such as those undertaken by the New Guinea Research Unit established by the ANU in 1961 but based in Port Moresby, focussed on diverse topics of development and urban and agricultural policy. Under sponsorship from the Social Science Research Council, a similar reappraisal was evident in the early 1960s among a new generation of anthropologists working with Aborigines. Arguing that Aborigines had become a convenient image of individual hopelessness in the popular press, that ‘benevolent’ policies had become ‘fundamentally dictatorial’, and dealing with communities often deeply involved in the European economy and increasingly urbanised, these anthropologists insisted that a dynamic process of adjustment and rejection was evident in relations with white society. They advocated a much longer process of economic assimilation for self-determining groupings, assisted by welfare agencies as communities.

By 1964, at a conference convened by the Australian Association for Cultural Freedom, New Guinea was discussed as ‘the most important and most difficult exercise in contemporary cultural activity’ the Association had sponsored. In these proceedings it was emphasised that both material and psychological preconditions for the emergence of a ‘liberal democratic framework’ had to be devised in haste, for unless something was at least seen to be done, the already active ‘communist subversives’ in the territory would continue unopposed. A similar point was made in one of the leading works of Australian anthropology in the 1960s, Peter Lawrence’s Road Belong Cargo. Earlier an ASOPA colleague of McAuley, Lawrence concluded after a study of endemic cargo cults in New Guinea that ‘we must not repeat the former error of stopping short at the cultural exterior [of native societies] but push through to the underlying social values and assumptions, which must be replaced by entirely new ones’. These imperatives clearly marked a departure from assumptions of extreme gradualism and virtual silence on political considerations. Political ‘means’, it seemed to older hands in New Guinea, came suddenly to

---


210 For comments on the Unit, see E.K. Fisk, ‘Papua New Guiea’ in Evans and Miller (eds.), pp.147-57.

211 For examples of this approach, see J.G. Crawford (ed.), The Independence of New Guinea - What Are the Prerequisites?, Sydney, 1961.


215 Peter LAWRENCE Born in England in 1921, Lawrence was educated at Cambridge University. From 1948 to 1956 he was Senior Lecturer in Anthropology at ASOPA, and then at the University of Western Australia until 1960 when he was appointed to the Sydney Department.

dominate discussion in the 'sixties, demanding increased resources but with little reference to 'ends'. Yet these new priorities continued to endorse two of the central pre-occupations of the commentary of the 'fifties. First, 'culture' remained the vital sphere of analysis: progress was the engineering of consent more than the provision or control of economic skills and resources. Second, Australia's role of guidance, as the engineer of that process of adjustment, was unquestioned. Perhaps these pre-occupations were inevitable given the widespread perception that New Guineans were 'intractically barbarous and perpetually disappointing'. Nevertheless, it was also true that for many intellectuals in policy and academic positions, the perception of 'the test' of New Guinea was shaped as much by their own sense of role in securing a culture against change as by the circumstances they faced in a society being inevitably drawn into the complexity of economic and political development.


Chapter 3

'The Milk Bar Economy'

F.R.E. Mauldon, Professor of Economics at the University of Western Australia, told the 1949 ANZAAS conference that the 'role' and 'experience' of the consumer, as distinct from the specific interests of 'the worker', 'the producer' or the 'taxpayer', had become a 'question of fundamental interest' in Australian economic thinking. It was possible, Mauldon observed, to talk of 'the consumer' - someone with sufficient income to provide for basic necessities in goods and services, and with which to secure 'freedom to plan his own decisions' - and include in that definition a wider spectrum of Australian society than before the war. Yet, while this new prominence of 'the consumer' was a clear sign of prosperity, Mauldon argued that it was not an unqualified cause for celebration. From his perspective, the accumulating political and economic influence of consumers threatened a victory in the post-war years for individual interests over any prospect of coordinated reform.

Mauldon was one of a group of Australian economists who had achieved an unprecedented level of recognition of their intellectual professionalism in the inter-war years. Governments, at first keen to extend programmes of development, and then to control the crisis of the 1930s, acknowledged the role of economists as advisers. Working in this context, Mauldon emphasised the need for 'coherency and unity of purpose' in policy. In the 1940s, reconstruction had seemed to offer economists even greater participation in policy formation, and Mauldon spoke in 1942 of a post-war world of social discipline and community spirit. With these expectations, Mauldon was representative of his colleagues in associating the discipline of economics with social management closely allied to the state. By the end of the forties, however, he was similarly far from alone in noting that the significance of consumerism threatened this alliance. 'The consumer' was then associated with a psychological tendency for individuals to make their own interpretations of the degree to which the

---

1 Frank Richard Edward MAULDON Born in Sydney in 1891, Mauldon was educated at the University of Sydney and later at the London School of Economics. For a time he worked in the N.S.W. Public Service, and then served as an YMCA officer with the AIF in Europe until wounded in 1918. He returned to Australia to become a Resident Tutor for the University of Sydney in the Hunter Valley until 1925. Mauldon went to a Senior Lectureship at the University of Melbourne in 1926, becoming Professor of Economics in Tasmania in 1935, and also serving as Economic Adviser to the Tasmanian government. In 1939 he became the Economist and Research Director for the Commonwealth Bureau of Statistics in Canberra, moving to a Professorship at the University of Western Australia in 1940, and retiring from there in 1958.


productive system can be made to yield more real income through leisure and to require less labour.\footnote{4}

As such, the concept was a challenge to intellectual assumptions which were integral to preceding reformism. No longer was society an evolving unity, amenable to guidance, but it was seen to be increasingly characterised by a self-interested mass capable of frustrating any claim to the ‘masterful social control of economic forces’. In the attempt to accommodate this new agency within their pattern of established assumptions, many economists in the 1950s contributed a conservative emphasis on restraint to the comprehension of the ‘Long Economic Boom’.

In their commentary on Asia, or on the administration of New Guinea, many Australian intellectuals had similarly attempted to find some way to apply concepts of management to post-war circumstances of change and volatility which threatened the basic premises of their social analysis. These premises, like Mauldon’s sense of ‘unity’ and discipline, had more to do with concepts of evolution than popular aspiration. The preceding two chapters have suggested that the intellectual response to these ‘traditional’ societies, on the verge of ‘modernity’ yet prone to chaos or subversion, was to recommend (and define, as far as possible) a sense of authoritarian guidance, or the stability of imposed social forms. For Australian society, however, entering a phase of prosperity and the lifting of wartime controls, any equivalent social analysis would need to be based on strategies oriented more to managing the demands of the individual than the evocation of an abstract cultural entity. It was in this context that Mauldon sought to emphasize the significance of ‘the consumer’ at a psychological and political level. In the course of the 1950s, in several variant forms, a similarly individualised concept of economic interests and conflicts was to express many of the strands of intellectual conservatism in the attempt to comprehend post-war prosperity. While older reformist patterns of economic commentary in Australia were seen to be irrelevant to a world of mass consumption, they nonetheless continued to influence both the cultural and institutional responses to the new circumstances of the ‘fifties.

The several levels at which this individualised concept was evident were not always easily reconciled. On one hand, there was the positive emphasis on personal economic freedom, central to Liberal Party rhetoric; on the other, was the negative emphasis which Mauldon shared with Douglas Copland’s popularized diagnosis of Australia as a ‘milk bar economy’, in which excessive personal consumption was seen to perpetrate inflation, economic imbalance and inefficiency. Both emphases expressed the sense that the extension of the individual’s capacity to participate in the abundance of the modern age was integral to post-war Keynesian policy.\footnote{5} They also shared a concept of the individual as the central agent, criterion, or symptom in the evaluation and management of economic change, largely to the exclusion of any more comprehensive critique. ‘The consumer’ provided a common point of reference in analysis which looked beyond class or ideology to ‘an abstract figure in an abstract market’,\footnote{6} shaping the terms of economists’

\footnote{4}{Mauldon, ‘The Consumer in a Planned Economy’, pp.14-5.}

\footnote{5}{Increasing personal consumption was the central component of Labor’s reconstruction policy, as outlined in the Commonwealth White Paper, \textit{Full Employment in Australia}, Canberra, 1945, p.3. For an assessment of Keynes on these lines, see Robert Skidelsky, ‘The Revolt Against the Victorians’ and ‘The Political Meaning of the Keynesian Revolution’ in Skidelsky (ed.), \textit{The End of the Keynesian Era}, London, 1977, pp.5, 34.}

\footnote{6}{See Raymond Williams’ study of the changing usage of the term ‘consumer’ in \textit{Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society}, London, 1976, p.69.}
analysis as well as their identification of the 'audience' to which they should address their counsel. As such, the concept was a significant component in the identification of new areas of economic expertise not only in academic training and the bureaucracy of the 'welfare state', but also in fields ranging from financial journalism, association with interest groupings, to the changing models of industrial relations. Within this range of commentary, the individual-as-consumer became a regular figure in economic rhetoric, providing a way to understand issues such as the control of inflation early in the decade to the distribution of wealth in the 'shareholder's democracy' proclaimed by its end. A conservative emphasis was evident in the limited field of analysis defined in this range of analysis, and in the identification of interests to be defended in prosperity.

***

From the 1920s economic commentary in Australia had been shaped by a close engagement with policies of national development. The leading figures of the inter-war generation of Australian economists - L.F. Giblin, R.C. Mills, J.B. Brigden, G.L. Wood, D.B. Copland, E.C. Dyason - shared common interests

---


8Lyndhurst Falkiner GIBLIN Born in Hobart, 1872, Giblin was educated at University College, London, and Cambridge. After leaving Cambridge in 1896, Giblin travelled widely before returning to Hobart in 1905. In 1909 he unsuccessfully contested the seat of Franklin for the Liberal Democrats, and then joined the Labor Party, rising through the State and Federal Executives and becoming an unofficial adviser to Lyons as Tasmanian Premier. In 1919 he was appointed the government statistician, increased his association with other economists, helped found the Economic Society of Australia and New Zealand in 1924, and served on the committee to investigate the tariff from 1926. He was appointed to the Ritchie Chair of Economic Research at the University of Melbourne in 1929, and during the early 1930s served on a diversity of government committees discussing issues from unemployment to the drafting of the Premiers Plan and the establishment of the Commonwealth Grants Commission in 1934. In 1945 he was appointed to the board of the Commonwealth Bank, and with the outbreak of war he become a member of the Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Finance and Economic Policy. He died in 1951.

9Richard Charles MILLS Born at Mooroopna, Victoria, in 1886, and educated at Wesley College, the University of Melbourne and later at the London School of Economics. Mills served with the British Expeditionary Force from 1916 to 1918, and then returned the University of Melbourne as a tutor in history in 1919. In 1921 he moved to a lectureship in economic and commerce at the University of Sydney. Like Giblin, Mills helped establish the Economic Society in 1924, but devoted much of his attention to education - writing several textbooks - and to the administration of the University. He served on economic commissions on the basic wage, banking and, in 1942, on uniform taxation. From 1945 he was the first full-time Chairman of the Universities Commission. Mills died in 1952.

10James Bristock BRIGDEN Born at Maldon, Victoria, in 1887, Brigden worked as a journalist and union organiser before enlisting in the AIF. Wounded in France, he was hospitalised in Oxford where he came to the attention of the economist, Edwin Canaan. With Canaan's private tutoring, and on a scholarship to Oxford, he graduated B.A. in 1920 and then begun work in the WEA movement. In 1921 he returned to Australia and, in 1923, became lecturer in employment relations at the University of Tasmania, and then professor of economics in 1924. He also served on the tariff committee. In 1930 Brigden was appointed the Director of the Queensland Bureau of Industry - the first government research position in economics in Australia - and became a vigorous advocate of national insurance measures. He died in 1950.
and similar careers. Generally based in the universities, they also sought to offer systematic 'research and advice' on those 'peculiar features of our economic organisation' to State and federal governments and their agencies. Through these connections, they aligned themselves with economic practices well established in Australia by the inter-war years. Within the framework of development, colonial and then State and federal governments had adopted extensive forms of regulatory and allocative 'partnership' with private interests. On the basis of this interaction, governments generally protected industry rather than fostering market competition, let alone an adversarial relation between the representation of 'the people' against manufacturers. This emphasis was reflected in the dominant assumptions in economic analysis. In the 1920s, economists comprehended individuals in society as elements of policy in schemes of migration, education, efficient government, and balanced economic progress. They were units through which to calculate productivity, standards of living, even 'racial vitality'. Economics was a 'science' which in 1925 Copland carefully distinguished from any 'abstract sociology'. It sought to explain the economy in operation without prejudice to any single agent, moderating inherent cycles without questioning the system itself. In effect, the costs of market imperfections were to be distributed as widely as possible in the name of social unity.

In the 1930s direct state intervention came under steady scrutiny as policy responses and political reactions to the Depression stressed the need to limit public expenditure. As a response, economic policy tended to shift from the public allocation of economic resources through services to more indirect controls in areas such as employment, welfare and investment. For economists, this reappraisal, and the crisis

---

11Neville Cain has covered many aspects of Australian economics, and the careers of economists, in the inter-war years. See especially 'Economics Between the Wars', Australian Cultural History, no.3, 1984, pp.74-86. The strength of Australian economics in the 1920s is evidenced by the foundation of the Economic Society of Australia and New Zealand in 1924, and the first publication of its journal, the Economic Record, in 1925; the establishment of the first faculties of economics in Australian universities between 1916 (Sydney) and 1929 (Adelaide); and the publication of a body of literature dealing explicitly with local issues - see H.M. Green, A History of Australian Literature, vol.2 (1923-1950), ch.14, especially p.1417.


16Copland, Commerce and Business: An Inaugural Lecture (Department of Commerce, University of Melbourne), Melbourne, nd (1925), esp. pp.10, 15.

17See Butlin, Barnard and Pincus, Government and Capitalism, p.12.

18Butlin, Barnard and Pincus, Government and Capitalism, pp.36, 107.
itself, confirmed their assumed role as the managers of a social totality - albeit one they feared to be on the verge of unrest. As they were drawn further into the formulation of public policy, they developed an increasingly sophisticated defence of public institutions of social and economic management - if not always to the extreme of Dyason who, in 1932, spoke of the merits of a ‘decline in democratic faith which ... makes society free to experiment’.19 With gradual economic recovery, even those economists most favourably disposed towards private interests, such as G.L. Wood, still favoured a form of ‘quadrupartite control of industrial and financial circumstances’ offered by the Arbitration Courts, the Commonwealth Bank, the Loan Council and by tariff policies. In 1938 it seemed to him that the pace of technological innovation, the rise of pressure groups, mass bargaining and monopolistic tendencies, had all irremediably distorted the prospects for a competitive, liberal democracy.20 For Giblin, in fact, individual private interests were often associated with a destructive ‘selfishness’, particularly when they organised outside the agencies of government or production.21

The state, then, rather than ‘the people’ or industry, was the central point of reference for these economists - a state defined more by regulation than by public enterprise. By the end of the 1930s, the careers of the younger colleagues and students of this prominent generation of economists, among them Roland Wilson, L.G. Melville, H.C. Coombs, E.R. Walker22 and Mauldon, were further characterised by


20See G.L. Wood, ‘If I Were Federal Treasurer’, paper read at the First Convention of the South Australian School of Political Economy, June, 1938, p.4; also ‘Changes in Respect to Freedom of Economic Action’ in D.B. Copland (ed.), Problems of Industrial Administration in Australia, Melbourne, 1938, pp.8-9, 12-13. There are numerous examples of the support given by Australian economists in the 1930s to statutory authorities: perhaps the central text was Copland’s 1934 Marshall Lectures at Cambridge University, published as Australia in World Affairs, Cambridge, 1934. See also the Supplement to the Economic Record, April 1939, of papers on related themes given at the 1939 ANZAAS.

21Even when the integrity of the individual was recognised, Giblin still insisted that ‘organised interests’ constituted ‘Satan’s last and cleverest gift for the destruction of mankind’. Quoted in Greg Whitwell, The Treasury Line, Sydney, 1986, p.77.

22Roland WILSON Born at Ulverstone, Tasmania, in 1904, Wilson was educated at the University of Tasmania and (as Rhodes Scholar) at Oxford, and then the University of Chicago. He was appointed to a lectureship at the University of Tasmania in 1930, then joined the Commonwealth Treasury in 1932, working as a statistician and then economic adviser to the Treasurer. From 1940 to 1946 he was Director of the Commonwealth Department of Labour and National Service, returning to the Treasury in 1946 and then, in 1951, becoming its Secretary. In the same year Wilson also became a member of the Commonwealth Bank Board. Leslie Garfield MELVILLE Born in 1902 in Sydney, Melville was educated at the University of Sydney and then became the South Australian Public Actuary in 1924. In 1929 he was appointed Professor of Economics at the University of Adelaide, and in 1931 moved from there to become the Economic Adviser to the Commonwealth Bank, holding that position until 1950 when he became the Bank’s Assistant Governor. From 1953 to 1960 Melville was the Vice-Chancellor of the Australian National University. Herbert Cole COOMBS Born at Kalamunda, Western Australia, in 1906, Coombs was educated at the University of Western Australia and then at the London School of Economics. In 1935 he was appointed Assistant Economist to the Commonwealth Bank, and in 1939 became the Economist to the Commonwealth Treasury. Coombs was made the Director of Rationing in 1942, and then the Director-General of the Department of Post-War Reconstruction from 1943 to 1949, when he became Governor of the Commonwealth Bank, holding that position until 1960. Edward Ronald WALKER Born at Cobar in 1907, Walker was educated at the University of Sydney and at Cambridge, becoming a lecturer in Economics in Sydney from 1927 to 1939. He then became professor in Tasmania, but other wartime commitments included Economic Adviser to the Tasmanian government (1939-1942), Deputy Director-General of Wartime Organisation and Industry (1942-1945), Headquarters staff of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (1945), and subsequently as the Australian representative to several UN agencies, especially UNESCO. In 1952 Walker was made the Australian Ambassador to Japan. From 1956 to 1957 he was the Australian representative on the UN Security Council, and then became the Australian Permanent Representative to the UN.
exchanges between academic work and public service consultation and employment. Proud of their tradition of social engagement, these economists shared a pragmatic concern with 'social welfare', but the definition of that welfare was in essentially pragmatic terms. Some contemporaries questioned whether this involvement with government compromised the integrity of their discipline,\(^\text{23}\) since it was usually either at the level of ad hoc consultation and service on committees of inquiry, or, in the later 1930s, as employees of government departments. In general, while these economists were admired for their accommodation in an "'official family' ... of cabinet ministers, certain senior officials such as permanent heads of departments, ... the new group of research officers ... and businessmen from private banks and industry", this acceptance was not accompanied by a marked degree of professional independence.\(^\text{24}\) The drafting of the Bridgen Report of 1929 on tariff policy was in itself marked by an awareness of the difficulty of reconciling economic principle to national development.\(^\text{25}\) Even given their prominence during the Depression, no formal economic advisory panel of economists was consolidated in Australia equivalent to those in Britain and America.\(^\text{26}\) Australian economists had no established 'Oxbridge tradition' in which university graduates and academics had 'privileged access to power and a rationale for change', or of the more politically competitive yet integrated relationship between social policy and the Ecole Normale in France.\(^\text{27}\) Instead, Melville recalled that 'economists [got] ... their coats off and barged into economic problems with gusto'.\(^\text{28}\) In 1934 it seemed to Giblin that the series of conferences between economists, politicians and bankers leading to the controversial 1931 Premiers' Plan, had been dominated by the necessity to observe 'practical politics'. Any public image of their unanimity and certainty in advice was largely inaccurate, as Giblin recalled: he at least had been 'inclined to sit on the fence' at those conferences, opposing 'whatever argument was put forward too confidently', all the while troubled by the threat of


\(^{27}\) Douglas Ashford provides an account of these connections, and the different practices and assumptions they produced, in *The Emergence of the Welfare States*, Oxford, 1986, p.92.

\(^{28}\) Sir Leslie Melville, interviewed by Alan Hodgett, NLA Trc 182, p.9.
social unrest.29

The post-war inheritance of Australian economists was largely conditioned by these elements of social management uninformed by theory, and a lack of institutional integration sufficient to keep their advice distinct from political compromise. One consequence of this pattern of development was that while Australian economists in the inter-war years were almost 'inadvertently' disposed to counter-cyclical policy,30 they tended to associate the greater demands for planning in the 1930s with substantial social, political and ethical adjustments rather than with instrumentalist policies. The many advocates of fiscal intervention among speakers at an AIPS Summer School in 1934 outlined themes of more extensive social management rather than economic reform, to which Roland Wilson responded with scepticism concerning the limited 'human material' with which the planner had to work: the 'restlessness of the masses'.31 If economics in Australia was seen by its practitioners as a tool for reform, it was far from an instrument for change. Seeking for themselves a place amid the neutral, 'scientific' agencies of the state, they - like many inter-war intellectuals - sought to engineer a social unity from above rather than to critically evaluate the competing interests of a developing economy.32

Wartime demands and then reconstruction planning appeared at first to provide an ideal environment for this orientation towards public policy. Total war drew on the expertise of economists as much as on other intellectual and physical resources, and their residual inter-war status as publicists was subsumed in areas of discrete administration.33 Again, this accommodation emphasised the development of macro-economic policy, principally full employment, which were assumed to have moved from questions of political debate to settled matters of policy. Wartime co-ordination was seen to provide an opportunity to redress traces of the Depression still evident in areas ranging from workforce skills to housing and social service provision.34 These aspirations tended to imply that the threat of 'the mass' had passed: any other perspective would have been incompatible with the essential requirement of full wartime mobilisation. Yet perhaps it would be more accurate to describe this transition in terms of the dissolution of 'the mass' into more manageable units, so that it could then be returned to a potentially unstable post-war society. At an AIPS symposium held in 1944, H.C. Coombs, Director-General of the Commonwealth Department of Post-War Reconstruction, insisted that the test of an economic system was not only the goods and services it produced, but the quality of life it provided. The new society must be one where individual decisions

30See Butlin, Barnard and Pincus, Government and Capitalism, p.103.
33Rodney Maddock and Janet Penny Have studied the major area of this wartime consultation of senior economists in 'Economists at War: the Financial and Economic Committee 1939-44', AHER, vol.23, no.1, 1983, pp.28-47.
34The extent to which the effects of the Depression were still evident by the end of the 1930s is discussed by Richard Cotter, 'War, Boom and Depression' in James Griffin (ed.), Essays in the Economic History of Australia, Milton Qld., 1967, pp.279-80; W.A. Sinclair, The Process of Economic Development in Australia, Melbourne, 1976, pp.203-4; Butlin, Barnard and Pincus, Government and Capitalism, p.75. See also J.D.B. Miller, 'Forty Years On', Quadrant, vol.29, no.11, 1985, p.68.
were made in the context of the welfare of the community as a whole, and where the structure of society at every level preserved the voice and security of the individual while observing social objectives.\textsuperscript{35} These objectives, outlined by Copland, who had been appointed Commonwealth Prices Commissioner, included \textquoteleft the maintenance of full-employment, the provision of social security, the more equitable distribution of the products of industry, and the provision of scope for private enterprise within a framework of social control\textquoteright.\textsuperscript{36} Mass production, Copland argued, had demonstrated its ethical bankruptcy. For Lloyd Ross,\textsuperscript{37} the Department\textquoteright s Publicity Officer, capitalism was rotting, and was to be replaced by \textquoteleft socialism by consent: science camouflaged to suit the prejudices of Everyman\textquoteright.\textsuperscript{38}

These papers demonstrated the promise of \textquoteleft the trained economic mind in official quarters\textquoteright which, five years later, Mauldon saw as frustrated by social and political change. The cast of that mind, clearly, remained fundamentally managerial. It was already evident in the discussion at the 1944 Summer School that there was growing concern at the apparently simplistic treatment of the role of private enterprise in recovery, and at the primacy given to social ideals over economic needs by these officials.\textsuperscript{39} It can also be seen that Post-War Reconstruction itself harboured a dual emphasis, not always easily reconciled: a champion of welfare, it also sought to moderate the claims and \textquoteleft prejudices\textquoteright of the individual lest they disrupt the larger project of reform. Early in the consideration of reconstruction priorities, advisers and government shared a common assumption, carried over from inter-war reformism, that the success of policy was contingent on the restraint of popular purchasing power and wages which would otherwise imbalance recovery and ensure the post-war depression many already anticipated.\textsuperscript{40} Coupled to this emphasis was another continuity from the inter-war years, evident in the steady incorporation of Keynesian principles of counter-cyclical management which led policy further in the direction of centralised and indirect controls and away from direct intervention.\textsuperscript{41}

As much as these aspirations for post-war reconstruction seemed to confirm reformist themes, they also confronted economists with the central ambiguity in the institutional and cultural alignment they had consolidated in the inter-war years: was state regulation itself sufficient to carry through economic and social reform, and if not, where else were they, as \textquoteleft managers\textquoteright, to find support? In 1945 the preparation of the White Paper on Full Employment provided a clear example of this uncertainty. At one level, it

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{35}H.C. Coombs, \textquoteleft The Economic Aftermath of War\textquoteright in D.A.S. Campbell (ed.), \textit{Post-War Reconstruction in Australia}, Sydney, 1944, pp.81, 86f.
\item \textsuperscript{36}Copland, \textquoteleft The Change-over to Peace\textquoteright in Campbell (ed.), \textit{Post-War Reconstruction}, p.129.
\item \textsuperscript{37}Lloyd Maxwell ROSS Born in Melbourne in 1901, Ross was educated at the University of Melbourne, and worked as WEA tutor and lecturer in Economic History at Dunedin, New Zealand, from 1931 to 1933, and then as District Tutor in Newcastle for the University of Sydney. In 1935, already an active member of the Communist Party, he became the Secretary of the NSW Branch of the Australian Railways Union, holding that position until 1943 when he joined Post-War Reconstruction. From 1950 to 1952, his communist allegiance having ended, he worked with the Melbourne \textit{Herald} as an industrial writer, and then returned to his old union position, occupying it (except for an interval in 1954) until 1970.
\item \textsuperscript{38}Ross, \textquoteleft A New Social Order\textquoteright in Campbell (ed.), \textit{Post-War Reconstruction}, p.221.
\item \textsuperscript{39}See for example the comments on the papers published in Campbell (ed.), \textit{Post-War Reconstruction: Janes}, pp.99-102; Holt, pp.102-4; Hytten, pp.111-2; O\textquoteright Toole, pp.171-2; Curtin, p.236.
\item \textsuperscript{40}For accounts of the measures adopted to effect this restraint, see Stuart Macintyre, \textit{Winners and Losers: The Pursuit of Social Security in Australian History}, Sydney, 1985, pp.81, 85-88; Tom Sheridan, \textit{Division of Labour}, pp.38-40.
\item \textsuperscript{41}See Butlin, Barnard and Pincus, \textit{Government and Capitalism}, p.107.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
represented the apparent success of economic expertise in shaping public policy - and was applauded in an international symposium in 1948 as 'the strongest statement of the Keynesian position' to be produced by any government. At another level, the drafting of the Paper demonstrated the strained recognition of economic expertise within the federal bureaucracy, and the limitations on policy stemming from this incorporation. Extensive consultations throughout the preparation of the Paper indicated that many of those academically-trained wartime recruits into administrative and policy positions were uncertain whether they were engaged in devising policies of electoral appeal, drafting political reforms committed to restructuring society, or whether they were to function purely in a technical, advisory capacity. Without direct or independent access to political leaders, and in a political context emphasising national integration over sectional interests, they faced an unequal struggle with established sections of the public service, especially the Treasury. G.G. Firth, for example, had studied under Giblin and joined the Department of Labour and National Service in 1940, leaving in 1947 to become Professor of Economics in Tasmania. In 1951 he recalled his disillusionment with the experience of being drawn into the popular 'symbolism' of issues such as full employment, advising and protecting ministers who did not understand the theoretical aspects of the doctrine and who were more concerned to sustain their electoral support. The White Paper itself, with its emphasis on investment control and on restoring a 'sense of security' to both 'workers and businessmen' without compromising 'enterprise and efficiency', disappointed those economists who had anticipated more fundamental structural reform, either of capitalism itself, or of the values and objectives to be served by economic development. While theoretically sophisticated in its analysis, the White Paper did not change anything. Following in the tradition of social management, it did not intervene so much as offer to make the existing system work better. It outlined a general principle of full employment which would be supplemented by residuary 'palliative' social security measures rather than establishing a more comprehensive system of social and economic welfare.

---


44Gerald Gill Firth Born in Leeds in 1916, and educated at University College, London, Firth came to the University of Melbourne in 1938 as a Ritchie Research Fellow in Economics. From 1940 to 1947 he worked with the Commonwealth Public Service, and was then appointed Professor of Economics at the University of Tasmania.

45G.G. Firth, 'Disinflation in Australia: A Democratic Dilemma' (paper to 1951 Brisbane ANZAAS), pp.3-4.


48See Macintyre, *Winners and Losers*, p.84.
In addition to the compromises implicit in policy, the role of the economist in government appeared to face reappraisal after 1945. Throughout the 1920s, as noted above, and particularly in the 1930s, there had been calls for the establishment of an independent panel of economists to advise government. In 1945 the Pinner Committee on Civil Staffing and Wartime Activities reiterated the point. Insisting on the necessity for an 'Economic Advisory Secretariat', the Committee even specifically nominated two officers of Coombs' Department as ideal members. Pinner's main purpose, however, was to advise on the transition of the public service from its wartime functions back to a peacetime footing. Aware of a public insistence on reducing costs and inefficiencies, the Committee recommended a rapid return to appropriate levels of civilian administration. It may also have been spurred by a reaction against centralisation and 'the regimentation schemes of the economists' evident in the rejection of the 1944 referendum to increase Commonwealth powers in welfare matters. June 1946 was set as the deadline for the transition, and such haste itself seemed to rule out the establishment of a new Secretariat. Coombs has recorded that it seemed wiser at that time to distribute expertise throughout the service in the senior divisions of Departments, or move it out into universities rather than risk the defence of a privileged advisory body. While this dispersal marked the beginning of many distinguished administrative and academic careers, it did not encourage the kind of integration required to reform public administration which had been anticipated. Instead, the process provided the pre-conditions for a separation of government, business and research which was to be a recurrent characteristic of economic debate in the 1950s and well into the 1960s.

The attempt to define a more secure institutional footing for economic analysis was not confined to government in the 1940s: the universities began to seem a more secure base for economic professionalism, yet they in turn would influence the form of that professionalism. In the 1930s university enrolments in economics had expanded, perhaps partly due to the prominence of economists in public debate. Economics was not a study characterised by academic isolation: by 1940 only 10 per cent of the 400 students in the Sydney Faculty were full-time enrolments. This was not a situation the Faculty welcomed. As R.C. Mills argued, the 'white light of publicity' had its value, but it was also time that the teaching of

---

49 Committee of Review: Civil Staffing of Wartime Activities, AA CRS A2760, p. 469. The recommendations were T.W. Swan and A.S. Brown.

50 A.J. Hannan, 'South Australian Attitude', Public Administration, vol.5, no.2, p.65. This issue included expectations of the likely referendum results from all states, each of which (apart from Mauldon in Western Australia) anticipated a 'no' majority on the grounds of over-centralisation.

51 Coombs, Trial Balance, pp.28ff.

52 Frederic Eggleston was one commentator who regretted the failure to establish a co-ordinating and advisory body, especially on issues of finance and arbitration. See Eggleston, Reflections of an Australian Liberal, pp.161, 169. For some comments on the need for some centralised direction of resource allocation, see Ronald Mendelsohn, 'The Allocation of Resources as an Administrative Problem', pp.181-3. Throughout the 1950s Treasury surveys were dominated by a concern with growth rather than planning. See Greg Whitwell, The Treasury Line, Melbourne, 1986, pp.119-23. Whatever the extent of his network of personal advisers, Menzies' approach to economic affairs was to reject the critical findings of 'experts', as was evident in the quashing of the Report of the Vernon Committee of Economic Enquiry in 1965.

economics found some distance from community expectations. Nonetheless, like their colleagues in official wartime positions, academic economists keenly participated in reconstruction discussions with government, advising on specific policy measures and offering to train graduates in the new complexities of administration. In the later 1940s, Keynesian theory greatly assisted this orientation. Its message was interpreted to mean that the ‘mythological background’ of mere ‘humanism’ (‘man in the ordinary business of life’) had been outdated by the need to see the economy as a dynamic, potentially chaotic, whole. Those economists who questioned the effectiveness of planning were censured for being out of accord with the ‘political temper’ of modern societies. The philosophical individualism then taking shape in European economics, building on the disturbances of previous decades and disgust with the ease with which established institutions had given way to totalitarianism, had little support in Australia. In 1948 Copland argued that every effort must be made to comprehend ‘the increasing importance of what is called social capital’: those ‘methods by which ... wealth and income will be transmitted to the average man through better educational and health facilities, libraries, parks and gardens, town planning projects, community centres and even housing’. Such a social conscience was also evident in an article by R.I. Downing in the same year, in which he argued that no society could tolerate the continued existence of slums: assistance in securing adequate accommodation must be extended to all, regardless of ‘sickness, invalidity or inefficiency.’ Such an orthodoxy was so pervasive that Torliev Hytten, Professor of Economics at Hobart, felt sufficiently professionally compromised in late 1949 to threaten a libel suit.

54See R.C. Mills, *The University and Business: A Lecture*, Sydney, 1940. Mills noted that 50 per cent of these students were in, or went into, business, 30 per cent in government, and 20 per cent in teaching (p.18). Enrolments, he observed, had increased by 10 per cent annually since 1930 - p.14. He applauded the decision of the Public Service Board in 1933 to accept specialist graduates, and their more recent decision to allow Honours degree students to be full-time enrolments throughout their course - p.15.


58In an *Economic Record* review of von Mises’ *Human Action: A Treatise on Economics*, F. Schnierer argued that such ‘extremist laissez-faire’ was unlikely to ‘find much approval among present day economists’ - vol.26, no.2, 1950, p.228.


60Richard Ivan Downing Born in Melbourne in 1915, and educated at the University Melbourne and then at Cambridge, Downing was appointed a lecturer in economics at Melbourne in 1940. From 1941 to 1945 he was Assistant Economic Adviser to the Prime Minister, and from 1945 to 1947, and again from 1950 to 1953, Downing worked with the International Labour Organisation in Montreal. In 1954 he was appointed the Ritchie Research Professor of Economics at the University of Melbourne.

61Downing, ‘Housing and Public Policy’, *Economic Record*, vol.24, no.1, pp.72-86.

62Torliev Hytten Born at Tonsberg, Norway, in 1890, Hytten came to Australia in 1910 and was educated at the University of Tasmania. After working as a journalist from 1920 to 1926, he was appointed a lecturer in economics in Hobart, and then Professor in 1929. Hytten was the Economic Adviser to the Tasmanian government from 1929 to 1935, and then held the same position to the Bank of New South Wales from 1935 to 1949.
Towards the end of the 1940s, this orthodoxy in turn had begun to provide academic economists with a vehicle through which they could distance their discipline from the compromises of involvement with government which had developed during the war. If this move offered greater intellectual integrity, it also gave a more limited cast to the reformist legacy of the inter-war years. Cyril Renwick argued in a series of public lectures in 1947 that the great ideas in economics had always been founded on contingent circumstances. While employment theory seemed triumphant at that time, he suggested, it might provide only a transitory base for policy as the economic environment changed. Renwick was not suggesting that economists withdraw comment on public policy, but that they emphasise perennial, neutral issues - ‘the problem of scarcity’ - rather than advocate particular theories. Benjamin Higgins, Giblin’s successor to the Ritchie Chair in Melbourne, made similar points in his inaugural lecture of 1948. Confronted by the potential incompatibility of economists advising government in a democratic society, Higgins recommended that so long as economics remained ‘scientific’, concerned only with the ‘fundamental economic problem of allocating resources so as to maximise satisfaction’, then their integrity would be preserved. From welfare as a matter of principle, the emphasis was moving to questions of efficiency and productivity.

This shift no doubt reflected the early evidence of post-war prosperity. As recovery moved through the phases identified by Samuelson, from ‘efficient growth and security’ to ‘inflation’ and then towards the ‘grand neo-classical synthesis’, new emphases in policy were required. The logic of counter-cyclical Keynesian theory itself directed that once the demands of depression and wartime planning had passed, there was less need for extensive intervention and perhaps more to direct resource allocation in the private economy. Rather than any substantial theoretical realignment, and in addition to changing circumstances, these reappraisals reflected a desire to define the social role of economics away from close engagement

63 ‘Professor Denies Urging Unemployment Pool’, Sun, 23 November 1949, p.3.

64 Charles Cyril RENWICK Born in 1920 at Gosford, and educated at the University of Sydney, Renwick worked in the Army Education Service in 1943 before being appointed a lecturer in economics at Sydney in 1944. In 1955 he moved to the Newcastle University College, and later became the Director of Research of the Hunter Valley Research Foundation.

65 Cyril Renwick, Economists and Their Environment, Sydney, 1947, pp.2, 38, 49.

66 Benjamin HIGGINS Born at London, Ontario in 1912, and educated at the University of Western Ontario, London School of Economics, Harvard, and the University of Minnesota, Higgins held several positions with state agencies in the United States during World War Two. From 1948 to 1949 he was the Ritchie Professor of Economic Research at the University of Melbourne, and then was appointed to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.


68 Paul A. Samuelson, Economics: An Introductory Analysis, New York, 1955, p.vi. Samuelson defined the ‘neoclassical synthesis’ in these terms: ‘If modern economics does its task well so that unemployment and inflation are substantially banished from democratic societies, then its importance will wither away and the traditional economics (whose concern is wise allocation of fully employed resources) will really come into its own’: p.11.
with politics.\textsuperscript{69} In 1947 E.R. Walker commented with regret on this return to the security of 'science'. The thin English inheritance of 'common sense', Walker argued, with its rejection of any micro-economic survey of the institutional and technical structures of society and production, would do little to alter 'the existing pattern of inequality and economic freedom'.\textsuperscript{70} Walker's advocacy of 'economic sociology', and his suggestion that more attention should be given 'to the popular versions of economics' articulated by sectional interests, found little support among his colleagues.\textsuperscript{71} In 1951 Higgins explained that 'economists' could be found in any grouping, but were more common among Keynesians who tended to appreciate government as an administrative system rather than an instrument for social change.\textsuperscript{72} Though one reviewer objected to his lingering 'Victorianism',\textsuperscript{73} Higgins indicated the disengagement with social reform and claim to neutral professionalism which increasingly figured not only in economists' publications, but also influenced their teaching.\textsuperscript{74} Such a-theoretical eclecticism implied that only the lowest common denominator in social objectives should prevail.

None of these related elements of academic professionalism, a new disciplinary integrity, or the wartime centralisation of macro-economic strategies, was in itself inherently conservative. In combination, however, they defined a context in which many economists sought to confirm a pattern of analysis based on the restraint of social demands rather than co-ordinated public policy. In 1947 S.J. Butlin\textsuperscript{75} argued that a dispersal of expertise was occurring at a time when co-ordinated specialist advice was most important to national recovery. The Commonwealth public service was increasingly attracting economics graduates and developing its own internal centres of expertise,\textsuperscript{76} but the universities languished for funding. Political parties and trade unions showed little sign of consulting economists; pressure groups sought only those whose opinions they valued.\textsuperscript{77} Similarly, it might be added that a relatively closed circle of senior

\textsuperscript{69}The mathematical models of 'robot economics' became more prominent in the published work of the early 1950s, but they did not in themselves constitute a political reaction. This quoted phrase is from Kurt Singer, 'Robot Economics: A Critical Introduction to Von Neuman's Theory of General Equilibrium', \textit{Economic Record}, vol.25, no.1, 1949. For a general survey of the new emphases in economic research and publishing at that time, see Mark Perlman, "The Editing of the \textit{Economic Record} 1925-1975", in J.P. Nieuwenhuysen and P.J. Drake (eds.), \textit{Australian Economic Policy}, Melbourne, 1977, esp. pp.224-5.


\textsuperscript{72}'Economists Never Agree' in Higgins, pp.59, 66.


\textsuperscript{74}For accounts of university teaching of economics at that time, see G.C. Harcourt, \textit{The Social Science Imperialists}, ASSA Annual Lecture, Canberra, 1978, p.2; and also Bruce McFarlane, \textit{Economic Policy in Australia: The Case for Reform}, Melbourne, 1968, p.186.

\textsuperscript{75}Sydney James BUTLIN Born at Maitland in 1910, and educated at Sydney, Cambridge and Freiburg universities, Butlin was appointed a lecturer in economics at the University of Sydney in 1935. Between 1941 and 1943 he worked as the Director of the Economic Division of the Department of War Organisation and Industry, and then returned to the University of Sydney. Butlin became Professor there in 1946, holding that position until 1971 when he moved to the ANU.


\textsuperscript{77}Butlin, 'Of Course I Know No Economics, But ...', \textit{Australian Quarterly}, vol.20, no.3, 1948, pp.37-52.
economists continued to influence the appointment of 'independent experts' to advisory positions in areas such as arbitration without necessarily securing either critical independence or public accountability.\textsuperscript{78} It was not that economic topics were overlooked, but little focus was available to coordinate the various levels in which a new professionalism was emerging.

In 1948, D.B. Copland, keen to escape the frustration of political and bureaucratic involvement,\textsuperscript{79} became the first Vice-Chancellor of the Australian National University, an institution to be devoted to research alone and closely involved with social policy and national development. Even there re-assessments of the social role of economics seemed to be underway. As Adviser for the School of Social Sciences, W.K. Hancock outlined a selection criterion for the first Professor of Economics emphasising the need for someone interested in 'practical enquiry' rather than theory, and certainly not 'an individualist' like Keynes himself.\textsuperscript{80} T.W. Swan\textsuperscript{81} was appointed to the Professorship in 1950, a young economist highly regarded in both academic and governmental circles, and already recommended by the Pinner Committee to head its proposed Economic Secretariat. A theoretician of international standing, Swan nonetheless called economists away from the 'glittering prizes of achieving a theory of the trade cycle' and to 'a systematic and pedestrian attempt to discover how the economy works and grows'.\textsuperscript{82} The pressures of a new period of intense national economic growth demanded a practical approach and empirical data. It was equally unmistakable, however, that such growth itself would be defined in ways distinct from earlier ideals: private resource development and technical adjustment were replacing issues of reformist social policy. Swan's career in the first half of the 1950s indicated that informal channels of consultation still existed between government and academic economists,\textsuperscript{83} just as Coombs, following his appointment as governor of the Commonwealth Bank, attempted to carry his enthusiasm for economic theory and policy into the senior ranks of the banking sector.\textsuperscript{84} Beyond these informal and private exchanges, a re-orientation of economic commentary occurred in the late 1940s to issues of adjustment. Both institutionally and culturally

\textsuperscript{78}See Sheridan, \textit{Division of Labour}, p.44.

\textsuperscript{79}Copland described himself as being 'sick of politics' when, in 1947, he declined the offer of a safe seat in Commonwealth parliament by the NSW Liberal Party. It was even suggested to him that he might be a more effective national leader than Menzies. See letters in C.R. Hall papers, NLA mss. 4674. Hall was at that time Director of the NSW Chamber of Manufacturers.

\textsuperscript{80}Hancock to Copland, 6 September 1948, and 'Notes on a Meeting with Sydney Economists', 12 November 1948 - in ANU Archives, Department of Economics - General, 9.6.1.0.

\textsuperscript{81}Trevor Winchester SWAN Born in 1918 at Sydney, and educated at the University of Sydney, Swan was appointed to a lecturership at Sydney from 1940 to 1941, and then became Economic Adviser to the Department of War Organisation and Industry. From 1946 to 1950 he was the Chief Economist of the Department of Post-War Reconstruction. In 1950 he was appointed Professor of Economics at the ANU.


\textsuperscript{83}For an appraisal of Swan's career, see N.G. Butlin and R.G. Gregory, 'Trevor Winchester Swan 1918-1989', \textit{Economic Record}, vol.65, no.191, 1989, pp.369-77. Butlin and Gregory note that Swan's thinking seems to have been dependent on some sense of contribution to public policy, yet that such opportunities closed when his frequent contact with Menzies ended in Swan's protest over Australia's involvement in the Suez dispute - p.375.

\textsuperscript{84}Committed to securing an acceptance of Keynesian economics throughout the banking system, Coombs recalls that most senior officials, in the private banks especially, defined their responsibilities in fairly static terms as 'borrowers and lenders of money in ways which combined security with profit'. See Coombs, \textit{Trial Balance}, pp.155-6. As Governor, Coombs was also concerned to increase the level of exchange between promising officers of the Commonwealth Bank and local or visiting academic economists - p.138.
- in economists careers and in the terms of analysis - this was the environment which fostered the rise of Mauldon's 'consumer' as an equivocal measure of economic progress, emphasising stability over reform or efficiency.

***

The 'Long Economic Boom' beginning in the 1950s was built on the mobilisation of capital and resources during war. It was characterised by higher levels of productivity in manufacturing, almost wholly for a domestic market which, after 1952, was sheltered by wide-ranging import controls. Drawing on a greater availability of private investment, particularly from America, this expansion was assisted by technological and managerial innovations leading to improvements in the scale, efficiency and concentration of skills in several sectors of industry. Public works programmes and policy commitments of the magnitude of the Snowy Mountains and immigration schemes indicated the commitment by federal and state governments to provide structural support for private economic development. Over the long term, the record of this expansion was impressive: from 1940 to 1970 'the economy ... provide[d] 80 per cent more people double the standard of living that had been enjoyed previously'. The level of domestic demand at last began to match the capacity of the economy. Such broad expansion placed enormous demands upon resources, and was directed in specific areas. Early shortages in basic industries, and high rates of inflation, testified to imbalance. While economic and social strains had been expected to accompany the return to peace, in the late 1940s and early fifties the causes of imbalance easily became issues of political debate over priorities of policy and control. Given their own attempts to redefine a tradition of management at that time, economists were quickly drawn in to such debate.

In this context, 'the consumer' became a vital figure in the mediation of political and economic claims. While consumers had figured in Australian economic thinking prior to the Second World War, they had never been so central to a diverse range of analysis. In Melbourne after the war, for example, a political party was formed to represent 'a citizenship of consumers' who sought to restore the power of personal

---


87 In his 1952 Presidential Address to the Economics section of ANZAAS, Professor Wilfred Prest suggested that 'one of the major needs of our time is some agreement upon how far it is desirable and practicable to pursue the twin objectives of full employment and social security' - Prest, 'The Future of Private Enterprise' *ANZAAS - Report of the Twenty-Ninth Meeting*, Sydney, 1953, p.176.

88 The formation of 'Consumers' Leagues', for example, had been advocated in Melbourne in 1917 as a popular response to the rising cost of living, but the union movement provided a more immediate vehicle for this discontent. See Judith Smart, 'Feminists, Food and the Fair Price: The Cost of Living Demonstrations in Melbourne, August-September 1917', *Labour History*, no.50, 1986, p.115. As the Webbs argued in 1921, 'associations of consumers' could serve the purpose of 'superceding the capitalist profit motive'. In general, however, the workplace tended to provide a more effective site for political agitation. See Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *The Consumer's Co-operative Movement*, Sydney, 1921, p.viii. For an example of one significant figure in the economic commentary of the inter-war period, see M.L. Robinson, 'Economists and Politicians: The Influence of Economic Ideas Upon Labor Politicians and Governments, 1931-49', PhD, ANU, 1986. Robinson is concerned mainly with the 'monetary radical tradition' and the 'ideology of the credit-dependant farmer or small businessman', evident in the rhetoric and policies of Labor governments. Other prominent figures in commentary in the inter-war years were defined by their interests as borrowers, lenders and tax-payers.
choice to a society dominated by organised interests. Similarly, in January 1949 the Bulletin's economic supplement detected an emerging, volatile political constituency, 'not short of pennies ... but beginning to watch their pounds'. After two decades of austerity, it was announced that issues of 'quality, workmanship, price and service will again be the dominant factors in trade'. As Whitwell has argued, the post-war consumer, unlike the figure of the 1920s, was not defined by class: 'citizenship' was the appropriate term for a grouping constituted instead by the general appeal of mass advertising and hire-purchase. The changes wrought by this new agent were evident at many levels, from the material improvement of life, heightened personal aspirations, a preparedness to endorse the premises of 'capitalistic progress', to the greater influence of the household sector in 'the rate of economic growth, price movements and cyclical fluctuations'. For economists, this new prominence had to be accommodated at the level of policy. At the same ANZAAS conference at which Mauldon feared the influence of acquisitive individualism, it was observed that the 'consumption function' would become a 'vital field of investigation' given the expanding role of public regulation: it touched on issues ranging from the division of labour, the distribution of income, and the availability of credit.

The emergence of 'consumer capitalism' was assisted by the regrouping of manufacturing and commercial interests in organisations such as the Institute of Public Affairs (IPA). During the war the IPA had advocated the extension of a social security system defined by subsidised private choice rather the general welfare entitlement. A major supporter of Menzies' Liberal Party, by 1949 the IPA was calling for the Party to offer a 'master plan' to capture the allegiance of 'the great middle classes'. Such a plan would:

- extend vastly the opportunities for all of achieving the good life, the utmost in personal self-realisation and self-expression ... the opportunity to build a satisfying career, for acquiring the rewards of good work or a special ability ... for enjoying the best in education, for acquiring private property and achieving home ownership, for starting in business, for moving from the lowest to the highest position in the land in industry, government and the professions.

This appeal to personal mobility and especially to domestic consumption was central to conservative political rhetoric of the 1950s, and it shaped economic commentary in turn by profoundly individualising - even 'privatising' - the basic reference points in social analysis. If the concept of class conflict was rejected in favour of 'citizenship', it was nonetheless argued that workers must become more 'responsible', and that Australian industry would benefit more from 'a change in the national psychology towards work' than from

---


90 *Wild Cat Monthly*, January, 1949, p.1


92 Whitwell, *Making the Market*, p.3.


95 For a general background to these connections, see Simms, *A Liberal Nation*.

technological innovation alone. The real threat of the time was observed by the IPA to lie not in 'the concrete instances of the advance of socialism' but in 'the growth of the mass mentality, the mass mind and character'. This was not the rhetoric of class unrest of the 1930s. Instead, the IPA evoked the interests of a mass of individuals, each needing a way to identify common values in terms of personal accountability, private aspiration and acquisition.

This rhetoric assumed a double edge when it was coupled to the inflationary circumstances of the early 1950s. As accumulated wartime demand rushed into a rapidly decontrolled economy, prices rose by 10 percent in each year between 1947 and 1952. At the same time as political rhetoric emphasised an economy free from intervention and control, economic commentary had also to discipline the new autonomy of the private individual. A recurrent theme of much economic journalism at this time was that prevailing shortages and imbalances could be explained by a fall in individual productivity, coupled to excessive public spending. As the local correspondent of the Economist observed, Australians had abandoned their tradition 'outback' skills for 'an eight hour day and a five day week', supplemented by 'movies and race tracks and beaches', and 'full industrial employment'. The first issue of the Financial Review in August 1951 simultaneously welcomed those 'middle income investors', 'atomised' from a small number of 'rich savers' by heavy taxation, while calling upon 'the people' to 'make necessary sacrifices in terms of a reduced standard of living' if the nation was to meet the demands of internal dissenion and external threat. In government as well there were signs of the need to negotiate a commitment to development as well as restraint. As the first minister in the new portfolio of National Development, Casey promised a 'grand strategy of development in peace-time' which would provide the 'means of selectively stimulating every branch of the Australian economy'. By 1951 this portfolio had been passed to W.H.

---

97"Triumph - or Disaster", vol.3, no.1, 1949, p.14

98'The Threat to the Individual', ibid, p.175.


101'Australia: the Price of Growth', Economist, 7 March 1953, pp.683-700. A similar interpretation of the basis of Australia's economic difficulties was presented in the series 'Australia's Economic Emergency', 30 September 1950, 7 October 1950, pp.559; 581; and in 'Australia's Future as a Primary Producer', 4 August 1951, p.291. A few Australian economists responded to this persistent criticism, pointing out that while a predominantly rural economy, dependent upon manufactured imports, was in the interests of British capital, Australia also had to remedy chronic international shortages in many goods. See the letters from Kingsley Laffer and Wilfred Prest, 15 November 1952, p.451.


103Casey to Menzies, 9 March 1950, A693 A924 pt.1; CPD (H of R), vol.26, 23 February 1950, p.66. Casey's approach to the Development portfolio was in the terms he had outlined in a collection of essays he published in 1949: 'government should keep a jump ahead of individual enterprise', he argued, preparing the way for expansion, fostering scientific investigation, encouraging contributory social insurance and superannuation schemes, and working towards better managerial, industrial and public relations. Casey's ideal was New Deal America, coupling decentralisation and social welfare with industrial modernisation. See Casey, Double or Quit: Some Views on Australian Development and Relations, Melbourne, 1949.
Spooner, who pronounced that 'governments do not produce things', and who steered the department towards a strategy of selective agricultural and industrial subsidisation in place of co-ordinated public programmes. While inheriting some of the functions of the Department of Post-War Reconstruction, National Development adjusted these priorities to an economy emphasising private choice.

The terms in which inflation was comprehended provided an indication of new directions in economic commentary at that time. In the late 1940s Chifley sought to restrain post-war inflation through an unsuccessful attempt to secure controls over financial services and prices. Fadden admitted in the Budget Speech of October 1950 that public works programmes would inevitably place strains on the resources of even the most prosperous countries. Yet by the end of 1949, and certainly by the time Fadden responded to the Korean War boom by introducing extensive deflationary controls and taxes in the 1951 Budget, inflation was no longer seen, in Chifley's terms, as a threat to 'the worker'. Instead, it was associated by many commentators, politicians and economists, with popular over-consumption. Harder work, 'better production and more goods' were Menzies' recommendations if price rises were to be contained, and in July 1951 he assembled the 'nation in microcosm' at a conference in Canberra to discuss the implementation of this counsel. Again, this highly publicised gathering affirmed the message of personal sacrifice and 'a greater sense of responsibility for production'. Its participants also indicated the range of interests which were then accommodated in economic analysis. Menzies placed inflation in the context of the domestic struggle with communism; manufacturers and commercial representatives argued that profit in itself had not been shown to be inflationary; the ACTU opposed wage pegging and defended

---

104 William Henry SPOONER Born in Sydney in 1897, Spooner worked as a chartered accountant until entering the Senate for NSW in 1949. A powerful figure in the NSW Liberal Party, his first portfolio was Social Services, which held until 1951, then taking over National Development.

105 'Spoonerisms', Financial Review, 16 August 1951, p.3. For an outline of Spooner's ideological position within the Liberal Party, see Simms, The Liberal Nation, pp.47; 60-2.

106 See Ministerial Statement on Development, A693 A1514 - Minute by Grenfell Rudduck on Migration and Investment, 26 May 1952; Statement on National Development, ibid, (n.d.). Also Peter Loveday, Promoting Industry: Recent Australian Political Experience, St Lucia, 1982, p.36; Gruen, 'The Economy', p.39; Butlin, Barnard and Pincus, Government and Capitalism, ch.5.


108 Arthur William FADDEN Born at Ingham in 1895, Fadden worked with the Mackay Town Council before establishing his own chartered accountancy firm in Townsville and Brisbane. From 1946 he represented Darling Downs in the House of Representatives, and in 1941 was elected Leader of the Australian Country Party. He led the Federal Opposition from 1941 to 1943, and from 1949, as MHR for McPherson, he was Commonwealth Treasurer. In 1958 he resigned from all political positions.

109 CPD (H of R), vol. 209, 12 October 1950, pp.763-5.


111 'Combined Effort Needed To Lift Output', SMH, 31 August 1950, p.2.

112 The phrase was employed by C.R. Hall in his history of the Associated Chamber of Manufacturers: Hall, The Manufacturers: Australian Manufacturing Achievements to 1960, Sydney, 1971, p.797. Such a description is apt, given that these representatives provide a fair guide to those pressure groups which were enjoying direct access to high levels of politics and administration at that time. See T.V. Matthews, 'Business Associations and the State, 1850-1979' in Brian Head (ed.), State and Economy In Australia, Melbourne, 1983, pp.138-9.
the 40 hour week; Mrs Ivy Brookes,113 of the National Council of Women, insisted that women must be present on any panel that determined what were and were not luxury goods; and the Reverend Alan Walker,114 speaking for the Methodist congregation (the Anglican and Catholic Churches were also represented), advised that 'human nature could not be allowed to go its own way', particularly in relation to gambling and liquor.115 Few of these representatives were predisposed to governmental controls, favouring instead induced restraint through personal taxation and credit controls. As an exercise in economic 'statesmanship' rather than policy formation, Menzies prepared the ground for the restrictions of the 1951 Budget. As an indication of assumptions in the economic analysis of major sectional interests, the conference demonstrated no sense of shared responsibility or of the need for structural reform in the process of national development: recourse to central authority was to be for the purposes of private regulation rather than public direction.116

In this context, many economists further reoriented their analysis from social welfare programmes to the control of individual purchasing power and wage demands. Traces of post-war reformism were evident in J.F. Cairns'117 suggestion in 1940 that inflation was a secondary issue to the more important gains in wages for the first time in over a decade.118 H.W. Arndt119 observed in June 1951 that consumers were in fact becoming more responsible, subscribing to insurance policies, moderate credit installments and other forms of institutionalised saving.120 More often, however, inflation led to recommendations of retreat in social policy. Before the Arbitration Court in 1950, Wood insisted that, since inflation was so severe, there

113Ivy BROOKES Born in Melbourne in 1883, the eldest daughter of Alfred Deakin, she was educated at the University Conservatorium, Melbourne, and was later to hold faculty and board positions in several areas of the University of Melbourne. She was also active in voluntary clubs and societies, and was President of the National Council of Women from 1948 to 1953. In 1905 Ivy married Herbert Brookes, manufacturer, pastoralist and active supporter of Protectionist and Liberal political parties in Victoria.

114Alan WALKER Born in Sydney, 1911, Walker was educated at the University of Sydney, Leigh Theological College, and was ordained in 1934. From 1936 he was the Assistant Director of the NSW Methodist Youth Department, then from 1939 to 1944 the Minister in Cessnock, NSW. In 1944 he led the Sydney Methodist Mission, and then in 1953 the Mission to the Nation. An evangelical and controversialist, Walker often spoke on matters of international affairs and domestic politics.

115See reports of proceedings in the Sydney Morning Herald, 31 July-1 August 1951.


117James Ford CAIRNS Born in Melbourne in 1914, Cairns was educated at the University of Melbourne. He joined the Victorian Police Force in 1935, and served with the AIF in 1945. From 1945 to 1955 he worked in the Department of Economics at Melbourne as tutor to senior lecturer, and in 1955 he won the federal seat of Yarra for Labor.


119Heinz Wolfgang ARNDT Born at Breslau, Germany in 1915, Arndt was educated at Oxford and the London School of Economics. He worked as a lecturer at Manchester University from 1943 to 1946, before being appointed a senior lecturer in economics at the university of Sydney, holding that position until 1951 when he was appointed Professor of Economics at Canberra University College.

could be no increase in the basic wage, and no award of equal pay for women.\textsuperscript{121} In June 1950 J.E. Isaac\textsuperscript{122} questioned the relevance of the concept of the basic wage in a fully-employed, expanding economy in which general wage increases might only exaggerate patterns of consumer demand, inhibiting the development of a flexible, more highly skilled workforce.\textsuperscript{123} With a need to reduce demand and increase productivity, wages provided the most direct vehicle to achieve these objectives. In turn, commentary on wages policy in the 1950s was often to provide a subtle way of segregating the workforce in terms of skill, productivity, and gender.

While these reappraisals were in response to the specific issue of inflation, they also prompted a general intellectual reorientation as deflationary measures prepared the way for a more formal conservatism on matters of priority in social development. Early in 1951, a tribute to Keynes' contribution in formulating economic models to deal with depression and unemployment, pronounced that, in the midst of over-employment and inflation, his appeal was evident only in "the emotional and slip-shod thinking of civil servants, politicians and agitators".\textsuperscript{124} One clear articulation of these emerging conservative priorities was Colin Clark's\textsuperscript{125} reaction to the 1950 Arbitration Court decision. The Court recommended a £1 increase in the basic wage on the grounds that prosperity and its burdens should be shared, and advised raising the wage for women from 54 to 75 per cent of the male award. This 'inflationary' decision provoked widespread controversy, but was welcomed by Clark, then the Director of the Queensland Bureau of Industry. He argued that the issue of inflation only masked the real problem of over-employment. An increase in wages must bring about a needed test of industrial efficiency. Light industries, thriving only on consumer spending, would be unable to compete with imports given a higher wages bill and no alteration in levels of protection. A similar pruning could also occur in government, where Clark identified at least '100 000 redundant public employees'. The pressure of higher wages, he argued, would force Australia to return to its optimum economic and social form, avoiding an inflationary spiral which might end in political totalitarianism. Further, the period of transition would be brief if left to 'natural effect', and if 'public authorities resist the clamour to provide "relief works"' in the inevitable interval of 'dis-employment'. After all, 'there will obviously be so many jobs for men to go to in building materials production, building, mining, forestry and farm and pastoral work, and there can be no serious unemployment problem for

\textsuperscript{121}'Dangers Seen In Equal Pay', \textit{Argus}, 28 February 1950, p.3.

\textsuperscript{122}Joseph Ezra ISAAC Born in 1922, Isaac was appointed a lecturer in economics at the University of Melbourne in 1950, and had become a reader by 1958. In 1959 he held the position of Assistant Secretary to the Planning and Research Division of the Department of Labour and National Service, and in 1962 he appointed Professor of Economics at Melbourne.


\textsuperscript{124}'John Maynard Keynes; The Modern Mind', \textit{CAB}, vol.9, no.1, 1951, p.10.

\textsuperscript{125}Colin Grant CLARK Born at Plymouth in 1905, and educated at Oxford, Clark was an unsuccessful Labor candidate at the 1929, 1931 and 1935 British elections, and worked with the Social Surveys of London and Merseyside between 1928 and 1930. He lectured in statistics at Cambridge from 1931 to 1937, and in 1937-1938 toured Melbourne, Sydney and Perth as a visiting lecturer. From 1938 to 1952 he held a combination of positions attached to the Queensland government: Under Secretary of State for Labour and Industry; Director of the Bureau of Industry; Financial Adviser to the Treasury. In 1953 he returned to Oxford as the Director of Institute for Research in Agricultural Economics.
women'. Not only would inflation be corrected, but these policies would return to Australia to its desirable social form.

If the views of 'Mr Clark and his followers' were sometimes noted as extreme, he was nonetheless regarded in Australian commentary as 'one of the world's leading economists'. He was one of a panel of three (the other two were Giblin and Melville) suggested by Roland Wilson to advise the Arbitration Court, and it not surprising that he enjoyed considerable influence among interest groupings and employers associations which, if they did not follow all of his recommendations, found his political views congenial. Once a colleague and keen supporter of Keynes, by the late 1940s Clark's economic thinking was strongly influenced by his conversion to Catholicism. Emphasising that humanity was defined primarily by the 'capacity to own our own property and make our own provisions for what we need in the future', Clark rejected any economic structure or policy which tolerated inefficiency, politicised economic processes, and interfered with individuals' attempts to make provision for themselves. Such politicisation was evident to him in the destabilisation of the wage relationship in large enterprises, in the practice of protectionism, in the compromising of regional interests through centralism, or in welfare policies of general entitlement which detracted from personal initiative. Writing for Catholic readers, Clark endorsed the tradition of social and economic criticism associated with Hilaire Belloc, defending 'the working proprietor' - the self-employed farmer, craftsman, trader and professional - as 'the reasonable norm in human affairs'. Addressing secular groupings, he spoke mainly in terms of political objectives which again were directed at reducing the power of government and re-emphasising individual responsibilities, voluntarism, and the family unit. On these principles, he called for the reduction of personal taxation to a maximum level of 25 per cent; the end of means tested pensions; and the discouragement of large-scale industries in favour of 'the small individual enterprise or partnership ... [as]

---

126 Colin Clark, 'The Budget and the Basic Wage', vol.26, no.2, 1950, pp.179-185; see also Clark, 'Economic Stabilisation at Home', ESANZ (NSW) Winter School, 1951, mimeo, NLA: 'It is our urgent task now, strange and unpalatable though it may seem, to destroy opportunities for employment whenever we get the chance': pp.1-2. Clark also argued in this lecture that married women worked only to escape poverty, therefore the state should increase child endowment rather than fund further programmes of development: pp.3, 10.


129 Sheridan, Division of Labour, p.44.

130 Norman Bartlett reports that Clark's conversion was 'part of a widespread reaction against the 19th century doctrine of automatic progress'. See 'Economist With A Human Touch', Daily Telegraph, 28 July 1961.


133 Clark, Property and Economic Progress, Melbourne, n.d. (repr. from The Tablet, 6-13 January 1945), p.5.
the most economically efficient as well as the most socially desirable form of organisation'. Clark, Principles of Public Finance and Taxation (Arthur Capper Moore Research Lecture to the Federal Institute of Accountants), Brisbane, 1950, esp. pp.18, 23-4. For a more extended critique, see Clark, Australian Hopes and Fears, London, 1958, esp. pp. 97, 111, 124, 129, 154, 204, 282-3.

Reversing his argument of 1937 for the nationalisation of private health insurance firms, in 1947 Clark advocated the establishment of contributory co-operative associations based in unions and regional groupings which would provide health cover and financial assistance without interest.

Clark provided an alternative to the challenge that pre-occupied economic commentary in the early 1950s: the choice between the individual and the state. He defined a social context which would conserve the family, independence and tradition without succumbing to aggressive individualism or centralisation. This context - the decentralised economy - is one that will be studied in greater detail in the next chapter. For conservative idealists at that time, such as the Catholic Rural Movement led by Santamaria, Clark outlined the model of the balanced rural community; for more pragmatic conservatives, resisting the encroachment of government and the demands of the union movement, Clark offered an industrial model of restraint and 'partnership'. In formulating these models, Clark was an effective publicist: his suspected influence was widespread. Practically, he was too much a controversialist to...
secure academic positions or bureaucratic support.\textsuperscript{139} Returning to England in 1953, Clark followed the logic of his position further than the political climate in Australia allowed at that time, and was one of the funding members of the Institute of Economic Affairs in London. With a consistent emphasis on the primacy of the individual unit defined in reference to ethical principles rather than economic change, and a calculation of welfare at a personal rather than a social level,\textsuperscript{140} Clark began to adopt a more vigorous support of the free market and economic individualism.\textsuperscript{141} Maintaining a close interest in Australian affairs, he disquieted an AIPS seminar in 1962 with his insistence that 'life is insecure and competitive and will so continue as long as the human race exists'.\textsuperscript{142} Clark continued to be consulted by Australian employers' representatives on the issue of wages policy, advising that adjustments ought to be geared to productivity alone.\textsuperscript{143} And his commentary continued to indicate the social ideals, and the latent economic principles, that characterised the thinking of conservatives seeking to direct Australia's economic progress rather than simply restrain it.

Clark's recommendations represented the logic of a post-war conservatism unrestricted by the main institutional formations of centralised policy. No academic economist provided such a comprehensive formulation. They attempted instead to adapt older managerial precepts to the circumstances of prosperity. Of Giblin's generation, it was only Copland who maintained active public and professional commitments well into the 1950s. As such, he retained the prominence and status of his generation, adapting it to the new circumstances of private prosperity. Copland's frequently quoted 'milk-bar economy' thesis provided one of the clearest and most consistent analyses of the problems of the period, shaping the earlier reformist assumptions to a new emphasis on the restraint of the individual. To a large extent, Copland attempted to develop an 'establishment' consensus which would complement Clark's conservative radicalism: both emphasised the dangers of post-war excess, but while Clark recommended a solution in social reorganisation, Copland provided more specific strategies to manage the equivalent of Mauldon's 'consumer'.

\textsuperscript{139}Some interviews with Clark record his sense that, as a controversialist, he was unable to secure an academic position in Australia following his resignation from the Bureau. See Alan Trengrove, 'Colin Clark: "I Feel I've Been Expelled"', \textit{The West Australian}, 6 January 1962; Noel Lindblom, 'Economist Sees Early Rift in EEC Plan', \textit{SMH}, 1 September 1967. In a more recent interview, Clark suggested that he considered academic positions in Adelaide and Melbourne, and declined an offer to go to Chicago, before accepting a position at the Oxford Institute for Research in Agricultural Economics, where he thought 'I could work in the directions in which I was interested' - Christopher Higgins, 'Colin Clark: An Interview', \textit{Economic Record}, vol.65, no.190, 1989, pp.305-6. More specifically, Clark felt he could no longer work with a government in Queensland which, in favouring the development of manufacturing industries, went against his convictions. See Chilla Bullbeck, 'Colin Clark and the Greening of Queensland: the Influence of a Senior Public Servant on Queensland Economic Development 1938-1952' in \textit{AJPH}, vol.33, no.1, 1987, p.8.

\textsuperscript{140}This assessment is based on appraisals of Clark's major work in the area of economic progress, but seems equally applicable to his Australian commentary: see Paul Baran, \textit{The Political Economy of Growth}, Harmondsworth, 1973, p.128, fn.6; Ervin Rothbarth, rev. of Clark's \textit{The Conditions of Economic Progress} in \textit{The Economic Journal}, vol.51, April 1941, p.121.


\textsuperscript{142}'Economic Growth', p.28; see also Sir John Crawford's discussion of Clark's paper - pp.30-3.

The 'milk bar economy' referred primarily to improvident consumerism, but also indicted the preparedness of government to leave social forces uncontrolled and to limit policy to short-term goals. On the one hand, Copland recommended restrictions on private spending through compulsory government loans, controls on hire-purchase agreements, and increases in sales tax, excises and interest rates. The severity of Fadden's 1951 Budget was seen by many to reflect Copland's influence on governmental policy. On the other hand, he demanded that government redress the poverty of Australia's social and economic infra-structure in areas from education, housing and hospitals, to roads and railways. To some extent, he anticipated J.K. Galbraith's critique of America's development as an economy of 'private affluence, public squalor'. But whereas Galbraith had endorsed a pluralist concept of the role of an emerging class of liberal intellectuals in both government and the professions, who were capable of redirecting priorities, Copland - with the inter-war inheritance as a conditioning factor - seemed unable to identify any equivalent grouping in Australia.

The question of reconciling the creativity of the entrepreneur with the public good had always concerned Copland, and 'management' had been a constant theme in his thinking from his foundation of the Melbourne University Commerce School in 1925 to his appointment as the first Principal of the Australian Administrative Staff College in 1955. From the 1920s onwards, he had tended to favour the role of a professionally-advised government over private interests. By the late 1940s, however, this preference seemed harder to maintain: while no more prepared to favour private enterprise, Copland pessimistically reassessed the role and scope of public policy in terms of its interference with personal freedom. Copland defined such freedom not so much as a question of market-choice as of ethical values. In a 1951 collection of essays he insisted that programmes of expansion must involve a sacrifice of economic stability: short-term personal security must be compromised for the sake of long-term growth, whether in the search for new markets in Asia, in meeting the demands of the immigration scheme, or in redirecting resources into industries vital to defence preparedness. Strict guarantees of full-employment could not be maintained, Copland argued. Wages should be set in accordance with the priority of specific industries; competition in industrial relations between unions and employers must be replaced by co-operation outside the courts; new, unnecessary enterprises should be discouraged. These issues were clearly seen in a broad, challenging context, but what was most remarkable about Copland's comments was not the objectives suggested but the institutional and intellectual mediums he advocated. It was in this respect that a progressive outlook became tied to an essentially conservative social analysis.

Surveying his contemporary society, Copland saw no tradition or inheritance capable of meeting the challenges he discussed. This implicit pessimism can not be separated from the themes of his economic

144 For an indication of his attributed influence, see the Editorial comments, SMH, 28 September 1951.

145 See for example: 'Economist Warns of Depression', SMH, 2 February 1951, p.4; 'Copland's 8 Point Plan To Defeat Inflation', 17 March 1951, p.3.


147 See for example Studies In Economics and Social Science, Melbourne, 1927.

148 For an example of this reassessment, see 'Authority and Control in a Free Society', 29th ANZAAS Conference, Sydney, 1952, pp.3-22.

commentary or even his policy advice. It had become possible to 'think of the welfare of the whole human race as a practical objective', yet it seemed to him that even 'advanced' societies were embracing some form of totalitarianism.\textsuperscript{150} This fear of social disintegration was intellectually crippling, given the reliance Australian economists of Copland's generation placed on social ideals of unity to justify their alliance with programmes of development, and their perception of themselves as a reformist elite. Progress, Copland noted in 1952, had lowered 'the standard of intellectual effort' into a mindless state of pure consumption.\textsuperscript{151} While Galbraith in America looked to the rejection of the anachronistic, orthodox preoccupation with scarcity in an age of affluence, Copland referred to a need to conserve values. Further, Galbraith's analysis addressed a society which embodied the 'countervailing power' of consumers, producers and union groupings against the influence of corporate monopolies.\textsuperscript{152} Copland's analysis displayed little equivalent confidence. Given the antipathy to private interests implicit in the inheritance of Australian economics to which he had contributed, Copland lacked a conceptual background capable of such pluralism. While highly respected by both trade unions and employers' associations, and frequently recommended in the press as a source of expertise for a clearly foundering federal government,\textsuperscript{153} Copland's thinking did not accommodate a diversity of active interests. Insisting on a generalised social morality, underpinned by a close scrutiny of the individual as consumer, his analysis in itself obscured the more fundamental structural adjustments occurring in the economy at that time, such as difficulty in securing imported capital goods and the need for industrial reform.\textsuperscript{154} Far from challenging 'conventional wisdom', Copland's executives were to be possessed of 'deeply embedded cultural roots', 'capable of keeping a changing world in its historical perspective'.\textsuperscript{155} Even after a decade of expansion, for example, Copland spoke in 1960 in favour of 'what might be called a fourth estate of government, complementary to parliament, the executive and the judiciary', and comprised of 'elder statesmen' who would advise on issues of social welfare and economic development.\textsuperscript{156} Their role was to be allied to institutions of control concerned more with social preservation than economic innovation - a poor relic of the plans for an advisory bureau of economists which had been put forward in the 1940s.

In these terms, Copland's 'milk bar' thesis reveals much of the inherent institutional and cultural conservatism of the 1950s. If the Menzies' years encouraged the development of a 'political capitalism'


\textsuperscript{151}'This Technological Age', \textit{ABC Weekly}, 13-20 December 1952, pp.8-9; 8-9.


\textsuperscript{154}For a critical assessment of the appropriateness of the 'milk bar' diagnosis, see Waterman, \textit{Economic Fluctuations}, pp.66-7.


expressed in ‘corporate ideals and practices’, then Copland at least was not articulating a model of constructive private and public co-operation. The ‘milk bar economy’ and the ‘elder statesmen’ both identified government and public agencies with the primary function of restraint. Even given Copland’s interest in managerial development, there was no clear function for private interests in his thinking. While his diagnoses were far from the only interpretations of post-war prosperity, and while they were informed by a range of macro-economic principles over which there was little debate, the priorities and rhetoric with which these principles were deployed indicated the conceptual limitations of economic commentary based more on the management of society than the criticism of economic progress.

***

For Colin Clark, post-war prosperity brought with it the chance to consolidate ideals of voluntarism, the family unit and private property; for Copland, like Mauldon, it seemed to threaten the basic premises of a reformism based on the management of a social whole. From their different perspectives, both endorsed a form of commentary which at best preserved the existing features of Australian society as discrete units rather than related parts: their economic commentary was based more on restraint than the co-ordination of the system as a whole. Across a wide range of more specific economic analysis, other commentators, whether academics or economic journalists, confirmed similar themes: the conservatism of individual rights and the rejection of extensive public policy on the one hand; or the conservatism associated with the a sense of the need to control the selfishness of the mass society on the other.

Whereas Copland reacted to the economic developments of the early 1950s with anxiety, the IPA began the decade with a triumphant welcome for the ‘spirit of enterprise’. The rhetoric if not their principles of social policy they had supported in reconstruction were swept aside in the first years of the decade. Full employment and ‘the Keynesian virus’ in particular were rejected in favour of an economy capable of responding to an international market without the constraints of government intervention and ‘the remote and sometimes autocratic control exercised by the Canberra officialdom’. The IPA Review moved easily from Beveridge to Hayek: from the rhetoric of ‘socially responsible capitalism’ in the late 1940s to that of individualism in the early fifties. The underside of ‘flexibility, imagination and individual resourcefulness’ was an insistence on trade union responsibility and the necessity for a rapid mobility of labour between industries. While the British were admired for their struggle with hardship, America - ‘the American attitude of mind, the psychological climate of America’ - came to provide the central inspiration for the Review. The comparisons were frequent, almost always in terms in terms of individual psychology. In 1953 it was observed that the average Australian undermined national economic progress through being ‘not so much intent upon acquiring the latest model motor car’ as on ‘his weekly excursions to the football and the races’. In the interests of economic expansion, even the Cold War was downplayed: Russia might

---

157For an outline of this pattern, see Marian Simms, ‘State Intervention and Coalition Governments, 1949-66’ in Head (ed.), State and Economy, pp.161-3


continue to be 'imponderable', but the prospect for peace and the freedom for international progress should not be abandoned. Representing the economic idealism of established private interests in the 1950s, the IPA departed swiftly from the rhetoric of the 1940s. Where Copland could see no possibility of economic integration, the IPA called for a new spirit in industrial relations, asserting that 'every man is himself a creator, by birth and by nature an artist, an architect and a fashioner of worlds'.

This optimism was not shared by all associated with private interests in the early 1950s. The Financial Review, a weekly newspaper launched by Fairfax in 1951 and initially edited by the Economist's Australian correspondent, J.C. Horsfall, insisted on both the reality of external threat and that 'Australia ... is not a harmonious country'. Intended to serve a broad readership ranging from business executives to small suburban investors, and drawing on both its own journalists and a wide range of commentators from the universities, unions and industry, the publication of the Review suggested the level of affluence and economic interest in Australian society, and also something of the values that affluence upheld. Rather than looking for themes of economic and social coherence, the paper stated that 'the rift between the political parties is matched in the mind and mood of the people'. The first issue rehearsed the lessons of the 1930s in terms of economic profligacy and a lack of adequate defence preparedness. Damning 'extravagant expenditure on public works', the issue included an article by Wilfred Prest on the need for 'heavy sales taxes on the less essential categories of civilian goods' to fund the strengthening of national defences. The paper also recommended Colin Clark's proposals for a massive reduction in the manufacturing workforce in favour of consolidating rural interests: it was as a primary producer that Australia would fulfil its responsibilities to Asia and to the world. The role of federal government, it was suggested, would be improved if 'East and West Blocks [were] within earshot of industry, [and] if their occupants could hear the rattle of the railway above the prattle of professors'. By September 1950 the paper was so concerned at levels of public expenditure, and at the need to marshal resources against potential aggression, that it called for a halt to the Snowy Mountains Scheme; by October it called for an urgent cut in immigration. While the IPA turned towards America, the Financial Review resisted even Copland's suggestion of closer currency ties with the United States, asserting that 'Professor Copland will find little support for his plan to leave Britain in the lurch at one of the most critical hours of her history'.

The conservatism of the Financial Review was that of the suburban shareholder rather than that of free market individualism. Arguing for reduced personal and company taxation and smaller government, the paper supported the restraint side of Copland's 'milk bar' thesis, but vigorously opposed any expansion of public works and welfare services. If critical of Menzies' levels of public spending and taxation, the paper

162Lord McGowan, 'Human Relations in Industry', vol.6, no.5, p.160.
163Macriele Dixon quoted in 'A Philospher on Individualism', vol.6, no.4, p.112.
164Wilfred PREST Born at York, England, in 1907, Prest was educated at the University of Leeds and then took up a lectureship at St Andrews University from 1933 to 1937. From 1938 Prest was at the University of Melbourne, first as Senior Lecturer and then as Truby Williams Professor of Economics.
166'Dear Brutus', 23 August 1951, p.2.
167'Mid-Stream', 20 September 1951, p.2; 'Financial Scene Changes', 4 October 1951, p.1.
168'Sir Douglas This Week', 25 October 1951, p.3.
consistently supported the Liberal government against Labor's alleged lingering socialism. Specialising in reactive opinion, it was not until the easing of international instability and inflation in late 1952 that the Financial Review outlined clear preferred directions in development. By the beginning of 1953, it was possible to anticipate stable if not boom conditions, but the Review continued to interpret issues in terms of resource-based expansion rather than co-ordinated industrial or social policy. It was an investor's recovery that the Financial Review began to celebrate, centering on a renewed confidence in productivity, and a relief that government appeared to have broken with 'blundering and unnecessary deviations away from free enterprise and toward socialism'.

Protected by the import licensing system for all imports introduced in 1952 to check the effects of post-war consumption on the balance of payments, the period to 1960 was one fostering often uncompetitive industries in a climate of development which emphasised private initiatives over central control. By early 1953, the Review still considered the Snowy Mountains project to be a dubious if inspiring conception, yet regarded more favourably Western Australian initiatives in encouraging secondary industry and oil exploration, South Australian intentions to develop atomic power, and proposals to exploit the resources of the Northern Territory. Government was encouraged to initiate development, but it had no place in interventionist management. In April A.G. Lowndes, Chairman of the AIPS, called for the establishment of an independent panel of research economists to advise government on policy and priorities, but the Review responded that 'this goes perilously close to suggesting government by experts'. Prosperity was defined by the infusion of private capital. Early in 1953 the paper rebutted concern at a recent local issue of debentures by American companies, and the flow of profits overseas, with a warm welcome for American 'know-how'. For their part, workers were encouraged to abandon antagonistic unionism for partnership in a new stage of prosperity, and even articles by Labor MHR Allan Fraser and academic E.L. Wheelwright endorsed a general editorial line calling on unions to act responsibly in a society which was seen to be approaching an effective welfare state. Given that 'gross and general want' had disappeared in Australia, the paper argued that there was less need for general social security programmes than for social workers who could deal with 'particular human cases' of maladjustment in an otherwise harmonious social whole. Equal pay for women was opposed in November 1953 on the principle that 'increasing the ability of one section of the public to purchase goods' would only 'conversely reduce the purchasing ability of all other sections'. In these ways the commentary of the Financial Review endorsed the inherent conservatism of consumerism, adding to it the interests of the shareholder,

---


170 See Gruen, pp.46-7.


174 Allan Fraser, 'The Union's Role', 27 August 1953, p.3; E.L. Wheelwright, 'Trade Unions and National Economy', 18 June 1953, p.2.

the individual psychology of the worker, and the 'natural laws' of economic progress.\footnote{This phrase was frequently employed in the paper - see for example: 'Unanswered Questions', 30 April 1953, p.2.}

The critiques of academic economists of these enthusiasms for investment rarely seemed to dent the perceived strengths of economic growth by the mid-1950s. Several articles and reviews in the Economic Record at this time questioned whether the kinds of interests central to the analysis offered by the Financial Review had any effective place in an economy increasingly characterised by large-scale industry. Following American analysts of 'managerialism', academic economists questioned the compatibility of the democratic ideal with a steady tendency to corporate monopoly.\footnote{In May 1952, for example, J.R. Wilson argued that as firms increased in size profits were more likely to be concentrated in the hands of corporate entrepreneurs than distributed to shareholders. Investors, Wilson suggested, were being excluded from any degree of influence, and cast into the role of mere 'residual risk bearers' - Wilson, 'The Degree of Monopoly Power', vol.28, no.1, 1952, p.38. See also Cyril Renwick, rev. of C.E. Griffin, Enterprise in a Free Society, vol.26, no.1, 1950, p.153; J.F. Cairns, rev. of N.A. Wills, Economic Development of the Australian Iron and Steel Industry, vol.26, no.2, 1950 p.320; Cairns, rev. of W. Adams, The Structure of American Industry, vol.27, no.1, 1951, p.110; Cairns, rev. of G.D.H. Cole, Essays in Social Theory, vol.29, no.1, 1953, pp.135-8; Ron Hieser, rev. of H.A. Wells, Monopoly and Social Control, vol.29, no.2, 1953, p.293.}

Yet as Ronald Henderson\footnote{Ronald Frank HENDERSON Born at Dundee, Scotland, in 1917, and educated at Cambridge, Henderson served in the Black Watch from 1939 to 1945, and then returned to Cambridge as Director of Studies in Economics at Clare College. Developing an interest in Australia, in 1962 Henderson was appointed the Director of the Institute of Applied Economic Research at the University of Melbourne.} observed in 1954, 'the most striking feature of industrial financing in Australia' was the availability of capital through ordinary share issues. Henderson noted that the share market had acquired a new responsibility after 1952, largely because of the emergence of 'more skilled professional investors' and investment trusts.\footnote{Ronald F. Henderson, 'Notes on the Australian Capital Market', vol.30, no.2, 1954, pp.172-186.} This image of a shareholding democracy fueling a new frontier of resource discoveries, however mediated by financial managers, was perhaps of greater popular appeal than the academic image of corporate monopoly.\footnote{It was certainly true that a large proportion of corporate financing continued to come from private investors. Toward the end of the decade A.R. Hall observed that while an increasing amount of investment was coming from insurance companies, pension funds and unit trusts, it was still the case that 'in Australia ... the bulk of finance obtained by companies by the issue of securities is supplied by private investors' - 'Institutional Investment in Listed Company Securities', Economic Record, vol.34, no.2, 1958, p.375.}

\footnote{Staniforth RICKETSON Born in 1891 at Melbourne, Ricketson joined J.B. Were and Son in 1911, and became a partner in 1914 (Ricketson's grandfather had been a founder of the firm). He fought with the AIF at Gallipoli with distinction, and then in France as a Company Commander. By the 1950s Ricketson was prominent on the boards of several major investment companies, including Australian Foundation Investment, National Reliance Investment, Jason Investment, and Capel Court.} Investment brokers in turn became commentators, extending their influence from the network of boardroom connections to the rhetoric of journalism. Staniforth Ricketson,\footnote{See ‘Rise in U.S. Investment’, 30 June 1955, p.3; ‘Tax Cuts and Defence’, 19 August 1954, p.5. See also Henderson, ‘Notes on the Australian Capital Market’, p.181. For an account of the 'congruence of economic, social and political structures' in Australia, often centring financial agencies such J.B. Were and Son, of which Ricketson was Chairman throughout the 1950s, see Encel, Equality and Authority, pp.346-7, 409-11.} a 'veteran stockbroker', was a regular voice in the Financial Review, welcoming not simply American investment, but the political and foreign policy realignments implicit within it.\footnote{See ‘Rise in U.S. Investment’, 30 June 1955, p.3; ‘Tax Cuts and Defence’, 19 August 1954, p.5. See also Henderson, ‘Notes on the Australian Capital Market’, p.181. For an account of the 'congruence of economic, social and political structures' in Australia, often centring financial agencies such J.B. Were and Son, of which Ricketson was Chairman throughout the 1950s, see Encel, Equality and Authority, pp.346-7, 409-11.} While there had been reckless speculation early in the decade, the share market of 1953 was said to show no excess of 'Keynesian
"animal spirits" but a judicious responsibility. After the severity of Fadden's 1951 and 1952 Budgets, the 1953 statement was welcomed by the *Wild Cat Monthly* as 'an investors' budget', paying 'respect to thrift and enterprise'. Later in the decade, in response to those who continued to question the power of the individual investor, the *Financial Review* pointed to a controversial case of 1956 in which a take-over bid was directed more at stockholders than the board of directors of a retail firm, optimistically suggesting that 'surely shareholders are capable of controlling their own destiny'.

At the end of the decade the *Financial Review* was still discussing the treatment of that 'psycho-neurotic' patient, Australia, but by then a consolidation of economic practices had prompted some re-appraisals of the need for state direction to stabilise the shareholder's democracy: permanent trade imbalances, for example, suggested the need for careful thinking about the flow of profits to overseas investors. The role of government, shifting from Menzies' 'roaring free-enterprise lion of 1949' to 'the polite socialist guardian of 1959' symbolised by Qantas, Canberra, markets controls and high protection, was accepted as evidence of these new responsibilities. In 1958 the concept of the shareholder also acquired a more sophisticated advocate in Donald Horne's *Observer*, a journal based on British models intended to address a much more precisely defined readership amongst middle class professionals and the 'B.A. businessman'. Despite the concerns of some academics, and even despite its own appraisal of the rise of the 'organisation man' in other columns, the *Observer*’s financial pages were centred on the role of the shareholders: they were the true owners and proprietors of companies, whether they invested on their own accord or through unit trusts. The financial editor, Michael Baume, noted that it was because of such agencies that there had occurred a 'little man's revolution': a broadening of the economic interests of the community which had served to alter 'older, class-war divisions'. 'It may disappoint the Communists, but large sections of the proletariat are quite happy about the fact that they are earning good dividends from their investments in big business'. Admitting that the effect of this development might be only to enlarge 'the power of a group of skilled managers who are usurping those rights of shareholders', the *Observer* demurely suggested that 'the significance of that is another story', to be dealt with in other columns.

---

183 'Our Basic Weakness', *Wild Cat Monthly*, 8 August 1953, p.226; 'An Investors Budget', 3 October 1953, p.289. In the *Bulletin* itself, Keynes' 'euthanasia of the rentier' was cited not as an advocacy for an end to speculation, but out of surprise that progress could have been thought possible without personal initiative and risk. The *Bulletin* began 1953 hoping that freedom might be returned to 'the middle class, traditionally a thrifty and industrious class' which had, 'through taxation and inflation, been robbed of its customary economic place in the community' - 'Capitalism or Cannibalism', *Bulletin*, 4 February 1953, p.5; also 'The Euthanasia of the Rentier', 7 January 1953, p.14.


185 'Lets Be Resigned To Some Careful Words', 23 July 1959, p.3.


188 Michael Ehrenfried BAUME Born at Sydney in 1930, Baume was educated at the University of Sydney, and then joined the Department of National Development at Canberra from 1953 to 1954. From 1954 to 1959 he worked as a journalist on the *Financial Review*, and in 1959 became the Financial Editor of the *Observer*.

There seemed to be no need to formulate an integrated critique of these two related institutional developments. Instead, in its 'Speculators Diary' the *Observer* was more concerned to offer profiles of prominent business figures, and its 'Industrial Law Reports' kept 'readers up to date with industrial relations and 'the high cost of arbitration'.

So integral was the concept of the shareholder to the economic commentary of the 1950s, that little criticism of the corporate system developed until the early 1960s. In 1957 H.W. Arndt allowed that big business was likely to be more developmental and less restrictive in its operations than small or medium-sized firms, but was also likely to reduce its investors to 'functionless shareholders', concentrating power in the hands of unaccountable managers.\(^{190}\) The business pages of the *Nation*, a left-liberal magazine also founded in 1958, directed its first scrutiny to the monopolistic aspects of Australian industry, not so much because of 'glaring personal inequality' as a concern at a potential 'loss of vitality and enterprise'.\(^{191}\) A concern with growth rather than structural analysis informed these comments. Yet as Blainey later commented, the Menzies years were marked by the consolidation of a managerial strata comprising a closed society of knighthoods, nominees, silent board elections, and the diversion of profits into salaries rather than dividends.\(^{192}\) 'The little man's revolution' was far from one of economic liberalism, but one more in tune with political conservatism and inflexibility. In 1976 Home himself observed that 'the shareholder has been seen as the archetype of capitalism', yet was largely irrelevant to the real operations of Australian business.\(^{193}\)

Left-wing economic commentary offered little challenge to this rhetoric of participatory capitalism for both conceptual and tactical reasons. Attempts were made - by the Victorian Fabian Society, for example - to develop an alternative to the triumph of private interests by suggesting that 'all property, and even personal abilities, have values, prices and earning capacities which are very much influenced by social factors'.\(^{194}\) The Introduction to a 1954 collection of 'democratic socialist' essays, *Policies for Progress*, published by the same body, outlined 'a considerable transfer of economic power' from the private to the public sphere.\(^{195}\) In the essay specifically dealing with economic policy in this collection, however, Arndt expressed a 'moral revulsion' from acquisitiveness and class domination while also defending the 'mixed economy', questioning how much further inequality could be diminished, either by taxation or planning, without impairing economic efficiency.\(^{196}\) In his Chifley Memorial Lecture in 1956, 'Labour and Economic Policy', Arndt criticised both the inertia and the anachronism of the ALP's economic thinking. Co-operation and greater productivity should replace concerns with redistribution and nationalisation; a


\(^{191}\)"Does Big Industry Bar The Way?", *Nation*, no.1, 26 September 1958, p.27 - a series of articles on this issue appeared in subsequent issues.


\(^{193}\)Home, *Money Made Us*, p.60.


\(^{195}\)Introduction, Alan Davies and Geoffrey Serle (eds.), *Policies for Progress: Essays in Australian Politics*, Melbourne, 1954, p.ix

\(^{196}\)H.W. Arndt, 'Economic Policy - Stability and Productivity', ibid, pp.37, 52, 59
more flexible, progressive taxation system, clearly differentiating between wealth and productive assets, should replace any blunt recourse to controls.\textsuperscript{197} Unlike the thinking of the inter-war economists, Arndt's lecture was premised on the prospects for continued expansion and the existence of a basic consensus on social issues such as full-employment and some measure of equity: it was up to the political parties to offer progressive policies which would appeal to the electorate rather than to frame their programmes around concepts of social management. By the latter half of the 1950s, the central issues became those of taxation as a process of adjustment rather than social planning.

The themes of the 'milk bar' thesis were still current in the second half of the decade, though they related more to qualitative assessments of the depth of affluence than to Copland's demands for restructuring. In a 1955 conference paper on 'Economic Freedom', R.I. Downing attempted to negotiate an injunction from L.G. Melville, to observe a distinction between 'liberty' and 'welfare',\textsuperscript{198} by suggesting that the freedom to consume was in itself no guarantee of liberty. 'Highly susceptible to propaganda', consumers in Australia, unlike their peers in the United States, were unassisted by either private bodies, co-operatives, or by government services policing the standards of goods.\textsuperscript{199} In similar terms, Downing observed in 1956 that while 'we may be one of the four or five richest countries in the world, it would be embarrassing to say where we would probably come in a ranking of countries according to standards of public services', especially in the areas of health and education.\textsuperscript{200} Again, the absence of any equivalent to Galbraith's 'countervailing power' - a conceptual as much as a practical absence - was regretted. To redress this imbalance, Downing suggested that private wealth and capital gains should be taxed on a 'more progressive scale',\textsuperscript{201} and more direct forms of public control (of housing rents, for example) should be re-examined on the basis of long-term equity.\textsuperscript{202} For Downing, inflation was primarily a political problem - one that prejudiced more systematic considerations of welfare.\textsuperscript{203} But it was a problem which seemed peculiarly dominant in Australian commentary, as governments sought to maintain the approval of an acquisitive society. Confronting this dilemma, Downing returned to the functions of statutory authorities which had been so popular in the 1930s, but with an over-riding concern to emphasise their status as 'fairly independent institutions'.\textsuperscript{204}


\textsuperscript{198}Melville did not expand this distinction, except to observe that it had not been observed in the 1930s - Meville, Foreword, in John Wilkes (ed.), \textit{Liberty in Australia}, Sydney, 1955, p.xii.


\textsuperscript{203}p.135.

\textsuperscript{204}R.I. Downing, 'Is an Economic Policy Possible?', \textit{Public Administration}, vol.15, to.4, 1956, p.284 - Downing listed the Tariff Board, Arbitration Court, Commonwealth Bank, primary production boards.
Dissatisfied with the malaise of policy and continued inflation, a group of eight leading academic economists - Arndt, H.D. Black, D. Cochrane, Downing, Firth, P.H. Karmel,205 Prest and Swan - issued a joint statement in February 1956, recommending a substantial increase in taxation and interest rates in an attempt to dampen 'spendthrift prosperity' and increase levels of saving. Any reduction in public works or immigration levels, which contributed to inflationary pressures, was opposed on the grounds that such action would disrupt long-range development and 'threaten serious shortages of power, transport and community facilities'.206 'The Great Debate', as the ensuing exchange between business, government and 'the masters of theory' came to be called - indicated that by then there was a widespread perception of the need for a more integrated approach to economic development, and revealed the institutional limitation of economic commentary at that time. Representatives of commercial and industrial interests argued instead for the the restraint of governmental expenditure. Yet even the Financial Review attempted to convince the the Prime Minister of the virtues of the economist's 'manifesto'.207 That the statement was issued in such a form at all indicated a lack of communication between academic expertise, the public service (especially the Treasury) and government.208 It had been observed in September 1955 that Menzies appeared to be conducting a series of conferences with banking, business and union representatives, yet the process was informal and guarded.209 After the economists' statement, Menzies began to assemble a panel of advisers. Again, however, it was in a circumspect way: Menzies emphasised that he had 'invited a number of gentlemen to act in an advisory capacity' but not to compromise the 'responsibility of government'. The panel he named was a broad and distinguished selection of senior public servants, bankers, academics and industrial, retail and farming leaders: it did not include a trade unionist.210 Assembled by personal invitation, it added another uncertain element to the question of who it was among the rival claims of personalities, Commonwealth departments, personal advisers and sectional interests that shaped economic

205 Herman David BLACK Born at Sydney in 1904, Black graduated in economics from the University of Sydney in 1927, and joined the Faculty of Economic there in 1933. From 1939 to 1945 he was Economic Adviser to the NSW Treasury, and in 1952 was seconded to the US State Department. Black was a frequent radio broadcaster, active in the AIIA, and a member of the University's Committee for Tutorial Classes. Donald COCHRANE Born in 1917 at Melbourne, Cochrane was educated at the University of Melbourne and at Cambridge. After serving in the RAAF from 1942 to 1945, he was appointed Lecturer in Economics at Melbourne, and Senior Lecturer in 1949. From 1951 to 1952 he worked in the UN Department of Economic Affairs, and in 1955 became the Sidney Myer Professor of Commerce at Melbourne. Peter Henry KARMEL Born at Melbourne in 1922, Karmel studied at the University of Melbourne and then at Cambridge. From 1943 to 1945 he worked with the Bureau of Censuses and Statistics at Canberra, and was then appointed a lecturer at the University of Melbourne, becoming Senior Lecturer in Economics in 1948 after a short period at Trinity College, Cambridge. Karmel became the George Gollin Professor of Economics at the University of Adelaide in 1950, holding that position until 1962.


208 For a sense of this 'lack of formal contact with officialdom', see H.W. Arndt, A Course Through Life: Memoirs of an Australian Economist, Canberra, 1985, pp.27f.


policy, and according to what priorities.211

***

Given the fact of relative affluence in the 'fifties, it might seem that this commentary was largely irrelevant to wider Australian society. Yet such a range of analysis in itself indicates that post-war prosperity was understood in distinctive terms. Central to this commentary was a concept of the individual - as consumer, as shareholder, as wage-earner - as the basic unit in economic analysis. In each of these areas, the individual was seen to have claims to make of society, but the nature of those claims was in turn shaped by strategies of restraint and adjustment. These strategies translated the individualised interests of the consumer to the workplace, and to the context of duties and rewards in labour. As Walter Scott,212 one of the most enthusiastic advocates for improved management, observed in 1950, 'the chief compliant the worker has to make about management was the way he was being treated as an individual - as a human being'.213 The individual in the workplace came to provide a valuable balance to the individual at market.

Always a substantial component of the social dimension of Australian economic commentary, industrial management gained a firmer institutional footing during the mobilisation of the Second World War. An early association with academic psychology was further consolidated in the 1940s, particularly in the area of vocational guidance.214 Maximum productive efficiency demanded close controls over the distribution of resources and labour, and included a scrutiny of the morale and efficiency of every worker. The Commonwealth Department of Labour and National Service, established in October 1940 to co-ordinate

211 For an indication of such uncertainties, see 'Experts Advise on Economic Control Measures', The Age, 12 March 1956, p.2. Such issues re-emerged when Menzies reconvened the Committee in 1957: the Review welcomed Menzies' preparedness to expand membership to include 'the national chairmen of manufacturers', traders', bankers' and farmers' associations instead of specially selected individuals', noting that Albert Monk of the ACTU had been invited to join. The paper also observed a context of 'profound dissatisfaction in his own party with the authoritarian trend of his economic policy'. See 'A New Look At The Economy', 31 January 1957, p.3; 'The Economists and the Business Woman', 7 February 1957, p.2; 'Departmental Intrusion', 10 January 1957, p.3. The IPA also expressed concern at the disdainful isolation of the Canberra bureaucracy from expert, critical economic advice - Editorial, IPA Review, vol.9, no.3, 1955, pp.1-4.

212 Walter SCOTT Born at Perth in 1903, Scott gradually developed his own company of Management Consultants. In the 'forties he was a member of many commissions established to improve management in industries, including munitions, aluminium and motor car production. In the 1950s he similarly participated in investigations into the coal industry, and attended many overseas conferences on management.


214 Since 1927 the Psychology Department of the University of Sydney had collaborated with the NSW Chamber of Manufacturers in establishing the Australian Institute of Industrial Psychology, and in the 1940s the interest of the department in vocational guidance underwent an enormous expansion. Enrolments in the later 1940s were over 1300 - A.P. Elkin, 'The Emergence of Psychology, Anthropology and Education' in One Hundred Years of the Faculty of Arts, Sydney, 1952, pp.34-5. Psychologists were among those professions to be compulsorily registered in the course of the war. See D.P. Mellor, The Role of Science and Industry, Canberra, 1958, pp.183f, 195. For an interpretation of the analytical and institutional character of industrial psychology in the inter-war years, see Helen Bourke, 'Industrial Unrest as Social Pathology: the Australian Writings of Elton Mayo', Historical Studies, vol.20, no.79, 1982, pp.217-233; J.P. Clark, 'Psychology in the Public Service, Business and Industry', Australian Journal of Psychology, vol.10, no.1, 1958, pp.30-40.
the wartime economy, created an Industrial Relations Division in 1941 to deal with such priorities.\textsuperscript{215} By the beginning of 1945 the focus of industrial management was passing from a concern to maintain wartime levels of output to questions of reconstruction and rehabilitation. In its first issue, the \textit{Bulletin of Industrial Psychology and Personnel Practice (BIPPP)}, the journal of the Industrial Relations Division, dealt with staffing adjustments of returned servicemen, recommending lenience with those who had suffered a 'loss of personal responsibility' in the forces.\textsuperscript{216} While it was doubted whether there was a sufficient commitment on the part of employers, unions, governments and the general public to support the magnitude of change necessary for an enduring programme of full employment,\textsuperscript{217} it seemed possible to develop strategies to give a more human dimension to work itself as a part of a reconstruction commitment. In dealing with those workers engaged in repetitive, mechanised work, the emphasis should be on encouraging 'satisfactions derived from social relations developed on the job'. Similarly, in recruiting for more complex administrative positions, 'the quality of performance in a job is very largely determined by the personality of the worker' as ascertained through a complex, professionally supervised series of tests, interviews, and mutual assessment sessions amongst applicants.\textsuperscript{218}

These techniques and theories of industrial management began to serve a new range of priorities in 'human engineering' in the post-war economy.\textsuperscript{219} During full-employment, it was noted that absenteeism and low productivity reflected not only a process of psychological readjustment but a shift of industrial power into the hands of workers themselves. In response to this shift, concepts of individual accountability and reward replaced those of community and self-realisation in work. Advocating incentive systems in a variety of forms, the articles appearing in the \textit{BIPPP} in the early 1950s were increasingly concerned with breaking down unity among workers. Wage incentive schemes based on productivity, for example, might increase each worker's scrutiny of his or her colleagues' output and commitment, and re-orient the dominant bond from workers-in-community to one between the individual worker and management.\textsuperscript{220} Productivity would increase under such schemes, as would the stability of the labour force. Just as significantly, however, they were intended to alter the pattern of relations within industry. As a case study of one incentive scheme observed:

\begin{quote}
[It] has served to emphasise the relationship between work effort and earnings. It has stressed the economic relationship between the employee and the firm with the probable result that many of the complaints against other employees were regarded as \textit{personal problems} in the work group rather than the problem of the management-worker relationship. On the balance it would seem that the satisfactions from increased earnings
\end{quote}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{215}For a detailed account of these wartime developments, see Paul Hasluck, \textit{The Government and the People}, Canberra, vol.1, 1952, vol.2, 1970, pp.291 (vol.1); pp.249, 509 (vol.2). By 1950 the Melbourne \textit{Herald} noted that psychology positions were plentiful, especially in the Department of Labour and National Service.; 'Psychology Posts Are Plentiful', \textit{Herald}, 28 February 1950, p.3.
\item \textsuperscript{216}A.G. Gibbs, 'Industry's Planning for Rehabilitation', \textit{Bulletin of Industrial and Personnel Practice (BIPPP)}, vol.1, no.1, 1945, pp.4-5; M.A. Morrisby, 'Some Problems of Discharged Service Personnel in Their Adjustment to Civilian Life', pp.7-12.
\item \textsuperscript{217}C.R. Thomas, 'High Employment - Implications for Personnel Practice in Australia', \textit{BIPPP}, vol.2, no.1, 1946, p.5. Thomas was the Superintendent of Personnel for Australian Paper Manufacturers.
\item \textsuperscript{220}T.J. Laidlaw, 'Wage Incentives in Operation: Case Study No.4', \textit{BIPPP}, vol.6, no.4, 1950, p.30.
\end{itemize}
through increased effort offset the dissatisfactions from other employees' actions or opinions.\textsuperscript{221}

The rationale for such programmes was very different from those concepts prevailing in the \textit{BIPPP} only a few years earlier. The transition may perhaps be explained simply by noting that the ideal of community was more appropriate during the disturbances of the later 1940s, and that the prosperity of the 1950s gave employers greater scope to experiment with more specific managerial strategies geared to greater productivity. With a correlation being drawn between absenteeism, labour turnover, wage demands, and the strength of a fully employed workforce,\textsuperscript{222} the \textit{BIPPP} reported a general satisfaction with the number of companies experimenting with the incentive or employee stock ownership strategies it recommended in an attempt to hold workers.\textsuperscript{223} Once the post-war labour shortage came to an end, however, contributors to the \textit{BIPPP} expressed concern that this interest might wane: an increasing focus on quality and costs would then give management a rather different series of objectives than quantity alone. Further, it was noted in 1952 that 'the problems of employee-initiated labour turnover were replaced during last year by those attendant on management initiated retrenchments'.\textsuperscript{224} In subsequent years the \textit{BIPPP} dealt with issues more appropriate to a stable economy in which management was secure in its control: articles on social and recreational facilities, for example, suggested that the ideal of community was distanced from the work environment itself and placed in a context of managerial benevolence; and while issues of absenteeism and the need for psychological testing continued to be discussed, any form of philosophic defence of the personality of the worker was replaced by a much more precise interest in individual productivity.\textsuperscript{225} An article of 1955 took the principles of incentive programmes further, introducing the notion of a 'merit payment scheme' which, while more complex to administer, would induce greater labour stability and higher standards: it involved an assessment not only of general productivity, but a much wider range of criteria: efficiency, attendance, length of service, productivity, quality of work, behaviour and attitude.\textsuperscript{226} Such precise and wide-ranging quantifications suggested not only a greater sophistication of managerial technique and a more stable workplace, but a conception of the worker very different from that which had prevailed in the same journal only a decade before: individualised, psychologised, the worker, perhaps unlike Mauldon's 'consumer', could be managed as an individual rather than a mass, and encouraged to align personal interests in rewards and partnership in industry.

\textsuperscript{221}M. Kangan and G.D. Grant, 'Wage Incentives in Operation: Case Study No.3', vol.6, no.3, 1950, p.24. Emphasis added.

\textsuperscript{222}A survey published by the \textit{BIPPP} in March 1950 showed that labour turnover was higher in Australia than either the United Kingdom or America, averaging 7.5%. See 'Labour Turnover in Australian Industry: March 1950', pp.24-26.

\textsuperscript{223}See W.J. Burt, 'Overseas Experience with Employee Stock Ownership', (\textit{BIPPP}), vol.6, no.1, 1950, pp.18-22; M. Kangan, 'Factory-Wide Group Incentive Schemes', vol.8, no.2, 1952, pp.17-20. Note also the several case studies published through this period.

\textsuperscript{224}W.M. Hurley, 'Problems in Retrenchment', vol.8, no.4, 1952, p.37; see also M. Kangan and W.J. Burt, 'Current Needs in Personnel Management', pp.3-10.

\textsuperscript{225}'The most rewarding results in tackling problems of morale and motivation are likely to arise form a study of work itself rather than from philosophic considerations of the nature of human personality and the "value" of people': W.B.D. Brown, 'An Approach to Problems of Motivation and Morale', vol.11, no.3, 1955, p.22.

As Tsokhas has demonstrated in the case of several mining industries, the implementation of these incentive schemes in the 1950s could lead to reciprocal benefits for both workers and managers. Accepting the inevitability of hierarchies of labour in modern industry, and allowing for variations in management and industrial circumstances, the greater regulation and 'paternalism' of the workplace provided stability for both sectors.\(^{227}\) The *Bulletin* also lends support to Cochrane's argument that such regulation affected the 'dispossession of labour's autonomy, both mental and physical, at the point of production.'\(^{228}\) Together with this 'dispossession', however, the *BIPPP* also suggests an attempt to integrate a sense of the worker as a personality rather than as a member of a class. In his 1952 inaugural lecture as Professor of Psychology at the University of Western Australia, K.F. Walker,\(^{229}\) an ex-officer of the Industrial Relations Division, emphasised the economic application of his discipline, outlining a thesis of 'disenchantment' in an 'Age of Organisation'. Walker saw a broad network of inter-connections between automation, human relationships, the decline of the family and the need for study in areas ranging from vocational guidance and labour mobility to consumer and investment decision-making. In 1954 Walker established an inter-disciplinary course in Industrial Relations, drawing together Economics, Psychology and Philosophy, the first of several academic ventures into the field of industrial relations in the decade.\(^{230}\) While there were some commentators who adopted such a psychological approach to emphasise the 'irrational factors' underlying employer-employee relationships - their basis in emotion, conditioning and distrust\(^{231}\) - this perspective also made it possible to think of workers' 'responsibility' and 'loyalty' in a context of economic partnership. It was this second theme which gave such impetus to the ideal of collective bargaining as an alternative to industrial arbitration in the 1950s. The worker, like the shareholder, was being invited into a new democracy in which individual adjustment and affluence provided a more attractive prospect than broader programmes of social reform.

In prompting a reappraisal of established practices in Australian economic affairs, the 'long boom' thus also influenced strategies in industrial relations. The abandonment of quarterly wage adjustments in the 1953 Basic Wage case, and Chief Justice Kelly's\(^{232}\) personal advocacy of an idealised collectivism, were


\(^{229}\) Kenneth Frederick WALKER Born at Burwood, NSW, in 1918, and educated at the University of Sydney and Harvard, Walker lectured in psychology at Sydney from 1938 to 1941. He then joined the Commonwealth Public Service, working in the Department of Labour and National Service until 1951 when he was appointed Professor of Psychology at the University of Western Australia.


\(^{232}\) William Raymond KELLY Born at Calcutta, India, in 1898, and then educated at the University of Adelaide, Kelly began legal practice at Yorketown, South Australia, in 1921. In 1925 he was appointed Mayor of Yorketown, and in 1926 became a Stipendiary Magistrate at Port Augusta. From 1929 to 1933 he served on the Police Appeals Board, and in 1930 was Deputy President of the South Australian Industrial Court. In 1941 Kelly became a Justice of the Commonwealth Arbitration Court, and Chief Justice in 1949. He was knighted in 1952.
indications of such a re-appraisal. Less idealistically, other commentators favoured some form of bargaining as necessary to break the conflict inherent in the industrial system. Moving a long way from his earlier communist associations and advocacy of 'socialism by consent', Lloyd Ross, Secretary of the NSW branch of the ARU and a regular commentator in the Financial Review, could see little to support a system of industrial co-operation on European models in Australia. He argued that the only solution, given entrenched antagonisms in the workplace, was a linkage of wages to productivity through a method of joint consultation in specific industries. To this advocacy of collective bargaining was added the issue of margins for skill, which Ross admitted served to divide workers as much as to unite them, but which was to become central to the highly complex mechanism of wage determination which developed in the course of the decade. In the 'fifties, as much as margins cases reflected the need to restore 'comparative wage justice' to an inflationary economy, they were also evidence of aspirations for occupational and social status pursued within an industrial system becoming both more skilled and more fragmented in its organisation. As the legal complexities of this system in turn became subjects of academic analysis, it was suggested in the first issues of the Journal of Industrial Relations, established in 1959, that even though marginal wage rates implied inequality in remuneration, they were necessary because of the occupational and class flexibility they encouraged. The consumer who, for Mauldon in 1949, had threatened to overturn prosperity in their selfishness, had become a wage earner by the end of the decade whose aspirations, individualised as much as possible, require that prosperity remain unquestioned.

By the end of the 'fifties many of the features of economic development which had provided the basis for commentary earlier in the decade were steadily being replaced. Highly protected manufacturing and the management of an industrialised workforce gave way to a greater emphasis on the export of natural resources and the continuing expansion of the services sector. Anxieties about the possibility of a major slump were overtaken by an awareness of the need to co-ordinate the more complex issues of domestic and overseas investment, the phasing out of protection, financial policy, taxation and development assistance. The 'milk bar economy' lost place to a self-conception more adequately summed-up in Arndt's phrase, 'the

---


235 For a contemporary consideration of the issue, see 'Wage Margins', Current Affairs Bulletin, vol.16, no.10, 1955, pp.51-64.


237 Donald Horne, Money Made Us, Ringwood, 1976, ch.4. For one example of this restlessness with the structures of the 1950s as expressed by an influential business figure, see Kosmas Tsokhas, "I Believe in Australia": the last years of W.S. Robinson, 1956-63, AJP, vol.30, no.1, 1984, pp.19-30. Editorials in the IPA Review in 1959 almost seemed to regard the ideological fervour of the first years of the decade with nostalgia, so different was the prevailing economic and political climate. See for example 'All Quiet', vol.13, no.1, 1959, pp.1-8; 'The 1950s', vol.14, no.1, 1960, pp.1-6.
small, rich, industrial country. Professionally, economists diversified from careers focussed on the Commonwealth government to work in the expanding universities or rising 'big businesses'. An acceptance of planning in co-operation with large-scale private enterprise gave them a more secure institutional function than they had enjoyed in the previous decade, just as increased industrial militancy and interventionalist fiscal policy in the early 1960s confirmed their status as consultants in management. These developments, however, did not fundamentally alter the form given to the 'Long Economic Boom' during the previous decade, and did not cast aside the concepts in economic analysis which had been an integral part of that consolidation. At the end of World War Two many economic commentators had, on the basis of a reformist inheritance, perceived an irreconcilability between economic management and the pursuit of individual gains. That perception in itself contributed to the assumptions through which post-war prosperity was understood: a need to consolidate private interests more on the basis of their capacity to influence restraint than to develop efficiency in a wider system.


239 See Noel Butlin, 'The Public Sector and the Economics Profession', pp.250-1.

240 The best guide to this 'pivotal period' of institutional and economic change is Tsokhas, A Class Apart, esp. pp.72-4, 129-33.

Chapter 4
Decentralisation and the Organisation of Life

A central preoccupation of intellectuals in the post-war years was their perceived need to formulate a conception of society which would allow the expression of popular aspirations while accommodating the demands of the mass within a framework of rights and duties. The prominence of 'the consumer' in economic commentary indicated the extent to which social aspirations were thought to have become individualised by prosperity. Priorities in social analysis also suggested that an evolutionary model of political and economic development was being replaced by one in which greater emphasis was placed on the maintenance of cultural stability - a 'way of life'. The conservatism associated with these assumptions was of two kinds. First, there was the commitment to preserve the status of the individual from centralised direction. Secondly, there was the more traditional conservative approach of defending those abstract cultural values - such as authority, faith and family - considered to be essential to the balance of society. As the commentary discussed in the previous chapter demonstrated, an economic conception of society could not reconcile these levels of individual initiative and social restraint without departing from entrenched intellectual alignments or adopting an extreme form of social reorganisation such as that advocated by Colin Clark. There were, however, other fields of commentary in which these levels could be drawn into a more consistent pattern of social analysis, and in which such radical elements of a conservative critique were subsumed within concepts of 'community' as they defined and restrained the claims of 'citizenship'.

Some themes of this commentary were indicated in a Preface written in 1944 by Henry Tasman Lovell, the Professor of Psychology at the University of Sydney, for a Report submitted by the New South Wales Council of Social Services to the Commonwealth Housing Commission. As President of the Council, Lovell was not simply addressing the chronic, long-standing shortage of housing throughout Australia, but also expressing a more abstract, ethical interest in the biological origins of individual motivation as the basis for welfare reform and psychological guidance. His emphasis was on the need to construct a physical environment which would foster desired values in interaction with personality. From his perspective, it seemed that 'a man deprived of space is reduced in stature':

But as soon as he owns space in which to move and to realise himself, he begins to sense his own value, and to feel a self-respect which renders him socially amenable and contented; he then accepts and conforms to the law of the land of his own free will.

1Henry Tasman LOVELL Born at Kempsey in 1878, Lovell was educated at the University of Sydney, and then lectured in Modern Languages at the Sydney Teachers' College before taking a scholarship to the University of Jena in 1907. In 1913 he returned to the University of Sydney as a lecturer in Philosophy, and in 1921 became Associate Professor of Psychology, then Professor in 1929, retiring as Emeritus Professor in 1945. For many years he served as Chairman of the Child Welfare Advisory Council, President of the NSW Council of Social Services, of the Recreation and Leadership Movement, and was active in the Australian Council for Educational Research, and in Toc H. Lovell died in 1958.

Everyone, Lovell advised, ought to have ‘room merely to sit for a while undisturbed’. The ‘segregation’ of space answered both to functional efficiency and the need for privacy - and might save individuals from the irrational propensities of the mass. Space, and the personal ownership of it, ensured freedom and stability, productivity and restraint, liberty and conformism.³

Lovell was far from alone, both in Australia and internationally, in thinking that political and economic objectives had become inappropriate to the comprehension and direction of social change. For many commentators, an awareness of the destructive potential of industrial development, a sense of political and social crisis in over-urbanised communities, and a new emphasis on sociological and psychological analysis, came together in the inter-war years to focus on the need to overcome class conflict and the loss of common cultural values through ‘creating form and order and design in our present civilisation’.⁴ The physical organisation of life was increasingly accepted as an integral component in social management and reform. In turn, such organisation established and mediated favoured political relationships through defining roles, allocating access and amenity, and embodying social and personal values in spatial forms.⁵ The Report following Lovell’s Preface, for example, gave his abstract precepts a more specific application, coupling both individual and social conservatism to new opportunities for post-war reform. ‘Bad housing’, it was argued, ‘fosters the growth of anti-democratic opinion’. The provision of appropriate housing, therefore, was identified as a crucial component of reconstruction. The aim was as much to eradicate ‘the frame of mind of the have-not’ as to improve material welfare.⁶ In addition to Lovell’s advocacy of privacy, the Report argued that a mixing of classes should be encouraged in neighbourhoods: ‘we regard it as essential to the growth of democracy that... segregation, which fosters class-consciousness, should be avoided as far as possible’.⁷ So, at one level, Lovell’s society was composed of individuals, needing space to retain their equilibrium. At another, the Report portrayed a community impeded by individualistic and class imbalances, and made an implicit recommendation for the surveillance and management of the working class in the context of the new stresses and aspirations of prosperity.

Similar themes were central to a wide variety of post-war commentary, and were often expressed in forms of a decentralist ethic: that society was at its most stable when it operated at a scale small enough to establish a link between the privacy of the citizen and the public of the community. This ethic might be integral to democratic reformism, seeking to establish societies in which services and amenities are equally accessible to all, but in the 1950s it functioned more effectively in the interests of conservatism in areas ranging from campaigns to reduce the powers of government, through programmes of regionalism, to the architecture and aesthetics of the suburban neighbourhood and the family home. Those who campaigned for decentralisation were the representatives of private industry and property, the advocates of voluntarism and the family unit as the basis of social welfare, and a range of intellectuals offended by the uniformity of modern life. In this chapter the elements of this conservatism are identified in two main areas. First, such commentary sought to establish new links of accountability and conformity between the individual ‘citizen’

---


⁴This phrase is from one of the major essays expressing these concerns, Lewis Mumford, *The Culture of Cities*, London, 1940, p.11.

⁵For a general discussion of these relationships, see Michel Foucault, ‘Space, Knowledge and Power’ in Rabinow (ed.), *Foucault*, pp.239-56.

⁶Matthews, Ogilve, Walker, *Housing*, pp.6, 8.

and an abstract social whole (‘community’). Second, the ‘community’ was defined in this commentary in a way that ostensibly maximised the social and personal benefits of economic and technological change, yet implicitly reaffirmed traditional roles and values in domestic, industrial and political spheres.

***

The attribution of significance to the physical organisation of society has a long tradition in conservative rhetoric and policy. Spatial organisation and a sense of ‘place’ have been invested with a symbolism which has legitimated or ‘naturalised’ authority and hierarchy, establishing principles such as an inalienable right to private property and the duties of obeisance. These themes, if mainly associated with older societies, have also been significant in Australian culture. The dispersal of colonial settlement, for example, was interpreted as a representation of the character of society. Early policies relating to the granting and sale of land reflected more than geographical circumstance, but were invested with social idealism and political design. Given the absence of local agrarian traditions, and the persistence of a pattern of development emphasising the role of central governments rather than regional autonomy, the politics of space in Australia has been peculiarly in the hands of ideologues and entrepreneurs: those intending to create rather than defend social structures. As a reaction against centralisation, a basic theme of political rhetoric from the late nineteenth century onwards has been a call for decentralisation involving the consolidation of communities which were to be economically, politically and socially distinct from the capital cities, even to the extent of their constitution as new, autonomous states.

By the 1920s, new states campaigns had become highly organised, and they shared much in rhetoric and organisation with other populist causes, such as Douglas Credit. Close ties of strategy and support were developed between groupings in several regions - between New England, the Riverina and the Monaro-South Coast, for example. From its formation in 1920, the Federal Country Party consistently supported decentralisation and the creation of new states, and in the 1920s New South Wales and Commonwealth commissions of inquiry were established to investigate the viability of such constitutional alteration.

---

8European and British conservatism customarily drew on the lineage of landed aristocracy - see for example Peter Viereck (ed.), Conservatism, Princeton, 1956. American conservatism frequently deployed an agrarian ideal based upon a sense of the ordered community of the Southern plantation system. See especially Donald Davidson et al., I’ll Take My Stand: the South and the Agrarian Tradition, New York, 1930; also Allen Guttmann, The Conservative Tradition in America, New York, 1967.

9Wakefield’s complaint in 1836, for example, that the Swan River settler ‘did not know his own position’, for example, carried the multiple significance, not simply of concern at extreme physical isolation, but also in terms of an associated ambiguity in social status and political rights. See E.G. Wakefield to the Select Committee on the Dispersal of Lands in British Colonies, in C.M.H. Clark, Select Documents in Australian History 1788-1850, Sydney, 1950, p.175.


11An attempt was made to give these groupings some symbolic unity. In the New England area after the First World War, lapel badges proclaiming ‘We Want A New State’ were common, and they were later formalised into a ‘rising sun’ motif which was also employed by movements in these other regions - Denis R. Towner, The Lion Badge of New England, ML Doc. 1682, p.1.

Geographers, commenting on the optimal distribution of population and the extent of resources, added the crucial component of 'land' to the economic formulations of 'men, money and markets' which defined the developmentalism of the '1920s,13 and added another level of analysis to the debate over decentralisation. By 1933, at the first AIPS Summer School (and amid a populist resurgence for new states spurred by discontent with governments during the depression),14 W.J.V. Windeyer15 observed that the New States movement must be recognised as a force of major importance, especially as it had developed in New England.16 At the same time, however, Windeyer noted the unfavourable findings of the 1925 Report of the NSW Royal Commission on New States. Despite the depth of popular resentment expressed through the movement, Windeyer asserted that there was a 'lack of definition of its objects' and a good deal of 'demonstrably fallacious' assertion in its campaigns.

In general, the New States campaigns had articulate leaders during the inter-war years, including D.H. Drummond,17 Deputy Leader of the Australian Country Party and a prominent minister in NSW governments, and F.A. Bland,18 a Lecturer, and in 1935 the first Professor of Public Administration at the University of Sydney. Both sought to shape local grievances about economic underdevelopment and concern at rural depopulation into more formal platforms of political principle and a commitment to national prosperity.19 Yet the appeal of their campaigns ran against the current of much discussion among intellectuals between the wars. The question of new states was a recurrent topic in AIPS symposiums, but it related more to securing the constitutional powers and safeguards for what was generally regarded as an inevitable expansion of Commonwealth responsibility, at least in economic and international affairs. New statism was regarded as much as a symptom of instability as a cause to be upheld. In 1935, for example, the

---

13See Cain, Political Economy and the Tariff, pp.3-4.

14As Geoffrey Bolton has observed, new states campaigns strengthened in the 1930s, provoked by the perception of an unequal burden imposed by the crisis, and ranging widely from Left to Right in their political orientation. See Bolton, 'How We Got Here' in T. van Dugteren (ed.), Rural Australia: The Other Nation, Sydney, 1978, p.16.

15William John Victor WINDEYER Born at Sydney in 1900, and educated at the University of Sydney, Windeyer lectured in several areas in the Law School of that university from 1929 to 1940 while also working as a barrister and then Q.C. In 1940 he joined the AIF and served in Africa and the Pacific. In 1949 he was elected a Fellow of the University of Sydney, and acted as its Deputy Chancellor in 1955. From 1951 to 1955 he was a member of the Council of the Australian National University.

16W.J.V. Windeyer, 'The Creation of New States' in G.V. Portus (ed.), Studies in the Australian Constitution, Sydney, 1933, p.135. The New England region was defined by the New States campaign as a roughly triangular area extending from north of Bourke to Tweed Heads and down to Newcastle. Whether Newcastle, as a major industrial centre and an ALP stronghold, was to be included in the proposed state, was a matter of frequent debate.

17David Henry DRUMMOND Born in 1890 at Sydney, Drummond worked as a farmer and grazier and in 1920 was elected to the NSW Legislative Assembly for Northern Tablelands (after 1927 renamed Armidale) representing the Country Party (NSW). Active on parliamentary committees, he became the Minister for Education in 1927 Armidale, and from 1938 to 1949 he was the Deputy Leader of the NSW Country Party. In 1949 he transferred to Commonwealth parliament, representing New England. In 1954 he became a member of the Council of the University of New England.

18Francis Armand BLAND Born in 1882 in Sydney, Bland was educated at the University of Sydney and the London School of Economics. From 1915 to 1935 he lectured in public administration at Sydney, and was then appointed to the new chair in that field. In 1951 he won the Federal seat of Warringah for the Liberal Party, and became Chairman of the Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee in 1952.

19For an example of Drummond's relationship to local campaigns, see the reports of his address to the Tamworth New State Demonstration, 26 May 1920, in Daily Observer, 27 May 1920, p.2. I am indebted to Dr John Knott for this reference.
‘too rapid expansion of Federal powers and Federal activity in administrative matters’ was not to be met by reducing bureaucracy, but by increasing the expertise available in the public service before the process went any further.20 Even Bland recommended improving the quality and range of the Federal administration, calling for the creation of a Bureau of General Administration to co-ordinate national development. Bland’s argument was caught between a call for the strengthening of local councils through an acknowledgement of ‘the energy of citizens in the work of voluntary organisations’, and his apparent support for the need for social management. ‘People are not rational’, Bland maintained:

They can, however, appreciate machinery, and ... be taught to value it both as an instrument around which their protests might collect, and through which their enthusiasms might find full play.21

Such delegated authority as councils might possess was a long way short of regional autonomy, but at least it introduced the principle of local participation in government.

The perceived need to overhaul the constitution in the inter-war years also led to support for the opposite of decentralisation: a unified rather than federal system. Prominent elements in the Labor Party since the 1912 Convention had advocated the principle of, as Fisher put it, giving ‘the whole of the political power to the Commonwealth in a larger and more general way’.22 The tactical implementation of such a project rarely received specific consideration, although in 1930 it was resolved within the Party to put the issue of the creation of a ‘National Parliament’ to referendum. Complete centralism was not envisaged: unification might form a basis from which to re-appoint responsibility to regional administrations.23 What was sought was political and administrative efficiency, uncluttered by the electoral vicissitudes of the States, and - at an abstract level - a population which had adopted the ‘mental habit and moral gravitation ... of self-identification with the nation’24 For both decentralists and unificationists, like inter-war economists, individuals in society were not citizens invested with individual rights so much as units in patterns of authority. Such were the conditions of the 1930s, however, that a stalemate prevailed in the debate between them. ‘Formidable forces’ favoured unification, so Hancock observed in 1930,25 but the advocates of new states similarly drew on ample discontent. Both causes faced the cultural and institutional impasse of attempting to formulate coherent programmes in the context of depression, facing the need for reform but in a political climate which encouraged neither the extension of government nor a trust in the will of the people.

Wartime mobilisation, with its diverse components ranging from the centralisation of control, planning for reconstruction, and the need to quantify and manage both personnel and material resources, broke this inter-war impasse more by necessity than design. In the process, underlying issues of developmental priorities and the social basis of government were not resolved, but further politicised. If central governments looked to local authorities and to regional units as part of a strategy of employing optimum

---


economic efficiency, they did so in the context of comprehensive national planning.\textsuperscript{26} Regional surveys, and the recognition of local authorities as capable of organisation and planning in the spheres of supply, production and welfare, seemed to provide the basis for more systematic post-war decentralisation, but did so only by delegation, not by conceding local autonomy. On the other hand, as Lovell’s Report indicated, while reconstruction planning gave a more formal status to the rights and needs of the individual citizen, that status was also shaped by the restraint of the demands of the mass within a more uniform and calibrated sense of ‘community’. Even technological changes during the war seemed ambivalent in their implications: the urbanisation of heavy industry, for example, contrasted with the threat of aerial bombardment to concentrated coastal populations. In short, in the post-war years the decentralist ethic acquired a deeper, inherent ambiguity, at once an integral component of reformism yet a valuable point of reference in defending social, political and economic formations from the threat of government control and the demands of ‘modernity’.

***

In 1943 D.H. Drummond produced one of the first of a series of publications by many authors in the 1940s dealing with issues of constitutional revision which were provoked by wartime centralisation.\textsuperscript{27} To one reviewer, referring to the imminent referendum to increase Commonwealth powers, it appeared that Drummond had ‘performed a timely service for Australia’s declining body of Federalists’.\textsuperscript{28} Drummond argued that the consistent rejection at referenda of proposals to extend Commonwealth powers provided clear evidence of the preference of Australian citizens for smaller, local government. While unificationists proposed the ‘arbitrary’ division of Australia into provinces with limited, delegated legislative and administrative powers, Drummond called for the sub-division of existing states into at least 15 areas which would follow ‘a natural process of growth and development’ into becoming self-governing states. These units would autonomously exercise the extensive residuary powers left outside a strictly defined grant of responsibility to a central government, reversing the existing formula of spheres of responsibility which invested initiative primarily with the Commonwealth. Drummond’s rhetoric, however, was directed not so much towards an alternative political system, but towards the preservation of traditional moral principles. With close personal ties to the New England area, and - having been a state ward himself - a commitment to the provision of social services at a local level, Drummond concluded that ‘the essential purpose of a system of government should not be machine-like efficiency, however desirable, but the character building of its citizens’.\textsuperscript{29} This formulation introduced a more expressive concept of the citizen than had been characteristic of inter-war decentralisation campaigns. Drummond insisted that government had to be of a scale small enough to respond to local needs and values, and to comprehend the new status of the individual in society.

In his Foreword to Drummond’s booklet, Bland gave these arguments a more directly political emphasis,
alleging that the Federal Labor government was controlled by 'a group [of planners] which owes no responsibility to the electors'. The designs of this coterie were assisted by an electoral distribution which meant that the 'influence of the class-conscious masses of voters in the metropolitan areas provides a constant threat to any policy'.

A classless rural society, Bland suggested, was suffering the tyranny of an urban mass. While Bland did not restate his belief in the inherent irrationality of the people, he did observe in commentary at that time that 'the democratic way of life in Australia is particularly vulnerable since popular liberties are not buttressed by democratic institutions rooted in the soil'. Australian government seemed to him at best a 'superstructure which has no firm foundations in municipal government and community ideals'.

'Parliamentary government' itself was later announced by Bland to be far from 'popular government': there was a greater need for a more local direction of political affairs. Disposing of class as an urban corruption, and with little faith in other intermediary institutions, Drummond's ideal of 'character building' was all there was to endorse. Again, Bland spoke of the expressive potential of regionalism, which would 'evolve from the people ... their own peculiar ambition'. So while problems in national development were identified in terms of the inappropriateness of 'standardised legislation' in a geographically diverse nation, constitutional revision on the basis of these essays was based more on the need to limit the ambit of reform than to make it more integrated in its reach.

The arguments of Drummond and Bland suggest that, if anything, the inter-war impasse in constitutional analysis had been complicated further by the shift from a managerial conception of government to a fear of imposed planning. To meet this threat, conservatives depicted society in terms of a citizenry and a 'way of life' with inherent values to be expressed rather than evolutionary potential to be developed. It did not follow, however, that decentralisation was presented as a necessary tactic of retreat. For many of its advocates, its central virtue was that it offered a social form which might accommodate the advantages of technological and economic advance while preserving principles of voluntarism rather than planning in social welfare. The problem with such commentary was that it assumed that this social form - the 'community', the family, or the voluntaristic relationships created by individuals - could and should be isolated from those features of industrial change which threatened established values. For Drummond and Bland, the 'citizen', and the 'character' of 'the people' were defined largely in opposition to such change, and were thus incapable of adjusting to the circumstances which had fostered those same rights and opportunities. One of the persistent characteristics of post-war Australian intellectual conservatism was an inability to account for the connections between economic and social change. The ethic of decentralisation itself was a product of this inability.

This separation of economic change from social values was evident in much of the discussion at an AIPS

---


31F.A. Bland, 'The Problem of Administration' in David Maughan, *Constitutional Revision*, p.120.

32Bland, commenting on a paper by H.S. Nicholas, 'Decentralisation - The Constitutional Problem' to an AIPS Summer School, held at Armidale in 1948. The proceedings of this symposium were published as H.L. Harris (et al), *Decentralisation*, Sydney, 1948, p.65.

33Bland, 'A Note on Regionalism', *Australian Geographer*, vol.6, no.9, 1946, p.214.

34See for example, Drummond, *Australia's Changing Constitution*, p.61.
symposium on decentralisation in 1948. A frequent campaigner for the cause, H.L. Harris, spoke there of the new opportunities to break down the ‘vast agglomerations’ produced by ‘laissez faire’ and enter into a phase of ‘purposeful and imaginative control of the environment’. Recent developments in power, transport and communications, Harris insisted, had made it possible for the ‘mass production economy’ to become ‘the servant of the people’. Yet Harris’ support for a comprehensively reformed industrial system did not extend to equivalent social or political programmes. Instead, he argued that decentralisation in itself might define ‘a field within which no authority whatever shall have the right to legislate’ - a field centering on the family unit, with its attendant roles and values. It was in this area that one inherent contradiction of the decentralist ethic emerged, particularly as it related to the conception of women’s role in society. A virtue of the decentralisation of new industries, Harris noted, citing plastics as an example, was that they might draw upon ‘a surplus of female labour’ outside urban areas. Harris seemed unaware that such an impact in itself might change a ‘traditional’ pattern of social life, while also having some effect on the greater fertility of the country which he presented as an alternative to urban ‘race suicide’. Outside the intrusions of the state, yet somehow integrated with the new semi-skilled workforce of modern industry, Harris noted that it was in the country that the traditional institutions of society still exercised their benevolent guidance. The subtle regulation of personal behaviour, implicit in the new opportunities he outlined, could be left to ‘the family, the school, the small community club, village or small town’: they were ‘the typically British training grounds for social consciousness’. Wedded to Harris’ prospect of technological advance was a social ideal contrary to the dynamics of precisely such technological change. Harris’ paper concluded with an image of ‘towns ringed with tiny farms, intensely cultivated market gardens, poultry farms and orchards’.

Discussion of Harris’ paper confirmed many of these themes. The Bishop of Armidale, the Reverend J.S. Moyes, gave an even greater emphasis to the role of decentralisation in consolidating ‘home life and family unity’. These qualities were particularly valuable at a time when, Moyes added, ‘biological survival’ was more urgent than ‘industrial rehabilitation’. The relationship between a decentralised society and the need to balance humanity’s access to ‘certain powers in the laws of nature’ with ‘control within ourselves’ was a message Moyes reaffirmed throughout the 1950s. There were some commentators who suggested

---

35 Harold Lark Harris Born at Burwood, Sydney, in 1889, Harris was educated at the University of Sydney and then appointed to a lectureship in economics and history at the Sydney Teachers’ College. He moved from there to the Department of Tutorial Classes at the University of Sydney, and from 1935 to 1938 was attached to the Bureau of Statistics and Economics. From 1938 he was the Director of Youth Welfare with the NSW Education Department, and in 1941 became Assistant Deputy Director of Manpower in NSW, and Director of the Australian Institute of Political Science. After the war, Harris was also active in the Marriage Guidance Council in NSW, and in 1948 he led a Carnegie Group studying youth welfare on a tour of the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States. He wrote a number of school textbooks and guides on child welfare.

36 H.L. Harris, ‘The Implications of Decentralisation’ in Decentralisation, pp.4-5.


38 John Stoward Moyes Born at Koolunga, South Australia, in 1884, and educated at the University of Adelaide and the Australian College of Theology, Moyes was consecrated Bishop of Armidale in 1929. In 1943 he was the Australian delegate to an International Conference on Post-War Reconstruction at Princeton, USA.

39 Moyes in Decentralisation, p.29.

that if social development was the objective, and if the psychological trauma of modern society was to be avoided, then 'family life' and 'civic pride' might not provide a sufficiently broad context in which to deal with such issues. These points, however, ran against the decentralist's general concern with breaking down the ambit of centralised social policy and reinstating the role of the individual. As Bland had already argued, there were few local institutions and traditions in Australia capable of mediating individual loyalties. While the relationship between decentralisation and community was often presented as an ideal way to manage economic and technological change, decentralist commentary in the post-war years produced few political models or concepts of society capable of addressing the relationship between the individual and change itself.

Complementing these public affairs forums was a more journalistic dimension of decentralist advocacy in which concepts of participatory citizenship were similarly defined less in terms of social welfare and more in terms of individual accountability. One of the most active contributors to this populism was Ulrich Ellis, who established the Office of Rural Research in Canberra in 1947, and worked from that base as a prolific and apparently influential advocate for the cause. He had been Earle Page's Political Secretary between 1928 and 1936, moving then into the Commonwealth Public Service. From the late 1940s he became a prominent agitator for the improvement of public amenities and services in Canberra, rejoicing in a £2 fine for infringing Public Service regulations in his criticism of housing allocation in the ACT. Inadequate medical, retail and transport services, poor fittings in Commonwealth housing, and high levels of juvenile drunkeness and vandalism in the ACT were all covered in Ellis' weekly broadsheet, The Spotlight. Greater self-determination for the Canberra community, he argued, was the only solution to such problems. Similar themes characterised Ellis's series of 'National Development Booklets', published in the late 1940s, which dealt with the opportunities presented by new states to maximise technological change. The model of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) suggested ways in which resources, science, and new forms of administration could be applied to regional development - though perhaps not the TVA's principle of the federal management of local initiatives. Electricification was one of Ellis' main campaigns, providing a focus for his criticism of the lack of regional autonomy and the extent of underprivilege in rural Australia. A 'lost province' in south-east New South Wales, for example, could be formed through the extension of local government to the Snowy Mountains Scheme. Ellis demonstrated the rural areas were excluded from the improving standards of living in the cities by calculating that up to

---

41 E.M. Higgins, *Decentralisation*, p.110. See also the comments of G.D. Godfrey at the same conference: 'To encourage family life it is necessary to have central control over parents so that they know the fundamentals of child psychology'; p.29.

42 Ulrich Ruegg ELLIS Born at Mount Morgan, Queensland, in 1904, Ellis had been employed as Earle Page’s Political Secretary, as Leader of the Federal Country Party, from 1928 to 1938. In 1936 he worked as Exhibitions Officer for the Department of Commerce, and in 1940 moved as Assistant Controller to the Department of Munitions. From there, he went to the Post-War Reconstruction as Deputy Director of Public Relations, resigning to establish his own Office of Rural Research in Canberra in 1946. Between 1935 and 1953 he was a member of the ACT Tourist Board, and from 1947 to 1951 served on the ACT Advisory Council. Ellis closed the Office of Rural Research in 1960, devoting the later half of the 1950s and the early 1960s to writing the histories of the NSW and Federal Country Parties.


44 See esp. no.6, 28 April 1948, pp.4.


700,000 people in Australian rural areas were without electricity, and continued to ‘live in the kerosene age’.47

Such a situation was one undoubtedly one for attention, but Ellis incorporated it within a campaign that seemed to rely heavily on increasingly conservative rhetoric rather than constructive social policy. From 1948, *The Spotlight* changed its focus to the new state movement exclusively, and Ellis’ campaign addressed more general political issues. *The Spotlight* documented the steady support the cause was drawing from many municipal councils, chambers of commerce, politicians and civic dignitaries.48 Arthur Calwell, for example, was recorded as favouring the creation of up to 30 new states in Australia, though the figure later attributed to him was around 15.49 In 1950, commenting on the Communist Party Dissolution Bill, Ellis argued that new states were ‘the only permanent safeguard against extremist domination in industry and government’.50 In the same year at a conference in Lismore, Ellis called for a programme of ‘civil disobedience ... as a positive protest against all forms of centralised control’ until the movement achieved its objectives.51 While Ellis was not always so extreme, the invocation of a popular will characterised even his more orthodox appeals. Ellis was a persistent advocate for a federal convention to revise the constitution,52 and by 1952 he reported that the New England New State Movement had drafted legislation to enact its own body of government, ensuring access of private citizens to the making of laws.53 This proposed triumph for democratic citizenship, however, had its basis in a restricted ideal of community consensus, and of the groupings which were most in tune with popular aspirations.

Encouraging new states campaigns across Australia, Ellis gave an indication of the interests most likely to be attracted to the ideal by inviting ‘any development league or Returned Soldiers’ organisation to apply for information’.54 By the mid-1950s the New England proposal was proclaimed to be fully prepared for implementation, awaiting only ‘legal authority’ to become reality. A name was sought for the projected state from among a list including tributes to explorers, patriots and politicians and the monarchy: Cooksland, Kingsland, Oxley, Pageland. Already it had formulated the heraldic badge of a ‘golden Lion Rampant’ to symbolise ‘the link between New England and Old England’.55 Firmly entrenched in traditional social and cultural allegiances, the New England movement was endorsed by many pressure groups, from the Grazier’s Association, Catholic Rural Reconstruction, several Chambers of Commerce and Local Government Associations, Church bodies, the IPA to the Australian Women’s Movement.

---

48 'New State Idea Extends', no.9, 1 January 1948.
49 No.41, 22 August 1949; no.57, 20 February 1951.
50 'Communism and New States', no.51, 5 May 1950.
51 'Fight for New State in North', *The Land*, 17 February 1950, p.3.
53 Ellis, *New States*, Canberra, 1952. This pamphlet outlines in detail the proposed constitution.
54 'Power and Water Schemes - Corowa Convention to Discuss', *The Spotlight*, no.59, 19 July 1951.
55 This emblem, replacing an earlier image of the ‘rising sun’, appeared on flags, club insignia, lapel pins and official stationary; that the lion was ‘rampant’ was to indicate a preparedness to take a stand on the issue, and was ‘crowned to represent the link with the British monarchy’. See *The Spotlight*, no.48, 21 February 1950; ‘New England’s Rampant Lion’, 16 July 1952; Towner, *The Lion Badge*, pp.1, 4.
Against Socialism. What Ellis offered was a form of social organisation premised on three central themes: an escape from standardisation yet a re-affirmation of tradition; the fruits of industrialisation without the challenges of an industrial society; government which would reflect local interests to the extent that they were expressed by the majority. In 1947 he had devised a laboured analogy between the principles of atomic physics and political theory. ‘The invisible particles which form the invisible atom’, he argued, corresponded to a society which could redeem its fractured condition by organising outward from the family unit - defined as ‘the individual’ - to encompass ties with other discrete areas of involvement: county, municipal, shire; recreation, work, politics; religious, family, school; state, commonwealth, empire (Appendix 1). This analogy was the inverse of the 1898 diagram of the magnets of Town and Country, devised by Ebeneezer Howard in the attempt to portray the reconciliation of ‘the people’ to welfare, health, amenity and industry. However clumsily, Ellis devised an emblem of the post-war conception of citizenship informing much decentralist analysis. The individual was defined through the loyalty and dignity incurred through voluntarism and civic-mindedness, rather than through the ties of class, conditions and need.

As T.H. Marshall argued in 1949, the relationship between citizenship and social class had become a crucial issue of the time. The pace of social change and the ‘array of rights’ vested in the individual seemed to sweep away nineteenth-century hierarchies, and a sphere of ‘social citizenship’, centering on access to welfare, education and security, had developed in the twentieth century on the earlier foundations of civil liberty and political suffrage. In discussing the concept, Marshall was careful to suggest that although social citizenship might be based on a universal entitlement to amenities, it did not necessarily replace class. Instead, he suggested that the entitlements of citizenship could both obscure and legitimate continuing structural inequalities in the name of individual rights and community loyalties which were dependent on the scale and orientation of amenities made available. A right to housing, for example, did not necessarily overcome the hierarchy of status in society; and the principle of equality of opportunity in education could operate to stream students on occupational lines, serving as ‘an instrument of social stratification’. Since the late nineteenth century, urban and regional planning had provided a vehicle for intellectuals in most industrialising nations to address the definition and provision of such amenities. This provision was defined through the various forms of social organisation ranging from the ‘garden city’ model as developed in Great Britain to the more sociologically conceived neighbourhood and regional ideal emphasised in the United States. Common to these models, as Peter Hall has argued, was often an initially idealistic ‘anarchist’ component, seeking social forms less regimented by capitalist industry, and encouraging co-operative welfare and the full development of human potential. Implementation of these ideals frequently gave way to the necessity of some kind of centralised direction or more authoritarian purpose, but some level of integration between productivity, recreation and modernisation usually

---


remained.\textsuperscript{61} In Australia, the ethic if not the practice of decentralisation was similarly central to much commentary on the appropriate context for social citizenship, and these overseas intellectual models were clearly influential in discussion. One major feature distinguishing this Australian commentary from European and American precedents was the minimal extent of an equivalent integration between industrial and technological change and the proposed social and political forms of decentralised communities. What integration was suggested was limited by an intellectual alignment either to public welfare or private citizenship, and in the late 1940s and early 1950s there seemed to be little possible mediation between the two.

There is plenty of evidence to suggest an association between regionalism and citizenship in Australia in the post-war years. The advocates for increasing the status of geography in Australian education - a cause itself much advanced during the war - seized the opportunity of both morale management and resource mobilisation to recommend such a linkage.\textsuperscript{62} Their argument was that, in elucidating the balance between 'man and nature', geography would 'assist young people in the acquisition of a unified or community sense, which will ... develop a rational patriotism'. Such a 'scientific' awareness might be directed towards issues of conservation, for example, and in turn to 'good citizenship'.\textsuperscript{63} The American social critic, Lewis Mumford, was quoted in the journal of the Regional Planning Division of the Department of Post-War Reconstruction, suggesting that 'the task of regional survey is to educate citizens: to give them the tools of action and to suggest socially significant tasks to serve as goals for action'. Centralised societies, Mumford continued, might create 'heroes', but could not foster a wide society of true personalities, men and women who have learned the arts of personal and communal living, who neither renounce the will-to-order nor seek to create it on a single monotonous pattern.\textsuperscript{64}

Other references to this link, however, emphasised the preservation of tradition over Mumford's concern with active socialisation. In many addresses and lectures in the late 1940s and early 1950s, Sir Richard Boyer, Chairman of the ABC, identified decentralisation and even the creation of new states as crucial elements of his commitment to defend 'local freedoms' in a world of technological change. The individual, from Boyer's perspective, needed saving from the tendency to a mass society in the same way that the family would need to be on guard against the possible dangers of television. 'Historically', Boyer informed an Armidale audience in 1951, 'every nation which has ceased to honour or has lost contact with its rural life by excessive devotion to the glamorous possibilities of metropolitan development, has had cause to bitterly regret it by the spiritual loss of the simpler, sterner values, and by the crumbling of its economic structure.\textsuperscript{65}

In a more idealistic framework, as taken up by Catholic movements in particular, decentralisation promised a return to the dignity of independent labour, the family unit, orthodox community values,

\textsuperscript{61}Hall, \textit{Cities of Tomorrow}, esp. chs.4-5.

\textsuperscript{62}In a stimulating study, Paul Rabinow notes a similar concern among French geographers in the latter half of the nineteenth century. See Rabinow, \textit{French Modern: Norms and Forms of the Social Environment}, Cambridge Mass., 1989, pp.139-42.


\textsuperscript{64}Mumford, \textit{The Culture of Cities in Regional Development Journal}, vol.1, no.1, 1949, p.17.

\textsuperscript{65}See several essays in the Richard Boyer Papers, NLA Ms 3181, Boxes 1 & 4, especially 'World Tendencies in Political Organisations' (noted as an address to New States Movement, 1 August 1959); 'The Retreat from the Country' (noted as delivered at Armidale, 27 October 1951; 'Faith of a Liberal' (undated); 'Television' (noted as 'Report by R.J.F. Boyer', 26 November 1951).
Christian worship, a balanced local economy and the natural order. In ‘distributivist’ themes, decentralisation expressed the conviction that society could not be improved by government, but only by voluntary associations built from local interests and shared values. Brian Fitzpatrick’s assault on the ‘poverty-stricken serfdom’ proposed by Santamaria’s National Catholic Rural Movement, does not square with the recurrent theme of modernisation in the NCRM’s journal, Social Survey, where investment in machinery and new techniques was seen to offer greater viability to the family farm or the agricultural co-operative. Nor did such criticism fully comprehend the extent to which the rural ideal was integrated with other issues of the day. Decentralisation was seen as vital to defence preparedness, both in terms of increasing agricultural production to feed and thus stabilise Asia, and to achieve internal social and economic structures capable of meeting the demands of war. In Queensland throughout the first half of the 1950s, the economists working for the Bureau of Industry, directed by Colin Clark, related decentralisation to issues ranging from declining marital fertility rates through to the optimum size of production units, even the quantitative analysis of culture. Australia’s relatively poor cultural record was contrasted to the lessons of history ‘[which] shows how great achievements can be under a regime of small principalities and city states’. Along side such archaism, the Bureau also advocated private car ownership as at least fostering some level of urban decentralisation. Again, even in its most extreme expressions, such a range of decentralist thinking in the post-war years was not a single programme nor a mere vehicle to ‘marshal opinion against the Federal Labor Party’. It represented a focus through which a wide range of conservative principles were given some coherence at a cultural and institutional level.

There is a wealth of literature which could be cited in this context: see esp. F.K. Maher and J.I. Sullivan, Regionalism in Australia, Melbourne, 1946; the publications of the National Catholic Rural Movement, esp. Social Survey, Fruits of the Vine, Fitzroy, 1958, Fire on the Earth, Richmond, n.d.; James G. Murtagh, Democracy in Australia: An Essay in Organic Reconstruction, Melbourne, 1946; several Social Justice Statements, esp. ‘The Australian Standard of Living’ (1954) and ‘The Big Cities’ (1955); the writings of B.A. Santamaria, esp. several essays collected in The Price of Freedom: the Movement After Ten Years, Hawthorn, 1964 (cf. esp. Gerard Henderson, Mr Santamaria and the Bishops, Sydney, 1983); several articles in the Catholic Worker and Twentieth Century from the mid-1940s to the late 1950s. Santamaria has recalled of his period as Secretary of the National Catholic Rural Movement from 1939 to 1960 that it was ‘the most personally rewarding work on which I have been engaged’, drawing primarily upon a philosophical commitment which was difficult to sustain in his other activities - Against The Tide, Melbourne, 1981, pp.48, 50.

Brian Charles Fitzpatrick Born at Cudgee, Victoria, in 1905, Fitzpatrick was educated at the University of Melbourne where he became a prominent member of the Labor Club. In the 1920s he worked as a journalist, first in Melbourne and, from 1926 to 1927, in England, and then in Sydney until 1930. He was a major figure in Left-wing political and literary circles, campaigning with the Book Censorship Abolition League and the Australian Council for Civil Liberties. In 1939 he published his first major work in Australian economic history, and over the following years wrote several more or less academic works, while writing a great deal of journalism. He never secured a permanent academic position.

Quoted in Don Watson, Brian Fitzpatrick: A Radical Life, Melbourne, 1979, p.153.

For an example of these associations, see ‘Anti-Rural Attitude’, Social Survey, vol.2, no.1, 1952, pp.8-12.

See for example the discussion of the 1953 Report of the Federal Government’s National Security Resources Board, discussed in Chapter One, and of the Menzies’ government’s policy commitments in 1950 outlined in Chapter Three. See also several essays in Santamaria, The Price of Freedom: ‘the right of marginal Australian industries to exist will not be placed before the right of Asians to live’: p.237.


As the decentralisation and new states campaigns gained prominence in the late 1940s, the distinction became wider between those who supported the cause primarily as a means of government assistance for social and economic development outside the major cities - the position taken by J.J. Cahill, for example, the Labor Premier of NSW - and those who focussed on the political objective of recasting the balance of government - the position taken by M.F. Bruxner, the leader of the Country Party in that state. If wartime mobilisation had seemed to promise opportunities to both sides of the debate, the underlying political differences remained. Throughout the war, for example, articles had appeared in the journal of the Institute of Public Administration arguing that as central authorities had been forced to acknowledge the importance of local government in co-ordinating resources, the trend should continue and be accompanied by a more permanent and extensive grant of power. Opposing the claims of centralised authority, the ideal of local autonomy often went beyond material benefits to encompass a conviction that geographical regions could foster a distinctive ‘consciousness’ - a sense of ‘community’ - which, as Bland argued in 1944, provided ‘an alternative to the existing social unit which tends to produce a hierarchical or class cleavage’. J. Macdonald Holmes, Professor of Geography at the University of Sydney, provided the main exposition of this theme in his 1944 study, The Geographical Basis of Government, and elsewhere spelt out that such regions must give ‘pride of place to private initiative ... and individual merit’ rather than

---

74 John Joseph CAHILL Born at Redfern, Sydney, in 1891, Cahill worked as an engineer before entering the NSW Legislative Assembly in 1925 as Labor member for Arncliffe (later Cook’s River). From 1941 to 1952 he was the Secretary of Public Works, and from 1944 to 1953 the Minister for Local Government. In 1952 he succeeded McGirr as Premier and Treasurer, and held office until 1959.

75 Michael Frederick BRUXNER Born in 1882 at Tabulam, NSW, and educated at the University of Sydney, Bruxner served with distinction with the AIF at Gallipoli and in the Middle East, achieving the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. In 1920 he was elected MLA for the seat of Tenterfield, and from 1922 to 1927 he led the NSW Progressive Party. From 1927 to 1930 he was Minister for Local Government under Bavin, and was Deputy-Premier and Minister for Transport under Stevens from 1932 to 1941. Bruxner led the NSW Country Party from 1932 to 1955.


77 See for example R.P. Hitchen, ‘The War and Local Government’, Public Administration, vol.4, no.2, 1942, pp.80-91. In Britain, the comprehensive welfare policies devised at the end of the war identified local government as major impediments to systematic reform, while in France the efficiency of local government in reformism was due to the extent of vertical integration from the commune system upwards. See Ashford, The Emergence of the Welfare States, pp.121-38, 280. Clearly, the French model had no application in the Australian system. For a study of the range of decentralist measures arising immediately from the war in Australia, see M.F. Maher, ‘A Consideration of Certain Aspects of Decentralisation’, M.Comm. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1957.


79 James Macdonald HOLMES Born in 1896 at Glasgow, and educated at the University of Glasgow, Holmes was appointed the MacCaughey Professor of Geography at the University of Sydney in 1929.

to any 'collectively' organised 'peasantry'. In 1951, heading 'a campaign to create an informed public opinion', a booklet presenting the programme of the Local Government and Shires Association of NSW, proposed a system of Regional Authorities which would 'discharge many of the tasks which now belong to the State Governments', defining the purpose of local government as 'the development of the human personality ..., giving maximum service at minimum cost'.

Despite such claims to make a contribution 'essential to our survival as a nation', official recognition of regionalism, and the need for rural reconstruction, tended to focus only on its administrative aspect. The NSW Government in 1941, and then the Commonwealth Government in 1942, supported regional planning programmes with the intention of developing specific economic resources and increasing the services available in country areas. In 1946, the Victorian Minister of State Development and Decentralisation, C.P. Stoneham, set out a programme of regional development which was based on consultation between a Central Planning Authority and a 'constituted' panel of local municipal and State government officers who would 'advise' on the efficient usage of regional resources through industrial decentralisation unaccompanied by executive or administrative transfer. Decentralists opposed these initiatives as defining development only in terms of centralised objectives. One expression of this official position was the final report of the Commonwealth Housing Agreement in 1944:

National and regional planning may be described as a conscious effort to guide the development of the resources of the nation, and their use in productive enterprise, so as to provide a rising national income, and, therefore, a rising standard of human welfare ... In the past national development has been largely in the hands of private enterprise, and has thus been guided by the possibilities of profit making rather than by the needs of the community. We consider that national regional and town planning is an urgent national need. Tied into reconstruction planning, this emphasis was more on the co-ordination of programmes of 'national economic policy' than developing local autonomy: the 'consciousness' of the region was to be subsumed in

---

81 Holmes, 'The Future of Australia', *Australian Geographer*, vol.4, no.5, 1943, p.118. Compare Holmes' trust in individual virtue in this article to his suggestion in 1936 that migration to Australia and further settlement ought to proceed only on the basis of strict control: 'care should be exercised not only in the national type entering Australia, but in the mentality of the individual in his ability to make progress in Australian industry, both primary and secondary' - Holmes, 'Australia's Vast Empty Spaces', *Australian Geographer*, vol.3, no.2, 1936, p.8. Again, these contrasts in rhetoric at least seem to suggest the more general realignment studied in this thesis.

82 J.M. Caldwell, R.T.C. Storey and A. Mainerd, *Regional Councils: A Review of the Local Government Structure Designed to Establish a Need for the Creation of Regional Councils*, Sydney, 1951, pp.6, 21. The Association was careful to avoid committing itself to either a 'new states' or 'unificationist' position, although it was suggested that the experience of wartime planning had probably lost much support for the latter: p.20. For later assessments of the Association's campaign, see J. Bales, *Regional Councils and Regional Associations - Why and How?*, Sydney, 1953.

83 Caldwell, Storey and Mainerd, *Local Councils*, p.23.

84 Clive Philip STONEHAM Born at Manly, NSW, in 1908, Stoneham worked as a clerk in the Department of Railways before being elected MLA for the Midlands, Victoria, in 1942, represented the Labor Party. In 1939 he was a foundation member of the Victorian Decentralisation League, and Mayor of Maryborough from 1942 to 1943. He served in the Cain government as Minister for Agriculture, Water Supply, State Development and Decentralisation from 1952 to 1955.


86 See for example, Bland, 'A Note on Regionalism', p.216.
the rights and services bestowed by the state. In a major report on British approaches to regional planning, sponsored by the ANU, Grenfell Rudduck, an officer in the Department of Post-War Reconstruction, insisted on the need to place ‘town and country planning’ in Australia on the basis of ‘some radical modification of the system of land ownership’, following the British realisation that ‘nationalisation’, or at least an equivalent public control by ‘subterfuge’ over private rights, was essential if industrial development was to be linked with social reform. Similarly, in 1952, Rudduck, then a Director in the Department of National Development, sought to contrast the political alignment of geographic surveys during the period of ‘bureaucratic imposition’ by the Development and Migration Commission from 1926 to 1930, to the emergence of ‘regional study’ during reconstruction, which ‘sprang from ... the plain people ... whose fathers had fought for federation and who were anxious to have a say in their own affairs’. Yet, Rudduck added, ‘it sprang also from the geographers, sociologists and town planners’, and their alliance with the people seemed to pass ‘as the war receded [and] there was a swing away from collective action and good works’. 

A Report prepared for the Commonwealth Division of Regional Development in 1949 offered one indication of the differences between national objectives and regional autonomy in terms not only of objectives, but also of underlying conceptions of society. Bringing together a wealth of statistical material, this Report confirmed the social and economic strain of an over-concentration of population in Australia. It was insisted, however, that both the ‘economics of association’ and the social benefits of life in larger cities were undeniable: ‘civilisation’ had ‘become almost equivalent with ... concentrated population and industry’. Yet these advantages were increasingly compromised by the pace of urban expansion. Rising land values, traffic congestion, poor housing conditions, threats to public health, the diffusion of essential services and a lack of social and cultural amenities - all accumulated to make urban life wretched and effective government expensive, while also fostering ‘social maladjustment’. A lack of planning rather than urbanisation itself was the real problem. Observing that few overseas models were relevant to Australian circumstances, the Report endorsed the ambitious Cumberland County Plan for the division of Sydney into zones allocated for living, industrial, park, recreation and ‘green’ use. He also endorsed a system of ‘development towns’ and ‘regional centralisation’, citing Albury as a likely centre for a


88Grenfell Rudduck Born at Dromara, Victoria, Rudduck was educated at the University of Melbourne and then at University College, London. In 1949 he was appointed Commonwealth Director of Regional Development, holding that position until 1952 when he became Assistant Secretary to the Department of National Development. During the ‘fifties Ruddock was consulted on planning priorities in both Malaya and Pakistan, and in 1958 he was appointed Associate Commissioner of the National Capital Planning Authority.


maximum population of 250,000.94

This emphasis was on central planning and the values of urban living as national objectives: the individual was seen to participate in the ‘civilisation' inherent in social progress rather than in a more static ‘way of life'. Yet such an perspective does not seem to have been widely held in the early 1950s. In 1951, in a comprehensive treatise, A.J. Brown95 and H.M. Sherrard,96 prominent advocates in the increasing academic recognition of town and regional planning, sought to define their objectives in the context of the enabling legislation enacted in all states as a part of reconstruction. They were careful to avoid any association with planning other than ‘almost exclusively the physical act'. While insisting that ‘orderly building' was inherent in ‘true democracy', and that the changes wrought on nature by technology and reason were integral to the ‘peculiar interest' of an environment, they nonetheless associated urban life with a distortion of social values. Urbanisation, and ‘man’s superficial reconciliation with the many', they argued, ‘fails to take the place of his craving for harmony with the few'. A ‘community', most effectively defined by the radius of walking distance to the neighbourhood primary school, would supply these ‘natural’ needs.97 Again, the virtues of a circumscribed citizenship were favoured over planned reform. More practically, the Cumberland plan, praised by the 1949 Commonwealth Report but eventually abandoned in 1963, was immediately confronted with the conflicting interests of the 39 local councils within its boundaries, and defeated by the limited powers of the central authority itself.98

The extent to which decentralisation represented a pattern of political reappraisal in the post-war years also had its academic dimension, where it was closely tied to a questioning of constitution frameworks and public policy commitments in the aftermath of the Chifley reform programme. Introducing the collected papers of two seminars on Australian Federalism held at the Australian National University in 1951, Geoffrey Sawyer99 noted that proceedings had been pre-occupied by a perceived swing in popular opinion back to ‘greater provincial power - particularly greater provincial financial autonomy'. While ‘states' rights' had traditionally been the demand of conservatives, Sawyer observed that the Left was also looking

---

94Halsey, Decentralisation, pp.64-70; 37; 74-75.

95Alfred John BROWN Born in 1893 at Auckland, Brown travelled to England to further his architectural training. In 1922 he won the Sloane Medal from the Royal Institute of British Architects, and was later to be appointed Assistant Architect and Town Planner on the Welwyn Garden City project. Travelling to Australia, from 1934 to 1936 he was the President of the Town and Country Planning Institute of NSW. He then established a private architectural practice in Sydney.

96Howard Macoun SHERRARD Born at Brighton Beach, Victoria, in 1897, and educated at the University of Melbourne, Sherrard worked as a surveyor for the Victorian, Queensland and NSW governments in the 1920s, and from 1940 to 1948 was lecturer in Regional Planning at the University of Sydney. from 1946 to 1953 he worked as Assistant Commissioner to the NSW Department of Main Roads, becoming Commissioner in 1953.


99Geoffrey SAWER Born in 1890 in Burma, Sawer was educated at the University of Melbourne, and was admitted to the Victorian Bar in 1938. He was a resident tutor in law a Ormond College, Melbourne, from 1934 to 1940, and was then appointed Senior Lecturer in Law in the University. Sawer worked on short wave radio propaganda during World War Two, and became a frequent post-war broadcaster and journalist. In 1950 he was appointed Professor of Law at the ANU.
for alternatives to centralised public policy following the constitutional obstructions to social reform programmes experienced in the 1940s. Discussion at these seminars involved a great deal of criticism of the ‘radically defective’ distribution of powers within the federal system, but further frustration faced those who hoped to find alternatives to that pattern. There was uncertainty about what the public wanted, what historical precedent sanctioned, and what was required in terms of the balance of government in Australia. Colin Clark, representing the decentralists, was not troubled. He insisted on the restoration of state income tax powers as a way of increasing accountability and countering the concentration of authority. ‘A local government body’, Clark added, ‘should not seek to assume duties that are capable of being performed by the family unit’. Criticism of Clark’s paper offered principles but little in the way of recommended practice, questioning whether a political system could be constructively defined only as ‘a system of obstacles’ to co-ordinated policy; whether the dispersal of power was itself a guarantee against ‘totalitarianism’; and whether such a system was appropriate to a society which, in terms of budgetary policy alone, accepted the need for long-term management. There was dissatisfaction that discussion had scarcely risen above a sense of generalised ‘felt needs’ without quantifying those needs or defining how they related to a democracy’s obligations to its minorities. In this context, then, the ANU seminar was evidence of a stalemate which seemed to confront liberal and left-wing intellectuals who attempted to define a popularly-acceptable form of society which might still serve their political ideals. Whether it was in their perception of an inherently conservative electorate, or the conservatism of the concepts employed by Clark and others in their analyses, or the pessimism of trusting no institutional measure to bring about reform, much discussion of the patterns of government in the 1950s, and of the relationships within society they defined, was caught in a circular process of reaction in which neither ‘the people’ or ‘the state’ seemed to have a clear line of direction.

***

For the historian, the post-war discussion of decentralisation should be seen as more than an ideological slogan or the scarcely rational expression of rural discontent, both of which are the customary

---


103Leicester Webb and Gerald Firth in Sawer (ed.), *Federalism*, pp.46-7; Gordon Greenwood, p.123.

104Partridge in Sawer (ed.), *Federalism*, pp.174-99; Macmahon Ball, p.201. Perhaps it was not coincidental that a dominant issue among Australian historians in the early 1950s related to the reasons for federation in the first place: was it economic interest, political grievance or national idealism which mattered most in explaining a form of government which, implicitly or explicitly, was seen to be so unsatisfactory in its contemporary operation? See esp. R.S. Parker, ‘Australian Federalism: the Influence of Economic Interests and Political Pressures’, *Historical Studies*, vol.4, no.13, 1949, pp.1-24; Geoff. Blainey, ‘Economic Interests in Australian Federation: A Reply’, vol.4, no.15, 1950, pp.224-37; John Bastin, ‘Federation and Western Australia: a Contribution to the Parker-Blainey Discussion’, vol.5, no.17, 1951, pp.47-58; A.W. Martin, ‘Economic Influences in the “New Federation Movement”’, vol.6, no.21, 1953, pp.64-71. S.R. Davis’ attempt to show that there had been an element of integration and progressive co-operation between the State and Federal governments in many areas seemed inappropriate to the general temper of discussion - Davis, ‘Co-operative Federalism in Retrospect’, vol.5, no.17, 1951, pp.212-33.
interpretations offered by political scientists. Instead, the concept of decentralisation can be seen in a wide range of social criticism at that time. It indicated the values and strategies adopted by intellectuals who were suddenly forced to look beyond the customary precepts of state reformism. For those commentators who had never been reconciled to that perspective of reform, decentralisation - in the prosperity of the 1950s - gave their campaigns scope for greater initiative. Decentralisation was an integral part in the definition of concepts of 'citizenship' and of 'community' which informed much post-war commentary. It was also a frame of reference through which attempts were made to comprehend social change and the measures necessary to meet such disturbance. Both interpretations had particular significance for rural Australia and for the new formulations of developmentalism which succeeded post-war reconstruction, and both contributed their own emphases to both the culture of conservatism in the 1950s and to its political and economic underpinning.

Since the 1930s, it had been obvious that rural Australia faced long-term economic decline unless inefficiencies in settlement, production and marketing were clearly addressed. A Commonwealth Rural Reconstruction Commission was established in 1942 to advise on a wide range of issues related to these needs. J.G. Crawford, the Commission's Director of Research, insisted that the origins of rural instability were in 'pre-war trends and conditions', but the Commission also approached these issues with reconstruction commitments to improving the conditions of life at all levels, from nutrition to culture. From 1944 to 1946 ten reports were prepared, covering many aspects of the rural economy, including patterns of land utilisation, credit provision, conservation and marketing. These reports often faced the difficulties experienced by many reconstruction agencies in attempting to define their range of operations among established bureaucratic and sectional interests. The Commission did not ultimately challenge the established pattern of private, family-based farming, but they exposed this pattern to an unprecedented depth of scrutiny. Policy guidelines were recommended which would, as one report advised, 'remove conspicuous abuses ... and abolish practices which are against the public interest'.

The need for reform of the 'cultural landscape' of rural Australia, identified by the Commission, had to

---


106 There was a perception among some politicians and advisers that the depth of the Great Depression could in part be attributed to the market vulnerability of Australian agriculture. Much of my assessment of this policy context is based on Fred Gruen, 'Economic Development and Agriculture Since 1945', as yet unpublished paper.


108 See Martin and Penny, p.230; the quotation is from the 1946 Report on Land Tenure.

109 The term, 'cultural landscape', was employed by W.H. Maze, Lecturer in Geography at the University of Sydney, in an article on 'Land Utilisation and Reconstruction', Australian Journal of Science, vol.6, no.1, 1943, pp.11-13. It was a broadly inclusive term, covering population density, types of settlement and utilisation, forms of ownership and production (p.11), and indicates the network of relationships which commentators such as Maze sought to encompass in their discussion of rural reform.
be achieved against a background of lingering rural depression in which a sense of community was not seen to be pre-existing, but had to be created as the maximum manageable unit capable of sustaining public policy. Sociological studies of rural life at that time depicted it as far from harmonious: country areas appeared to facing cultural impoverishment and economic insecurity which were at least as severe as that occurring in the cities, and life there was characterised by deep class divisions and social animosity. The 'conservatism' of country towns seemed to be more the product of enforced conformity and repressed resentment rather than the stability of a genuine sense of community. Not only was a necessary 'civic culture' seen to be lacking in these areas, but there were few institutions existing which seemed capable of developing it. In the area of local government, A.F. Davies concluded a 1951 study that, in Victoria at least, 'no political institution of the modern state is more disheartening to a democrat' in its condition: it seemed to be steadily declining not only because of the centralisation of the welfare state, but because of the depth of public apathy. Davies' observation was scarcely surprising given the traditional weakness of local government in Australia, although at least local authorities had developed in Victoria through voluntarism rather than by central compulsion. The simple fact of Davies' interest in the issue again suggested the 'democrats' search for an alternative to the inherent frustrations of centralised policy. Yet unlike F.A. Bland, many social scientists not only observed the absence of local institutions, but doubted the 'organic' character of rural communities, and questioned the wisdom of attempting to reverse a logical economic process with inefficient, subsidised development.

Whatever post-war opportunity might have existed to carry an awareness of rural inefficiency into comprehensive reform was lost in the early 1950s. In the first years of the decade, farming interests seemed to be speaking with renewed confidence on a diversity of issues. Through the wool boom of 1950, graziers in particular led the swing back to affluence, although not all farmers' incomes kept pace with average wage increases over the following years. A Liberal-Country Party coalition in federal government seemed sure to serve rural interests in areas including financial aid to local government, assisted marketing programmes, tax concessions, and a priority to country areas in the placement of migrant labour. This

---


111 Alan Fraser DAVIES Born at Ivanhoe, Victoria, in 1924, and educated at the University of Melbourne, where he became a lecturer in 1946. He visited the London School of Economics in 1950, and the Tavistock Institute in 1958.


113 The state governments of New South Wales, Queensland and, to a lesser extent, Tasmania, had assumed the responsibility of establishing systems of local government in the first decade after federation. It was not until 1905, for example, that NSW established a system of local government, and then against considerable popular hostility. For a survey of Australian local government, see John R. Robbins, 'Australian Local Government and the Federal System' in C. Lloyd Brown-John, **Centralising and Decentralising Trends in Federal States**, Lanhan N.Y., 1988, p.156. In 1954 H.W. King observed that, in Australia, 'local government' was generally more appropriate as a term of convenience than an exact description, 'since often no more is implied than the local administration of central regulations' - King, 'Country, Shire and Town in New South Wales', **Australian Geographer**, vol.6, no.3, 1954, p.14.

114 See for example Eggleston's comments on the economic costs of decentralisation in **Reflections of an Australian Liberal**, pp.118-9. As late as 1960, J.P. Belshaw reminded a local government conference in Armidale that their host city, still the proposed capital of the New England state, was not completely sewered and had an inadequate water supply - and yet was 'a great deal better than most country towns' - Belshaw, 'The Economics of Decentralisation' in A.J.A. Nelson (ed.), **Proceedings of the Conference on Decentralisation and Local Government**, Armidale, 1960, p.16.

115 This survey is based upon a reading of **The Land** newspaper for the 1950s.
recognition was ironically forced upon government by the renewed evidence in 1951 that rural growth was uneven and falling behind manufacturing expansion, and by the shrewd negotiations of the Country Party in maintaining their influence in the Federal coalition. In 1953 the fielding of separate Liberal and Country Party candidates in the Gwydir by-election provided one clear indication of this insistence on an independent voice in the coalition. Improvements in agricultural technology and methods, the increasing application of scientific research to rural productivity and pest control, and a heightened awareness of the issues of soil and water conservation, not only assisted farmers economically but contributed to the consolidation of an image of the farmer as a diverse manager, demonstrating new levels of expertise.

Such an image of responsibility, whatever the reality, in itself contributed to the political weight of farming interests. Farmers were typically portrayed as hard-working individuals in contrast to the selfish, organised interests of the cities. As mechanisation gradually reduced the need for a rural workforce, the political and class distinction between rural and urban production widened, reinforcing this image. The rural press, the Country Party and farmers’ organisations, each frequently damned those areas of secondary and tertiary production which ‘had been recreant to their trust’, working fewer hours for more pay, manufacturing and marketing non-essential goods, and thus merely spurring inflation. Government intervention was also criticised, whether in the case of a reserve price scheme for wool in 1951, or the failure of a state-run large-scale farming venture in Queensland in 1953. These sentiments alone upheld the virtues of rural life - the wise farmer, in tune with tradition, responsibility and the genuine values of home, family and religion - expressing the need for new states not simply as a healthier life, but as political systems unhindered by organised pressure groups. It was only at its most pessimistic moments that The Land allowed that a pattern of ‘neglect and abuse’ might place Australian farmers in the position of being ‘told what to do’ sometime in the future, and never did it anticipate the structural criticisms which would


117 For a close study of this election, see Henry Mayer and Joan Rydon, The Gwydir By-Election 1953: A Study in Political Conflict, Canberra, 1954.

118 One example of this new status was offered as the ABC consolidated its rural services in the late 1940s, particularly in the detailed market and technical surveys provided by the ‘Country Hour’ - K.S. Inglis, This Is The ABC, Melbourne, 1983, pp.152-4. For a contemporary observation of this image, see Ronald Taft and Kenneth F. Walker, ‘Australia’ in Arnold M. Rose (ed.), The Institutions of Advanced Societies, Minneapolis, 1958, pp.132-3.

119 For a case-study of the decline of ‘working-class culture’ in a rural community, see P.R. Hay, ‘Labor Vacates the Bush: The Eclipse of Working-Class Values in Victoria’s Western District’, Labour History, no.54, 1988, pp.64-82.

120 See for example: ‘FSA Conference Told Australia Now A Nation of Mendicants’, The Land, 3 August 1951, p.5. The Land was one of the few sections of the press to welcome the severity of the 1951 Budget. See ‘The Federal Budget’, 28 September 1951, p.4.


take shape in the early 1960s. The strength of the Country Party, after all, lay in its appeal to specific interests centred on individual values. For the 1954 election, the party depicted the farmer confident in two assertions: 'I've never been better off than I am today' and 'I don't trust the Labor Party and I know they will socialise us all if given half a chance'.

The concept of community underpinning this sense of identity was based on the model of the nuclear family, and a vital constituent of that 'progressive' image of rural society in the 1950s was the role of women in that context. A domestic corollary of citizenship, this role was defined more in terms of a maternal function in ensuring stability rather than in terms of needs to be addressed in social development. The Country Women's Association, for example, was seen to enter an expanding sphere of activity in 1950, committed to increasing membership among 'Younger Sets' and new settlers, and strengthening international links. Womens' distinctive qualities of organisation and influence were attributed particular value in holding rural societies together, however inscrutable such qualities might be. Margaret Mead, visiting in 1951, was quoted as suggesting that the 'seeming "puttering" of women evolves into a smooth running home life' which could be extended into the organisation of community facilities: 'Community planning is much the same as raising a baby or getting a dinner'. The terms in which womens work was valued neatly reconciled modern techniques and new responsibilities of citizenship with traditional roles. A Homemakers' School for 'junior farmer girls', was established at Yanco Experimental Farm in 1952, offered training in areas from deportment, interior decoration to 'a talk given by a well-known psychologist on family relationships'. This acknowledgement of the relevance of 'feminine skills' to social improvement was in no sense part of a change in perceived role. In the same issue in 1953 in which The Land praised the CWA on page four for establishing holiday houses, schools, hostels, baby health centres, libraries and 'opportunities for self-expression ... which abolish all barriers of class or creed', it congratulated Mrs G.T. Barber on page one for winning both the plain and fancy biscuits prize in a Cookery Contest. Thelma Kirkby, the Country Party candidate in the 1953 Gwydir by-election,

---

124 A fall in output, a decline and aging in the rural workforce, and a lack of wage or capital incentives equal to those operating in manufacturing industries - these were the factors which explained rural economic imbalance in the 1950s. See Campbell, 'Current Agricultural Development', pp.305-19; F.H. Gruen, 'Australian Agriculture and the Cost-Price Squeeze' in Arndt and Corden (eds.), Australian Economy, pp.320-48.

125 See Mayer and Rydon, p.187. Brian Costar and Dennis Woodward have contrasted the narrowly-defined issues addressed by the Australian Country Party to equivalent parties in Scandanavia, particularly the Swedish Centre Party, which, in 1957, linked decentralisation to a more comprehensive and radical platform of social policy, including 'enviromental protection and the questioning of economic growth': Costar and Woodward, Introduction to Country to National: Australian Rural Politics and Beyond, Sydney, 1985, p.3.

126 Election advertisement in The Land, 7 May 1954, p.6.


130 'The Anthropologist Looks At Women in Pacific Affairs', 31 August 1951, p.34.

131 'Homemakers' School at Yanco Was Big Success', 16 May 1952, p.24.

132 'Proud Record of CWA'; 'Two Prizes in "Land" Cookery Contest', 24 April 1953, pp.4, 1.
although qualified as a Bachelor of Arts in Child Psychology, made little mention of her academic background in the campaign, stressing instead that the extension of government into welfare issues made 'a woman's view ... vital' in federal parliament.133

Implicit in this commentary was an association of decentralisation not only with the attempt to determine a social form appropriate to the challenges of modernity; decentralisation was also seen to have clear economic advantages in minimising the social disturbance of economic change. The social forms encouraged by decentralised development, such as maternal roles in the community, relied on conservative themes of personal duty rather than social reform. In the form of government developmental policy, there was an equivalent transition from publically-directed enterprises addressing social needs to subsidised private schemes which were assumed to extend eventual benefits to their host communities.134 An indication of the ways in which these forms of decentralisation were employed in more strictly economic contexts in 1950s is provided by their usage by industrial developers and managers.

On 13 September 1956, for example, the first 'Develop Victoria' Conference was held in the Melbourne Town Hall. These conferences were then convened annually by the Develop Victoria Council, an organisation established in 1956 by the Victorian Employers Federation.135 Each conference dealt with a specific theme relating to industrial decentralisation, developing discussion around a common ethic of economic growth and community spirit. They attracted an extensive range of delegates, including representatives from private enterprise, local government, commonwealth departments, community associations, Chambers of Commerce, churches, banks, and parliamentary representatives of the Liberal and Country parties. Blue-collar unions and the Labor Party appear to have been unrepresented.136

At this first conference the new Liberal Premier of Victoria, H.E. Bolte,137 recounted with enthusiasm a recent visit to the United States of America. He had returned convinced that, through channelling extensive overseas investment into developmental projects, Victoria should seek to emulate the American model of an 'internal economy', maintaining a high standard of living without having to enter into the uncertainties of export dependence.138 Bolte found in the Council a perfect forum through which to express his distinctive style of 'grass-roots' Liberalism.139 Other speakers emphasised the wealth of resources Victoria

133Mayer and Rydon, The Gwydir By-Election, pp.58-60; 76.


136See the lists of delegates included in the published Record of Proceedings of each conference.


139Little has so far been written on the policies or style of Bolte's government - for an anecdotal account, see Ian Baker, 'Victoria' in Max Harris and Geoffrey Dutton (eds.), Sir Henry, Bjelke, Don Baby and friends, Melbourne, 1971, pp.3-9.
could draw upon in pursuing this ideal, through industrial expansion, the exploitation of minerals (especially brown coal) and more systematic agriculture. The theme of decentralisation in these papers was tied to programmes of technological development and efficient managerial strategy, which on the one hand could be presented as contributing to the ‘material and cultural welfare of the town’ favoured by decentralised industry, but which also offered an opportunity to bring production under greater control, both in terms of labour and technical efficiency.\(^{140}\) Rather than celebrating a distinct ideal of rural life, the Develop Victoria Council emphasised the opportunities for industrial expansion in regional centres. The setting was more significant for the social outlook it was seen to encourage, congenial to such expansion, than for any inherent local features or specific needs.

Central to this outlook was the theme of the 1957 conference: ‘self help’. This theme related more to voluntary community action than to individualism. Public relations advisers and travel consultants suggested ways in which towns could increase their attractiveness to tourists and developers while also developing unity within. Citing Melbourne’s Moomba as a model, the Secretary of the City Development Association, Robert Gardner,\(^{141}\) recommended the role of festivals in drawing all sections of the community into ‘active participation’. Such festivals countered the corrosion of social life ‘in an age of cinema and T.V. sets’ while also benefiting local economies.\(^{142}\) Other measures to unite towns included the establishment of free libraries and co-operative societies - especially in relation to housing, and the development of a town plan around ‘a group of important public buildings as a focus for our daily comings and goings’. It was the ‘manager’s wife’, according to Denis Winston,\(^{143}\) Professor of Town Planning at the University of Sydney, who determined the success of decentralisation. Life away from the metropolitan centres needed to made attractive to her through improving the quality of domestic, commercial and...

\(^{140}\) Compare A.M. Flanders, ‘Industrial Development’, *Develop Victoria*, p.10, on his sense of responsibility to encourage community activities in Wangaratta, the site of the textile factory of which he was managing director, to Sir Samuel Wadham, ‘Our Natural Resources - Agriculture’, p.7, who proposed a more efficient scrutiny of land tenure in the light of productivity. Another proposal advanced at the 1958 conference by Professor C.E. Moorhouse, Professor of Electrical Engineering at the University of Melbourne, recommended a higher education system decentralised away from Melbourne, offering flexibility of transfer between technical colleges and universities, and training in areas relevant to regional issues, and open to the involvement of private enterprise. See Moorhouse, ‘Development - Educational Implications’, *Develop Victoria*, pp.3-4.

\(^{141}\) Robert Arthur GARDNER Born at Melbourne, 1916, and educated at the University of Melbourne, Gardner worked as a journalist from 1934 to 1939, and then held a series of executive positions with private welfare organisations, including the YMCA, the Suburban Clubs Movement, the National Fitness Council, and the Victorian Association of Boys’ Clubs. From 1945 to 1947 he was MLA for Ivanhoe, Victoria, and in 1951 he became Secretary of the Town and Country Planning Association of Victoria, and then, in 1953, of the City Development Association, Melbourne. In the ’fifties he was also prominent in the Australian Planning Institute, and in 1956 he was awarded the Barrett Memorial Medal for his contribution to Town Planning. Between 1956 and 1958 he was the Director of the Moomba Festival.


\(^{143}\) Denis WINSTON Born at Liverpool, England, 1908, Winston was educated at the University of Liverpool and then at Harvard. In the ’thirties he won a number of architectural awards, including a competition to design the town of Kincorth in Scotland in 1937. After lecturing at the Liverpool School of Architecture from 1936 to 1941, Winston went to Northern Ireland as the Chief Architect for the Ministry of Health and Local Government; between 1945 and 1948 he worked for the Borough of Southampton, and was then appointed Professor of Town and Country Planning at the University of Sydney. Wiston was President of the Australian Planning Institute from 1951 to 1953, and from 1957 to 1963 he was a Planning Consultant to the Snowy Mountains Scheme.
entertainment services in the towns.\textsuperscript{144}

The prevailing ethic in these proceedings was one of ‘progress through individual effort’, building on the insistence that ‘the old idea of relying on governments to do everything has been discarded for all time’,\textsuperscript{145} and on the need to identify alternative sources of vitality in society. Welfare services were clearly seen as integral to that vitality, but their provision revealed distinct assumptions regarding social responsibility. By the end of the decade the Council could point to areas of local initiative in towns throughout Victoria, including the construction of hotels, swimming pools, factories, ambulance stations and memorial halls; the establishment of timber plantations; the launching of drama festivals and sporting events.\textsuperscript{146} Informing these initiatives, it seemed to the Council, was a concept of ‘community’ which, as A.J.A. Nelson\textsuperscript{147} suggested in 1958, had as its essence the capacity of a society to give ‘the individual an opportunity to contribute - to think, to take part in discussion, in decision making and in action - and that makes him feel that he matters in the scheme of things’.\textsuperscript{148} Other rationales were also presented: one speaker suggested that ‘defence planning’ was a more appropriate description of objectives than ‘decentralisation’.\textsuperscript{149} While the community centre, the family home, ‘the Chamber of Commerce …, the Mother’s Club, the School Committee and the Church groups’\textsuperscript{150} were frequently mentioned in the discussion of welfare services, the workplace never was. In 1958 it was suggested that workers might accept a smaller ‘country wage’ since ‘the cost of living is generally cheaper in the country’.\textsuperscript{151} There were no representatives from unions present to question what concession industry itself might make in the light of such cheaper costs and frequently requested government subsidies. Decentralisation, in the context offered by the Council, appears to have been an effective medium through which private enterprise could present itself as socially progressive, albeit through a reliance on domestic values - the needs of the ‘manager’s wife’ - without having to deal with the complexities and conflicts of industrial production itself.

It was evident by the mid-1950s that decentralisation was no longer discussed in terms of reconstruction idealism, but as an issue of pragmatic management. Some geographers defended the potential of rural areas for settlement and development in terms of the ability of ‘individuals’ to form ‘flourishing communities’ if


\textsuperscript{145}‘Victorian Community Service Award’ and Lewis Burne, \textit{Start Now}, 1958, pp.7; 32.


\textsuperscript{147}Archibald John Alexander NELSON Born at Scotts Creek, South Australia, in 1911, and educated at the University of Adelaide, Nelson worked as a teacher before serving with the RAAF from 1941 to 1946. He became a Captain the Army Education Service and was a member of the Universities Commission. From 1947 to 1948 he was the Senior Education Officer for International Relations in the Commonwealth Department of Education, and represented Australia on UNESCO advisory committees from 1949 to 1954, after which he went to the adult education section of the University of New England.


\textsuperscript{149}F. John Gill, 1958 Conference, p.41.

\textsuperscript{150}‘Your Local Development Council’, \textit{Start Now}, 1958, p.11.

\textsuperscript{151}F.G. James, ‘Industrial Development of Victorian Rural Areas’, p.31.
only investment and resources could be drawn away from the cities, but these arguments were premised on
the realisation that communications and industrial development required some central direction and must reduce local distinctiveness. To the Professor of Geography at the ANU, O.H.K. Spate, the term 'region' seemed more open to political manipulation than to geographical accuracy, and in 1955 Australia in general appeared to him to be a 'monoculture', despite the intensity of local 'self-consciousness'. In the same year, strict new statism drew little support at an AIPS forum, but there was a general acceptance of a need for some level of administrative and industrial decentralisation on the grounds of 'social equality'. Centralisation was attributed less to some form of moral or political culpability, and seen more in terms of the facts of geography, political realities, and even the pattern of overseas investment. It was in this context that E.G. Whitlam restated the unificationist position which he was to advocate steadily in the ALP over the next twenty years. Whitlam argued that the best that would come of new states campaigns was an increased appreciation of the extent to which local authorities might take responsibility for schools, hospitals, police and housing.

By the early 1960s commentary on economic decentralisation had also become more systematic, partly because of an increased awareness of the inter-relationships necessary for economic development, and particularly in terms of the need to co-ordinate all areas of the economy, production and marketing, in an increasingly less protected international economy. The establishment of the National Committee for Balanced Development in 1962 indicated a shift from the form of analysis which had been characteristic of the decentralisation debates of the 1950s to that which was to dominate discussion well into the 1970s. The Committee was formed after the 1962 Develop Victoria Conference, with Sir Douglas Copland as Chairman and a strong academic representation at its first proceedings. In 1963 a deputation to the Prime Minister stated the Committee's aims as: 'to ascertain that the nation's resources are utilised to the utmost

152See for example R.H. Greenwood, 'The Rural Pattern of South-Eastern Queensland', *Australian Geographer*, vol.6, no.6, 1956, pp.8-9.


157Edward Gough WHITLAM Born in 1916 at Kew, Victoria, and educated at the University of Sydney, Whitlam served with the RAAF from 1941 to 1945, and was admitted to the NSW and Federal Bar in 1947. In 1952 he won the Federal seat of Werriwa, NSW, for the Labor Party, and from 1956 to 1959 he served on the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Constitutional Review. Whitlam was elected Deputy Leader of the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party in 1960.


159For some context to this development, see McKay, 'Post-War Agriculture', pp.45-6.
and that a reasonable balance between urban and rural development is preserved.\textsuperscript{160} The improvement and diversification of the export capacity of the Australian economy was frequently emphasised, with Asian markets particularly in mind. Capital investment was encouraged in heavy and processing industries.\textsuperscript{161} Wedded to this industrial decentralisation was an awareness of the need for centrally directed social reform, especially in the area of education. R.B. Madgwick,\textsuperscript{162} for example, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of New England, argued at the the 1964 conference that

\begin{quote}
We should do everything we can to secure recognition of the fact that adults as individuals, and as members of communities, can not be expected to participate in any programme of national development unless they are provided with the means for continuing education in all those fields in which they need to be educated.\textsuperscript{163}
\end{quote}

Such a frame of reference, from its emphasis on the individual acquisition of skills and opportunities to the need for an integrated national economy, was unprecedented in the decentralisation campaigns of only a few years earlier, including Bolte's call for an 'internal economy' and the general preparedness to protect industries because of their political influence and their cultural status rather than their economic efficiency.\textsuperscript{164}

***

Clearly, decentralisation and 'community' were not concepts employed by conservatives alone. The Communist Party, for example, had been keen to develop strength in country, municipal and local council affairs after the war in the name of 'the people against monopoly'.\textsuperscript{165} Communist pamphlets of the 1940s and the 1950s attempted to link small farmers to urban workers, supporting industrial and administrative decentralisation and a recovery of the virtues of an independent country life.\textsuperscript{166} Bernard Smith\textsuperscript{167} concluded his 1945 essay on Australian art, \textit{Place, Taste and Tradition}, with a call to reaffirm 'the democratic nature of art' by returning it to a base in communities: not only cities but 'suburbs and country

\begin{flushleft}
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{161}Copland, 'The Challenge of Balanced Development for Australia', pp.1-6; see also R.H. Greenwood, 'Factors Favourable to Growth and Their Priorities'; H.R. Edwards, 'National Planning and Balanced Development' - papers presented to 1964 conference.
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{162}Robert Bowden MADGWICK Born at Sydney in 1905, and educated at the University of Sydney and at Oxford, Madgwick held research positions at the University of Melbourne from 1933 to 1936, and then was appointed Senior Lecturer in Economics at the University of Sydney. From 1941 to 1946 Madgwick was the Director of the Australian Army Education Service, attaining the rank of Colonel. In 1947 he became Warden of the New England University College, and was appointed Vice-Chancellor when the College became a University in 1954.
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{163}Madgwick, 'The Contribution of Education to Balanced Development', p.11.
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{164}In agriculture, for example, Gruen has suggested that throughout the 1960s, despite impressive gains in production through pasture improvement (around 35% through the 1950s and 1960s), a greater awareness of the costs of protection prompted fundamental re-appraisals of directions and priorities in the farming industries. See Gruen, 'Economic Development', pp.8-16.
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{165}For an account of these campaigns, see Ralph Gibson, \textit{The Fight Goes On: A Picture of Australia and the World in Two Post-War Decades}, Marborough, 1987, p.42.
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{166}See Every Farmer Well-To-Do, Sydney, 1944; Together for a Better Life, Sydney, 1955.
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{167}Bernard William SMITH Born in 1916 at Sydney, and educated at the University of Sydney, London University, Smith worked as a school teacher from 1935 to 1944, and then as an Education Officer at the Art Gallery of NSW. Between 1952 and 1955 he studied at the Australian National University, and then was appointed to a lectureship, and then senior lectureship, at the University of Melbourne.
\end{flushleft}
centres' should be included in an interchange of exhibitions of 'local manufactures ... local industrial
designs ... [and] local crafts'. Smith, Place, Taste and Tradition: A Study of Australian Art Since 1788, Sydney, 1945, pp.254, 264-5

'There is a new spirit abroad', an ABC booklet proclaimed in 1945: 'the spirit of community'. Whether its origins were in the British tradition of the village, a more American concept of geographical region, or a national identity 'worthy of Anzac', 'community' was seen to offer a way to immerse 'self' in the 'common need' without adopting any explicit political programme. Smith, Place, Taste and Tradition: A Study of Australian Art Since 1788, Sydney, 1945, pp.254, 264-5

The post-war years also saw cases of decentralisation which successfully followed economic rationales, such as the development of Whyalla around iron processing and ship-building, and principles of access to social services, such as Elizabeth, also in South Australia. For a contemporary account, see J.B. Rowe, 'Whyalla: A Study of Geography in the Making', Australian Geographer, vol.5, no.7, 1948, pp.176-182.

Despite these many claims, however, the concept of community in the 1950s assumed an essentially conservative cast. This was not only true of its deployment by organised political movements, but also of the more subtle ways in which perceptions of public and private space demonstrated a conservative influence.

A desire to restructure the personal environment in recognition of changing patterns of life was also evident in the discussion of domestic architecture after the Second World War. Throughout the later 1940s and into the 1950s the dominant themes in such commentary were those, firstly, of developing an architecture appropriate to a society built around a classless nuclear family, and, secondly, of reconciling the efficiency and rationalism of a European or American modernity with the individual freedom offered by the Australian suburbs. From the early 1940s there was an expectation that the end of the war would lead to a great expansion in standards of living, and this expectation was coupled to a wartime awareness of the importance of sustaining levels of individual morale and civic participation. As suggested by the quote from Lovell with which this chapter began, a link between these two elements of planning and effective citizenship was provided by an emphasis upon the function of the physical environment in shaping individual allegiances.

Indicating the extent of this concern, a 1941 series of radio talks on 'Design in Everyday Things' given by prominent consultants in fields ranging from interior decorating to town planning, suggested that:

It is generally accepted that our environment, quite as much as our heredity, has a profound influence on our character ... those who insist on surrounding themselves with beautiful, faithfully designed and built objects would naturally tend to seek and experience the joys and the dignity of a civilised and cultured life, resist humbug, expose trickery and hate all that is shoddy and second-rate, avoid regimentation, but develop a social sense ....

The central subject of such writing, whether referring to domestic appliances or to community centres, was a quality and functionality in design which would encourage the individual's social commitment. 'Individuality' was defined primarily as a balance between personality and environment, and seen as Smith, Place, Taste and Tradition: A Study of Australian Art Since 1788, Sydney, 1945, pp.1, 7, 68, 83.


See Sandercock, Cities for Sale, pp.115-6. For background to these initiatives in South Australia, see Walter Crocker, Sir Thomas Playford: A Portrait, Melbourne, 1983, ch.7. It would be worth comparing Playford's sense of economic development with Bolte's, whose emphasis seems to have been on specific programmes drawing on overseas investment rather than Playford's more systematic development of resources. See also Laycock, 'Development Ideology', pp.234-60.


168Smith, Place, Taste and Tradition: A Study of Australian Art Since 1788, Sydney, 1945, pp.254, 264-5


171See Sandercock, Cities for Sale, pp.115-6. For background to these initiatives in South Australia, see Walter Crocker, Sir Thomas Playford: A Portrait, Melbourne, 1983, ch.7. It would be worth comparing Playford's sense of economic development with Bolte's, whose emphasis seems to have been on specific programmes drawing on overseas investment rather than Playford's more systematic development of resources. See also Laycock, 'Development Ideology', pp.234-60.

particularly important in a new age of advertising in which 'we like to be different, but not too different'.

Much of this advice was derived from inter-war European theories of design, particularly those of the Bauhaus group. When Walter Gropius, founder of the Bauhaus, toured Australia in 1954, he provided a strict outline of the principles behind these theories:

'Today, after a long chaotic period of l'art pour l'art - so utterly unrelated to the collective life of man - a new language of vision is slowly replacing individualistic terms like 'taste' and 'feeling' with terms like 'objective validity'. Based on biological facts - both physical and psychological ... - it seeks to represent the personal cumulative experience of successive generations.'

Yet just as reconstruction reformers and social scientists faced the problem of attempting to combine rational, integrated policy objectives with maintaining social cohesion, so the issue facing commentators on the organisation of life was one of melding objective function with the stability of a community increasingly defined around the interests and roles of individuals. Social reformism negotiated these demands with difficulty, for in dealing with those with insufficient means to undertake a process of self-realisation, it was difficult to avoid a form of prescription in which function was explicitly imposed rather than developing out of 'efficient' patterns of living. Indicating something of this difficulty, an influential booklet of 1942, Oswald Barnett and W.O. Burt's 'Housing the Australian Nation' (published by the Research Group of the Left Book Club of Victoria), drew on widespread alarm at extensive slum areas of major cities and many country centres which had been publicised by official inquiries in the late 1930s. Arguing for programmes of slum abolition, community development and welfare support, the authors maintained that private enterprise had demonstrated no interest in the family, despite the fact that most of the men, women and children in under-privileged areas were in fact 'excellent citizens'. Insisting that 'we are what we are because of where we are', Barnett and Burt drew on English models of the 'garden city' and, more recently, the satellite town, outlining proposals for comprehensive housing programmes and industrial decentralisation 'to counteract the lure of the lights of the city'. Housing based upon cottage units, with an area of private property as an inducement to gardening, and

173 Design in Everyday Things, p.11. An Army Education pamphlet on Interior Decoration emphasised that 'peace, unity, variety and individuality' were the key elements in any environment: the age of science should be adapted to Australian conditions while also assisting in the discovery and expression of personality - Army Education Service, Interior Decoration for Australians, no date or place, p.8.


175 Frederick Oswald BARNETT Born at Brunswick, Victoria, in 1883, Barnett was educated at the University of Melbourne, and worked as a school teacher from 1898 to 1902, and then as a public servant until 1920. He then practiced as an accountant. Between 1938 and 1948 he was a member of the Victorian Housing Commission, and wrote on criminality and slum reform.

176 Walter Oswald BURT Born at Warrnambool in 1893, Burt was educated at the University of Melbourne at the Inner Temple, London. He served on the Victorian Investigation into Slum and Housing Conditions from 1936 to 1937, and with Barnett on the Victorian Housing Commission until 1946, drafting legislation dealing with slum reclamation, when he was co-opted to the Commonwealth Housing Commission.

177 F. Oswald Barnett and W.O. Burt, Housing the Australian Nation, Melbourne, 1942. For an assessment of this booklet, and of the inquiries which informed it, see Leonie Sandercock, Cities for Sale, pp.101-2; 69-76. Kerreen Reiger has provided a close study of one enquiry into housing conditions in the 1920s which provides indications of the precursors of some of Barnett and Burt's concerns - Reiger, "'Clean and Comfortable and Respectable': Working-Class Aspirations and the Australian 1920 Royal Commission on the Basic Wage', History Workshop, no.27, 1989, especially pp.92-4.
hence personal commitment, was their preferred model.\textsuperscript{178} With these Edwardian influences of social intervention and an organic idealism, such recommendations can be contrasted to the more psychologically precise calculations of a ‘balanced community’ outlined in the report of the NSW Council for Social Services with which this chapter began.\textsuperscript{179} While the Council drew on English models, their emphasis was less on public provision and more on the strict efficiency of personal accountability. The shortage of housing was seen to reflect a combination of improvidence and economic hardship, stemming from early marriage, excessive fertility, unrealistic expectations, parental desertion, and an underskilled workforce demanding unrealistic wages and imposing restrictive practices in the building trades.\textsuperscript{180}

The NSW Council’s report also offered an expanding sphere for professional management rather than governmental planning. A similar theme was implicit in the 1944 report on \textit{Post-War Development} prepared by the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA) for discussion among its members. Assuming that ‘the well-established principles of town, country and neighbourhood planning will be mandatory in the future’,\textsuperscript{181} the report was concerned with marshalling improved technology and industrial methods to planning and construction. Without presenting its own social analysis, the report endorsed the concept of a ‘neighbourhood unit’ of ‘such a size and so planned as to create in each person the consciousness of his place in the community’.\textsuperscript{182} Recommending national measures such as the public control of all land, whether publicly or privately-owned, and enthusiastically supporting industrial decentralisation, it was insisted that ultimate responsibility for initiatives in planning should be vested in ‘the smallest groups capable of such work’.\textsuperscript{183} With an emphasis on the role of technical expertise, the report indicated a professional concern to shift emphasis away from public policy to a much more moderate governmental role of management and basic servicing for the initiatives of private, professional bodies.

After 1945, even with the implementation of Commonwealth-State housing agreements, financial and bureaucratic constraints explain many of the limitations in reformist housing policy. The concern of reconstruction policy became one of economic pragmatism since broad redistributive strategies were not politically viable either due to a lack of finance and power to implement programmes, or a lack of will to interfere with existing patterns of ownership and investment in property.\textsuperscript{184} The concepts employed in


\textsuperscript{179}The concept of ‘balanced community’ had also been developed as a part of the post-war ‘new town’ programmes developed in England. For an assessment of the political ambiguity of the concept - ‘charity and effective social control both require the upper and middle classes to retain contact with the lower classes’ - see Harold Orlans, \textit{Stevenage: A Sociological Study of a New Town}, London, 1952, pp.81-95.

\textsuperscript{180}Matthews, Ogilve, Walker, \textit{Housing}, pp.7-9; 14-17; 20-22.

\textsuperscript{181}RAIA, \textit{Wanted! A Plan!}: \textit{Post-War Development}, no place given, 1944, p.4.

\textsuperscript{182}RAIA, \textit{Wanted! A Plan!}, p.13.

\textsuperscript{183}RAIA, \textit{Wanted! A Plan!}, p.6.

social analysis also changed in significant ways. In 1947 Walter Bunning, Chairman of the NSW Town Planning Advisory Committee, argued that any recognition of the obvious demand for better standards in the independent family home must qualify the priority being given to community facilities. This demand reflected both the rising expectations of 'the low income group' for individual family homes, and a 'new emphasis placed by younger parents on facilities for children'. As such, it seemed to have Bunning's support. He recommended that architects should seek to restructure space within the home away from the 'niceties of adult living' to the privacy of the family unit. Given these pressures, the focus of architectural commentary began to give more emphasis to internal, domestic roles to be encouraged by housing than to external, social values.

It was in the midst of this transition in priorities that Robin Boyd declared, in 1952, that 'Australia 'is the small house'. A 1950 Current Affairs Bulletin, probably also written by Boyd, observed that the focus of an 'awakening interest' in Australian architecture itself centred on private home ownership. Reflecting functionalist sympathies, this essay suggested that the direction of change followed a desire for efficiency which in itself would recast the shape of domestic life. An emphasis on family living space offered an opportunity to replace the chaos of false individuality in suburban development with a harmony of style and an encouragement of integrative activities within the home. In 1952, however, Boyd lamented the 'aesthetic calamity' of an Australian suburbia which had not only carried the basic conception of the small home to the 'blind end of the road', but had further enshrined that image of domestic privacy and of 'unco-operative individualism' - the slogan of 'Bob Freeland and family' - which had been deployed by anti-Labor groupings in the late 1940s. Even the family unit, formed within this architecture, was reacting against the opportunities for integration. The 'master bedroom' had triumphed over 'informality' and the 'amalgamation of space into larger areas' in modern family living. Rather than encouraging an open structure to domestic and social life, Boyd argued that the allotted spaces of the home only reinforced inefficient roles and introverted attitudes. The decentralist ethic, with its precise allocation of individual accountability and of public and private space, was evident also in the organisation of life in the family home.

This post-war redefinition of essentially traditional roles was particularly evident in the conception of

---

185Walter Raston Bunning Born at Brisbane in 1912, Bunning studied at Sydney Technical College and then in England, Scandinavia, Europe and the USA under the NSW Board of Architects Travelling Scholarship from 1937 to 1939. Between 1943 and 1944 he was an Executive Officer with the Commonwealth Housing Commission, and in 1945 Bunning established an architectural and town planning practice in consultation with C.A. Maddern.


187Robin Gerard Penleigh Boyd Born in 1919 in Melbourne, Boyd was educated at Melbourne Technical College and the University of Melbourne, and then served with AIF in New Guinea. From 1947 to 1953 he was the Director of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects' Small Homes Service, and from 1952 was a member of the Victorian Town and Country Planning Association. He also lectured in Australian Architectural History at the University of Melbourne. In 1953 he became a partner of the architectural firm, Grounds, Romberg and Boyd.


189Australian Architecture, CAB, vol.6, no.3, 1950, p.39. The style and themes of this essay reflect Boyd's other published work.

190Australian Architecture, pp.52, 54-5.

women’s place in society and in the home, and in the determination of appropriate forms of citizenship framed by these roles. The ‘permissive consumerism’ and reconstituted suburban ideal of the ‘traditional’ nuclear family was focussed to a very clear image of women’s function and personality by the architecture of the home. At a 1952 exhibition of ‘Australian Homes for the Future’, organised by the RAIA, it was declared that architects must become primarily concerned with ‘the question of domestic work, now that most housewives cannot get help in the house’. It was added that walls should be left bare, recognising that ‘many housewives are interested in interior decorating’ and should give their own personal stamp to the domestic environment. Similar points were made throughout the decade. ‘Thirty years after her retirement’, the *Age* Small Homes Section observed in 1954, ‘the house maid still directs home design’ despite the fact that ‘housewives’ had replaced maids in most homes, and combined the functions of children’s supervision and running of an efficient family home. House design, then, should acknowledge these new roles, coupling them to ‘convenience and comfort’. Here, perhaps, was the other side of functionalism. Once social forms were accepted as ‘given’, the task of the modern architect was to make them as orderly as possible, and to integrate them with equally prescribed avenues of social activity. In 1955 the controversial Sydney architect, Harry Seidler, suggested that the new responsibilities and expectations of the housewife were a central premise of his work:

> The present-day housewife does not want to be shut away from her family while preparing, or simply unfreezing, meals. She wants to be able to partake in conversation with her family and guests, and, above all, she demands an efficient and pleasing work centre.

Domestic architecture should leave women ‘more time for looking after children, for community activities and hobbies’. In these ways, the modern home was itself a school for citizenship, emphasising the social participation of the individual housewife through these domestic roles, and benefiting society through such happy adjustment to her own sphere of civic duty. Seidler’s work, drawing on the theories of Gropius and Le Corbusier, was certainly seen to be ‘extra-ordinarily advanced’ in Australia at the time, and was presented by him as manifesting ‘lasting quality and social consequence’. In retrospect, his views scarcely challenged existing social values.

As a profession, architects were part of the redefinition of priorities in social development from the 1940s to the 1950s. An eagerness to accept a more formal acknowledgement of their expertise in social management during war and reconstruction has already been noted; on the other hand, the post-war period provoked widespread concern that the price of that acknowledgement was a regimentation within public policy which was inconsistent with their creativity. At the first national conference of architects, held in 1950, this problem was directly addressed in terms of the need to distinguish ‘an acceptance of ... an

---


aesthetic approach to physical development' from association with 'any political philosophy'. At the same time, the journal of the RAIA featured a debate between one architect, welcoming 'public architecture' as it reflected 'the change in social structure resulting from the war, and ... the development of a new attitude to social service', and another who insisted that:

Architecture should be regarded as a service available at a price commensurate with its importance ... to such discerning private individuals, communities and governments as will appreciate and demand its rightful employment.

These issues of public or private responsibility were not directly resolved, but contributors to the journal in the course of the decade indicated that a more subtle way had been found to avoid such a professional polarity between public planning and private choice. A concept of 'community interest' emerged in discussion, encouraging architects to consider neighbourhood models in urban planning for the sake of welfare and efficiency; to seek consultation with government to ensure optimum utilisation of skills in case of civil defence; to cast aside strict functionalist theories for the sake of 'ornament ... for the people', while not losing sight of the fact that 'people on the whole are really quite inarticulate' and required the guidance of experts. In these discussions, 'community' could seem to be little more than a level of social engagement at which it was possible to reconcile the creativity of the architect with the private interests of clients without stepping over into any suggestion of social reformism. The shallowness of this sense of 'community' was noted by critics within the profession, such as Boyd, who noted that derivative 'Austerican' styles were suffocating more appropriate local models of design while also selectively excluding the inspiration of 'the great socialist enterprises of the U.S.A.' Milo Dunphy regretted that prosperity encouraged architects to choose those projects which suited their tastes and aspirations without considering wider social needs. Those architects who explicitly discussed the concept of community largely endorsed the theories of those such as Tasman Lovell, which emphasised the need to provide an environment which would assist individuals to appreciate their responsibilities in society. Style was best not left to the mass, who, as Boyd lamented in 1951, added 'free shaped peach mirrors and suchlike' to the functionalist designs of better architects. But nor could the state direct taste at a time when it was critical that citizens had a sense of participation in their society. To meet this impasse there developed an interest in what was called 'public art' to grace significant institutions in society. This form was described by one


203Boyd, 'Victorian Scene', *Architecture*, vol.39, no.3, 1951, p.89. Boyd was discussing the decoration of Frederick Romberg's 'Stanhill' apartments in Melbourne.

of the most sought-after exponents and practitioners in this field, the sculptor, Tom Bass, in these terms:

The role of the sculptor in the community from the most primitive times has been to provide society with the emblems it needs to make it conscious of itself as a society, to keep it reminded of its objectives and make its members aware of their obligations.

Neither left to the individual, nor dictated by the state, 'public art' was reasoned to offer an almost sub-conscious prompt to unquestioned civic duty.

Similar issues can be identified in a wide range of commentary in the 1950s. Quadrant, for example, began in 1957 with an editorial commitment to a discussion of decentralisation as one of the issues raised by 'a thoroughgoing crisis in social relations', and the magazine regularly featured discussions which combined aesthetics, design, citizenship with evaluations of the new patterns of suburban life. Avoiding the chaos of 'individuality' and the 'private fetish', several Quadrant articles of the late 1950s hoped to identify a more 'anonymous' aesthetics for 'the ordinary man'. One writer, for example, advocated a form of suburban decentralisation which might encourage 'a new humanism ... based on spiritual principles, served by rather than dominated by technology and commerce'. Despite its intellectual sophistication, this writing on architecture and design shares three themes with more specifically decentralist commentary. First, community was defined as a unit to be managed for the sake of its own stability rather than as an agent in social change. Second, it was conceived as a formally static if internally unstable unit, reinforcing established roles rather than encouraging any re-assessment of them on the basis of economically or technological change. Third, the individual within this managed community became a citizen observing a generalised conformity rather than an agent with more complex loyalties and objectives emerging from the intermediary interests associated with a time of change.

It was on these foundations that, in the mid-1950s, architectural commentary moved from a focus on roles within the home to an interest in defining the 'quality of life' of the suburban environment. The themes of citizenship and community became less explicit once it seemed that Australian suburban society had stabilised in affluence. While interested in European developments in urban planning, Australian architects were quick to defend the virtues of this local organisation of life. On the one hand, articles celebrated models such as Le Corbusier's l'Unite d'Habitation in Marseilles, a single block of 337 self-contained apartments representing both a social policy of slum clearance and a principle of housing as 'small, efficient units, ... leaving the occupants time to enjoy a better life'. On the other, there was a self-congratulatory sense that the world was impressed 'by the views of private houses each with its own garden...'
and each housing one family'. In 1957 a visiting English architect suggested a move to medium density housing, and was met with a response stressing the 'sociological and historical' value of 'a sea of suburbia':

In an age of growing conformity and official direction and mass thinking, the Australian pattern, so different from that of Britain, Europe and America, has unwittingly enabled a goodly proportion of a population of over nine million people to maintain independence and individuality. This pattern threatened 'architectural anarchy' to Robin Boyd in 1958. He argued that there was no need to fear 'the unifying tendencies' of modern architecture, with its promise of collective 'dignity' in the 'ordinary functions' of life, and of buildings which would 'intensify the experience of our more engaging activities'. Few of his peers agreed with this ethic of public unity: they were more concerned to defend the privacy of the individual and the family unit. The Bulletin in 1951 had found a popular way to express their sentiments. Commenting on a suggestion by the Dean of Architecture at the University of Melbourne that there should be more flats in the inner-city, the paper allowed that 'the Dean may not be a socialist, but what a Socialist ideal - to get all the people in one place and surround them with inspectors'.

The background to the 1950s image of middle class suburbia and private home ownership was one of housing shortages, unserviced allotments, and the inability of state and municipal authorities to institute comprehensive plans for urban development. In 1956 W.H. Spooner, as Minister for National Development, renegotiated the 1945 Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement, diverting a substantial proportion of funds from the building of homes for rent to lending institutions which would then provide finance for private home purchase. Over subsequent years the States carried his emphasis on private ownership further by selling a large proportion of their housing stock. As the Age Small Homes Section commented in 1957, the freedom of the suburbs was more important than 'splitting the cost of a sewerage connection four ways' in schemes of closer settlement. Not only did the new architecture enshrine privacy, the nuclear family, and the domesticity of women, but its aesthetics also eased aside any analysis of the conflicts and inequalities attending social change through an emphasis on citizenship and functionality which invoked its own 'natural order'. In a 1961 survey of Best Australian Homes Neil Clerehan observed that in the new Australian home, not only had a 'new bareness ... been smugly adapted' to 'ease of maintenance', but 'the structure [itself] replaces the suite as the family status

---

211 'Small Houses on Big Mountains', Age, 17 May 1954, p.6.

212 'London Architect Attacks Suburbia', Age, 22 April 1957, p.8


218 Neil Clerehan Born at Melbourne in 1924, Clerehan was educated at the University of Melbourne and the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. He served in New Guinea in 1944, and then worked in New York as a housing consultant to the U.N. Secretariat between 1952 and 1953. From 1954 he was the Director the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects Housing Service while also establishing a private architectural practice.
In this way, the clutter of possessions which had once defined social class was replaced by the classless functional family home, defined by the disciplined individual personality of the ‘home maker’ yet available to only a few.

***

In 1958 the Local Government Association of NSW looked back on ‘a minor social revolution ... in community life’ which had occurred since the end of World War Two: ‘people have come the regard as their right to have provided for them vastly improved amenities’, ranging from sport and health facilities to ‘the means of cultural expression’. The Association regretted that so little had been accomplished in bringing these aspirations to a level at which people in their immediate societies could participate in these services and give them meaning. Across the wide span of its influence in the post-war years, the decentralist ethic had been based partly on such a desire to reclaim a sense of social citizenship from centralised planning. As such, it represented a continuation of that dimension of reformism which recognised the new prominence and aspirations of the individual in society. Yet not only did this ethic confront an entrenched pattern of Australian political development, but it also embodied an essentially conservative desire to contain the demands of the individual within the loyalties of family, privacy and established roles. In defining these roles, decentralist commentators did not acknowledge the reciprocal relationship between the forms of social and economic life and the ‘social revolution’ they sought to accommodate. Decentralist commentary, across its many forms, can be seen in the context of Marshall’s concern that social citizenship might only entrench inequality under local and restricted ‘rights’, particularly when the concept of ‘community’ was so often used to resist both the threats and opportunities presented by social change. To some extent, more comprehensive approaches to national development, and new projects in sociological research which criticised the rhetoric of ‘community’ as a vehicle for specific interests and as increasingly inappropriate to a mobile, diversified society, fundamentally challenged these conservative components of the decentralist ethic in the 1960s. Nonetheless, the influence of these components was evident in many attitudes to reform in a period of social consolidation and adjustment to change.

---


Chapter 5
Images of Self and Society

Previous chapters have indicated the range of intellectual effort devoted to attempts to comprehend and contain those elements of post-war political and economic change which seemed to threaten social order. In these attempts, Australian commentators often worked within established and expanding institutional structures of policy, advice and analysis in international affairs, in economics and in criticism of social development. The conservatism of their analyses was as much a result of the adjustment of those structures to circumstances as the product of ideological initiative or reaction. At the centre of post-war change, however, there was perceived to be a subject which could not not be directly addressed through existing agencies, yet which was most vulnerable to instability. That subject was 'the individual', not so much in social action, but in private conscience. The accumulated effect of twentieth century modernity, culminating in the mobilisation for war from 1939 to 1945, had not only called into question many traditional social structures and assumptions, but had wrought fundamental changes on the concept of 'the individual' itself.

Australian intellectuals were far from alone in this new awareness of the importance of individual subjectivity in social analysis, particularly as it was associated with post-war reconstruction reform. By mid-century, industrialisation, urbanisation, consumerism, social mobility, concepts of psychology, electronic communication and propaganda - all provided a context for the realisation that societies could no longer be efficiently disciplined and reformed from without by the agents of the state and the control of the streets, the home and the workplace. What was increasingly required was a culture of guidance from within the individual. The thesis that 'wars begin in the minds of men', for example, had been internationally acknowledged in the foundation of UNESCO in 1946. The post-war period was one in which greater personal access to knowledge was presented as the panacea for social and international conflict. 'Knowledge without morality', it was argued, had led to totalitarianism, and morality itself could only be restored through respect for the individual - for human 'dignity and rights', and for the capacities of 'reason and conscience'.

At another level of commentary, David Riesman predicted in 1950 in The Lonely Crowd, one of the most influential books of the period in the United States, that the coming decade would constitute 'a stage in historical development' between 'the widely variegated social character types of an ununified world and the even more widely divergent individual character of a unified but less oppressive world'. At the heart of this transition, Riesman identified 'the new "plastic" man', undefined by a continuity of traditional values or by the certainty of future directions, yet integral to the process of change, and individually responsive to its forms. For Australian intellectuals, who were closely tied to concepts of

---

1For a study of these two themes in the functioning of UNESCO, see Clare Wells, The UN, UNESCO and the Politics of Knowledge, London, 1987, esp. ch.3; also Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948.

social management geared more to the state than to private interests, this realisation was especially challenging.

Concepts of 'citizenship', as we have seen, were revitalised after the war to define the place of this individualised agent in political and economic fields. These concepts related, however, mainly to public conduct in the context of 'culture' and 'community'. Social analysis also had to adjust to this new emphasis on subjectivity by defining strategies less in terms of the external influence of class or the state, and more in terms of establishing the conditions of 'self-government'. Gradually, in American and British commentary especially, and then in Australia, these strategies centred on a concept of 'personality' as it defined the latent dispositions to citizenship within the individual, and the functional relationships between self and society. For Australian intellectuals, 'personality' and social psychology in turn provided a new sphere of social engagement and commentary, yet one mediated by more conservative cultural patterns reflecting their own established assumptions and the lack of institutional supports to accommodate the concept of 'the individual'.

The location of this sphere, and the definition of the strategies adopted, were diffuse and sometimes imprecise, partly reflecting the very 'plasticity' of individual subjectivity that Riesman observed. Nor can this commentary be readily associated with major public figures, for part of its significance lies in the extent to which it was incorporated within more discrete areas of 'expertise' emerging in the post-war period. In general terms, this awareness of 'personality' was most significant among intellectuals in the fields of education, of the formation of values in the media and entertainment, and the regulation of personal conduct - of delinquency or of sexuality, for example - as the basis of social stability. While far from exhaustive in coverage, the chapter draws examples from commentary on adult education, film and later television criticism, the broad appeal of social psychology, and the imaginative depiction of social and personal relations in fiction. In each of these areas, attempts were made in the 1950s to construct and express a sense of subjectivity which was based not only on the defining the features of a 'way of life', but also on creating the conditions for the adjustment of 'personality' to 'citizenship' within a 'unified' society. Across this range of reference, it is clear that although post-war reformism was based on a new awareness of individual rights, the terms in which both those 'rights' and the concept of the 'individual' were defined came to owe more to a conservative emphasis on resistance to change, and the evocation of an idealised social conformity.

***

Implicit in the liberal reformism - Rowe's 'secular evangelism' - of the first decades of this century, was a commitment to encouraging a perception of collective interests in society which might replace the conflicts of class. The subjectivity of the individual was largely subsumed within loyalty to a group, and comprehended in evolutionary terms. Social reformism was couched as an educational process, providing the means for the realisation of the rational basis of a 'social consensus'. In this process, groups were to be guided by the ministrations of organisations such as the Workers' Education Association, which combined both a pedagogical and sociological function. Yet the domestic conflicts of the First World War, and more significantly, the political pressures of the Great Depression, prompted some qualification of this trust in rational social evolution. The barriers of class seemed to become more rigid, and the interests defining those loyalties to become more fundamentally antagonistic. As Rowe argues, by the outbreak of the

---

3For a study of this transition, see Peter Miller and Nikolas Rose, 'Governing Economic Life', Economy and Society, vol.19, no.1, 1990, p.28.
Second World War, the assumption of an emergent rationalism was being replaced in social analysis by ‘a concept of managed irrationality’. Previous chapters have suggested that the transition did not stop there. The demands of the Second World War - a total war of civilian mobilisation, of morale rather than of loyalty - required that such irrationality be precisely calibrated if not overcome for the sake of optimum efficiency. It was to be managed at the level of the individual rather than of class. In Chapters Three and Four it was noted that the inter-war concept of an evolutionary social totality became instead a ‘community’ of participants, consolidated by private assent to the bonds of social life. This emphasis placed a new stress on the ‘adjustment’ of the individual as a ‘citizen’, and on the origins of that adjustment not only in public allegiance but also in personality.

Perhaps the clearest example of such a transition in social analysis is provided by the operation of the Australian Army Education Service (AAES), established in 1941 to serve a series of objectives based on the maintenance of morale and the preparation for post-war reconstruction. In meeting the particular demands of war, the AAES applied some of the educational ideals of the inter-war years on an unprecedented scale. It also united new strategies and expertise which would continue in influence well into the 1950s. For those with experience of adult education in the inter-war years, the AAES offered the first opportunity, with ‘a reasonable budget and reasonable staff’, to achieve something of their earlier aspirations. Employing up to 500 officers by the end of the war, the AAES was not created by the Army itself, but imposed upon it by the Directorate of Research and Civil Affairs in Canberra. Its officers, dispersed throughout the force but inevitably more active in larger camps, were to offer an education ‘for victory’, ‘welfare’ and ‘citizenship’. Not only were they to ‘boldly attack ... the causes of moral weakness and disaffection among the men’, but their objective was to prepare soldiers to return to the community ‘as good and useful citizens’. Vocational training was central to these goals, but so was

fostering and broadening the troops’ sense of social responsibility, keeping them in touch with their civic interests, and encouraging them to think intelligently about the problems of reconstruction which will face the community. ‘Citizenship’, then, was defined not only through participation but also through attitude and personality.

That the AAES attempted to reach beyond ‘training’ to the more subjective bases of social conduct was demonstrated by the inclusion of aesthetic education among its programmes. Together with lectures, discussion groups, and sessions developing manual skills in art and craft work, there was an emphasis on literary and music appreciation. Here, the aim was both ‘entertainment’ and a commitment ‘to raise and extend the troops’ cultural interests’, giving them higher standards of taste and making them ‘more receptive to new ideas’. Assisted by whatever technical aids were available, from film to talks and the

---

4Rowse, *Australian Liberalism and National Character*, p.23. This summary is based heavily on Rowse’s arguments in the first three chapters of this book. In his analysis of C.H. Northcott’s ‘theory of consensus’, Rowse provides a succinct formulation of a widely prevailing understanding of individual subjectivity at that time - pp.50-1.


6See Fred Alexander, *Adult Education in Australia*, Pasadena, 1953, p.10


distribution of the Service’s *Current Affairs Bulletin*, the AAES officer was to attempt to instill in soldiers a critical awareness of ‘what they’re fighting for’.\(^{10}\) This meant convincing them that:

> The Germans swept through Europe, and the Japanese through Asia, not only because of the efficiency of their tanks and planes, but because of the fanatical belief of their peoples that they had a mission to conquer the world.\(^{11}\)

Some equivalent if less extreme commitment to the concepts of ‘nation’ and ‘democracy’ would be necessary to the Australian soldiers’ own task of defending and rebuilding their own society. Yet the cultivation of a sense of personal independence was also seen to be a crucial objective:

> It was noticed in Europe at the end of the last war that many of the demobilised soldiers were spiritually lost. ... That frame of mind contributed to the breakdown of democracy in European countries.\(^{12}\)

That ‘frame of mind’, then, was to become the basis of reformist strategies, not in terms of the imposition of an ‘social character type’ (to use Riesman’s terms), but in facilitating the expression of ‘individual character’.

If troops offered almost laboratory conditions for exercises in social conditioning, the AAES officer had also to be adept at balancing a commitment to independent thought with collective goals - a balance not always easily maintained. Drawing on some of the more politicised members of the inter-war generation,\(^{13}\) the very form of the AAES provided opportunities for the articulation of views of dissent. Its weekly newspaper, *SALT*, encouraged discussion among soldiers, inviting contributions and correspondence as an open forum of debate. As with similar programmes in Britain, this concept of ‘participatory citizenship’ existed in the ironic context of military discipline, yet was spurred by reconstruction ideals for a better world.\(^{14}\) Defined partly by the need to mould the individual for return to post-war society, this context also encouraged comment on the reshaping of society itself in sentiments which could be disturbing to authorities.\(^{15}\) To some extent, mobilisation could contain such critical attitudes, for wartime efficiency required that soldiers be invested with a more precise individual competency in both skills and commitment. The soldier, after all, was a unit in a disciplined context separate from society and with its own specific operational objectives. Again, Australian practice drew on British models in these fields. In Britain, treatments initially developed in military hospitals influenced a range of ‘social therapies’, based on psychosomatic theories, and on medical ‘interpretation’ rather than ‘direction’. These theories were geared towards the management of the individual ‘from a pathology conceived of as social maladjustment to a normality construed in terms of functional efficiency’.\(^{16}\) The efficiency of wartime, however, was to be sustained in temporary, ‘artificial’ conditions. In the transition to civilian life, to regular work and ‘citizenship’, the calculation of individual normality had to answer to more diverse notions of what it meant to be efficient in society. Just as Chapter Three noted the individualising strategies developed in industrial

\(^{10}\) *Handbook*, p.18.

\(^{11}\) *Handbook*, p.18.

\(^{12}\) *Handbook*, p.20.

\(^{13}\) For an autobiographical account of his period with the AAES, see Ian Turner, ‘My Long March’, reprinted in Turner, *Room For Manoeuvre*, Melbourne, 1982, pp.116-20. ‘Army education was an obvious point of communist concentration, and comrades all round the army tried to transfer in’: p.117.


\(^{15}\) See for example MacCallum, *Plankton’s Luck*, esp. pp.144-5; 150-2.

psychology to deal with the worker's bargaining strength in times of full employment, so, in the more diffuse area of social management, the demobilised individual was seen to require new strategies.

Added to an emphasis in the AAES on maintaining the allegiance of the individual soldier, was the realisation, itself prompted by mobilisation, that there was a widespread lack among the Australian population of what seemed to be 'fundamental' and 'simplest' attributes of general knowledge, literacy and comprehension. Soldiers might be 'highly intelligent', so R.B. Madgwick, the Director of the AAES, observed, but their distance from the 'ordinary techniques' of education meant that they required the demonstration methods of kindergarten teaching rather than a continuation of the university models of instruction which had been assumed to be appropriate in the education of adults before the war. The troops also required a more comprehensive, 'Commonwealth-wide' provision of services if new methods were to have anything more than piecemeal effect. Towards the end of the war many educators hoped that the AAES would be continued on an equivalent scale, but in a form more appropriate to civilian society. Anticipating this form, Madgwick argued in 1944 that a lower standard of teaching must be adopted to meet the abilities of students, premised not on the general topicality of issues, but on an immediately accessible approach 'adapted to their own experience, problems and aptitudes' and based on 'learning to shoulder civic responsibilities'. The AAES, then, not only indicated a need to appeal more directly to the individual in the achievement of post-war stability, but also signalled that such an appeal would need to be tailored to a sense of the subjectivity of that individual, and premised on the lack of any more extensive or effective social integration.

At the end of the war, the AAES was praised in many quarters for its role in maintaining morale and fostering intellectual activity among troops. This success prompted serious consideration of the importance of adult education in the general context of reconstruction, both among the public and at State and Commonwealth governmental levels. The nature of such post-war provision, however, became a matter of considerable debate in the mid to late 1940s, caught in the general struggle over questions of whether priority should be given to voluntary and local responsibility for such services, or whether they should be the subject of centralised control. Each State initiated some form of inquiry into the issue. In NSW, the majority report of an advisory board appointed in 1944 favoured the public support of voluntary or local government organisations. The minority report favoured centralised control. In 1947 the Tasmanian government withdrew its funding from the WEA, vesting all responsibility for adult education with the State Department of Education. Such recommendations inevitably had an effect on the perceived

---

17Madgwick, 'Adult Education as a Commonwealth Movement', pp.24-7.
18See for example C.E.W. Bean, War Aims of a Plain Australian, Sydney, 1943, p.114.
19Madgwick, 'Adult Education', p.31. Outlining the 'main pre-occupations and driving forces of the average man or women', Madgwick suggested a curriculum to meet the individual demands of: '(i) Getting a Living, (ii) Finding ways of using "leisure" which will be satisfactory to the adult, (iii) Making a home and rearing children, (iv) The wider field of personal and social relationships in which can be grouped all the problems of learning adult ways of behaviour in an adult society': p.29.

20See for example the assessments quoted in Andrew Spaull, Australian Education in the Second World War, St Lucia, 1982, pp.252-3.
21D.M. Waddington, W.C. Radford, J.A. Keats, Review of Education in Australia 1940-1948, Melbourne, 1950, pp.167-70. In Queensland, a board established in 1944, comprising academic, government, employer and employee representatives, was committed to the regional provision of 'classes, recitals and displays'; South Australia and Western Australia, relying on university and WEA facilities in the capital cities, were more restricted in their services. See Waddington, Radford, Keats, Review, pp.170-3.
functions of adult education, if not on curricula then on the definition of the relationship between that service and social reform. In turn, these emphases registered changing priorities in the provision of non-vocational education in areas seen to be of interest to individuals in post-war society, and, just as importantly, appropriate for them. At the Commonwealth level, preference was given to the funding of university training schemes for returned soldiers, while proposals favouring a national adult education system, together with the establishment of boards responsible for the arts and film, failed to secure formal action.22 As the resources and skills accumulated in the AAES dispersed, and the State governments took up adult education with little money and no unified guidelines,23 the awareness of individual subjectivity which developed in wartime shifted from a context of reformism to less co-ordinated structures which were based on the preservation of social stability.

Such a new emphasis on adult education achieved its most substantial recognition in the establishment, in Victoria in 1946, of the Council of Adult Education (CAE). A statutory body, the CAE was constituted outside the spheres of direct university or bureaucratic influence. Its members represented a broad range of educational and sectional interests.24 C.R. Badger25 was appointed the first Director of the CAE, and as early as 1944 Badger had defined the role of adult education in terms of providing 'an opportunity for civilised living' to 'the masses'. 'Economic advance', he argued, 'is already providing the possibility of greater leisure and of greater income' for the majority. What was needed was access and inducements to appropriate forms of recreation: forms which would, as Badger put it, encourage 'self-training' for the duties of 'citizenship'.26

Given post-war affluence, it seemed that the imperative to social reformism was passing, and the CAE represented this transition in both its institutional as well as its cultural realignments. Badger was as keen to preserve the Council from political direction as he was to distance it from his own experience of the failure

---


23For assessments of the post-war situation, see Fred Alexander, *Adult Education*, p.14; Derek Whitelock, 'A Brief History of Adult Education in Australia and an Outline of Current Provision' in Whitelock (ed.), *Adult Education in Australia*, Sydney, 1970, pp.16-27.

24The annual grant was £25,000, which could be supplemented by levies at the Council's discretion. The official members of the CAE, appointed by the Governor-in-Council, consisted of a Director, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Melbourne, the Manager of the ABC, the Director of Education, and the representatives of the Trades Hall Council, Chamber of Manufacturers, Free Library Service Board, National Film Board, National Gallery, National Museum, Victorian Teachers' Union and the Workers' Education Association - Waddington, Radford and Keats, p.169. See also C.R. Badger, 'A New Deal in Adult Education in Victoria', *Australian Quarterly*, vol.19, no.1, 1947, pp.73-7; Badger, rev. of *A Vision Splendid*, pp.156-7; Badger, 'The Making of Chairman Frank', *Australian Journal of Adult Education*, vol.14, no.3, 1974, pp.99-104.

25Colin Robert BADGER Born at Peterborough, South Australia, and educated at the University of Adelaide and at London University, Badger returned to Adelaide in 1933 as a Tutor and Extension Lecturer. In 1936 he moved to the University of Western Australia as a Readers' Counsellor, and in 1939 Badger was appointed the Director of University Extension at the University of Melbourne. He held that post until 1947, when he was appointed the Director of Adult Education in Victoria.

26Badger, *Adult Education in Post-War Australia* (ACER pamphlet), Melbourne, 1944, pp.16, 6.
of extension teaching under the academic auspices of the University of Melbourne. While it inherited much from the AAES, the CAE dealt not with a mobilised soldier, but with civilians upon whom post-war prosperity was bestowing more time for themselves, and more political and economic influence. If Mauldon’s ‘consumer’ eluded the established patterns of economic policy, then at least the recreation of the citizen in prosperity provided new opportunities for social management which were not dependent on centralised authority. According to the 1952-53 Annual Report of the CAE, ‘adult education cannot be imposed from above ... its greatest value lies in creating opportunities for co-operative social action’ which would in turn dictate the ‘need for new knowledge and new techniques’. Personal aspirations, individual skills, and the adjustment of private values to the voluntary community: these were the elements of a service concentrated in an area which, as Badger suggested in 1951, ‘is rather unhappily called “cultural entertainment”’. While limited resources explained something of this emphasis, it was also clear, as Fred Alexander, a prominent inter-war advocate of such provision, observed in 1953, that ‘relatively little prominence [was being given] ... to controversial political, social and economic issues with which the Australian citizen should be actively concerned’.

The activities of the CAE, in both metropolitan and country areas, included the provision of classes in subjects ranging from gymnastics to logic, the encouragement of discussion groupings, and the organisation of exhibitions, performances and documentary film screenings. Its ostensible model was the British Arts Council, which emphasised the subsidisation of professional companies and exhibitions to tour the country and so increase access to the arts outside major centres. While the CAE also sponsored touring theatre companies, its services seemed to give priority to personal adjustment over access, encouraging ‘a sense of responsibility for self-discipline’. This emphasis, in fact, characterised an expanding network of cultural and educational provision in post-war Australia. In seeking to identify a role for the individual amid sudden and widespread change, many commentators in the area of ‘civic’ education gave priority to subjective stability over more active social participation.

One venture, closely associated with the CAE, and also using the model of discussion forums developed by the AAES, was the Quest series of booklets introduced in 1947 by Cheshire publishers. The influence of this series is impossible to assess, but it does indicate another area of initiative in post-war commentary. Covering topics from the influence of advertising, the position of women in post-war society, to the techniques of philosophical reasoning, the series adopted the maxim: ‘A little more knowledge, a wider perception of things that are happening around us, a tolerance of things that comes with understanding’.

---


29 Badger, ‘Adult Education in Victoria’, *Australian Quarterly*, vol.23, no.3, p.32. For a more general survey, see Fred Alexander, *Adult Education in Australia*, Melbourne, 1959, pp.11-13. ‘Community arts services ... should be means to ends and not ends in themselves’: pp.34-5.


32 Badger, *Adult Education in Post-War Australia*, p.6.
Guiding readers 'carefully through the maze of social and cultural subjects'\textsuperscript{33} that suddenly confronted them, these booklets evoked a sense of innate individual character and of immutable values to be preserved amid change. 'Tolerance' rather than active engagement set their tone. An essay on the role of the media in forming opinion, for example, directed its readers to questions which would assist them to identify their personal convictions:

Have you ever tried to estimate the part the training you had at school has had on your mental development? How often, when you express an opinion, do you take time off to wonder whether it is your own or merely a restatement of something you read in a paper or heard on the radio?\textsuperscript{34}

It was, so it seemed, possible, possible, and certainly desirable, to shake off these extraneous influences, and discover the basis of personality, and of responsible citizenship, in the extension of native values and gifts - the talent of women for housework being given as one instance.\textsuperscript{35} At one level, this was perhaps a popular version of the Protestant doctrine of the individual moral state, and of justification by faith.\textsuperscript{36} At another, it was the stern accompaniment to the CAE's insistence on the community basis of its services: here was an implicit injunction against any reformism which sought to define a common good through comprehensive planning, the manipulation of values, or intervention in the name of social equality. Here also, the individual was defined as ideally resistant to, rather than enabled by, the expanding influence of the media and social mobility.

It was not that such commentary was a reaction against a reconstruction interest in social welfare provision: the CAE's programmes, and Quest booklets on topics such as the importance of community libraries,\textsuperscript{37} contributed to the formulation of an expanding range of post-war services and amenities. The conceptual basis of these programmes, however, was less committed to universal entitlement or to social rights than to assisting a local consensus, supported by voluntarism. Individuals should be encouraged to make the most of new opportunities for citizenship, but not, as Menzies had put it, to remove themselves from the list of contributors to the list of beneficiaries.\textsuperscript{38} In these circumstances, Australian intellectuals were left with a particularly limited frame of reference, given their own disposition to concepts of a social holism predicated on national developmentalism. Seeking some form of engagement with post-war society, they had few points of contact with the emerging focus on individual adjustment.\textsuperscript{39} As the CAE and Quest series indicated, one of the major issues they faced related to new or more pervasive forms of entertainment and instruction: radio and advertising, for example, seemed to be interposed between the individual and

\textsuperscript{33} An Introduction to the series incorporating these phrases, and listing available and projected titles, was printed inside the cover of each volume.


\textsuperscript{35} Wilcher, \textit{Education}, p.15.

\textsuperscript{36} For a succinct outline of this doctrine, see Christoper Hill, ‘Protestantism and Capitalism’ in F.J. Fisher (ed.), \textit{Essays in the Economic and Social History of Tudor and Stuart England, In Honour of R.H. Tawney}, Cambridge, 1961, pp.16-25. For an example of the adoption of such an ethic, see the Quest edition on \textit{Advertising}, written by R.C. Luckie and Harry Harte. Luckie suggested a distinction in these terms: 'To announce publically, especially by printed notice in a newspaper or elsewhere, is to advertise in a good sense. But to put oneself forward, to urge one's claim to recognition, is to advertise in a bad sense': p.7.


\textsuperscript{38} See Menzies, \textit{The Forgotten People}, p.6.

\textsuperscript{39} For one discussion of these themes, see N.C. Carroll, 'The Decline of the Individual', \textit{Australian Quarterly}, vol.21, no.1, 1949, pp.90-6; Alec Doyle, 'The Importance of the Individual', vol.21, no.3, 1949, pp.95-9.
society to a much greater extent than before the war. Documentary film, touring exhibitions and so on - these forms provided a way to draw forth civic participation, but could their instructive potential be guaranteed? Without abandoning a commitment to welfare and social reform through these media, commentators also began to seek a more specific purchase on the concept of the individual as a vulnerable point in the maintenance of order and security. This attempt in turn effected the priorities identified in welfare, emphasising ‘citizenship’ as adjustment rather than entitlement.

As another among many post-war attempts to address these problems of post-war intellectual engagement, in 1946 the ABC launched the journal, *Talk*. For its editor, *Talk* was to serve the needs of a population which had become more ‘sophisticated’ during war, when the ‘discipline of the front-line fighter was imposed also on the citizen’. Now keen to shake off a residual ‘restriction-mindedness’, Australians were seen to be ‘confident’ in their ‘destiny’, and prepared to engage with questions appropriate to the thinking of a ‘free people’. Publishing each month ‘a great deal of the excellent material’ being broadcast by many of Australia’s ‘distinguished men and women’, the journal was introduced by the Commission’s Chairman, Richard Boyer, as especially necessary at a time when radio ‘entered the field of discussion of controversial topics, of political, social and ethical debate’. Explicitly, then, *Talk* was to serve a section of society identified as expanding in number and keen to make up its own mind. Implicitly, *Talk* was to provide some assurance that this new citizenry would deal responsibly with an unprecedented exposure to the pace of social change. Boyer referred to a conference on ‘Radio in Education’, held in Canberra earlier in the year, at which concern was expressed at broadcasting’s inherent tendency to propaganda, with its easy appeal of the spoken word to an undifferentiated mass. One rationale for *Talk*, emphasised by Boyer, was to check this potential by encouraging the careful consideration of the written word in the privacy of individual judgement.

The background to *Talk* was the broadly educational mission the ABC had identified for its services since its foundation in 1932. Yet if ‘self-improvement’ and the provision of cultural ‘uplift’ had been the themes characterising the Commission’s first decade of operations, *Talk* was more concerned with defining the necessary conditions of citizenship than assisting aspirations to high culture. Boyer was anxious to insist that

the public use of electronic means of communication is a two-edged sword, capable at one time of enslaving a people or of clearing a way to a more vigorous and self-respecting democracy.

As indicated in his support of decentralisation, Boyer hoped to save the individual from the tyranny of

---

43 This emphasis is often seen to reflect the views and personality of the ABC’s Chairman from 1934 to 1945, William Cleary, a Sydney corporate manager and then public service commissioner of considerable self-cultivated intellectual tastes. See Alan Thomas, *Broadcast and Be Damned: The ABC’s First Two Decades*, Melbourne, 1980, ch.3; K.S. Inglis, *The Is The ABC*, pp.39-43; Alan Thomas, ‘Cleary, William James’, *ADB*, vol.8, Melbourne, 1981, pp.21-2.
44 This distinction was suggested by D.L. LeMahieu, *A Culture For Democracy: Mass Communication and the Cultivated Mind in Britain Between the Wars*, Oxford, 1988, p.147.
45 Boyer, ‘A Political Experiment Comes of Age’ (an address to mark the ABC’s 20th anniversary), typescript dated 22 January 1953, Boyer Papers, NLA Ms 3181, Box 4, p.1.; for an outline of Boyer’s commitments as Chairman, see Inglis, pp.133-6.
technology and of the mass by returning to the authority of 'teacher, preacher and parent'. It was in this context that Talk appeared, at the same time as the Commission acquired extended facilities and responsibilities, including an independent news service, the broadcasting of federal parliament, and the introduction of two distinct programme offerings, attempting to extend access to informed citizenship while also recognising gaps in cultural interests and taste. The journal was to balance the expanding forums of public discussion by investing the subject of that discussion - the individual listener - with a kind of private conscience necessary to social responsibility and to meeting the uncertainty of the future.

Modelled on the BBC's Listener, Talk followed of the attempt in broadcasting, developing in Britain in the 1930s, to make services more responsive to a diversity of popular and regional opinion. Radio talks especially were seen to assist social integration through the development of new styles of presentation premised on the need not simply to inform by way of formal lecture, but to encourage a sense of audience identification and participation through programmes of debate, interview, and informal discussion. In Australia, institutional and political barriers greatly restricted the application of these models. Previous ABC initiatives in print, such as the launching of the ABC Weekly in 1939, the same year as the Listener, met with a lack of public support, the obstruction of press agencies, and suspicion by the Federal government of any move by the Commission to expand its range of comment and potential influence. During World War Two, the ABC was accorded a crucial role in the dispersal of information, yet even then, any extension of the Commission's range of programming was fought for in the context of internal and external debates over the role of public broadcasting. Wartime ideals of 'inspirational' broadcasting were coupled to a closely policed reporting of the successes of Australians in combat: critical appraisals of the course of hostilities was strictly discouraged. By 1946, Talk seemed to indicate the legacy if not the persistence of such a heavy hand in the control of broadcasting, and also in the conception of an audience needing management rather than challenge. While the Listener published open debates on issues of controversy, Talk relied on the personal essay, offered by respected public figures or 'experts' on matters which rarely extended beyond personal adjustment to social and moral change.

Covering topics from child psychology to atomic energy, space travel to adultery, Talk was clearly committed to serving 'serious' discussion. Early articles lent support to campaigns for decentralisation,

46Boyer, 'Individual Judgement in an Age of Mass Information', Canberra University Gazette, vol.1, no.6, 1953, p.3.

47See Inglis, This Is The ABC, ch.4.


49For background to the publication of the ABC Weekly, see Frank Dixon, Inside the ABC: A Piece of Australian History, Melbourne, 1975, pp.40-1; K.S. Inglis, This is the ABC, pp.92-3.

50One major battle was conducted over the establishment of a news service independent of the private press. Dixon's memoir, Inside the ABC, is the best guide to this debate, although it is partial. See also Inglis, This Is The ABC, ch.3.

51See John Hilvert, Blue Pencil Warriors: Censorship and Propaganda During World War II, St Lucia, 1984; Thomas, Broadcast And Be Damned, chs.4, 7.

52For an example of the character of political debate printed in the Listener, see the discussion of the nationalisation of health, 'The State and the Doctor' vol.35, no.889, 1946, pp.110-14.
encouraging readers to ‘play your part as an adult and a citizen in the affairs of your neighbourhood’. Primary emphasis, however, was placed on marshalling the resources of individual personality to meet the challenges of modernity. In a series of articles devoted to the reconciliation of one of the Ten Commandments to contemporary social values, the prevailing counsel was introspection and the development of ‘a dynamic power for this increasingly difficult problem of self-mastery’. A survey of the traumas associated with modern society, and the employment of concepts of neurosis, were coupled to an injunction to preserve the ‘sacredness of the human personality’ by the practice of personal restraint. The weight of this appeal to introspective discipline was reinforced by another regular column in which eminent figures - Sir Isaac Isaacs, Eris O’Brien, Professors K.H. Bailey and A. Boyce Gibson among them - responded to the theme ‘Life Means This To Me’, drawing out their personal philosophies and values. Public commitments were canvassed in these features - Frederic Eggleston proclaiming ‘my life is wholly social’ - but personal adjustment far outweighed social change as the recommended objective. Whereas the contemporary Listener featured many articles dealing with the condition of religious faith in a world ‘dehumanised’ by war and totalitarianism, calling for a creative assertion of ‘the individual person’ and ‘man’s spiritual essence’, Talk’s religious commentators spoke in terms of ‘a deep and satisfying peace and joy quite unknown to the self-indulgent’. A new prominence for the individual was central in both areas of commentary. British writers saw the expression of a sense of self as the imperative in the recovery of morality; Talk’s contributors thought more in terms of personal restraint.

Again, the civilian impact of war and of mobilisation was never far from these considerations. Older collective loyalties were seen to have been fundamentally shaken during wartime, and new loyalties, based more in personal assent than in social engagement, had to be cultivated. In this context, while it survived

55Isaas Alfred ISAACS Born in 1855, Isaacs would have been known best to Australians in 1946 as the first Australian-born Governor-General, holding that office from 1930 to 1936. After resigning that position, Isaacs became an active public speaker and a writer of pamphlets on questions of constitutional reform, the extension of the powers of the federal government, and on religious doctrine. He died in 1948. Eris O’BRIEN Born in 1895 at Condobolin, NSW, O’Brien was educated at the Universities of Sydney, Ireland and Louvain. He was ordained a Priest in 1918, and was a Fellow of St Sophia College and St John’s College at the University of Sydney from 1930 to 1934, and a Lecturer in Modern History at Sydney in 1947. O’Brien published several works on the history of Australian Catholicism, and in 1953 was ordained the Archbishop of Canberra-Goulburn. Kenneth Hamilton BAILEY Born at Canterbury, Victoria, in 1898, Bailey was educated at the University of Melbourne and at Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar. In 1924 he beca a Vice-Master of Queen’s College, Melbourne, and in 1928 was appointed Professor of Jurisprudence, and in 1931 Professor of Public Law at Melbourne. Bailey was the Australian delegate to the League of Nations in 1937, and in 1946 became Commonwealth Solicitor-General. Alexander Boyce GIBSON Born in 1900 at London, Gibson was educated at Oxford and was appointed a lecturer in Philosophy at Glasgow in 1923, returned to Oxford as a tutor in the Extra-Mural Department in 1925. After a period lecturing at the University of Birmingham from 1927 to 1935, Gibson succeeded his father to the Chair of Philosophy at Melbourne.
58Carrington, ‘Thou Shalt Not Commit Adultery’, p.82.
only a little over a year. Talk was representative of an attempt among commentators to devise new forms of social allegiance. The demise of the journal did not necessarily indicate its historical irrelevance, for Talk's limitations reflected a transitional stage in social commentary from generalist ethical precepts of public authority to the deployment of more specific strategies of engineering 'self-government'. Effective socialisation for this dislocated citizenry required very specific interventions. Even changes in language were seen to strain an ability to comprehend the significance of events which might seem remote, but were crucial to new threats and responsibilities. Each early issue of Talk, for example, included a test encouraging readers to assess their knowledge of terms which had 'evolved in the English language in the past few years [through] the needs of war, science, industrial and domestic requirements and entertainment'. Clues were provided for answers ranging from 'montage' in film to 'nylon' in clothing, 'soap opera' in entertainment, 'octane' in motorizing, to political terms such as 'ideology', 'liquidate', 'chetnik' and 'stakhanovite'. If this was a game for the erudite, it was nonetheless based on the imperative of securing the participation of the individual within the emerging concept of a common 'culture'. Such a need was made even greater by the observations of other essayists that the shared culture of post-war Australia was being undermined by the manipulation of passive audiences at the 'picture palace', by the excessive sentimentality of 'mass emotions' evident in sporting crowds and in the 'customs' adopted in marriage and mourning, and by a tendency to 'parasitism' on welfare assistance and indulgence in child-rearing. In each case, it seemed that popular tastes were exerting an unprecedented influence over basic social and personal modes of conduct, corrupting individual subjectivity at a time when that alone seemed to provide the basis for social cohesion.

These opinions, however extreme, appear to have passed for informed commentary at that time. Similar themes were expressed throughout the following decade, although increasingly in the moderate tones of 'experts' on matters of censorship, cultural values, and psychological counselling. The effect of Talk was to make views on matters of conduct, belief and taste conspicuous before they were diffused into the more formal and discrete strategies of the 1950s. By the late 1940s, the ABC was already handing the training for citizenship over to 'Listening Groups' assembled from among 'family, friends and business associates',

59 See Inglis, This Is The ABC, p.182; John Thompson, 'Broadcasting and Australian Literature' in Clement Semmler and Derek Whitelock (eds.), Literary Australia, Melbourne, 1966, p.90.

My suggestion here is similar to Hugo Wolfsohn's argument in his analysis of the failure of 'The Call to the Nation', a much publicised statement signed by senior members of the clergy and the judiciary, advising on the need for 'each Australian to examine his conscience' for signs of 'moral and intellectual apathy', to produce any enduring effect. Wolfsohn suggests that by that time the public acceptability of the 'universalistic claims' of 'ideology-makers' had passed in favour of a more diffuse range of 'competing elites'. See Wolfsohn, 'The Ideology Makers'. The text of 'The Call' is reproduced in F.K. Crowley (ed.), Modern Australia in Documents, vol.2, Melbourne, 1973, pp.201-3.

61 See for example 'New Vocabulary Test', Talk, vol.1, no.1, p.83.


Whatever emotional reaction the beholder generates must be bottled up ... until ... it is relieved by the chance to guffaw at some piece of buffoonery that heralds the inevitable "happy ending" - 'Report to the Nation', Talk, vol.1, no.2, p.7.


65 Dr W.A. Dibden, 'War Neurosis: Should It Be Pensioned or Cured?', Talk, vol.1, no.1, p.17; M.F. Vlach, 'Understanding Children', vol.1, no.1, p.60.
who would discuss programmes with the assistance of 'scripts, background notes and bibliographies', and guided by their own judgements and shared conscience. Many of the models for such commentary, as already noted, were first developed in Britain to meet the needs of a society already troubled by social division and then profoundly affected by war. Australian society, however, was largely untouched by the physical destruction of World War Two, and lacked an equivalently comprehensive sense of a cultural and material context for reconstruction. Welfarist themes of social analysis were transplanted to Australia by intellectuals keen to assume the roles associated with reform, but this was often a heavy-handed process, lacking the formative circumstances of dislocation and necessity. Such application tended to become prescriptive, and to anticipate instability rather than redress need. Similarly, Riesman's concept of the 'plastic man' was developed in America around a sense of the interplay of 'technology and organisation', 'peer group and school', in shaping the opportunities for the expression of self. For their part, Australian commentators seemed reluctant to venture beyond home and neighbourhood, and returned to the necessity for stability not only in society, but in basic subjective values. Writing for *Talk* in 1946, Eric Ashby, Professor of Botany at the University of Sydney and a frequent advocate of educational reform, called for a more comprehensive acknowledgement of Australian 'high-brow's', whether musicians or scientists. Yet Ashby was careful to to exclude from this recognition 'the pansy sort who have none of the Australian vigour ... about them'. Time and again in Australia, the subjective personality, itself largely formalised as a concept during the war, was incorporated in the residual strands of analysis still contrasting national development to the demands of the mass society. While Australian intellectuals were aware of the magnitude of social change, they were increasingly pre-occupied by the need for stability more than by the opportunities for sustained reform.

***

Studies of conservatism in the 1950s often interpret its intellectual manifestations in terms of the adoption of 'metaphysical' themes in commentary. Concepts of ethical principle, of the 'end of ideology', and of the homogeneity of a 'way of life', it is argued, were deployed in such a way as to exclude reference to specific

---

66For an indication of the character of these groups, see the advertisement for a series of broadcasts, 'What of the Future?', intended to serve them: *ABC Weekly*, 3 June 1950, p.18. The topics to be covered in the series were revealing in their emphases: 'Psychology as the Foundation of the Social Sciences', 'Can Psychology Help Us?'; 'Building the New Australia'; 'Ourselves and the Peoples of South East Asia'; 'A New Approach to International Understanding'; 'Some Brave New Worlds'; '2000 A.D.'?

67For a brief assessment of the impact of physical destruction on the comprehension of social priorities in Britain, see Alan Sinfield, *Literature, Politics and Culture in Post-war Britain*, Oxford, 1989, ch.2. In the early 1950s, the *ABC Weekly*, assuming something of *Talk's* role in publishing broadcast programmes, featured several articles following the progress of Britain's recovery from war, also making the point that the pace of recovery was hastened by a sense of 'civic pride' and 'tolerance' lacking in Australia. See for example Mungo MacCallum, 'How Green Is My Country', 7 January 1950, pp.22-3; Catherine King, 'England Today - The Myth and the Reality', 29 April 1950, p.23.

68Eric ASHBY Born in 1904 at Bromley, Kent, Ashby was educated at the Universities of London and Chicago, and from 1931 to 1935 lectured in Botany at the Imperial College of Science. From there he went to a Readership at the University of Bristol, and in 1938 was appointed Professor of Botany at the University of Sydney. From 1942 to 1943 he was Director of the Scientific Liaison Bureau, and an active member of the ANRC. In 1945 he served as a Counsellor at the Australian Legation in Moscow, returning to Australia in 1946, and then leaving for appointments at Manchester and Queen's Universities.

69Ashby, 'Give the Highbrow a Fair Deal', *Talk*, vol.1, no.1, 1946, p.37; Ashby, 'Universities Fighting to Retain High Degree Standards', vol.1, no.2, 1946, p.79.
political and social issues.\textsuperscript{70} As the examples of the AAES, the CAE and \textit{Talk} suggest, however, the definition of these concepts of general consensus in the 'fifties, and the priority given to more abstract areas of analysis - 'the moral, the psychological, the introspective, the intellectual, the reflective, the contemplative'\textsuperscript{71} - often built on very specific interventions in the areas of personality and individual adjustment. Such abstractions were not the product of intellectual disengagement, or of the conservatism of mere reaction or retreat from political commitment. They were premised on distinct forms of political engagement, and a calculation of morale and welfare, which were integral to reconstruction reformism. It is also clear that, having identified more individualised criteria as the basis for the quality of life under the 'new order', that same individual came to constitute the most valuable point from which to resist the excesses of planning and of manipulation in the 1950s.

Partly, this post-war sense of subjective vulnerability was associated with the extent to which the individual life rather than the evolving social unity came to provide the focus for social management. Transitions in social development which had been conceived in terms of groups or class in the 1920s and 1930s, were increasingly plotted in terms of personal maturation in the 1940s and 'fifties. In terms of reform, this new emphasis was based on a perception that all areas of an individual's life, not only work but also the domestic, recreational and even sexual spheres, had to be included in any assessment of well-being. One particular manifestation of this awareness was the increasing significance attributed to the period of adolescence, in which the phase of childhood was seen to give way to an intensity of subjective consciousness and personality formation prior to adulthood. This transition was accorded great importance, for example, by J.D.G. Medley,\textsuperscript{72} Vice-Chancellor of the University of Melbourne from 1938 to 1951, and a prominent member of the CAE\textsuperscript{73} who argued that no employer should be permitted to offer full-time work to anyone under nineteen years of age.\textsuperscript{74} His point was that the years of adolescence were a formative stage in the development of a responsible personality, and that neither employment nor education were sufficient in themselves for the production of a balanced individual. Medley's view, attributed to English models, had wide currency at that time. In 1943 C.R. McRae,\textsuperscript{75} Professor of Education at the University of Sydney, had similarly argued that we [should] have in this country, for the sixteen-eighteen period, half-time work and half-time school. At

\textsuperscript{70}See for example John Docker, \textit{In A Critical Condition: Struggles for the Control of Australian Literature - Then and Now}, Ringwood, 1984, ch.4. Docker describes the influence of 'a general Cold war lofty end-of-ideology view which looked down on the social and the political as unworthy of human interest' - p.82. See also Richard White, 'The Australian Way of Life', \textit{Historical Studies}, vol.18, no.73, 1979, pp.528-45.

\textsuperscript{71}Docker, \textit{In A Critical Condition}, p.82.

\textsuperscript{72}John Dudley Gibbs MEDLEY Born in 1891 at Oxford, Medley was educated at New College, and became a Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, in 1914. He served with the British Army during World War One, and in 1930 was appointed Headmaster of Tudor House School, Mossvale, NSW. From 1938 to 1951 he was Vice-Chancellor of the University of Melbourne, and from 1942 was a member of the Australian Broadcasting Commission. He also served as a Trustee of the National Gallery, Victoria, and was President of ACER.

\textsuperscript{73}See Badger, 'The Making of Chairman Frank', p.102.

\textsuperscript{74}Quoted in Wilcher, \textit{Education}, p. 22.

\textsuperscript{75}Christopher Ralph McRAE Born at Glenpatrick, Victoria, in 1901, McRae was educated at the Universities of Melbourne and London, returning to a lectureship at Melbourne Teachers' College in 1925. In 1928 he moved to a similar position at the Sydney College, and in 1939 became Inspector of Schools in NSW. McRae was appointed Professor of Education at the University of Sydney in 1940, and 1955 became Deputy Vice-Chancellor of that university.
school, young people can be given their technical training. In addition they can continue their general education, in science, art, music, literature, physical activities, above all, perhaps, in citizenship. At present, we let children go just as they become capable of learning the lessons of citizenship.76

The concept of adolescence thus effectively integrated the public and the private sphere, giving a priority to personal adjustment. In 1944, the Secretary of the Universities Commission, W.J. Weeden,77 suggested at a symposium on adult education that adolescents would also need distinct services as a part of post-war reform: adolescence constituted a critical phase in the consolidation of ‘industrialised civilisation’. It was a phase encompassing both the greater role of the nuclear family in bringing ‘their children much closer to maturity’, while also formulating that maturity as personal competence in the spheres of economic, intellectual and emotional judgement.78 The personality of individuals became a cipher for social stability, as they moved from the necessary stability of the family, through the tuning of personal and social loyalties, to a reliable adult, mature and autonomous in the circumscribed sphere of community. In the 1950s, as Bruce Smith has shown, the concept of the adolescent was to form closer links between secondary schools, the community and the family, centring on the concept of the adjustment of the adolescent.79

If individuals were vulnerable in this transition through adolescence to adulthood, then that vulnerability was greater when they were confronted by the sheer technical capacity of the mass media to manipulate the emerging, independent conscience. Contributors to Talk and Quest, as already noted, were very aware of these depredations. In the early 'fifties, the essayists for the Current Affairs Bulletin, now published by the Commonwealth Office of Education through the Department of Tutorial Classes at the University of Sydney, also offered more extensive appraisals of these influences. As the Opinion Poll system, developed in America, was gradually adopted in Australia, it was noted in 1950 that

Polls are just one - and certainly, not the most important - aspect of a society that tends more and more to emphasise the typical, the representative, the standardised, planned ways of behaviour and thought.80

The newspaper press was seen as another area of calculated appeal to the mass, as debate and information were seen to be replaced by opinion and sensationalism.81 A distinction was insisted upon between the citizenship of social responsibility and the manipulation of ‘public opinion’. ‘Publicity’ had been accepted during the war as a part of maintaining morale, and for a time the Commonwealth Department of Information, created in 1939, had even sought to give ‘expression’ to the wartime aspirations and solidarity

---


77William John WEEDEN Born at Tumut, NSW, in 1905, and educated at the University of Sydney, Weeden worked as a teacher between 1928 and 1936, and then became the Vocational Guidance Officer at the Sydney Technical College. Between 1940 and 1942 he was a research officer with the NSW Department of Education, and was then appointed Secretary of the Universities Commission. He held that position until 1946 when he became Assistant Director and then, in 1953, Director of the Commonwealth Office of Education, and also Chairman of the Universities Commission.


79Bruce Smith, Discipline, From the Classroom to the Community (Cultural Policy Studies: Occasional Paper No.7), Griffith University, 1989.


of the people. At the end of the war, however, there was seen to be a greater need to restore individual judgement. A current of agitation developed in the fields of journalism and advertising, demanding a greater sense of 'responsibility' and professionalism in the provision of services. On the one hand, these campaigns were provoked by an awareness of the increasing range of media influence and a new enthusiasm for 'public relations'; on the other, by the need to release the people from the private control of the 'machinery of information and discussion'. Protesting against a manipulative private press in 1954, E.T. Brown hoped to redeem public opinion by arranging that 'human nature', which had 'already been radically altered and interfered with', would 'for the first time ... be left alone'. Even on the premise of defending freedom of expression in 'the press, the platform, the wireless broadcast, the political pulpit, the cinema newsreels, the cinema pictures', it seemed impossible to avoid invoking the elusive abstraction of the individual - 'human nature' - which in turn could only acquire definition in more specific and accepted strategies in social analysis.

This dilemma of defining citizenship against the mass society had many elements in the 'fifties. In America many intellectuals, in a measure of agreement with Riesman in allowing some form of productive negotiation of meanings and values in the process of modern consumption itself, began to draw a distinction between an oppressive 'mass culture' and the dynamic elements of a 'popular culture'. Daniel Bell was another influential commentator who suggested a potentially creative dualism of self and society within the broad boundaries of social consensus. In 1952 a Partisan Review symposium, 'Our Country and Our Culture', testified to the conviction among many prominent intellectuals that 'in their chastened mood, American democracy looks like the real thing': the challenge was to reconcile themselves to working through popular forms as expressive fields in themselves. In Britain, on the other hand, the consolidation of the Welfare State, and its implicit challenge to class formations, seemed to offer a similar, if less pluralistic, field of engagement for intellectuals. The political paradoxes present in the work of George Orwell - 'the scepticism and contempt for slogans, [the] praise of common sense and decency' - constituted a major inheritance for British culture of the 1950s. For Australian commentators, there seemed to be no equivalent field of engagement as the 'popular' gave way to the individual.

82See Hilvert, Blue Pencil Warriors, ch.4. Within these guidelines, as Hilvert's study makes clear, there was still ample potential for conflict between the desire for accurate reportage from professionals and an administrative concern with the distribution of positive accounts of Australian participation in war. For a defence of the Department's functions, see Calwell, CPD, (H of R), vol.198, 6 October 1948, pp.1294-1304: 'We are in the vanguard of those progressive nations which have realised the necessity and the possibilities of publicity and we are already harvesting the results': p.1295.


84Brown, Sovereign People, pp.4-5.


87Davies and Saunders, p.24; Raymond Williams, Culture and Society, ch.6.
New forms of popular communication were not rejected by Australian intellectuals, but they were adapted to the institutional and cultural alignments already indicated in the areas of government responsibility and social purpose. Even Boyer allowed in 1946 that the magnitude of the task of educating a post-war citizenry suggested the need for the co-ordination of education by radio with the work of the schools, universities, Workers’ Education, libraries, and most interestingly, with its sister in modern scientific achievement, the film.88

For the AAES, for Talk, and for Adult Education agencies, film in particular seemed to constitute a vital medium in meeting objectives, especially documentary film - a form which had made great advances in Britain, Europe and America in the years immediate prior to and during the war. ‘Visual education’ had many advocates in the late 1940s: not only did film have the potential to reach a large audience, but its appeal was seen to be distinctive in its power of communication. During the 1930s, spurred by the achievements of experimental Soviet directors, cinema was championed on the Left: in its range of appeal, its ability to evoke the lives of ‘the people’, its technical proficiency, and its ability to concentrate on detail rather than the evocation of ‘metaphysical modes of reasoning’, film was discussed as ‘a completely dialectical form of expression’ - a form which, if anything, lost its integrity in the ‘individualist’ sentimentality of American ‘talkies’.89 While Left-wing support for documentary continued into the 1950s,90 the lives of ‘the people’ assumed a different importance during wartime. In NSW, for example, the Documentary Films Commission was established in 1940 to acquire and distribute films, following a visit by John Grierson as representative of the Imperial Relations Trust. The Trust had identified the medium as a valuable component in the attempt ‘to strengthen the ties which bind together the Dominions and the United Kingdom’. Other states followed suit, but the project took particular hold in NSW largely due to the support of the Minister for Education, D.H. Drummond.91 Several of Talk’s contributors stressed the role of documentary or ‘factual’ film in the ‘urgent necessary’ task in ‘the creation of a more enlightened citizenry’, reaching those individuals otherwise beyond the reach of education.92 Precisely because of its capacity for conveying information, entertainment and propaganda, film was a medium which became intricately involved in political debates of the post-war years concerning the nature of its role in society, and its appeal to citizens.

A.K. Stout,93 Professor of Moral and Political Philosophy at the University of Sydney since 1939, was a

90Probably the most famous of the locally-produced documentaries was Joris Iven’s coverage of support for post-war Indonesian nationalism, Indonesia Calling (1947). For a general account of politically-radical film producers at this time, see Graham Shirley and Brian Adams, Australian Cinema: The First Eighty Years, Sydney, 1983, pp.179-80; 189-91. See more generally Roger Milliss, Serpent’s Tooth, Ringwood, 1984.
93Alan Ker STOUT Born at Edinburgh in 1900, and educated at Oxford, Stout lectured in Philosophy at the Universities of Wales, Edinburgh and St Andrews before being appointed Professor at Sydney in 1939. He was an original member of the Australian National Film Board, the NSW Film Council, and from 1958 to 1975 was Governor of the Australian Film Institute. Stout was also the patron of the Prison Reform Council of NSW, Foundation President of the NSW Council for Civil Liberties, Chairman of the Board of Social Work at the University of Sydney, and served on the Senate of the University from 1954.
keen advocate of film in education and as a cultural form. Appointed Chairman of the Documentary Films Commission, his involvement in the attempt to establish a role for documentary in Australia over the following years offers a clear illustration of the relationship between cultural forms, political interests and the attempt to evoke the values of citizenship. Stout’s appreciation of documentary, as he outlined it in many papers, lectures and discussion groups on radio and with the WEA during the war, was as a medium which would prompt social criticism, or at least participation:

Our various institutions, social, political and industrial, are the means whereby we resolve the conflicts between man and man and between man and nature - and therefore there is a rich field for documentary in showing us to ourselves, showing how these institutions work, their difficulties and their triumphs, what we need to do to improve them, and what service they render us.94

In his insistence that ‘public services especially render themselves to this treatment’, Stout’s emphasis can be contrasted to the deployment of documentary in America in the 1930s in an attempt to create a sense of an ‘authentic’ national culture.95 His emphasis on state agencies was also distinct from the British model, exemplified by the Empire Marketing Board and then the GPO Film Unit, of a more sociological interest in the patterns of community surrounding industries. The common element in these other cases was that of seeking a point of cohesion around images exemplifying attributed characteristics of national identity, particularly (in the decade of the Great Depression) those of the working class and of agricultural and non-urban labour. As well as an implicit commitment to increasing an awareness of the poor conditions of life in these areas, Greirson described his attraction to the medium as an interest ‘in all instruments which would crystallise sentiments in a muddled world and create a will toward civic participation’.96 Yet Stout’s proposal concentrated more on the relation between the individual and a social system rather than the level of participation within industry and community.

This ‘proselytising’ sense of civic virtue in Stout’s approach nonetheless sat uneasily with the increasing interest of government departments in the use of film. In 1945 Stout was involved in negotiations between the Departments of Information and Post-War Reconstruction leading to the creation of the Australian National Film Board, and was appointed as its only non-public servant member. Committed to the encouragement of ‘self-criticism rather than complacency, to [films which would] inform rather than sell a policy’;97 Stout shared little common ground with the Chairman of the Board, E.G. Bonney who as the Director of the Department of Information, emphasised the role of film in espousing national policies and evoking national pride.98 In less than two years Stout was removed from the Board, and Bonney’s emphasis then seemed to prevail over the government production of film.99 In 1945 the Commonwealth

---

94Typescript for a talk on documentary (undated, but circa 1944), A.K. Stout papers, NLA Ms. 5712, Box 2.

95For a discussion of the ‘folkways’ emphasis in American documentary, see Andrew Ross, ‘Containing Culture in the Cold War’, pp.47-50.


97Quoted by Stout from an 1947 article by him, in ‘Films in Australia’, p.15.

98Stout, ‘Films in Australia’, p.15; Tom Politis, ‘1940s - Australia’ in Ross Lansell and Peter Beilby (eds.), The Documentary Film in Australia, Melbourne, 1982, p.39. A 1949 CAB on ‘The Documentary Film’, written by Stout (early drafts are included in his papers), raises the question of whether governments can ever be expected to be fund films which ‘in giving an honest account of particular situations, implicitly criticise governmental policy’ - vol.5, no.2, 1949, pp.30.

99Bonney had already sought to exercise a similar influence over the ABC during wartime. See Thomas, Broadcast and Be Damned, pp.117, 149; Hilvert, Blue Pencil Warriors, p.139.
Film Unit, which was attached to the Department and was not a statutory authority like its British model, recruited Stanley Hawes, who had trained with Grierson, as Producer-in-Chief. Yet while the Unit’s work, covering topics such as correspondence courses, the experiences of immigrants, life in the outback, and the 1954 Royal Tour, was met with considerable international acclaim, it was hampered throughout the 1950s by bureaucratic restrictions, lack of acknowledgement, and almost no public releases. From official wartime concerns to draw the population into public unity, the post-war years seemed to prompt a lesser interest in the evocation of collective social experience.

The decline of documentary, and of Grierson’s objective of replacing ‘the sloppy romanticism of the person in private’ with an ‘aesthetic of the person in public’, although this decline fits a general pattern in the evocation of citizenship which gradually returned in the post-war years to a focus on private assent. In the ‘fifties, critical assessments of the relationship of subjectivity to social values were to be negotiated in the more complex area of non-factual film, touching even more closely on the relationship of the public to the private. Intellectual interest in film continued to expand in Australia throughout the 1950s. By the end of the 1940s Film Societies had formed in all states. A Film Festival, accompanied by lectures, was held in Canberra in 1951, and in January 1952 a larger festival was held at Olinda, north of Melbourne. Together with a high standard of press reviewing, such as Bruce Grant’s column in the Age, this organised interest served to focus the discussion of film upon its relationship to social values, particularly with regard to censorship. As an industry, film was effective in relating issues of creative expression to those of political or economic control, whether in terms of overseas influence - especially from ‘totalitarian’ Hollywood - or of the constructive potential of the medium to shape social attitudes. Discussion at Olinda drew attention to the banning of recent Chinese and Soviet films on apparently political grounds, whereas films of a more dubious ethical character were seen to be flooding in from United States. In this way, film criticism raised issues of the

100 Hawes’ appointment was later scrutinised on the suspicion that Grierson had been associated with ‘communist activities’. See question from Lang to Calwell, CPD (H of R), vol.196, 7 April 1948, p.592.

101 It was not until the 1960s that Hawes felt the Unit could undertake ‘interesting and enjoyable films of considerable variety, including some of serious social themes’ - Graham Barry, Interview with Stanley Hawes, Cinema Papers, no.19, 1979, pp.183-5; Shirley and Adams, pp.191-3; ‘Films That Few Australians See’, SMH, 23 February 1952, p.4. The film covering correspondence courses, screened at a UNESCO conference in Paris, was nominated for an American Academy Award in 1947. See Shirley and Adams, Australian Cinema, p.178.

102 ‘The Documentary Film’, p.20.

103 For an account of the ‘post-war decline’ in Britain, see Elizabeth Sussex, The Rise and Fall of British Documentary, Berkeley, 1975, ch.7.


105 Precis of lectures were published in the journal of the Canberra Film Centre, Film Progress, April, 1951.

106 Bruce Alexander Grant Born in 1925 at Perth, Grant served with the Royal Australian Navy from 1942 to 1945, then studied at the University of Melbourne before joining the editorial staff of the Age in 1949. From 1950 to 1954 he was that paper’s Film and Theatre Critic, and from 1954 to 1957 was London correspondent. After a period as a Fellow at Harvard University, Grant became the South-East Asia correspondent for the Age and the SMH in 1959.


need for a national culture, and festivals provided an opportunity to question political stereotypes.

More often, however, the ethical evaluations of film indicated not simply a liberalisation of attitudes, but a more specific concept of the individual-as-citizen. If film was thought to appeal more directly to individuals, it did not follow that personal values in themselves constituted a self-sufficient basis for criticism. The intensity of film’s impact demanded a criterion of the public good against which personal responses could be assessed. It was not so much the depiction of sexuality, for example, which raised concern: as Stout argued in 1951, it was more the portrayal of crime and the ‘repetition and glorification of false patterns of life’ - especially materialism and images of ‘the ideal life as one of idle luxury’ - which were identified as a social threat. Such influences, he suggested, broke down those patterns of work and creativity through which individuals were encouraged to social duty. Technical devices such as ‘emotionally-charged music’ and ‘close-ups’ further encouraged ‘identification’ and subsequent ‘day-dreaming’. Other commentators adopted different emphases but made similar points. An Age reviewer questioned whether gangster films should receive unqualified disapprobation. While in many cases censorship was warranted to protect teenage audiences from ‘the exposition of crookedness [which] ... is generally closely related to sex’, it was also suggested that there were instances in which explicit violence might be of valuable effect in pointing ‘memorials to police officers who have lost their lives in the cause of civil justice and discipline’. These films might be accorded the status of being ‘semi-documentary’, or of being ‘very close to documentary’ in their ‘authenticity’. They did not encourage ‘participation’, but they played out dramas which reinforced responsible citizenship.

At this level, debates over age-of-admission classifications, while indicating moves against absolute restrictions, perhaps suggested an attempt to quantify social maturity as much as to establish ethical principles. If Australian advocates of documentary in the 1940s had sought to engage citizens with the services provided by the state, then film critics in the 1950s emphasised the adjustment of the individual to social norms through the appeal to psychological responses regulated by age. Similarly, from an educational point of view, film was also seen to foster a distinctive subjectivity. In the Foreword to a 1953 booklet on the value of instruction in film appreciation in secondary schools, W.V. Aughterson, Associate Professor of Education at the University of Melbourne, argued that the use of film should be a

---


112 D.J.B., ‘Youth and Crime’, Age, 27 January 1951, p.12. In 1958 Colin Bennett argued that there was virtually no political censorship of films, but questioned whether a film involving the murder of a clergyman deserved to be banned - 29 March 1958, p.19.

113 These comments were applied to the films of John Ford, for example, who was seen to be ‘concerned with character rather than incident’ in portraying a ‘world of the past, when life was much simpler and standards much better defined and more generally upheld’. See N.H. Rosenthal, Films in Our Lives: An Approach to Film Appreciation, Melbourne, 1953, p.47.

114 See Bruce Grant’s welcoming of the ‘Adult’ classification: Age, 26 August 1954, p.17.

115 William Vincent AUGHTERSON Born at Bendigo in 1903, and educated at the University of Melbourne and the University of London, Aughterson lectured at the Melbourne Teachers’ College in 1926 and then became English Master at Melbourne High School. In 1939 he became a lecturer in education at the University, and after touring England and America as a Carnegie Fellow, he became Associate Professor of Education there in 1955.
central component in the move away from 'the tyranny exercised by examinations' in concentrating on the written word, towards an emphasis on encouraging clarity and confidence in spoken communication, and, by extension, the greater expression of the responses of the student as an individual. Assessable personal expression, however, had to be distinguished from the denial of personality in the unregulated exposure to popular films. The main body of this booklet, written by the Director of Visual Aids at the University of Melbourne, Newman Rosenthal, suggested that:

There is a need for research into the extent to which the motion picture is responsible for the prevailing tendency towards totalitarianism, the waning of the flame of individuality, the willingness to repeat the opinions of others instead of formulating them for ourselves. ... The cinema's ... effects are subtle, persuasive, insinuating. Again, it is not so much the concern itself which is significant here, but the frame of reference it evokes. Emphasising the vulnerability of the individual, it nonetheless excludes a sense of politics based on personal rights in favour of one based on social norms: the depiction of sexuality and violence, for example, could point civic morals, but seemed to have little inherent significance in shaping personal lives.

As Mark Finnane has observed of the campaign against comics in the 1950s, the 'conditions' informing that commentary are more significant than the content of the comics themselves, or than any search for a uniform ideology among the 'politically dichotomous' interests that sought to eradicate this 'great menace ... to our Christian civilisation'. The campaign was not simply 'reactionary', but was a product of the new forms of social analysis already noted, including an awareness of 'the educational career of the child' as a crucial period in the formation of personality, and the emphases adopted in the social sciences of identifying 'the familial and domestic genesis of delinquency'. Similar observations surrounded studies of the social effects of television, a medium which was attributed an even stronger appeal among the young and which further accentuated a sense of the domestic sphere as both the most vulnerable and the most necessary in the inculcation of citizenship. In 1953, for example, parliamentary debates on the system of television broadcasting to be adopted in Australia often focussed on the impact of television on the 'youthful elements of the community', and on a sense that 'the institution of television will impose a much heavier responsibility upon parents'. For the Government, Senator Vincent, who later chaired a Select Committee on Television Programming, was prepared to trust in a range of agencies which would ensure the maintenance of 'good public taste' involving

---


117 Newman ROSENTHAL Born at Ballarat in 1898, Rosenthal was educated at the University of Melbourne and then became Chemistry Master at Melbourne High School in 1921, and then at Xavier College. In 1940 he joined the RAAF, working the area of visual training, and in 1945 he was appointed Lecturer in Visual Education at the University of Melbourne. He travelled in the USA in 1944, and in the UK, Germany, Italy and Holland after the war, studying film and television broadcasting, and extending an interest in Nazi propaganda. Rosenthal represented the University at the Third International Congress on Film and T.V. at Paris in 1955, and was the President of the Victorian Council Of Childrens' Film and Television from 1950 to 1954.


121 Senator McKenna, *CPD* (Senate), vol.221, 11 March 1953, p.778. Youth were seen by McKenna to be the 'less discriminating elements', needing to be 'shielded from coarseness, lewdness, obscenity and blasphemy; above all, ... they need to be protected from programmes which may tend to incite to course of wrong action'.

the advantages and the assistance of adequately framed regulations, policed by a wise council of men and, more important, with adequate education in our homes, schools and universities, (which) will eventually reject the immoral, obscene and licentious in television.\textsuperscript{122}

The government's insistence on both public and private television broadcasting might have been 'a vindication of democracy',\textsuperscript{123} but debate over the issue continued to be hedged by concerns at how best to manage such an immediate appeal to the individual.

In more professional discussion, and despite his enduring scepticism, Newman Rosenthal expressed his commitment in a CAE article of 1957 to avoiding any assumption that television must corrupt society, preferring to concentrate on ways in which it could serve the 'vital' need 'that intellectual activity shall occupy some part of our leisure moments, especially those of us whose daily task demands no particular intellectual effort'.\textsuperscript{124} Yet few commentators seemed to greet television with enthusiasm,\textsuperscript{125} seeing it as the exemplary medium of the mass society. Extensive studies were conducted in Rosenthal's Department to establish the impact of particular genres of television programming on children and adolescents. The response of selected audiences was recorded by infra-red photography as they watched 'crime-dramas' or 'Westerns', indicating a progressive build-up of attention and concentration in the audience as the plot develops. Towards the end, many children (more especially the girls) show some signs of stress in their facial expressions and attitudes.\textsuperscript{126}

'Anxiety', 'caution' and 'conventionality' were noticed in 'post-film responses'. There was little evidence of acquired 'psychopathic tendencies', but prolonged exposure to such programmes, it was thought, led to 'the acquisition of certain relatively stereotyped and insensitive reactions': a 'decrease in sympatetic "rapport" with one's fellows'.\textsuperscript{127} Identification with criminal heroes, then, was not suspected to lead to criminality: it was associated instead with 'guilt feelings' which were in turn conducive to social 'ambivalence' - particularly among females.\textsuperscript{128} Again, this analysis reinforced a commentary on citizenship as subjective adjustment, particularly as mediated by the given contexts of family, school and community, and by the psychology of adolescence. Summaries of psychological evidence, including the work of Rosenthal's Department, stated that 'the basic effect of television has been to induce in the majority of the children in this country a high degree of anxiety, hostility and guilt towards their parents'.\textsuperscript{129} Whereas David Riesman observed in \textit{The Lonely Crowd} that television and other mass media had the potential to restore 'a kind of realism' to children - a sense of the world outside the bounds of family alone and to be

\textsuperscript{122}Senator Vincent, \textit{CPD} (Senate), vol.211, 11 March 1953, p.804.

\textsuperscript{123}Senator Annabelle Rankin, \textit{CPD}, (Senate), vol.211, 11 March 1953, p.809.

\textsuperscript{124}Newman Rosenthal, 'What Will We Do To Television?', \textit{Adult Education}, vol.1, no.4, 1957, p.14

\textsuperscript{125}There is not space in this chapter to cover the political debates over the form of television broadcasting adopted, but see Ann Curthoys, 'The Getting of Television: Dilemmas in Ownership, Control and Culture 1941-1956' in Curthoys and Merrit (eds.), \textit{Better Dead Than Red}, Sydney, 1986, pp.123-54.


\textsuperscript{127}Thomson, \textit{Television}, p.2.

\textsuperscript{128}Thompson, \textit{Television}, pp.21-2.

\textsuperscript{129}These findings were presented to the Vincent Committee by Sidney Forsey, Senior Research Officer for the Australian Broadcasting Control Board. See Minutes, \textit{Report of the Select Committee on the Encouragement of Australian Productions for Television}, Canberra, 1963, p.101.
experienced rather than bequeathed - there was little equivalent confidence in the individual among Australian commentators. Giving evidence to the Vincent Committee on the Encouragement of Australian Productions for Television in 1963, Lady Alice Paton, President of the Australian Council for Children's Film, which had been founded in 1957, stated that she was prepared to accept the access of children to 'sex films' and even 'free-for-all' violence, so long as the selection also offered 'a more extensive and authentic representation of the Australian way of life'. Again, the politics of personal rights scarcely registered within such specific manipulation of individual subjectivity to accord with abstract social values.

By the late 1950s it seemed to have become possible to speak with more confidence of a settled consensus in the public sphere, identified in established roles and institutions. That identification, however, was built on increasingly sophisticated strategies of directing subjective allegiances. By 1956, when the CAE launched its own journal, *Adult Education*, the Council looked back over a change in its priorities from remedial or corrective training, through a phase of 'education for social purpose or social reform' in the post-war years, and then to a more diverse concern with providing 'the essential equipment for a full and thoroughly enjoyable life'. If the population was seen to have moved beyond the need for reformist intervention, this did not mean that the CAE had become any less concerned with constituting a distinct conception of the individual-in-society. 'Mental and spiritual health' became the CAE's 'vital concern'; transgressions from this balanced course could be traced to individual maladjustment in the balance between self and society. With juvenile delinquents, for example, that failure could be traced to unfulfilled family roles, and especially to 'maternal deprivation'. At all times, public life must reaffirm individual values, and in the late 1950s the CAE devoted much attention to a campaign to lift the annual Moomba Festival in Melbourne, established in 1955, above the level of a 'tawdry' and diverse 'popular carnival' to that of a more selective, educative programme 'at the highest cultural levels'. Since the immediate post-war years, 'the festival' as a social form had been identified as a way to consolidate civic and national optimism, and to manifest the virtues of 'freedom' and 'progress' in celebration against social

---


131 For an exception to this tendency, see Medley, 'Concerning Teenagers And Their Problems', *Age*, 14 May 1955, p.17.

132 Alice PATON Born at Melbourne in 1905 and educated at the University of Melbourne, Alice Watson married George Paton, then a barrister in Melbourne, in 1931. She was a member of the Free Kindergarten Movement from 1933 to 1938, and of the Royal Womens' Hospital Board of Management from 1938 to 1941. In 1949 she founded the Victorian Council for Children's Films and Television, and in 1960 was elected President of the national form of this body.


regimentation. In 1951 the Festival of Britain was perhaps the largest of such attempts, and the previous chapter noted the enthusiasm of community festivals among decentralist developers in Australia. For CAE commentators - a 'positive and constructive citizenry' - Moomba was a lost opportunity: the commercial floats, the American symbolism, and the 'kitsch use of Aboriginal artefacts and motifs' offended them, and they looked to the arts - and to the model of the Adelaide Festival, inaugurated in 1959 - to assist in unifying the mass society around the certain values of the civilised. This distinction was not simply a matter of elitism, but stemmed from the continuing conviction that no mere 'civic enterprise' was sufficient to keep the public 'jollied along the path of pleasure': the co-operative initiative of the community required to be reconciled to the formal expression provided by established arts and 'purposeful discussion'. Beneath the conservatism of this sense of appropriate values, however, there was also a more intrusive conservatism of individual guidance.

***

Central to much of this commentary was the concept of 'personality' as it defined the reconciliation of self with society. In the 1950s this concept entered into wide currency as a way of comprehending social change by diffusing conflict and without requiring any extension of reformist programmes. Reviews of American symposia on 'personality' recommended that 'what we seem to need far more than increased production ... is a series of mutually consistent ideas in which most members of our society can participate and believe'. These themes were reinforced in lecture tours by American academics such as Margaret Mead and Clyde Kluckhohn, Professor of Anthropology at Harvard, both of whom had been involved in the development a systematic study of 'national character' as it was consolidated even in the 'child-rearing patterns of a culture' and reinforced in the dynamics between personality types and institutional

138See Mary Berhan and Bevis Hillier, A Tonic to the Nation: The Festival of Britain 1951, London, 1976, esp. Roy Strong's Prologue, pp.6-9; Appleyard, The Pleasures of Peace, Part One; 'The Festival of Britain', CAB, vol.8, no.5, 1951, pp.64-79. Another example of this deployment was the Festival of Paris, convened by the Congress of Cultural Freedom in 1952. See Coleman, The Liberal Conspiracy, pp.45-6, 55-7, 162.

139The CAE shared much with the advocates of community centres noted in the previous chapter, identifying them (so long as their services were not monopolised by 'the cinema') with strengthening regional ties and the ability to defer individual desires to the wishes of the group - see 'New Hall at Wendouree', Adult Education, vol.4, no.3, 1959, pp.7-8; 'Country Festivals', vol.2, no.4, pp.12-15; Badger, Adult Education in Post-War Australia, p.6.


141Stephen Alomes provides both an evocation and an analysis of the features of Moomba in Alomes, 'Parades of Meaning: The Moomba Festival and Contemporary Culture', Journal of Australian Studies, no.17, 1985, pp.3-17. Concern was expressed in some quarters that Moomba, originally conceived in 1953 as a tourist promotion and to replace the Labour Day march, was failing to achieve a sufficiently high cultural standing. For a summary of the foundation of Moomba, and the debates over its quality, see Keith Dunstan, Moomba: The First 25 Year, Melbourne, 1979, pp.5-11.

142'On This Picture and That', vol.4, no.3, 1960, p.14.

143'Claims of the Social Sciences', rev. of Stuart Chase, The Proper Study of Mankind, Age Literary Supplement, 15 July 1950, p.9; see also 'Personality; A Symposium', 13 July 1953, p.9.
structures. With little tradition of private psychotherapy in Australia, 'personality' provided a way of accommodating new psychological interests within essentially normative and publically-oriented patterns of analysis. In 1956, for example, Colin Roderick campaigned for a Chair in Australian Literature on the grounds that such a study must lead to a better 'adjustment between society and the individual by which the liberty of the individual personality is preserved and the co-operative duty of mankind is accepted.'

'Personality', then, provided a nexus between the individual and social norms. As applied in post-war Australia in areas from sociology and political science through to private family and marriage counselling, the concept allowed for a precise categorisation of personal dispositions as they related to the demands of citizenship. The contributory factors of social environment and biology were acknowledged to the extent that they contributed to the alienation or adjustment of the individual, but they were not seen as decisive. Alan Stoller, a specialist in Medical Psychology attached to Repatriation Headquarters in Melbourne, offered one formulation of the concept as it had been extensively applied in civilian and military contexts since 1939:

144See Kluckhohn, 'Western Civilisation Needs New Ideas', ABC Weekly, 27 September 1952, p.7. My summary of this body of analysis is based on Arnold Rose, 'The Comparative Study of Institutions' in Rose (ed.), The Institutions of Advanced Societies, Minneapolis, 1958, pp.3-27; Margaret Mead, 'National Character and the Science of Anthropology' in Seymour Martin Lipset and Leo Lowenthal (eds.), Culture and Social Character, New York, 1961, pp.15-26. The concern to 'reconstruct cultural wholes' in societies after wartime destruction, developed in America by the many influential anthropologists such as Mead, Bateson and Benedict, in association with the Office of Strategic Services, seems to have much in common with the desire to defend the integrity of attributed 'ways of life' in Asian and Pacific societies discussed in Chapters One and Two.

145For appraisals of Australian psychology, and its emphasis in the areas of vocational guidance and aptitude testing, see the essays published in the Tasman Lovell tribute issue of the Australian Journal of Psychology, vol.10, no.1, 1958, esp. J.P. Clark, 'Psychology in the Public Service, Business and Industry', pp.30-40. R.S. Ellery, a Melbourne doctor, was among the first in Australia to move into private psychiatric practice in the early 1930s. It was only during the Second World War, he argued, that 'the pale face of psychological medicine was suddenly smitten with the acne of new psychiatrists': Ellery, The Cow Jumped Over The Moon: Private Papers of a Psychiatrist, Melbourne, 1956, esp. p.231.


147Colin RODERICK Born in 1911 at Mount Morgan, Queensland, Roderick was educated at the Universities of Queensland and Melbourne. During the war he worked on censorship, and in 1945 joined Angus and Robertson as Education Editor. Roderick published widely in the field of Australian literature, was a frequent radio commentator on that topic, and was one of the major figures campaigning for the establishment of the Chair in Australian Literature at the University of Sydney in 1956.

148Colin Roderick, 'Stimulating the Creative Impulse In Australian Writing', Age Literary Supplement, 5 November 1956, p.18.

149See for example A.F. Davies, Private Politics: A Study of Five Political Outlooks, Melbourne, 1962.

150Alan STOLLER Born at London in 1911, Stoller was educated at University College Hospital, London, and in 1936 came to Australia as the Senior Medical Officer in the Western Australian Mental Hospitals Department. He served with the AIF in New Guinea, and then returned to London to work at Maidseley Hospital in London from 1946 to 1947. He toured America and then returned to Australia in 1954 as the Chief Clinical Officer of the Mental Hygiene Department, and conducted a survey of facilities for psychiatric treatment in Australia for the Commonwealth government in that year. In 1956 Stoller was appointed a member of the Juvenile Delinquency Advisory Committee in Victoria, and in 1957 became Chairman of a panel established by the World Federation on Mental Health and consultant to the World Health Organisation in 1957.
Personality, at any point in time, is a resultant of the interaction between biological constitution and experience: and whilst one realises the significance of social and cultural factors which affect the group, one must needs consider the physique, the emotional drive, the intellectual capacity and the instinctive make-up in any individual case. Developing mainly in American psychology in the inter-war years, the concept of personality was essentially a functional, predictive device. Whether it drew on biological or environmental emphases, personality dealt more in terms of latency rather than overt behaviour, and the individually unique rather than the socially representative. It was based on the assessment of the internal relations between clearly differentiated areas of motivation. For Stoller, the formation and arrangement of these networks indicated the 'supreme importance of the family constellation', particularly maternal influence: 'the early foundations of behaviour depend on a restricted series of intimate personal inter-relations'. In 1941, A.P. Elkin's concern with social unity led to a conviction that the individual 'persona' must find active integration with the 'ideology' of their social grouping or 'just flounder about', indecisive and undefined. Such attention to personal adjustment might lead to a critique of a social system which alienated or exploited its members, and in the 1940s these issues were addressed by some intellectuals who had been influenced by Marx, Jung and Freud. In the 1950s, however, it was more likely that 'personality' would stress the need to consolidate existing values, whether in the prescribed space of the nuclear family or in the conformity of the group.

Partly funded by UNESCO, with the intention of testing the hypothesis that 'wars begin in the minds of men', in 1949 the Department of Psychology at the University of Melbourne commenced an extensive collective staff, student and professional project to assess the interaction between 'social structure and personality' in rural and urban Australia. Following the 'behaviour and outlook of individuals in a life context', and the 'adjustment of individuals to institutional groups', these surveys were a sustained attempt

153 Stoller, 'Social Health', p.4.
154 Elkin, Society, the Individual and Change - With Special Reference to War and Other Present-Day Problems, Sydney, 1941, pp.52-3.
155 See Max Harris, 'Conflicts in Australian Intellectual Life 1940-64' in Semmler and Whitlock (eds.), Literary Australia, pp.19-20. Harris was mainly referring to Melbourne painters, although university magazines of the time suggest a somewhat wider and more extreme intellectual currency - see for example Neil McInnes, 'A Renegade From Freudo-Marxism: Wilhelm Reich', Hermes, 1946, no.1, pp.26-9: 'Any libertarian movement in society must attack radically and without compromise not only the mechanisms of our economic subjugation but the cornerstones of authoritarian ideology: the patriarchal family, lifelong monogamous marriage, and the most absurd of delusions, the "sublimation of adolescent sexuality"', p.29. For a more moderate 'liberal' application of the concept of alienation, see Jean Craig, 'Industry and Personality', in Gordon Barton's The New Liberal, vol.1, no.1, 1950, pp.15-9.
156 The results of the project were published as O.A. Oeser and S.B. Hammond (eds.), Social Structure and Personality in a City, London, 1954; O.A. Oeser and F.E. Emery, Social Structure and Personality in a Rural Community, London, 1954. In the Preface to the City volume, Oeser and Hammond outline the history of the project and the extent of academic, postgraduate and undergraduate, and voluntary professional involvement - pp.v-xi. The 'steering committee' directing the project comprised Oeser and Professors R.M. Crawford, A.P. Elkin, W.G. Friedmann, P.H. Partridge, and J.A. Passmore - p.xi. The Dyason Foundation, already discussed in Chapter One with reference to the study of conflict in Asia, had also been involved in establishing the project.
to define the subjectivity of the Australian population in terms of its ‘personality structures’.\textsuperscript{157} The methodology of the project indicated a conception of personality as an issue of individual adjustment, with some attention to questions of social and political coercion.\textsuperscript{158} In the rural study, sampling was restricted to children of school-age, on the assumption that they were in the process of ‘absorption’ in society, and that any difference between their response to questionnaires and that of adults would only be ‘quantitative’.\textsuperscript{159} Such a field of reference encompassed the context of family and school, but little beyond that. Even the more sociologically-oriented urban study,\textsuperscript{160} while it followed a discussion of family and childhood with surveys of adults in work and in class groupings, emphasised the highly subjective, individual relationship between situation and behaviour.\textsuperscript{161} Individuals were not simply static products of their circumstances, but were also ‘interpretative and purposive’, and over time ‘role symbols became incorporated into [their] central ego structure’.\textsuperscript{162} Yet this dynamic element was accommodated within the implicit assumption that beyond adolescence and outside the family unit, exchanges in the areas of employment, education, politics and community would essentially confirm an already formed personality in terms of either frustration or reward, functionality or dysfunctionality.\textsuperscript{163} Working with the thesis that ‘the major value in general Australian ideologies was that of personal independence’,\textsuperscript{164} the absorption, satisfaction or discontent of individuals could only be registered in these studies as aspirations to security, conformity, stability and privacy rather than in any more explicitly political or socially integrative terms.

The personnel and institutional resources devoted to the project are significant in Australia at that time as an area of intellectual co-ordination. The Department of Psychology in Melbourne also had close ties to Rosenthal’s Department of Visual Aids, and to the analysis of audience reaction to film and television. O.A. Oeser,\textsuperscript{165} Professor of Psychology in Melbourne and in charge of the surveys, sought to challenge the teaching of the ‘theologians’ and the ‘metaphysicians’ of ‘free will’ with a scientific model of society and


\textsuperscript{158}For an assessment of the political significance of personality in British psychiatry in the 1950s, particularly in the area of behaviour and aversion therapy, see Nikolas Rose, ‘Psychiatry: The Discipline of Mental Health’, pp.77-80.

\textsuperscript{159}Oeser and Emery, \textit{Rural Community}, pp.47-8.

\textsuperscript{160}Hammond, ‘General Orientation’, pp.3-4.

\textsuperscript{161}Hammond, ‘The Self and Society’ in Oeser and Hammond (eds.), \textit{Urban Community}, pp.261-78.


\textsuperscript{163}The point of adolescence posed some unresolved problems in this model. In the rural study it was noted that the ‘obsessive-erotic’ child who was most characteristic of farming families, where close and sentimental ties developed with mothers and in work relations, was more ‘stable and socially oriented’ than the ‘narcissistic’ child who grew up in the much looser social relations of the town. Yet the farm child, while ‘functional’ in the family context, was perhaps ‘dysfunctional’ and prone to alienation in making an inevitable transition into an adult working life. See Oeser and Emery, \textit{Rural Community}, pp.204-12.

\textsuperscript{164}Hammond, ‘Class Strata and Politics’ in Oeser and Hammond (eds.), \textit{Urban Community}, p.312.

\textsuperscript{165}Oscar Albert OESER Born at Pretoria, South Africa, in 1904, Oeser was educated at the Universities of South Africa, Marburg and Cambridge, and then became the Head of the Department of Experimental Psychology at St Andrews University from 1933 to 1946. He was then appointed Professor of Psychology at the University of Melbourne. He was one-time Chairman of the Social Sciences Research Committee, and a member of the Victorian Council for Mental Hygiene. In his 1955 \textit{Who’s Who} entry, Oeser listed ‘making documentary films’ as one of his recreations.
self informed by ‘learning theory, the integrative action of the nervous system, the dynamics of motivation and the persisting unity of behaviour traits’. In more popular discussions, however, the concept of personality was taken in directions which emphasised the need to preserve the social forms and values Oeser might condemn as ‘myths’ and ‘essences’. The family was central to these defences, and was seen to provide an antidote to the mass society not so much as an ideal, but as a necessary institutional focus for strategies of social efficiency and stability. Again, the personal trauma of war, and its effects on marriage and divorce in the post-war years, gave added impetus to this concern with the functions of the family unit. In 1945 the Commonwealth Matrimonial Causes Act attempted to bring greater co-ordination to divorce laws so as to meet the post-war increase in petitions, and divorce law reform continued to be an issue of debate throughout the 1950s. More particularly, the individualisation of wartime society contributed to a more interventionist concern with the personal and subjective causes of social instability. In 1942, for example, the NSW Division of the newly-formed Australian Association of Scientific Workers established a sub-committee on ‘Sex and Society’, to contribute to the efficiency of reconstruction by bringing scientific expertise to research and education in the areas of marriage, divorce, ‘sexual delinquency’ and the ‘problems of sex and the individual and sex and society’. Further, mobilisation had inevitably disturbed social roles, especially those of women as they entered new areas of the paid workforce. Inheriting these changes, in the 1950s sexuality and the function of the family became matters of considerable discussion.

In the early 1950s Marriage Guidance Councils were established in all Australian States, as was a National Council on the British model. Initially sponsored by the churches, the Councils adopted a more professional image by the mid-1950s, drawing on psychological theories without excluding a clerical presence. David Mace, the founder of the British movement and later the Chairman of the International Commission on Marriage Guidance (a consultative body to UNESCO), outlined the central assumptions of the Councils, arguing in 1948 that:

Many of the most serious evils which afflicted individual and social life could be traced to unsatisfactory family relationships; and these in turn derived in large measure from lack of harmony in the basic relationship between husband and wife.

The foundations for future ‘harmony’ had to be established in the education of the child, and sustained in ‘the literature he reads, the youth organisations he joins, the mass media which mould his concepts of personal relationships and social behaviour’. Marriage, the partnership of husband and wife, and the family, then, emerged as the exemplars both of social morality and individual adjustment. If war had


167 See for example the parliamentary debate of federal legislation, in which the central question was whether a period of separation was itself grounds for divorce - ‘Private M.P.’s Bill May Be Federal Divorce Law’, *Age*, 29 April 1957, p.2; ‘Divorce Bill To Be Hotly Contested in Senate’, *Age*, 16 November 1959, p.2.


destabilised marriage, then by 1953 it seemed to Jane Clunies Ross, Tutor in Psychology at the University of Sydney, that a balance was being regained: 'social changes in marriage are like fashion changes in furniture ... they still have to fit comfortably the more-or-less constant dimensions of the human body'.\footnote{Clunies Ross, 'The Changing Patterns of the Family in Western Civilisation', \textit{Australian Quarterly}, vol.25, no.1, 1953, p.41.}

Yet if the basic functional form of marriage was static, many commentators were to argue throughout the 1950s that, in terms of its social role, fundamental changes were still occurring within and around the family unit.

A 1957 symposium, marking a visit to Australia by Mace and seeking to advise social workers on 'scientific method',\footnote{A.P. Elkin, Introduction to Elkin (ed.), \textit{Marriage and the Family}, p.v.} discussed these changes at two levels. First, there had been a transition from the 'corporate' conception of the family to one in which 'the individual's happiness and independence' were paramount. It followed that older bonds and loyalties were giving way to 'sexual attraction and the appreciation of companionship' as sufficient 'to ensure the continuance and cohesion of a family'.\footnote{Harold Fallding, 'Inside the Australian Family', pp.54-5.}

Second, despite the tendency of modern society to deprive the family of its traditional functions in the areas of education, production, recreation and religion, it seemed even more crucial that the family serve as a point of unity amid these fractured allegiances. It had become 'a specialized social agency, mainly concerned with the regularisation of sexual relations and with the basic socialisation of children' at a time when these responsibilities were increasingly fundamental to social stability.\footnote{Harold Fallding, 'Inside the Australian Family', pp.74-6; Morven Brown, 'Changing Functions of the Australian Family' in Elkin (ed.), \textit{Marriage}, p.87.}

Again, the central concept in this analysis was that of personality: the family had become the only institution capable of shaping the identity of the child, 'organising all an individual's separate parts into one'. The 'personality weaknesses' manifested in the sexual and emotional symptoms of marriage breakdown, were taken to reflect an individual failure to escape indulgence, guilt and inhibition in childhood.\footnote{Coughlan, 'Marriage Breakdown', pp.131-4.}

W.D. Borrie saw those couples who evaded their social duty of parenthood less in terms of the attributed 'selfishness' of the early decades of the century, and more as exhibiting the signs of 'maladjustment' to social and personal roles.\footnote{W.D. Borrie, 'Australian Family Structure: Demographic Observations' in Elkin (ed.), \textit{Marriage}, p.19.}

Jean Martin\footnote{Jean Isobel MARTIN Born at Sydney in 1923, Jean Craig studied at the University of Sydney and was a researcher in the Department of Anthropology there from 1943 to 1947, and from 1949 to 1950. She studied sociology at the University of Chicago, and in 1951 was appointed a Research Assistant at the Australian National University. While in Canberra she commenced post-graduate research on migrant settlement in rural Australia, and in 1956 returned for a brief period to work at the University of Sydney.} observed that class location might have a substantial effect on the ability of families 'to integrate the individual into the larger society',\footnote{Martin, 'Marriage, the Family and Class' in Elkin (ed.), \textit{Marriage}, pp.50-1.} but this suggestion was overshadowed by strategies to ensure 'mental and social health'. Instead, it was suggested that there was a public responsibility to 'restrain' by 'some measure of readjustment' those marriages which imperilled the functioning of the home as 'an
emotionally satisfying centre for the development ... - the euphoria - of personality'.

The subject of more intensive social demands and the vehicle for a more explicit expression of personal needs and desire, concepts of marriage and the family nonetheless sought to conserve established roles and values. Adolescence, as already noted, conceded complexity to the emergence of the self from childhood, but only in terms of a network in which a partnership of responsibility between parents and the community effectively delayed the concession of maturity to the child. Recognising the two crucial aspects of the modern family - partnership and the socialisation of sexuality and identity - the strategies adopted in marriage counselling centred on the need for individuals to adapt themselves to specific roles within marriage. Drawing on methods of psychotherapy, counselling sought to encourage self-reflection or 'reorganisation of the self' as a part of adjustment to these roles. In defining the partnership of husband and wife in the 'companionate marriage', familiar gender divisions tended to emerge in areas from economic to sexual responsibilities. A study of counselling records in Western Australia for the 1950s reveals that sex was an issue in seventy-five percent of cases, and in the notes and texts of interviews it seems that the demands of adjustment centred heavily on women to fulfill the requirements of the 'good wife'. While women were encouraged to 'express their sexual feelings', they 'risked condemnation as "frigid" or "dominant" if they transgressed the limits of responsiveness' determined by the characterisation of female sexuality as 'essentially passive ... and maternally-oriented'.

Such a departure from functional roles by women seems to have been met with a peculiarly severe diagnosis. In 'Psychologists' Reports' appended to one paper to the 1957 Marriage Guidance Council symposium, diagnoses in the cases of men stressed immaturity or lack of 'emotional insight', but those dealing with women emphasised sexual trauma or the transgression of role in masturbatory practices, leading either to 'homosexual panic' or 'latent homosexual trends'. Morven Brown's paper suggested an historical basis for the relative absence of the 'erotic' in Australian marital relations, and in such a culture, the 'demands' and the 'deviance' of women, taking sexuality beyond the family and into personal desire, were especially conspicuous. If, as Wotherspoon has argued, male homosexuality became an area of greater concern in the 1950s as the public scapegoat for social anxiety, then female homosexuality became an area of concern in the analysis of the private, domestic sphere. Women had the potential to undermine from within the cradle of personality adjustment and citizenship, if not by 'maternal deprivation' then by sexual indulgence. The extremity of such diagnoses, if not representative, were


180 Jane Clunies Ross gave one example of the increased vulnerability of adolescents to social and political manipulation in suggesting that the importance of 'home life' had been confirmed by the recent evidence of 'what educational authorities and youth groups can do in totalitarian countries to drive a wedge between parents and children and disintegrate the private, closed family' - Clunies Ross, 'The Changing Patterns of Family Life', p.37.

181 McDonald, 'Women as Wives', pp.70, 98, 107, 142-44.

182 Appendix II to Coughlan, 'Marriage Breakdown', esp. pp.152-3, 159, 161. McDonald details a case in which a similar diagnosis of homosexuality was made of a women who initiated sex with her husband against his wishes. See 'Women as Wives', pp.142-6.

183 Morven Brown, 'Changing Functions', pp.92-6, 114.

perhaps at least indicative that the family was not another metaphysical theme of the political culture of the 1950s, but was itself a unit, much reduced but also more functionally efficient, in which to conserve an image of society and self which confirmed roles rather than challenged them.

***

Beyond such specific and relatively institutionalised interventions into subjective lives, these same themes of assigned roles and personal adjustment had a more general cultural influence at that time, shaping not only the strategies of management but also the creative evocation of self in society. Without questioning the extent to which Cold War politics consolidated what Clem Christesen, editor of Meanjin, described in 1950 as ‘the most deplorable [mental climate] in Australia’s history’, and made it difficult to create a collective image of society that escaped the circularity of an anachronistic ‘legend’, much literature and literary criticism in the 1950s was also committed to the formulation of an ‘image of man’ in the process of a moral adjustment to a changing society. Studies of Australian writers in the inter-war years often stress an aspiration to contribute to the pervasive sense of evolutionary nationalism among intellectuals, but post-war writing focussed more on personality in terms similar to those already discussed. One example of this tendency was Frank Dalby Davison’s The White Thorn Tree, a novel of over 1,000 pages which Davison began in 1945 and completed some twenty years later. Set in middle-class Sydney between the wars, the novel surveyed suburban Australia from what Davison referred to as an ‘anthropological’ perspective. The ‘mores’ Davison sought to identify were, he suggested, those which would become increasingly characteristic of modern societies. His subject, pursued compassionately yet exhaustively, was human sexuality. Davison’s Foreword states:

My own view is that while man is by deep need a social being - and would have little more than a brute existence without disciplined give-and-take among his fellows - none of the many forms of social organisation or patterns of sexual behaviour he has been able to devise in his age-long search for personal happiness ... has ever offered more than approximate satisfaction of the complex and changing needs of every

---

185Clement Byrne CHRISTESEN Born at Townsville, 1911, and educated at the University of Queensland, Christesen worked as a publicity officer for the Queensland government from 1935 to 1941, founding the journal Meanjin in Brisbane in 1940. In 1944 Christesen moved to Melbourne, where Meanjin was to receive some assistance from the University - an alliance that was to prove difficult to balance in the 1950s. In 1955 Christesen was called before the Petrov Commission to explain the appearance of his name in documents stolen from the USSR Embassy by Petrov.

186Editorial Announcement, Meanjin, vol.9, no.4, 1950, p.302. For a detailed study of Meanjin during this period, see Lynne Strachan, Just City and the Mirrors: Meanjin Quarterly 1940-1965, Melbourne, 1984, ch.4-5.


188These phrases are from Vincent Buckley, ‘Image of Man in Australian Poetry’ (1957) in John Barnes (ed.), The Writer in Australia 1856-1964, Melbourne, 1969, pp.273, 293. As Susan McKernan argues, Australian writers of fiction and poetry in the twenty years after World War Two ‘cannot be dismissed as "metaphysical" in their interests and so divorced from important political and social issues’. See McKernan, A Question of Commitment, p.19.

189Frank Dalby DAVISON Born at Glenferrie, Victoria, in 1893, Davison lived in America from 1908 until he returned to Australia in 1919 after serving with the British army in France. He farmed for four years in Queensland before taking over his father’s real estate business in Sydney, and then began to write journalism, short stories and novels. He returned to farming outside Melbourne in 1951.

190See Hume Dow, Frank Dalby Davison, Melbourne, 1971, p.34.

191Frank Dalby Davison, Foreword to The White Thorn Tree, vol.1, Sydney, 1975, p.xiii.
Romantic love, itself seen as the product of a particular environment as much as any inherent human need, is undermined by the novel not for the sake of any better medium or doctrine, but as a destructive if necessary fiction. The scale and directness of Davison's survey of the lives of a network of individuals, couples and families, breaks down any categorisation of behaviour as normal or abnormal. Yet despite a careful objectivity in intention, *The White Thorn Tree* is a pessimistic work: the circumstances in which the characters conduct that part of their lives seen to be vital to their psychological stability and to the institutions of their society - the family, the law, and so on - are described as fraught with suffering and exploitation, however innocently inflicted and silently endured.

Davison's novel is extra-ordinary in its scale and form, and its encyclopaedic purpose gives it the character of a documentary statement, perhaps comparable in range to Oeser's social-psychological project. In other works of fiction from the period, there was a greater interest in the implicit evaluation of these themes, identifying social fragmentation and personal instability as the product of specific imbalances attributable to concerns familiar in conservative critiques of the ethical failure of modern society, and to the weakness of personality. Challenges to convention were more likely to be the product of irrationality or moral corruption than aspirations for positive reform. Traditional values, tenuous though they may have become, were points of stability, not open to individual trangression.

Again, it was women's sexuality which was frequently associated with threat, fear or weakness, rather than liberation. In Seaforth MacKenzie's 1954 novel, *The Refuge*, sexuality is an underlying motif throughout a story primarily dealing with the relationship of a journalist with a young European refugee, Irma Maartens, fleeing communism, the rise of fascism, and sexual exploitation. Fitzherbert, the journalist/narrator and a widower, quickly falls 'under the spell of her young enchantment, secret and ineffable, of absolute womanhood, and could not see the violence it concealed'. Having infiltrated the Nazi Party in Germany, Irma brings warning of the Nazi-Soviet pact, and of the inevitability of war in Europe. Through the attempts of the Communist Party to trace her in Sydney, she also brings an awareness of the increasing political corruption of an innocent Australia, and an anticipation that 'our glorious Russian ally ... [would grow] to become a nursery of terror of nightmare proportions ..., the acknowledged potential enemy of the whole western world'. Yet while the novel is remarkable in its attempt to cover social and political change in Australia from the late 1930s to the early 1950s, the central dynamic of the plot, and the agent of its conclusion, is Irma's sexuality. She is implicitly opposed to Fitzherbert's admiration of 'the perfect, normal health' of his son, Alan: his possession of a 'strongly masculine spirit'. The qualities Irma represents are particularly contrasted to the themes developed through Fitzherbert's commitment to the education of his son: his insistence, for example, that Alan should see 'the virtue in ... conforming mainly to the social pattem' as embodied in a private school education through the

---

192 Davison, *The White Thorn Tree*, p.xii.

193 Kenneth MacKENZIE Born at Perth in 1913, and educated at the University of Western Australia, MacKenzie moved to Sydney in 1934 and worked briefly in journalism. Drafted into the army in 1942, he was attached to the POW camp at Cowra. Troubled by alcoholism and ill-health, MacKenzie did not secure stable civilian employment, and lived in poverty on a small property farm at Kurrajong. He died in 1955.


crucial years of adolescence.\textsuperscript{197} This commitment is further accentuated by Fitzherbert's lament for the wartime background of 'the soft debauchery of a surprising number of adolescent girls' before the unrestrained intrusion of American soldiers, who in turn express the hollow democracy and 'tragedy of the American way of life'.\textsuperscript{198} Despite the expectation that it is the momentum of political intrigue and communist reprisal against Irma which will steer the novel to conclusion, these several themes are brought to a resolution in which her sexuality and the betrayal of masculine youth and innocence provide the catalyst. It is Fitzherbert who murders Irma, after having married her in secret, and discovering that she has taken his blameless son as a lover.

While these elements reflected characteristic pre-occupations in Mackenzie's writing,\textsuperscript{199} they also suggest some of the thematic associations of the issues with which the novel deals. \textit{The Refuge} is highly detailed in conveying its urban setting\textsuperscript{200} and political context, and also in its direct and symbolic deployment of female sexuality as the key to an understanding of social threat.\textsuperscript{201} In its identification of deeper forces of social unrest not in political but personal relations, it is also a part of a pervasive current in Australian literature in the 1950s. In a chapter of this scale it is impossible to survey the literature of the decade in any comprehensive way, but an analysis of the bi-annual anthology of short stories, \textit{Coast to Coast}, offers an opportunity to test for such themes in a collection of work selected by editors, themselves prominent writers, from many hundreds of contributions for each volume. Their criteria was not simply one of quality but representativeness and, no doubt, likely popularity. In these ways, the anthologies offer a valuable index not simply to common pre-occupations but prevailing tastes.\textsuperscript{202}

The stories in \textit{Coast to Coast}, like much literature of the time, were frequently set in rural areas, involving some element of hardship, of sexual trauma and of contact with Aborigines. Such subject matter was not unusual in itself, given similar concerns in the writing of the 1930s\textsuperscript{203} and the ready accessibility of that imagery to a generation of writers established by the 1950s.\textsuperscript{204} But the significance given to these subjects seems to have taken on a new shape in the fifties. Rather than a rural environment establishing a frontier or bush ethos of some collective sentiment, these stories usually define a more neutral context which appears to be valued for reducing personal relations to the barest elements. Sexuality pervades them not so much as desire or reciprocity, but as a form of psychological segregation; similarly, the rural environment is more a confrontation with self-limitations than the evocation of identity in hardship. As

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{197}MacKenzie, \textit{The Refuge}, pp.176-7.
\item \textsuperscript{198}MacKenzie, \textit{The Refuge}, pp.181-2; 190-1.
\item \textsuperscript{199}See Evan Jones, \textit{Kenneth Mackenzie}, Melbourne, 1969.
\item \textsuperscript{200}It was in this regard that R.M. Crawford praised the novel in a series of lectures at the University of Wisconsin in 1960 - \textit{An Australian Perspective}, Madison, 1960, p.40.
\item \textsuperscript{201}It is interesting to note that the depiction of Irma in \textit{The Refuge} shares much with a recurrent theme in the depiction of women as racial and political 'others' in the work of C.J. Koch. See Susan McKeman, 'C.J. Koch's Two-Faced Vision', \textit{Meanjin}, vol.44, no.4, 1985, pp.432-9.
\item \textsuperscript{202}Few editors outlined their criteria in Forewords, but the general presentation of the collections would indicate these objectives - see, however, Vance Palmer's Foreword to the 1945 collection (p.ix) and Davison's comments in 1943, in which he noted that while contributions in the form of socialist realism were prominent, they did not meet his sense of appropriate literature (p.xi).
\item \textsuperscript{203}See H.M. Green, \textit{A History of Australian Literature}, vol.2 (1923-1950), ch.11.
\item \textsuperscript{204}See McKeman, \textit{A Question of Commitment}, ch.1.
\end{itemize}
with Fitzherbert in *The Refuge* and even with *The White Thorn Tree*, men are customarily reticent, innocent, perhaps aware of a latent power to their sex but honourable in the possession of it. Women, on the other hand, are vulnerable, even unstable, their sexuality fraught with frustration. Such a distinction reflects the persistence of 'masculinist' assumptions and conventions in Australian culture, made even more marked in that these stories of the 1950s tend not to emphasise the social or economic roles associated with gender, but reduce difference to sexuality alone. Often women are described with some element of reassuring masculinity about them, until it is disturbed by a distinctively feminine undercurrent. In a story in the 1949-50 anthology, an itinerant farmer - the narrator - chances upon a farm in which a crop hangs heavy in the fields, unharvested because the farmer has broken his leg. Offering his help, the itinerant notes of the farmer’s wife that her voice ‘was low-pitched like a man, but softer, if you know what I mean, and that was another thing I liked’. Together the wife and the itinerant bring in the harvest over several days. All the while she maintains silence until, in the heat of work, she betrays a trace of sexual tension: ‘I knew I would have to keep away from her’. A passionate exchange is inevitable, as is the departure of the itinerant after a silent acknowledgement of what has happened from the husband. The loyalty of male to male is left inviolate; it is the wife who is left alone, restless and demanding.

Similar elements recur in the stories selected throughout the decade. In the same collection, Vance Palmer developed a frequent subject of his shorter writing: the disillusionment of an adolescent male at his betrayal by a more sexually experienced young woman; Judith Wright adopts a child’s perspective in recounting the fate of a ‘fast’ girl and the humiliation of her father in a small country town; Marjorie Barnard writes of an impressionable young man, aware that he has the power of ‘looks and charm’ but teased by the ‘insatiability’ of women; a respectable student at a boy’s school, full of ‘explosive masculinity’, is triggered into emotional crisis by the lures of sexuality and religion. Sexual conflict in marriage is sometimes diffused by hardship, and the family itself can offer emotional support amid relentless struggle. Throughout the decade, however, such accents are exceptions to a dominant emphasis on feminine sexuality as a persistent chord of instability. The contrast might be with the easy virility of young men, or the resignation of older men - in each case drawing tolerance and sympathy

---


206 Evans, ‘Harvest’, p.90.

207 Edward Vance PALMER Born at Bundaberg, Queensland, in 1885, Palmer went to London in 1905 and worked as a journalist and free-lance writer, returning to Australia in 1907. After a series of jobs commercial and teaching positions, Palmer went back to London, and then travelled through the USA and Mexico. In Australia again after the war, Palmer devoted himself to writing, living with his wife, Nettie Palmer, at Caloundra in Queensland from 1925 and publishing a series of novels. After touring Europe in 1935-1936, the Palmers moved to Melbourne where they established themselves as major cultural figures in criticism, broadcasting, and public lectures. In 1947 Palmer was appointed Chairman of the Advisory Board of the Commonwealth Literary Fund. He died in 1959.

208 Judith Arundell WRIGHT Born in 1915 at Armidale, Wright studied at the University of Sydney, and visited Europe and England in 1938-1939. She held various stenographic and secretarial positions there before becoming a statistical research officer at the University of Queensland in 1944. In 1949 she was awarded a Commonwealth Literary Fund Scholarship, and in the following years she became a prolific poet, critic, editor, and fiction writer.


210 See for example D’arcy Niland, ‘Without You In Heaven’ in Palmer (ed.), *Coast to Coast*, pp.135-42; Lyndall Hadow, ‘Full Circle’ pp.143-159.
through reference to a form of self-possession and self-knowledge. It is women who are consistently seen to be vulnerable, flawed, even to some extent corrupt. A nun in charge of a group of school children on a beach is disturbed by images of masculine sexuality; at a further extreme, a lonely country mother, provoked to sexual arousal by a travelling salesman, murders him in humiliation after discovering his sexual impotence. There are few images of stable maternal relations; it is often the father, as with Mackenzie's novel, who earnestly attempts to grasp the difficulties of his children, especially adolescents. In the 1957-58 collection, which also includes a story suggesting a doomed lesbian relationship, J.M. Rosen writes of a bush walk to a site of potential building construction with a real estate agent and his son, a property-developer and his wife. The theme seems initially to involve the despoilation of the country in speculation, but all through the story an obsession develops in the mind of the woman, finally finding articulation:

Sonia Cohen looked at the boy covertly. She wondered how old he was, fourteen perhaps or fifteen, but already male ... What was in her that could not leave the bud in its dark leaves, that had to penetrate the dark secret of the boy's virginity? ... Why all this fuss, a voice seemed to say; what is a boy's virginity? What harm could you do him? The father notes her gaze as 'hot' and urges his son to take advantage of it; the boy is more interested in the prospect of shooting a lyre-bird. Any suggestion that the story might seek to defend unfettered desire is dispelled by the woman's complicity, in attempting to get closer to the boy, in suggesting that she meet him at a later time to buy him the gun of which she disapproves. Not only is convention offended, but maternal instinct is swept aside in an almost gratuitous exercise of sexual stereotyping and the adoration of the male body.

Such a small survey offers no basis for generalisation, although other critics have noted the presence of similar themes in post-war Australian literature. As a part of a 'backlash against feminism', for example, Susan Sheridan observes 'woman's inhumanity to woman' to be a 'repeated theme' in novels by women writers at this time. In popular culture, too, the depiction of women seems have undergone a significant transformation towards more exclusive stereotypes of social and sexual role. Richard White has argued that the depiction of women in *Man* magazine changed fundamentally in the 1940s: 'inevitably mere sex objects', women were at least accorded by columnists in the late 1930s a quality of innocence, or, on the other hand, of sexual confidence and a level of 'mental and moral equality' with men. In the 1950s, however, the image was either 'cold and distant', oozing sex appeal, or the domestic stupidity of the 'sweet, innocent suburban girl-next-door'. A 'Sydney Psychiatrist', writing occasionally for the *Bulletin*, commented on the extent to which changes in sexual attitudes were undermining social and personal commitment. It was noted with particular concern that moral decay and an increasing intellectual and

---


216Sheridan, 'Women Writers' in Laurie Hergenhan (ed.), *Literary History*, p.323

quantifying approach to sex had produced a marked rise in homosexual practices, ‘especially among women’ who suffered most from the disappointment of unreal expectations. While much popular fiction during the period undoubtedly celebrated more explicitly conservative aspirations for suburban domesticity hinged on maternal roles, the persistence of themes scrutinising women’s sexuality suggests that this conservatism was not simply one of recovering innate qualities of motherhood, but also involved attempts to identify threats to stability within the individual and the family.

This pattern of analysis was later extended in the social criticism of Ronald Conway, particularly in his diagnosis of Australia as a ‘matrist state’ in which an over-concentration of social influence among women had strengthened the role of desire and emotion in Australian life, undermining commitment, principle and ‘masculine strength’ in all areas, from personal relations to political allegiances. The fifties did not foster such a coherent formulation, although the *Observer* noted in 1958 that women were ‘their own worst enemies’ in perpetuating, with little masculine assistance, a closed circle of ‘conservative’ interests in society, politics and education. In Britain at this time, much writing has been seen to exhibit an antagonistic pre-occupation with male homosexuality which in turn has been equated with a reaction against political liberalism and reformist idealism. In American writing, heavily influenced by psychological theories, the image of the possessive ‘mom’, the sexually aggressive suburban woman, and, almost by way of reaction, the increasingly overt male homosexual, became common figures of individual reaction within society. In Australia, however, there seemed to be neither a political nor sociological awareness sufficient to support any integration of sexuality with social critique or personal expression. As represented in *Coast to Coast, The Refuge* and *The White Thorn Tree* - the three spanning a fair range of the forms of literary response to the times - images of self and society seemed to trace instability back to a kind of corruption in the attributed origins of personality in maternal care.

***

Exceptions can be found to the themes identified in this survey of several areas of social commentary in the 'fifties, although they are likely to consist of attempts to shape a different emphasis around the themes of personality and the individual in search of identity. In 1955, for example, in *The Tree of Man*, Patrick White took similar elements but built from them a more challenging, complex sense of relationships in ‘the cat’s cradle of human intercourse’ which he saw as characteristic of Australian society: ‘necessarily simplified, often bungled, sometimes touching’. Those painters who, in 1959, signed Bernard Smith’s

---


219 See esp. Senyard and Lees, *Australia in the 'Fifties*, ch.4


‘Antipodean Manifesto’ - Charles Blackman, Arthur and David Boyd, John Brack, John Perceval, Bob Dickerson and Clifton Pugh - sought to create ‘myths’ which, skirting the edge of alienation, might evoke in individuals a collective awareness of their ‘identity’, and thus play a ‘creative and liberating role’. Nonetheless, there is a remarkable persistence of more conservative themes across the broad range of commentary covered in this chapter. Such commentary indicates an attempt to accommodate the newly individualised images of society in an analysis that seemed incapable of distinguishing the ‘popular’ from the ‘mass’. It was not the conservatism of a coherent ideology, or of retreat from social engagement to immutable abstractions. Often it grew from a desire to sustain a level of post-war reformism into a society that seemed to intellectuals, so long accustomed to concepts of social holism, suddenly fragmented rather than enabled by prosperity. They responded by seeking a reconciliation between social cohesion and the individual in terms of the adjustment of ‘personality’. Their criteria in these strategies were those of managing a stability defined within the individual rather than extending the ability of that figure to participate as a critical agent amid social change.

225 The full text of the Manifesto is reproduced in *Art and Australia*, vol.6, no.4, 1968, pp.608-9, with a following article by Barbara Blackman, ‘The Antipodean Affair’, pp.611-16. The character of its argument is indicated in the following passage: ‘We live in a young society still making its myths. The emergence of myth is a continuous social activity. In the growth and transformation of its myths a society achieves its own sense of identity. In this process the artist may play a creative and liberating role. The ways in which a society images its own feelings and attitudes in myth provides him with one of the deepest sources of art’ - p.609. For a succinct essay on this period, see John Rickard, *Australia: A Cultural History*, Melbourne, 1988, ch.10. See also Bernard Smith, ‘Reds, and Other Colours’, *Age Monthly Review*, vol.1, no.6, 1981, p.8.
Chapter 6

‘A Community with a Climate of its Own’

On 26 April 1939, R.G. Menzies addressed the Canberra University College on the topic of ‘The Place of the University in the Modern Community’. He spoke with enthusiasm, for education touched on his sense of his own achievement. In a national radio broadcast earlier the same day, introducing himself as Prime Minister, Menzies assured listeners that ‘I was not born to the purple’: having won his way on scholarships, his loyalty lay with ‘ordinary men and women’. Before his Canberra audience, however, Menzies defined the role of the university in more exclusive terms. ‘A life is not rich which contains no cloisters’, he maintained. A ‘civilised’ society would defend the principle of the university as a place of ‘pure culture and learning’, without demanding that it produce doctors, lawyers or engineers. For Menzies, the university gave a quality of character to the leaders it educated: a personal integrity not only in public office but also for those times ‘when the bright lights go out’. All Souls College, Oxford, exemplified his ideal:

I doubt whether it could exist outside of England, though I hope my grandchildren may know something like it in Australia. An ancient foundation, with chapel, dining hall and living quarters complete, it is a college of dons with no undergraduates to vex its calm, no teaching to debase its currency.

Menzies’ audience included members of the University Association of Canberra, a body formed in 1929 primarily by senior Commonwealth public servants, conscious of their intellectual isolation in the ‘bush capital’, but also participants in that inter-war enthusiasm for national development. Introducing the Prime Minister that night, Sir Robert Garran, Commonwealth Solicitor General from 1917 to 1932 and the current President of the Association, outlined a concept of a university’s potential contribution to society which differed significantly from that of his guest. Whereas Menzies’ vision of All Souls was of a place to which Fellows might retire ‘to refresh their weary and frequently dejected minds with the pure idealism of

---

1Menzies, ‘This Nation is Ours’ (national broadcast of 26 April 1939), reprinted as Appendix A in Fred Alexander, From Curtin to Menzies and After, Adelaide, 1973, p.209.

2Menzies, The Place of the University in the Modern Community, Melbourne, 1939, pp.10, 11, 16.

3Robert Randolph GARRAN Born in 1867 at Sydney, and educated at the University of Sydney, Garran was called to the NSW Bar in 1890. From 1897 to 1898 he was Secretary to the Drafting Committee of the Federation Convention, and 1901 to 1916 he was Secretary to the Commonwealth Attorney-General. Garran then became Commonwealth Solicitor-General, holding that position until 1932. He accompanied Hughes to the Peace Conference in 1919, was a prominent member of the Canberra University Association, established in 1929, and was Chairman of the Book Censorship Committee in Canberra from 1933 to 1937. Garran wrote several studies of the constitution and published translations of German poetry and lieder. He died in 1957.
the intellect', Garran spoke of the distinct kind of institution which members of the Association thought appropriate for the national capital. The role of this university would be as an integrated part of the functions of government, advising on international affairs and national objectives, offering leadership in the form of systematic research as a precondition to public policy.

Within twenty years of Menzies' Canberra address, the character of Australian universities changed dramatically. Much of this change can be seen in terms of the contrast between these two views. In the 1940s not only was the Australian National University established with an initial purpose very like Garran's ideal, but universities across Australia became part of mobilisation and reconstruction planning. Amid the demands of wartime, academics hoped to secure a more formal recognition of their expertise than had emerged form the ad hoc consultation of the inter-war years, and many administrators and professional groupings saw in the universities a base from which to co-ordinate post-war reform. From the end of 1941 it was also clear that the universities were moving from being the concern of State governments to become increasingly associated with the Commonwealth. There was no clearer indication of this realignment than the beginning of federal financial assistance to students from 1943, and then the massive growth in university enrolments under the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme after 1944. When Menzies took office in 1949, the universities were expanding and had entered a phase of unprecedented social integration, albeit under the strains accompanying that process. In the following decade, Menzies was to take 'great pride and satisfaction' in the 'dramatic development of the universities' as they attempted to meet these strains. The emphasis in that development, however, like the ideal Menzies sketched in 1939, was to profoundly reshape the form of that integration, as reformism gave way to the cultivation of a 'liberal' tradition. In the 'fifties, the universities were no less a part of Australian society and politics, but their function became more conservative. As institutions, they were to preserve a sense of integrity defined with reference to abstract, internal values rather than with reference to the needs and conflicts associated with social change. Among many who taught and researched within them, there was a commitment to resisting the demands of that change by appealing to the necessity for stability and the separation of the 'applied' from the 'pure', and the utilitarian from the 'academic'.

The issues addressed in the discussion of the universities' role in the 1940s and 1950s have been traversed in other areas of this thesis: the prospects of social reformism; the legitimate extent of government regulation of social activity; the reconciliation of technological advance to cultural values; the balance between tradition and critical enquiry. In each chapter it has been indicated that the the forms of

4Much of Menzies' address in Canberra paraphrased diary entries recording his visit to the College in 1935. The quotation is taken from that diary - see Menzies, Overseas Diary B (1935), Menzies Papers, NLA Ms.4936/13, p.199. It is perhaps ironic for Menzies that it was around the 'disasterous dinner table' of All Souls throughout the 'thirties that influential senior Fellows, including Dawson, had perpetuated the British policy of appeasing Nazi Germany. Their ability to overlook the significance of political change in Germany was, as A.L. Rowse has suggested, not purely coincidental to a tendency to place 'good form' above critical analysis - Rowse, All Souls and Appeasement, London, 1961, pp.113-17.


academically-disciplined enquiry, such as anthropology, economics, geography and psychology, were central to the attempts to comprehend social change and to shape its course. As they were so much a part of post-war development in Australia, the universities mediated the changing patterns of knowledge, authority and accreditation in society. The subjects they taught and even - as Garran and Menzies suggested - the ways in which the institution itself shaped the priorities and the status of intellectual activity, were a part of their role, and a part of their contribution to post-war conservatism. Without covering all their aspects and functions, the focus in this chapter will be on the Arts faculties of the Universities of Sydney and Melbourne, which, as the largest and most established of the nation’s universities, offer sufficiently extensive fields in which to assess the inter-relationship between institutional alignments, cultural forms, and social and political change. Attention will also be given to the evolution of the Australian National University. The prospect of the ANU, distinguished from other academic ventures by a more specific identification of objectives with reference to national needs, was much in the minds of those present at Menzies’ Canberra address in 1939. Through its establishment and consolidation in the post-war years, the ANU was to bear the marks of its time.

* * *

Universities in Australia have always had a high profile. Without being objects of general veneration, or benefitting from public or private munificence, they have been discussed with an intensity of scrutiny and expectation. Whereas British and European universities since the nineteenth century had served an established middle class, in Australia the universities were established to create a middle class. Lacking the American context of private philanthropy, Australian universities were the creatures of government, often scarcely distinguishable from the public service in their constitution and conditions, and publically accountable and politically vulnerable. From their beginnings in Sydney and Melbourne in the 1850s, the cultivated Englishness of Australian universities operated more as a commodity than a tradition, overshadowing other academic models proposed at that time. They were expected to replicate middle class England in Australia. When some among the early Professoriate gave evidence of the diversity of views that a functioning middle class might accommodate on educational, sacred and secular questions, they were informed of their transgressions by governing bodies dominated by the non-academic representatives of political and economic interests. In Australia, in the colonies and then in the States, academics were expected to keep out of politics, respect religious orthodoxy and maintain moral conventions.

Some of these early academics, coming from England at a time when the need for social reform through education was increasingly discussed in terms such as Matthew Arnold’s advocacy of a ‘collective best self’, were acutely aware of the absence in Australia of even the basic cultural or class traditions on which

---


to build an equivalent educational structure. In 1882, for example, Charles Badham, Professor of Classics at the University of Sydney, expressed concern that if Australia was to become a democracy capable of escaping the gullibility of the inchoate mass - and he could see no alternative - then the universities must draw their students from all classes in society. No other institution in the colonies was capable of addressing such a task. Without Badham's insistence on the need for a classical education to demonstrate the essential continuity in human aspirations, Charles Pearson in Victoria drew on a more evangelical tradition of reform in an attempt not only to open universities to a wider section of society, but to offer students an education more immediately relevant to the tasks of social advancement. As academics sought, often with great enthusiasm, to contribute to the growth of their societies, for the community itself the universities remained conspicuous as fonts of wisdom - albeit within the bounds of respectability. 'I simply wanted to be a person', W.K. Hancock wrote of his years as Professor of History in Adelaide from 1924 to 1933, 'but found myself being treated as a personage ... whose words were chronicled in the newspapers and deemed to be authoritative'.

In turn, the 'college walls' were sometimes seen to mark a gulf between academics and those who worked in journalism and creative writing, and sought to mark out their own perception of Australian society without such status. Debray, in his study of the changing mediatory centres for intellectuals in France over the last century, argues that the university was succeeded by publishing in the 1920s. In Australia, with a vigorous tradition of journalism in the nineteenth century, it might be more appropriate to reverse the diagnosis while maintaining something of its symptoms of a steadily imposed public consensus in ideas. The universities well into this century were caught ambiguously between public accountability and academic isolation - a status symbolised by their physical location on the inner-suburban fringes of city

---

10 Charles BADHAM Born in 1813 in Britain, Badham was educated at Cambridge and, after a period teaching, he became headmaster of a school at Southampton in 1851, and then at Birmingham. He was actively involved in issues of education reform, and this was a commitment he maintained after his appointment as Professor of Classics at the University of Sydney in 1863. He was a trustee of the Free Public Library in Sydney, and examiner for Tasmanian schools, and a keen participant in extra-mural teaching. Badham died in 1884.


12 Charles Henry PEARSON Born at London in 1830, and educated at Oxford, Pearson became a Fellow of Oriel College before embarking for South Australia in 1864 to improve his health. He farmed for a time, and in 1874 was appointed Headmaster of the Presbyterian Ladies College in Melbourne. During this period he was also active as a journalist and public speaker on reformist issues. In 1877 he entered Victorian parliament, and in 1878 led an Inquiry into Public Education in the colony. Pearson died in 1894.

13 See John Tregenza, Professor of Democracy: The Life of Charles Henry Pearson, 1830-1894, Oxford Don and Australian Radical, Melbourne, 1968, esp. ch.5.

14 For an assessment of the wide range of public commitments of Australian academics, see Barry Smith, 'Academics In and Out of the Australian Dictionary of Biography', unpublished paper to the Special Seminar Programme, 'Sources and Ideas for the History of Universities in Australia', RSSS, ANU, 14 May 1990.


centres. The announcement of the University of Sydney’s ‘Open Day’ in 1935 indicated something of this uncertain standing:

It [Sydney University] would seem to be situated on the outskirts of a large metropolis, absorbed in its own academic pursuits, and it remains to some extent aloof from the business world. Yet the University of Sydney is an integral part of our city, and citizens should take an interest and pride in our ‘home of culture’.

Despite the standing the university might have warranted in the medical and natural sciences, its public status was still caught between remote scholarship and commercial application. In 1935 visitors were also encouraged to take special note of the excellent state of the gardens and grounds.

There were attempts to resolve these ambiguities, often in the terms of an evolutionary reformism. One stream of educational philanthropy from around 1870 to the 1900s encouraged the founding of Chairs of Engineering, partly to engage the universities in the interests of a broader section of society, offering the working class an opportunity to contribute to its own ‘improvement’. The rise of a politically organised labour movement at the turn of the century is often associated with the demise of such an ideal, as the strict categorisation of skills and rights offered by industrial arbitration is seen to have become the new class intermediary. Then, in the 1910s and 1920s, the ‘secular evangelism’ of those advocating the study of sociology was expressed in attempts to recast the university as a benevolent counsellor between the state and society, fostering an ethic of efficiency, managed rewards and improved civic morale. Programmes on these lines found little formal recognition - although traces might be seen to emerge later in the more restricted application of psychological programmes of vocational guidance discussed in Chapter Three. There was no desire, either in private or government sectors, to fund comprehensive approaches to social issues, again perhaps reflecting the lack of an administrative or managerial class, and an industrial base, sufficient to see the advantages of such programmes. The universities, as Helen Bourke has argued, were ‘at once too close and too remote’ to their communities to find necessary support. It was clear in the 1920s that specific disciplines had achieved a considerable degree of professional cohesion, and previous chapters have given examples of academics finding areas in which to apply their expertise, often associated with government and rarely with private interests. Yet this recognition, as the case of the economists suggested, tended to be on the basis of a form of consultation which did not extend a reciprocal

---

18For an account of achievements in these areas, see David Branagan and Graham Holland, *Ever Reaping Something New: A Scientific Centenary*, Sydney, 1983.


21A detailed account of this campaign is provided in Rowse, *Australian Liberalism*, ch.2. A prominent advocate in this area, Francis Anderson, Professor of Logic and Moral Philosophy in Sydney from 1887 to 1921, argued in 1912 that as a people ‘engaged in the making of a nation’, the time had surely come ‘when the national government should provide ... for the teaching of the science of society’ in the nation’s universities - Anderson, ‘Sociology in Australia’, repr. in *Social Horizons*, 1943, p.20.


23One indication of this development is the founding of journals such as the *Australian Journal of Psychology and Philosophy* (1922), *Economic Record* (1925), *Australian Quarterly* (1929), and *Oceania* (1930).
acknowledgement of institutional role to the universities themselves. Deference to academic opinion did not translate into the provision of time or facilities for extended research, or the opportunity for academics to specialise amid the demands of generalist teaching.24

In the 1930s, with the fears of social crisis stemming from the Great Depression, the universities were included in a renewed scrutiny of the inability of the Australian education system to address social conflict across class lines, and to offer curricula appropriate to pressing social issues.25 Yet that scrutiny, in keeping with the general intellectual orientation of that period, was geared more to social management than philanthropic amelioration. Raymond Priestley,26 who had been appointed Vice-Chancellor of the University of Melbourne in 1933, argued in a series of public lectures in 1937 that ‘the boundaries of the State should be the boundaries of the university’. By this Priestley meant that university students must become ‘the natural leaders’ of their time - not through character alone, but through professionalising the Public Service, which figured in his thinking as the culmination of the state as a liberal, co-operative society. An extensive scholarship scheme should ensure that these students were ‘the pick of every generation of the youth of the State, whether they come from well-to-do or basic wage homes’. While the university would prepare them for social engagement, offering study in the disciplines of sociology and economics, it would not compromise the privileges and exclusiveness necessary to cultivate ‘the full development of the body, character and mind of its undergraduate students’.27 In their youth, in the universities selectivity, and in the cultural formation seen to be integral to their education, it was clear that Priestley envisaged the formation of an elite, diverse in its origins but united in its mission. Like many commentators at that time, Priestley’s proposals found no funding to support them, and would wait for the mobilisation of the 1940s for any form of concrete recognition. In 1937 he returned to Birmingham, convinced that Australian universities were locked into inertia, lacking administrative independence and incapable of participating in the social reform which seemed so necessary.28

Proposals similar to Priestley’s model were under discussion elsewhere in the inter-war years. Two prominent graduates of the University of Sydney, Percy Spender, then a King’s Council, and H.V. Evatt, a Justice of the High Court, joined in 1935 to insist on the necessity ‘to inculcate an idea of service among

24There are several accounts, mainly autobiographical, of these demands in the inter-war years, in departments which often consisted of one professor and one or two junior or part-time assistants, and giving lectures in many different fields each week to classes sometimes in excess of one hundred students. See for example W.K. Hancock, Professing History, Sydney, 1976, p.187, and, more generally, Geoffrey Serle, From the Deserts the Prophets Come, Melbourne, 1973, p.151. To these accounts might be added the recollections of students. A.R. Chisholm recalled of his teachers at the University of Melbourne that ‘practically all were inaccessible’: Chisholm, Men Were My Milestones, Melbourne, 1955, p.33.


26Raymond Edward PRIESTLEY Born at Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire, in 1886, Priestley was educated at Bristol University College until 1907, when he joined Shakleton’s Antarctic Expedition. Returning in 1909, he resumed study at Cambridge University, becoming a Fellow of Clare College between 1923 and 1934. In 1935 he was appointed Vice-Chancellor of the University of Melbourne, holding that position until his resignation in 1938, following which he became Vice-Chancellor of the University of Birmingham until 1952.


The President of the Australian Teacher’s Federation suggested that the establishment of a university in Canberra would assist the nation to develop a sense of pride. In fact, this second suggestion had been under active official consideration prior to the Depression, and the terms of that discussion revealed some of the ideals then surrounding the universities’ potential role. A report commissioned by S.M. Bruce in 1926 for the Federal Capital Commission, had placed the creation of a university in Canberra at the head of a progressive, emphatically sectarian educational network. The suggested model for the project was Johns Hopkins University in America, the graduates and staff of which were seen to have given a distinctive shape to American intellectual and political life. As Garran repeated in 1939, the university was to foster research in fields appropriate to national development. In the 1920s these fields had been identified to complement the scientific programmes of the CSIR with an analysis of social issues built around a core department of Economics, with Law and Engineering as next priority. Planning for the university was suspended in 1928, but the project was not forgotten. Instead, as Garran indicated, the priorities shifted from emphases on development to a battery of disciplines more attuned to managing domestic and international uncertainty. In 1934 L.F. Fitzhardinge, then a Research Officer in the National Library of Australia and a member of the University Association, argued that the province of a national university should be ‘humane studies’, in which he included ‘history, philosophy and literature, sociology, anthropology and oriental studies’. These areas of enquiry would provide the qualities he saw to be lacking among an Australian elite, deprived of ‘the long tradition which makes them almost second nature in the intellectual and governing classes of the older countries’.

Badham and Pearson’s mission for universities still had advocates in the 1930s. By then, however, it was being given a more specific form by commentators emphasising the recruitment of an elite to serve society in association with the state, and identifying the role of distinct disciplines in social reform. The prospect of a national university carried this enthusiasm beyond a concern with teaching to the concept of a university as a research body in its own right, with objectives defined in terms of national development and social management. If little day-to-day work in the universities registered these ideals, the inter-war period nevertheless generated a distinct series of assumptions relating to the social role of the universities. First, an emphasis on teaching, geared not to the direct utility of subjects, but to the contribution of an educated elite in specific areas of social reform. Second, the identification of a disciplinary framework, primarily in

31 Professor Mungo MacCallum, of the University of Sydney, felt compelled to dissent from the strongly anti-religious tone of one report, which advocated the establishment of highly selective government secondary schools to direct students to academic study. MacCallum’s committee comprised R.S. Wallace (then Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sydney) and L.F. Giblin (Commonwealth Statistician). This report also seems to have been found too ambitious in its recommendations by the government. Another committee was appointed to deal with more specific matters, and comprised Garran, A.C.D. Rivett (Deputy Chairman of the CSIR) and J.G. McLaren (Secretary, Department of Home and Territories). See Australian Archives files AA 27/1732. For a more detailed coverage of the advocacy of a university for Canberra, see Milton Lewis, ‘The Idea of a National University: the Origins and Establishment of the Australian National University’, ANZHES Journal, vol.8, no.1, 1979, pp.40-55; Lewis, ‘Canberra as a Cultural Centre: the Aspirations of the Canberra University Movement 1927-1945’, RAHS Journal, vol.65, pt.1, 1980, pp.59-64.
32 The alumni included Frederick Jackson Turner, John Dewey and Woodrow Wilson.
33 Fitzhardinge, ‘The University That Will Be’, Prometheus, 1934-5, p.11. For further and more comprehensive statements of this shifting orientation, see the Annual Reports of the University Association of Canberra from 1929-30 to 1939-40, especially 1938-39, p.3-4.
the social sciences, which, as applied expertise or as systematic research, would be appropriate to new areas of public policy. These were the assumptions implicit in Garran's and, to a lesser extent, in Menzies' comments in 1939. They were also those with which a substantial group of academics hoped to improve the condition and extend the capability of Australian universities amid the challenge of war and reconstruction.

***

After 1942 academic expertise was widely deployed in areas of wartime priority, including planning, administration, technical and scientific research, education and the maintainance of morale. This mobilisation was intensive but not comprehensive, and was often dictated by short-term imperatives. Nonetheless, it established for some commentators an enduring association between the universities' assumption of social engagement, and the extremes of bureaucratism and centralised control. An alliance with the form of 'liberal' state envisaged by Priestley had been irrevocably politicised. There were two levels at which these opportunities and compromises were understood. First, there was an institutional level, at which universities were discussed with reference to the expansion of public policy and state regulation. The second level emphasised the cultural dimension of that process, and involved the definition of those areas of knowledge which were seen to be appropriate to social analysis. This discussion dealt primarily with the role of the applied and social sciences as they were seen to influence research priorities, the objectives of teaching, and even the selection of students.

One of best examples of the character of the wartime mobilisation of academic resources was the work of Alfred Conlon. Through the network of linkages Conlon developed between the National Morale Committee and Army Research Unit, and agencies such as the Australian National Research Council (ANRC) and the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), he assembled a group of 'researchers' and advisers, mostly consisting of graduates and academics, with the intention of determining and implementing priorities and policies for post-war reconstruction. Dedicated to the 'recruitment and inspiration of elites', Conlon is credited by John Passmore with forcing on the army and the government

---

34 Each chapter of this thesis has dealt with aspects of this 'intellectual' mobilisation, and it is well covered in more general histories. For a comprehensive study of its educational dimension from an administrative point of view, see P.D. Tannock, *A Study of the Involvement of the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia in Education* (PhD, Johns Hopkins University), Ann Arbor, 1969; Andrew Spaull provides a concise account, with a more social emphasis, in *Australian Education in the Second World War*, pp.219-31. In 1944 a Commonwealth Committee was established under Professor R.C. Mills, to review Commonwealth involvement in all levels of education. See Spaull, *Australian Education*, pp.258-61.

35 Alfred Austin CONLON Born at Sydney in 1908, Conlon was educated at the University of Sydney and in 1942 became chairman of the Committee on National Morale, and then Director of Research for the Army, with the rank of major. He was then appointed to the staff of the Commander-in-Chief, General Sir Thomas Blamey, as the Director of Research and Civil Affairs. From this position, Conlon sought to co-ordinate the intellectual resources for reconstruction. He was centrally involved in the creation of ASOPA, and was its Principal until 1951, at which point he was forced to resign by a dissatisfied staff. Conlon returned to the study of medicine, and practiced in Newcastle, Melbourne and Sydney until his death in 1961.

36 John Arthur PASSMORE Born at Manly, NSW, in 1914, Passmore was educated at the University of Sydney, at which he became a Tutor in Philosophy in 1935. He left Sydney, having achieved the level of senior lecturer, in 1949 to become Professor of Philosophy at the University of Otago, NZ. In 1955 Passmore returned to Australia to take up a Readership at the ANU.
a recognition 'of the contribution academically trained people could make to the community'. Conlon was also committed to the more specific task of revitalising the concept of a national university as a way of perpetuating the influence of academic expertise on government. The enthusiasm of this grouping, together with the more particular advocacy of many others interested in improving facilities for scientific and medical research in Australia, influenced the recommendation of the Walker Committee in 1944 that 'immediate steps' should be taken to establish a primarily post-graduate university in Canberra. From this enquiry emerged a further formulation of the areas in which the university should concentrate: an Institute of Government would include Australian history, economics, public administration, political science, law, international relations, diplomacy and oriental studies; there would be an Institute of Social Medicine; and a postgraduate School of Town and Regional Planning. Conlon's influence, however, was conditional on mobilisation. Pragmatically, J.J. Dedman, as Minister for Post-War Reconstruction, stated that: 'The Commonwealth is interested in the universities because they are, and are likely to remain, the only training ground for certain essential contributions to the war effort'. At the end of the war, Conlon's elite left their uniforms for dispersed fields in the professions, the public service, and the law, with many returning to the universities. In these spheres their individual achievements continued to be striking, but their period of collective activity had passed.

Academics still within the universities also participated in the intellectual enterprise of mobilisation to the extent that shortages in equipment and movement in staff allowed. For scientists, although keen to offer their services to government, it was often the case that while their laboratories might be utilised, their own teaching commitments, and their inability to sustain large-scale research projects, meant that they were excluded from major areas of wartime work. In the social sciences, academics identified programmes which would influence the changing priorities in social intervention. In Elkin's Anthropology Department at the University of Sydney, the Australian Institute of Sociology was established to encourage research on issues of civilian and industrial morale, drawing on concerns similar to those outlined in the discussion of Army Education in Chapter Five. Much of the Institute's work was conducted outside the university, among a national network of school teachers, clergy and bureaucrats. This work, however, referred back to the university as the institution vital to the co-ordination and analysis of enquiries in areas of actual or potential social conflict. These areas ranged from the discontent of a working class which had scarcely recovered from the Depression, to the issues of racism, housing, and family disunity. In meeting these

---


38 For a discussion of the Walker Committee, see Tannock, *A Study of the Involvement*, pp.365-6; also the essays by Wright and Oliphant in Thompson (ed.), *Alfred Conlon*, pp.28-9; 39-40. The most comprehensive study of the consultations surrounding the establishment of the ANU is Milton Lewis, 'The Idea of a National University'.


43 Prominent 'members' of the Institute included Lloyd Ross and R.J.F. Boyer. For general reference to the Institute, see Rowse, *Australian Liberalism*, p.166.
problems, 'administration' was seen as the crucial theme. As observed by one Institute member, Kenneth Henderson, it was 'mainly to the universities that governments have gone to recruit a high type of administrator capable of dealing with just these turbulent masses of fact'. Henderson recommended an 'ideal system' in which academics (especially economists) would work in the public service for several years before taking up teaching posts. Employed by the ABC as an Editor of Special Talks, Henderson went further to suggest a more expansive alliance for academics: 'To change the plain man in his condition, we must know him and respect him'. With the common objective of penetrating that shell of privacy, 'the scholar should not despair the techniques of the press and radio and other networks of popular persuasion'.

This projected mobilisation of academic expertise went beyond the taste for erudite 'opinion' which irritated Hancock in the 1920s, demanding specific skills of analysis and co-ordination. Yet in identifying the individual rather than the social whole as the focus, the imperatives of wartime and the programmes of reconstruction seemed to define a dual, sometimes ambiguous objective: on the one hand was the need to encourage the participation of the citizen; on the other was the mechanism through which to implement centralised planning. In the programmes of Elkin's Institute, where national priorities were related to the adjustment of the individual in terms of specific professional skills and 'techniques', this duality in turn implied a new emphasis in defining the university's social role. The evolutionary and managerial precepts which informed the role outlined in the inter-war years was cast more in terms of a specific professionalism geared to the citizen rather than to the state. This shift in objectives was not manifested as a clear contrast in discussion, but it did mean that by the later 1940s a new range of unresolved questions entered into the definition of the role of the social sciences which in turn informed expectations of the universities themselves.

In the context the Sydney Institute, this sense of professionalism can be attributed to the influences of the traces of Christian philanthropy among Elkin's network of researchers, and to the inter-war specialisation of the Sydney Department of Psychology in the field of vocational guidance and counselling. During World War Two, Psychology had made perhaps the most direct academic contribution to the war effort in the social sciences, through the application of techniques of guidance and selection in industry and the armed forces. In turn, as Elkin noted, that Department then attracted the highest enrolments among returned soldiers. The field of application developed by this discipline and consolidated in wartime was to exert considerable influence on post-war programmes in the social sciences in Sydney.

---

44Henderson, 'The Scholar in Reconstruction', Social Horizons, no.1, 1943, pp.82-3.
46Established in 1921, that Department had quickly developed ties with the New South Wales Department of Education and, in 1927, had formed the Institute of Industrial Psychology in collaboration with the Chamber of Manufacturers. For a background to the Department, see the articles published in Australian Journal of Psychology, vol.10, no.1, 1958 - a tribute to issue to H. Tasman Lovell - esp. J.P. Clark, 'Psychology in the Public Service, Business and Industry', pp.31-2; D.J.A. Verco, 'Psychological Services in Education Departments', pp.19-20. Chapter Four began with a discussion of Tasman Lovell's commitment, as the first Professor of Psychology, to the problems of 'motivation, emotion and personality' in the individual, and noted his association with the Council for Social Services, a body co-ordinating the flow of information between public and private welfare agencies. See K.F. Walker, W.M. O'Neil and J.F. Clark, 'H.T. Lovell: An Appreciation' in the AJP tribute issue, pp.4-5.
47D.E. Rose, 'Psychology in the Armed Forces', AJP tribute issue, pp.42-8; Elkin, 'The Emergence of Psychology, Anthropology and Education' in Elkin et al., One Hundred Years of the Faculty of Arts, Sydney, 1952, pp.31-5.
More important than these local influences, the ethic of professionalism in the post-war social sciences also related to a concern among many academics to overcome the entrenched limitations of Australian universities, and to make the most of new opportunities for the extension of their expertise. In 1943 the ANRC established a Committee for Research in the Social Sciences (the precursor of the present Australian Academy of the Social Sciences) in recognition of the increasing importance of work in that area. This initiative was a significant departure from the Council's previous concentration on funding research in the physical and biological sciences. The first Chairman of the Social Sciences Committee, K.S. Cunningham, was also the executive officer of ACER, which itself had been established in 1930, with funding from the Carnegie Corporation, and which remained one of the very few research institutions in Australia to work independently of universities. The Committee's recognition of the social sciences emphasised their direct application to social issues. There was, however, some internal disagreement over the form of that application. Among the members of the Committee were those for whom the issues of post-war social reform were either those of individual adjustment - Lovell, Elkin, Bland and Wood among them - or of planning, such Conlon, Coombs and Mauldon. Explicit in the Committee's conception was an awareness of the need to establish research programmes away from the relative social isolation of Australian universities, with their British inheritance. Yet whereas a similar debate had been played out in the establishment of the American Social Science Association, between private philanthropists and the 'scientific' analysis offered by a new generation of academics, in Australia it was clear that discussion would be confined to academics. There were only university or governmental foundations on which such programmes could be built.

In 1945 the Research Committee was ambitious in confronting 'the concrete problems which press so urgently for solution'. The issues identified for attention ranged from population growth (addressing questions of race, assimilation and eugenics); social and economic imbalances in rural areas; urbanisation; the institutions and powers of government; labour and industry; education and culture; ‘native people’ and

48Kenneth Stewart CUNNINGHAM Born at Ballarat in 1890, Cunningham was educated at Melbourne Teachers' College, the University of Melbourne and Columbia University. He served with the AIF in the Ambulance and Education Service during World War One and was the appointed to a lectureship at Melbourne Teachers' College, moving to a similar position in the School of Education at the University in 1930. At the same time, he became Director of the Australian Council for Educational Research, a position he held until 1954. Cunningham was a member of several organisations, serving as a member of the Social Science Research Council and as President of the Eugenics Society of Victoria. He was elected a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Librarians, the Institute of Industrial Management, and the British Psychological Society, and published widely on education theory.


50See Social Science Research in Australia, p.7.

51See Mary Fumer, Advocacy and Objectivity: The Professionalisation of Social Science 1865-1905 (PhD, Northwestern University) Ann Arbor, 1972, pp.5, 8, 31-4.

52The Australian Committee had from the start an overwhelming academic basis. Of the thirty-three members of the Committee in 1945, for example, all but eight were academics then working in universities; those who were not academics were public servants or members of statutory authorities, and five of them had been professors at one time - see listing in ANRC, Social Science Research in Australia, endpapers.

53In the late 1940s, in attempting to secure a clearer intellectual and institutional orientation for the social sciences, the Committee sought close association with UNESCO and its programmes, yet found that these ties were not necessarily accompanied by substantial recognition of local initiatives and needs. See Office of Education files, 'UNESCO - Abstracting in the Social Sciences', AA A1361 16/44/14.
the administration of external territories; health; and social psychology (including the formation and 'modification of attitudes' though the popular media; the dynamics of groups; and the causes of delinquency). The Committee was critical of the paucity or non-existence of facilities in Australian universities for teaching in these areas. Cunningham emphasised the necessity for 'training workers in these fields' to avoid 'unscientific' solutions in their advice and interventions. This emphasis, which related not only to prospective careers but also to academic objectives, was not uniformly endorsed in subsequent Committee reports. Alternative positions developed between a focus on professionalism or on planning - a difference which might relate to the personal political allegiances of academics, but also involved conceptions of the role of the university in teaching and in its society.

The themes of the division were clear in a Report of the Committee, published in 1951, on The Teaching of the Social Sciences. One grouping of contributors outlined cross-disciplinary undergraduate programmes to serve a need for managed reform to be addressed by the state; another group emphasised a 'professionalism' in academic training which would only be diluted by such internal or external ties. John Passmore observed with approval that the University of Sydney had established a 'special school in the Social Sciences' which insisted on compulsory units in philosophy and history (in the absence of sociology), but left 'considerably more freedom' in the choice of further subjects than was available to other Arts students. S.J. Butlin similarly noted a 'liberalisation' in Economics courses at Sydney. Here was evidence that 'universities are feeling their way to a view of the social sciences as a co-ordinated and integrated field of study'. Graduates of this course were destined for diverse areas of employment, and would be capable of deploying a range of critical disciplines unavailable to economists with strictly 'professional' training. In History, too, R.M. Crawford, Professor in Melbourne, welcomed closer collaboration among the social sciences in terms of a greater attention to matters of 'scientific method'. Familiar with theories and models in analysis, the students of these courses were expected to find work in the public service. The private sector was seen to lack sufficient development or initiative to provide appropriate opportunities. Julius Stone, Professor of Law in Sydney, hoped that graduates of a Law course modelled on cross-disciplinary lines would become government research officers, particularly in the field of law reform. As Stone argued in 1952, the social sciences offered the necessary reconciliation between the 'ancient humanities' and the contemporary social changes being wrought by the 'physical sciences': they developed those skills once associated with the 'social function' of ""the professions"" but which were

---

54ANRC, Social Science Research in Australia, pp.5, 13-16.

55Cunningham then outlined the 'scope of the community' as being defined by 'the sociological aspects of such fields as the study of anthropology, economics, education, history, human geography, jurisprudence, medicine, philosophy, political science, psychology, public administration and statistics': Social Science Research, pp.7-8.

56Passmore, Preface, ANRC, The Teaching of the Social Sciences in Australian Universities, no place of publication given, 1951, p.5. This Report was largely a revision of papers prepared in 1947.

57Butlin, 'Economics', Teaching, p.17.

58Raymond Maxwell CRAWFORD Born at Grenfell, NSW, in 1906, and educated at the University of Sydney and at Oxford, Crawford worked as a school teacher from 1930 to 1935, and was then appointed to a lectureship in History at Sydney. In 1937 he became Professor of History at the University of Melbourne.

59Crawford, 'History', Teaching, pp.31-3.

60Stone, 'Law', Teaching, pp.37, 39. See also Passmore, Preface, Teaching, p.5.
destined to coalesce more with those of government.\textsuperscript{61}

At one level, it is the optimism of these proposals that is most striking. Although increasing numbers of graduates were finding employment in the public service in the post-war years, it was not until 1958 that the Boyer Commission gave close scrutiny to the issue of systematic recruitment. Law reform would wait much longer for formal consideration. At another level, however, what seems remarkable is the exclusiveness with which academic initiatives were linked to social reform through public policy - an association which was particularly conspicuous when compared to the views of other contributions to the Report. Cunningham's Foreword suggested a substantial re-appraisal of the agenda outlined for the Committee in 1945. Instead of defining areas of progressive policy tied to the state, he emphasised a need to define and defend common social values, suggesting a 'fascinating field' for the social sciences in these terms:

There is a danger in the fact that our civilisation is transplanted and not indigenous. Because of our common language with the parent culture, and our preservation, in name at least, of many of the same institutions, our perception may be dulled to the need for careful study of the changes brought about by the physical fact of separation, and by the new set of geographical, economic and political conditions effecting our social evolution. We cannot neglect our past, but we can, and commonly do, neglect to study the effect on the growth of the tree of transplanting those roots.\textsuperscript{62}

As Cunningham informed an ANZAAS meeting the following year, such a field was dictated by the need to address distinctively Australian issues in a hitherto derivative curriculum. It is equally worth stressing that this need was comprehended in terms of a threatened loss of 'cultural homogeneity'.\textsuperscript{63} In this context, as both Elkin and W.M. O'Neil\textsuperscript{64} agreed that Psychology must be central to the social sciences: the development of techniques of individual adjustment was more pressing in a time of cultural transition and consolidation than any wider cross-disciplinary survey. In 1952 Elkin expressed hesitation regarding the inter-related claims of 'what are now fashionably called the social sciences', preferring to describe a more specific academic training in 'an understanding of the mind' and the dynamics of 'the group'. The graduates of such training would 'go into the professions', taking positions in 'education, the church, counselling, staff welfare and management, social service and such like fields of human relations'.\textsuperscript{65}

These contrasting emphases were more than the reflection of personal political views, for they not only informed academic objectives in teaching and research, but they were also in themselves a product of the post-war context in which attempts were made to define the role of Australian universities amid social change. Politically, this commentary can be divided between the advocates of social reform looking to public policy during a period when government shunned the rhetoric of planning, and the advocates of individual adjustment relying on traditional social and personal patterns of support so as to avoid further


\textsuperscript{62}Cunningham, Foreword, \textit{Teaching}, p.1.


\textsuperscript{64}William Matthew O’NEIL Born at Sydney in 1912, and educated at the University of Sydney, O’Neil was appointed Lecturer in education at the Sydney Teachers’ College in 1935, and in 1936 became the Psychologist-in-Charge of the Vocational Guidance Bureau of the NSW Department of Labour and Industry. Between 1940 and 1945 he worked as a Research Officer with the Sydney Technical College, and in 1945 became the McCaughey Professor of Psychology at the University of Sydney. In 1955 he served as Dean of the Faculty of Arts at Sydney.


\textsuperscript{66}Elkin, ‘The Emergence of Psychology, Anthropology and Education’, pp.21-4.
centralisation. In terms of the universities' role, it seems that the viable inheritance of post-war reformism was that which, ironically, was shifting in its emphases to a more conservative stress on sustaining the integrity of the university from both academic syntheses, and the integrity of the individual-in-society from intrusive public policy. Strategies of private management, apparently, were regarded in a different light.

From both within and outside the universities in the late 1940s came a number of expressions of disquiet at the extent to which academics had continued to 'participate ... in the partisan hurly-burly'. Understandably, the representatives of the political regrouping of private interests were among the most outspoken. As the IPA Review suggested, 'this tendency [of academics] is greatly to be regretted, for in the world of pressure groups and ideological conflicts, the university at least should strive ... to be an oasis of individualism and of independent thought and judgement'. There was no clearer indication of this association of academics with the state than those proposals for a national research university of the late 1920s and 1930s. As the Commonwealth moved to establish such an institution in the immediate post-war years, it was evident that the proposal would have to be accommodated within a different political climate to that which supported the initial proposition. Introducing the Australian National University Bill into Commonwealth parliament in June 1946, John Dedman suggested that 'in the social sciences perhaps more than in any other field of learning, Australia has an outstanding contribution to make'. As a 'young nation', in 'economics, history, law, anthropology and all related sciences', Australia could yet renew its reputation as the social laboratory of the world. To this suggestion, several opposition members responded that the proposed university would be a haven for 'the pseudo-scientific hill-billies [and 'rat-bags'] of which the Government appears to be so fond', and who had proliferated on the fringes of politics since the 1930s. For Menzies, this type of university was far from the ideal he had sketched in 1939. He could see no sign of intellectual vitality in Canberra sufficient to support the venture. In 1945 the magazine of the Canberra University College carried an exchange between Garran, who still claimed that the new university would 'afford inspiration and guidance to the national Government, Parliament and Public Service', and Gordon Jockel, a Diplomatic Cadet, who wrote of the inappropriateness of the project 'in an age when institutions are struggling to retain their independence from government'. 'A ruling or an administrative education', Jockel concluded, 'is an education of a most illiberal character'. In these post-war references to the influence of 'pressure groups' and to the need to avoid the taint of politics, it was clear that the universities would not escape the reaction of the time.

Practical considerations as well as political associations lay behind reassessments of the universities' social role. The social character of the universities was also changing after the war in ways which

---

67 'The Threat to the Individual', IPA Review, vol.3, no.6, 1949, p.175. In 1945, Professor F.A. Bland had similarly attacked his peers for compromising their status as 'non-political leaders' of society by their willingness to "assist" government. See Bland, Planning the Modern State, Sydney, 1945, p.82.


69 See Blain, CPD (H of R), vol. 187, 5 July 1946, p.1567; White, p.2248; Cameron, p.2305.

70 Menzies, 5 July 1946, p.2293.

71 Gordon Albert JOCKEL Born at Manly in 1920, and educated at the University of Sydney, Jockel joined the Department of External Affairs as a Diplomatic Cadet in 1944. His first postings were to New York and London, and he represented Australia at the UN Office in Geneva from 1956 to 1958.

72 Garran and Jockel, 'A National University: Two Views', Prometheus, 1945, pp.3, 6.
influenced a sense of their objectives. In Melbourne in 1943, for example, the university initiated a study of selection procedures, conducted by ACER, in an attempt to make a more efficient contribution to the ‘admission and reservation’ of students amid wartime priorities. From 1944 to the early 1950s, the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme sponsored over 17,000 ex-soldiers through a university education, and by 1947 the number of students at the seven state universities was almost double the 1939 figure. A wider section of society now had access to a university education. Without proportional increases in staff, funding or materials, this increase seemed further to threaten the universities’ autonomy until a balance began to be gained in the late 1940s (see Appendix 2). The sheer numbers of these assisted students, and their origins in a presumably wider socio-economic stratum than pre-war undergraduates, in itself challenged the earlier assumptions of an institutional role in terms of a discrete reformist grouping. Here was a more specific manifestation of the concern discussed in Chapter Five: would the post-war citizenry be able to cope with demands that would fall to them as never before? The Melbourne tests, and those being initiated at other universities, suggested that the social background of students was a less significant determinant of their academic success than the ability of the universities themselves to reassess methods in an attempt to make the most of a larger but not necessarily less able enrolment.

One aspect of this post-war challenge was addressed at the level of curriculum in the search for a form of education appropriate both to social needs and to the interests of new students. In 1944, Eric Ashby suggested one formulation which combined general citizenship with social reform. Ashby recommended that

A great contribution to our time will be made by the university which sets up a new school of humanities, and which offers a degree to the student who has thought intelligently about the history of technology, the culture and society of Pacific countries, economic stresses and the political frameworks which bear them

A more extreme proposal was outlined by J.D.G. Medley in 1945. Priestley’s successor at Melbourne, Medley argued that only the ‘fusion of technical and humane achievement’ could ‘save civilisation’. The system he proposed required that students, working in the civilian equivalent of Army Education, would spend two years between school and university in compulsory work in ‘ordinary life’, with classes in the evenings and periods of ‘hard physical work ... rubbing shoulders with a wide variety of their fellow creatures’. He was unconcerned that this regimentation might disrupt the exclusiveness of the university:

After all, the essence of effective citizenship in a democracy is to learn at an early period the business of a proper distribution of your loyalties, and undue subordination of any one of them is the mark of a child rather than an adult.

While he praised the contribution university training might make to the public service, he was not preoccupied by the concept of an elite. Preferring an intake of older undergraduates, Medley argued for the value of part-time study in developing a closer relationship between the university and employment.

---

73 The results of this enquiry were published in two volumes, the first dealing with Arts students and the second with Science students. See H.H. Hohne, *The Prediction of Academic Success*, Melbourne, 1951; Hohne, *Success and Failure in Scientific Faculties of the University of Melbourne*, Melbourne, 1955. See generally C. Sanders, ‘Higher Education - State or Commonwealth?’, *Australian Quarterly*, vol.22, no.4, 1950, pp.42-45.


77 Medley, *The Present and Future*, pp.32, 35.
These proposals were clearly formed in the context of reconstruction, with the inherent assumption of a continuing level of regimentation in the name of the 'new order'. While extreme, at least Medley's sense of the autonomous functions of the university within an integrated society encouraged him to defend his academic staff from allegations of communism during the proceedings of the Victorian Royal Commission into the Communist Party in 1948. Whereas his successor as Vice-Chancellor, G.W. Paton, was prepared to police debate within the university, Medley expressed surprise that there were so few communists on campus. In 1951, responding to Bruce Truscott's *Red Brick University*, Medley similarly regarded with scepticism the necessity for residential universities, and questioned any rigid priority given to research over teaching. Both Ashby and Medley allied the university with citizenship in ways which can be distinguished from the advocacy of 'service' in the commentary of the inter-war years. They shared an awareness - or a hope - that the students of the late 1940s would be returned to a society or community rather than a class or elite, and would need to comprehend pressing social issues, and negotiate diverse loyalties. This was one way to meet the fact the universities had been drawn further into social engagement at a time of fundamental change. Yet the question of how the universities might address such change was complicated by the sense among commentators that they were also the custodians of social values. The universities offered the opportunity to reinforce social consensus, at the same time as maintaining a position from which to criticise their societies. It was in the relations between these assessments of institutional role and patterns of social analysis, that post-war elements of conservatism became most evident in the discussion of the universities' objectives.

***

The very nature of their wartime involvement had reinforced an awareness in the universities that they were not a rule to themselves. Throughout the 'fifties this awareness did not lapse. Inheriting concepts of reform attuned to 'the state' and the formation of an elite, the universities were in a poor position to deal with the political reaction and the pressures of greater social integration in the post-war period. Throughout the decade, a wide range of issues served to prescribe the narrow boundaries in which they were to fulfil their role. In Commonwealth parliament, questions were asked about the appropriateness of appointing academics with political associations; in Melbourne and Adelaide, University Councils scrutinised academic participation in debate or prohibited professors from membership of political parties; security checks were reported to be part of appointment procedures, and rumours circulated that security agents

---

78 *Age*, 13 January 1951, p.3. For background to this controversy, see Rosenthal, *Sir Charles Lowe*, ch.5.

79 *Age*, 24 January 1950, p.5.

80 Medley, 'The Civic University - Its Basic Functions', *Age*, 1 December 1951, p.8. Medley argued that if research were 'regarded as the main job of all members of a university staff, ... it is very apt to degenerate into the compilation of useless papers on unimportant trivialities'. Insisting on the necessity for academic autonomy, Medley nonetheless suggested that 'whether they like it or not, students, even in a residential university, must be effected by their community contacts, whether organised or haphazard'.

81 See for example Gullett's question to Menzies regarding the appointment of Lord Lindsay to the ANU, *CPD* (H of R), 17 September 1952, p.1606; and the discussion of Macmahon's references to Professor H.W. Arndt's participation in the campaign against the Communist Party Dissillusion Bill, *SMH*, 12 October 1950, p.5; 14 October 1950, p.2

82 'New Ruling on Political Debates Within the University', *Age*, 13 November 1951, p.3; 'Academic Freedom in Australia', *Universities Quarterly*, vol.6, no.2, 1952, p.117.
were active among academics and students. Towards the end of the decade, even salaries and promotions were threatened with greater governmental influence. While a few academics suggested that the community had a legitimate claim to some level of academic accountability, or indicated the benefits of some participation with industrial development and governmental policy, the issues of academic freedom and institutional autonomy were generally seen to be more pressing. An ABC radio forum in July 1950 expressed this defensiveness. Discussion was framed by the 'delicate' question of whether emphasis should be given to 'scholarship and pure research' or to 'the technical training demanded by our scientific age?' For one panel member, a lawyer, the university graduate 'should be able to put his shoulder to the wheel to the best advantage of society'. The rest of the panel, however, were academics in the humanities and social sciences. Each called for a return to the 'liberal tradition' under the pressure of contemporary events. There was, they argued, a great need for disengagement to escape anti-communist encroachments on civil liberties; to combat the budgetary threats to university autonomy; to achieve a stronger corporate life as a balance to the sudden growth in student numbers. Rather than detailing social commitments, a consolidation of academic 'tradition' seemed to them essential for the universities' survival.

Community sentiment itself lent some support to these academic aspirations for the reinstatement of 'liberal' values, though it was clear - as the IPA indicated - that this support was shaped by a distinct sense of the university's contribution to stability at a time of rapid social and economic change. The assigned role continued to be that of confirming values already accepted in society. When, in February 1950, the Governor of New South Wales, Sir John Northcott, laid the foundation stone of the University of Technology - 'the first University of Technology in the British Empire' - it was in the midst of a controversy which related precisely to these concerns. This venture was to be the culmination of a reconstruction programme of technical education. It was intended to develop close ties with 'industry and commerce' at a time when 'as never before, we look to our technical colleges to provide much of the

---


84See the discussion of the Queensland government's University Acts Amendment Bill, 'Politics And A University', SMH, 4 April 1957, p.2; T.K. Ewer 'The Government of Queensland and University Autonomy', Science and Freedom, no.14, 1960, pp.35-9; and the Premier of New South Wales' moves to influence salaries, 'University Salaries and Outside Control', SMH, 16 July 1957, p.2. See also the letter from E.L. Wheelwright and A.G. Mitchell on the same day, representing the Sydney Association of University Teachers.


86Transcript published in Nation's Forum of the Air, vol.6, no.2, 1950. The academics involved were Professor A.K. Stout, Professor J.P. Belshaw from the Department of Economics at the New England University College, and H.D. Black.

87For general background, see J.P. Baxter, A Short History of the University of New South Wales, The Australian University, vol.3, no.1, 1965, pp.74-114. There had been moves to establish a similar institution in Melbourne, but they had been frustrated in a network of political influence and the loss of wartime 'momentum'. See A.J. Dare, 'Melbourne Technical College and the Proposed Institute of Technology', Melbourne Studies in Education, 1977, pp.126-62.
training essential if we are to hold and extend the position we have gained as an industrial nation'.88 Yet the new institution called itself a university, not a technical college. As its critics maintained, it was a travesty on two counts. First, it testified to the controls that governments in Australia - especially Labor governments - sought to exercise over universities. Until 1954 the University of Technology was administered as a Public Service department, maintaining even after its grant of autonomy a staff code of set hours and regulations.89 Second, to some, the new university represented a victory for those ‘in government circles who really do not understand the purpose of a university education’.90 It stood for specialisation and applied knowledge, and for the contraction of a sense of common culture into a narrow, professional competence. While it attracted funds to large-scale engineering research projects, and offered specialised, accessible graduate teaching91, commentary on the University of Technology often returned to its failure to fit tradition. In 1952, on the occasion of the centenary of the ‘impoverished’ University of Sydney, the *Sydney Morning Herald* regretted that:

> Far from seeking to correct this tendency [to become a nation of specialists], the Labor government in New South Wales has lately strengthened it by giving priority of endowment to the University of Technology. This misnamed newcomer has a useful job to do, especially in a city becoming so industrialised as Sydney. But it it is this very industrialisation - now threatening to submerge, among other things, the best qualities of our rural tradition - which calls loudly for measures to redress the balance between ‘skills’ to earn a better living and culture to make living better.92

As this editorial made clear, the criticism of ‘applied’ training itself could have its own social purposes. Adding that the social problems of the future - namely, ‘an amount of leisure quite disproportionate to the necessities of national development and security’ - could not be met by the domination of ‘artisan or strictly professional demands’, this defence of academic integrity was partly on the basis of political and economic anxieties. While academics, in hoping to sustain freedom of enquiry, sought to attain a community of scholarship, for commentators outside the universities, this sense of community had its own purposes to serve. Throughout the ’fifties there was a frequent claim that the universities were integral to ‘community’. Prominent figures, for example, argued that they should be decentralised so that they might better serve the

---


89 Further, more than half of the University’s Council were to be appointed by the Minister of Education, two of whom were to be officers of the Public Service, and two members of State parliament - ‘Controversial University To Be Autonomous Soon’ *SMH*, 2 April 1954. See see also J.P. Baxter’s defence of the constitution of the University in a letter to the *SMH*, 4 March 1954, p.2.

90 Editorial, *SMH*, 1 February 1954, p.2, quoting the Bishop of Newcastle, Dr Batty, who was vigorously opposing the opening of a branch of the University of Technology in Newcastle. For a study of the local opposition to the origins of the Newcastle University College, see Vanessa Tripp, ‘The University of Newcastle: Controversial Beginnings, 1952-1959’, *Student Research Papers in Australian History*, no.3, 1978, pp.37-45.


92 ‘The University’s Next Hundred Years’, *SMH*, 30 August 1950, p.2.
'harmonious development' of their host societies.\textsuperscript{93} Strenuously resisted by most academics\textsuperscript{94}, such proposals nonetheless indicated that the preservation of the university's privileges from 'utilitarian' demands could be seen to be not without its own social benefits: that disengagement itself could be an element of a wider conservative alignment in society in which social structures were consolidated rather than challenged by scientific, industrial or economic change.\textsuperscript{95}

The terms in which academics themselves met these demands revealed not simply political encroachments on their integrity, but also the institutional and cultural resources available to them. For scientists, the post-war period had its own particular problems. The impact of war had distorted the existing profile of Australian scientific work away from pastoral and agricultural areas to the physical sciences and secondary industry. If academic scientists, with restrictions on their capacity to undertake research, had been largely excluded from wartime programmes, at the end of the war this problem was compounded by the expanding demands of undergraduate teaching, and by specialised research facilities which further consolidated their claims to funding. On the other hand, scientific work in areas of political sensitivity had as a consequence that the accountability and 'loyalty' of researchers became a matter of controversy.\textsuperscript{96} The reconstitution of the CSIR as the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) in 1949, placing it under greater governmental direction, suggested to Sir David Rivett,\textsuperscript{97} the CSIR's Chief Executive, that its work would be pulled further away from the 'university model'.\textsuperscript{98} While the Professors

\textsuperscript{93}See for example a proposal signed by C.E.W. Bean, John Behan, Robert Garran, C.M. Gilroy, Stanton Hicks, Norman Kater and John Latham, \textit{SMH}, 16 February 1955, p.2; also W.A. Merrylees, \textit{The University and the Community}, Wangaratta, 1954; J.P. Belshaw, 'Decentralisation of University Education', \textit{Australian Quarterly}, vol.20, no.4, 1948, pp.67-76. In Chapter Four, it was noted that in 1958 C.E. Moorhouse, Professor of Electrical Engineering in Melbourne, suggested a decentralised tertiary education system, offering greater ease of transfer between technical colleges and universities in an attempt to serve regional needs - fn.125. For parliamentary discussion of a proposal to establish a university in the Riverina or Murray valley 'in such a decentralised and congenial area', see W.G. Turnbull, \textit{CPD} (H of R), vol.4, 7 September 1954, p.698.

\textsuperscript{94}See for example Oliphant's comments, 'Difference On Trends in Universities', \textit{SMH}, 25 September 1954, p.6. This article summarises the proceedings of a Universities Convention held in Sydney, at which R.G. Heffron, the NSW Minister for Education, supported the principle of decentralisation, accompanied by a greater degree of institutional specialisation across a State system of university education, including 'intensive graduate schools and research institutes'. Oliphant's defence of the universities from technological training (which, by analogy with training in clinical medicine in the hospital system, was best 'pursued only in industry or in Government establishments') was supported by P.H. Partridge on the principle of maintaining freedom of enquiry.

\textsuperscript{95}For further comment on this interpretation, see B. Bessant, \textit{A Critical look at the Functions of Australian Universities Since 1939}, School of Education, La Trobe University, 1978, pp.7-9. To maintain the status of Australia's struggling universities, the Bulletin insisted in 1950 that courses in 'democratic economics' should be introduced in secondary schools aimed at reassuring the ordinary Australian 'that it is no shame to be a brick layer or a carpenter': 'Our Universities', 29 November 1950, p.6; also 'Sydney's Blighted University', 11 April 1951, p.7.

\textsuperscript{96}This summary is based on R.W. Home, 'Science on Service: 1939-1945', pp.220-51. For a more extensive account of this period, see D.P. Mellor, \textit{The Role of Science and Industry}, Canberra, 1958.

\textsuperscript{97}Albert Cherbury David RIVETT Born at Port Esperance, Tasmania, in 1885, Rivett was educated at the University of Melbourne and then at Oxford, proceeding from there to the Nobel Institute, Stockholm. He returned to Melbourne in 1911 as a Lecturer in Chemistry, and by 1924 was Professor. Rivett was Chairman of the CSIR from 1946 to 1949.

of Zoology and Chemistry in Sydney proposed in 1944 that wartime methods of 'mass production' and 'visual education' might be applied in lecture halls to produce larger numbers of more 'uniform' graduates in science\textsuperscript{99}, the more general post-war concern among Australian academic scientists was the need to preserve the principles of freedom of enquiry both in age of scientific challenge and of governmental control.\textsuperscript{100}

In this context, in a lecture of 1948, Rivett observed that the days when a free international exchange in science were over, 'therefore we must rely upon ourselves as never before to advance the frontiers of knowledge'. To meet this need, the universities would have to reduce their teaching commitments, excluding those who 'mean to be artisans' and concentrating on 'the humanities and sciences'.\textsuperscript{101} A younger generation, Rivett feared in 1951, was 'growing up in science which has not known the freedom accorded to its predecessors, and maybe does not miss it'.\textsuperscript{102} In these circumstances of moral and material uncertainty, 'artisans' and scientists were accorded little common ground, even in terms of economic development.\textsuperscript{103} Just before his 'triumphal return' as the first Director of the Research School of Physical Sciences at the ANU, Marcus Oliphant\textsuperscript{104} argued in 1949 that 'our ideals of life, and hence of the university, must still be determined to a large extent by our instinctive reactions'. If this was 'the traditional way of reaction', Oliphant nonetheless insisted that the need for a clear separation between the pure search for truth in the university and a training in the applied sciences and technologies was more pressing than ever if the destructive potential of scientific change was to be met.\textsuperscript{105}

In these terms, many scientists added their own defence of academic 'disinterestedness' to post-war discussion. 'During and since the war', Ian Clunies Ross, Rivett's successor as Chairman of CSIRO, argued in a public oration in Sydney in 1952, the universities had fallen from their 'high estate' and now merely taught 'how to earn a living'. Science itself, as it 'tends increasingly to dominate the life and purpose of the university', had contributed to the emergence of the 'modern fragmented man', lacking 'ideals and ideas'. In this context, the curriculum suggested by Ashby in 1944 - a critical enquiry into the inter-relations

\textsuperscript{99}E.A. Briggs and Francis Lyons, 'Mass Production in Australian Universities', \textit{Australian Journal of Science}, vol.6, no.6, 1944, pp.157-61.

\textsuperscript{100}For an example of this sense of responsibility, see the discussion at the ANZAAS Conference of 1954 of the resolution that 'it is desirable to have one session devoted to some aspect of the social and international relations of science at each meeting of the Association' - \textit{Australian Journal of Science}, vol.16, no.5, 1954, p.173.


\textsuperscript{102}Rivett, 'Science in Australia', \textit{Australian Journal of Science}, vol.14, no.2, 1951, p.34.

\textsuperscript{103}As C.B. Schedvin has argued, applied science in Australia has usually 'to win its spurs in technology' before an economic imperative existed to integrate it with academic research. See Schedvin, 'Environment, Ecology and Australian Biology', \textit{Historical Studies}, vol.21, no.82, 1984, p.14; see also Sol Encel, 'Science, Education and the Economy', pp.61-2.

\textsuperscript{104}Marcus Laurence OLIPHANT Born at Adelaide in 1901, Oliphant was educated at the University of Adelaide at then at Cambridge, after which, in 1931, he became a Research Fellow of the Royal Society. In 1934 he was appointed Assistant-Director of the Cavendish Laboratories, and during World War Two he worked with Atomic Energy Committee. In 1950 Oliphant returned to Australia as the Foundation Director of the Research School of Physical Sciences at the ANU.

between social and scientific issues, disciplines and theories - was replaced by Clunies Ross’ call for the adoption of the models of Harvard, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Cambridge, in which all students in the sciences took a ‘general education’ in the humanities and the ‘classic social sciences’.106 Even this sense of ‘civilising’ the sciences had little support in the Australian intellectual climate at that time. Courses on similar lines at the University of Technology were acknowledged by their teachers as, at best, ‘remedial’.107 Instead, scientists emphasised a need for an educational ‘climate so intense’ as to inspire their best students into ‘the scientific mood’.108 Keen to consolidate the recognition of their work109, those prominent scientists working at the Australian National University, including Oliphant and Titterton,110 offered a vision of science capable of raising ‘the mental stature of mankind as a whole’, and exerting a profound influence of the shaping of the future so long as its freedom of enquiry was ensured.111 While in Britain there was much discussion of the need for greater co-operation and diversity in the relations between university science and applied and technological study,112 this theme was not prominent

106Clunies Ross, The Responsibility of Science and the University in the Modern World, Sydney, 1952, pp.3, 6,10-11, 14. A limited application of the principles informing Ashby’s proposal was the ‘General Science’ course introduced with 38 students in the Arts faculty in Melbourne in 1947. Diana Dyason recalled of this course that ‘we had no intention of teaching science - we were teaching about science. Our students learned the simple scientific "laws", but only to assist them in understanding the scientists’ original writings, the basis of all our history of science courses’. See Dyason, ‘After Thirty Years: History and Philosophy of Science in Australia’, Melbourne Studies in Education, Melbourne, 1977, p.56.

107‘Controversial University To Be Autonomous Soon’, SMH, 2 April 1954, p.2. For some comments on the social context of this emphasis on scientific education, particularly as it may have impeded working-class aspirations to university study, and narrowed the encouragement of criticism to specialisation only, see Ian Turner, ‘Conflicting Conceptions of a University’ in Murray-Smith (ed.), Room for Manoeuvre, pp.260-63.


109See for example the proceedings of the symposium organised by Oliphant on ‘Science in Australia’, held in Canberra in 1951 - for publication details, see the previous footnote. By 1954, with the foundation of the Australian Academy of Science, it was clear that scientists were committed to an authoritative, independent representation of their interests - see Frank Fenner and A.L.G. Rees (eds.), The First Twenty Five Years, Canberra, 1980, pp.9-11.

110Ernest William TITTERTON Born at Tamworth in 1916, Titterton was educated at the University of Birmingham and in 1939 was appointed a Research Officer with the British Admiralty, and then to the British Atomic Bomb Mission to Los Alomos from 1943 to 1947. After a period with the atomic research group at Harwell in Britain, Titterton was appointed Professor of Nuclear Physics at the ANU in 1950.

111See for example a discussion between Cockcroft, Oliphant and Copland in the ABC Weekly, 13 December 1952, pp.8-9; 20 December 1952, pp.8-9. Harry Messel, as Professor of Physics at the University of Sydney after 1952, developed a more entrepreneurial approach to scientific research and teaching, basing his initiatives on ‘a steady supply of undergraduate students’, a wider contact with industry and with secondary teaching - see ‘Importance Of Atomic Reseach’ and ‘Scientists For University’, SMH, 30 April 1953, and more generally J.B.T. McCaughan, ‘The Era Begins’ in D.D. Millar (ed.), The Messel Era: The Story of the School of Physics and the Science Foundation within the University of Sydney, Sydney, 1987, pp.8-44.

112The 1949 Annual Report of the Advisory Committee on Scientific Policy in Britain recommended that ‘the effective and speedy application of the results of scientific research is even more urgently required for the promotion of our economic recovery than the furtherance of research itself’ - London, 1949, pp.5-8. See also ‘Technological Education in Great Britain’, Nature, vol.165, no.4202, 1950, pp.737-40; and generally N.G. Vig, Science and Technology in British Politics, Oxford, 1968.
in Australian discussions. Sometimes with contempt, leading Australian scientists commented on the failure of even their academic colleagues to keep pace with social change without seeming to realise that it was not a kind of dialogue they encouraged.

In the humanities and the social sciences there was no equivalent sense of enterprise, only a negative perception of the necessity of preserving the basic premises of academic enquiry which often broke earlier assumptions of their social contribution. John Anderson, for example, Challis Professor of Philosophy at the University of Sydney, had been a controversial campaigner for the universities as bastions of social criticism since taking up the Chair in 1927. He insisted that any intellectual programme built on principles of potential social harmony ignored the inherent and necessary conflicts in society. In the 1930s, Anderson saw much in common between the inherent ‘productivity’ of the working class and of academics: both groups implicitly confronted the pretence of social unity, the worker through resisting the alienation of their labour under capitalism; the academic seeking intellectual integrity against the claims of vested interests. Upholding the independence of ‘the academic life’, Anderson defined this commitment to ‘the social struggle’ in terms of ‘a general grasp of the scientific, artistic and social activities of mankind’.

In the late 1940s, however, Anderson denounced the ‘tawdry stuff’ proposed by those such as Ashby and Medley. He insisted instead on the necessarily exclusive privileges of the universities, arguing that as the last refuge of genuine criticism, they must observe a strict classicism in curriculum. ‘The sense of a steady cultural decline’, he added, ‘has a greater affinity to learning than any optimistic belief in continued advance’. It at least fostered a sense of ‘standards’. Anderson opposed the acceptance of scholarship

---

113 The Australian academic community has yet to learn something that is well understood overseas, that we cannot in the modern world afford to ignore the social consequences of science and technology’. See Dyason, ‘After Thirty Years’, p.72.


115 John Anderson Born in 1893 at West Lothian in Scotland, Anderson was educated at the University of Glasgow, and then held several teaching positions at Cardiff and Edinburgh Universities. In 1927 he was appointed Professor of Philosophy at the University of Sydney.

116 For an indication of Anderson’s preparedness to incite public controversy, provoking calls for his removal, see the letters and articles appearing in the Sydney Morning Herald in April-May 1943 following his comments on the issue of religious education.


120 See for example Anderson, ‘Democratic Delusions’, Hermes, 1952: ‘Without a variety of cultural, including political and economic traditions, there can be no civilised life, but the maintenance of that variety is impossible unless each tradition has its special body of custodians with their special privileges’ - pp.16-7.

121 The central essay by Anderson on these issues is ‘Classicism’ (1960) in Education and Inquiry, pp.45-6, as compared to ‘University Reform’, quoted above. The 1960 essay concludes by summarising ‘classicism’ as standing for ‘the unity of culture against all forms of subjectivism and interest rootedness, and for the unity, the common principles, of criticism against specialism and ad hoc devices’ - p.63.
students, whose bonds to the state must compromise their intellectual freedom. Clearly, the political implications of Anderson’s views changed in the 1940s, but rather than indicating inconsistency or ‘degeneration’, his position exhibited a consistent philosophic insistence on the necessity for the universities to preserve their independence. The ‘proletariat’, he argued, had ceased to be oppositional, but was becoming the servile agent of the ‘common good’ triumphed in post-war reconstruction. In turn, the universities had become the ‘industrial’ vehicles of ‘opportunity’ for the mass. Against this assault, the privileges of the universities were vital, for they confronted both the failure of critical impetus in society and the further imposition by the state of a specious harmony of interests.

Without following every step of this argument, aspects of Anderson’s position were shared by many within the universities who no longer saw their circumstances in terms of an opportunity to influence society, but rather of social threats to ‘academic freedom’. Anderson’s colleagues and students proclaimed an intellectual need to break with ‘the social and political ideas of the ‘thirties’, and to reject popular stereotypes of ‘the public’ in an attempt to grasp the creative and critical potential of ‘the individual’, independent of the mass. This need was all the more pressing given the complicity of social scientists who had deserted ‘the function of criticism’ in their alliance with bureaucracy and technology. Even those in the Department of Psychology at Sydney took care to distinguish their professional objective of ‘adjusting’ a workforce for greater productivity, from any ‘directive’ application of their discipline which might compromise ‘the freedom of the individual’. Responding to an attack on the thinness of Australian academic culture, Passmore suggested the paradoxical solution of cultivating ‘tradition’ and rejecting ‘orthodoxy’ in the name of academic freedom. In a more general survey, P.H. Partridge argued in 1952 that, amid the clash between collectivism and individualism, university teaching in the social sciences needed always to be tempered by an historical awareness of ‘the social and moral decisions which have to be continually reaffirmed if a cultural tradition is to be preserved’. These were not responsibilities that could be fulfilled while attempting to serve the demands of ‘public interest’.

---


124 ‘There is, at any rate, in the current conflict no field in which cultural decline can be halted except by people who are not afraid to attack progressive and egalitarian dogma and to uphold privilege’ - ‘Democratic Delusions’, p.18. My account of Anderson’s position draws heavily on B.C. Birchall, ‘John Anderson’s Social/Political Theories: Degeneration or Development’, AJPH, vol.24, no.1, 1978, pp.52-60. Birchall argues that ‘earlier [in the inter-war years] Anderson had thought that all privileges were contrary to independence. Now [in the 1950s] he came to recognize, through the development of pluralism in concrete social/political terms, that while some privileges are contrary to independence, others are essential to independence’: p.56.


129 Partridge, ‘The Contribution of Philosophy and History’ in One Hundred Years of the Faculty of Arts, pp.67-80.
For those less influenced by Anderson, post-war social change nonetheless raised problems in defining an academic role. Among the ‘meaning mongers’ of Melbourne, particularly of R.M. Crawford’s Department of History, there was not an equivalent sense of a fundamental challenge to academic values. The ‘social conscience’ associated with Crawford, a synoptic, evaluative approach to historical change, was best expressed through teaching rather than criticism - a ‘tradition’ cultivated by the contribution of that department to staffing the expanding Australian university system in the 1950s and 1960s. With Medley as Vice-Chancellor until 1951, Melbourne accommodated the student infusions of the late 1940s better than Sydney, and by the mid-fifties (partly in search of private funding) the University was popularising the ‘silent impact’ academic research could make on its community. Of the 1950s, however, Crawford allowed that the opportunity to prepare the ‘best students’ for academic careers in the expanding academic system was in itself a kind of post-war illiberalism, although it was accompanied by the gratefully received reminder, after ‘a generation of implication in the world’, that ‘scholarship was our business’. The terms in which post-war demands were accommodated themselves revealed a desire to reclaim a level of academic disengagement. The University opened a temporary branch at Mildura in 1946 to meet the needs of students, primarily ex-soldiers studying medicine, dentistry, architecture and engineering under the CRTS. In 1957, in his Centenary History of the University of Melbourne, Geoffrey Blainey placed the Mildura campus in the context of the enduring conflict in the University between ‘utilitarians’ who advocated the teaching of applied disciplines, and those who upheld a more ‘traditional’ concept of liberal study. Mildura, as Blainey argued (reflecting much comment on the project at the time of its instigation), offered post-war students ‘a stronger sense of tradition’, and ‘captured more of the spirit and ideals of the university’ than was available to those studying applied sciences in cramped conditions in Melbourne itself. In meeting the need for the ‘utilitarian’ training of larger numbers, Melbourne at least hoped to offer its students an evocation of a singular academic spirit distanced from the pressing demands of society.

The passing of reconstruction demands, and the emphasis on the education of a larger cohort of students, made it perhaps inevitable that the universities should seek to redefine a ‘traditional’ function and character. This ‘traditional’ academic model, however, had little relevance either to the straightened conditions of the institutions or to the aspirations of some of their leaders in the inter-war years. As the ‘psychometric’ studies of student performance initiated in wartime were applied to the larger intakes of the ‘fifties, the underside of this ‘tradition’ was gradually revealed as less than appropriate to social needs. There seemed to be no re-appraisal of either selection or teaching methods in response to post-war demands, and there was certainly no attempt to diversify the institutional form of the universities to accommodate the interests and abilities of students, or skills lacking in society. Admittance procedures

---


132 G.W. Paton, Foreword, Discovery, no.1, 1955, p.3 - this short-lived journal provided essays from professors in many fields, discussing the social contribution of work in their departments.


134 Blainey, A Centenary History of the University of Melbourne, Melbourne, 1957, pp.183-5.
were seen to be based on the British model of ‘damming the flow as close to the source as possible’; the extent of ‘delayed graduation’ and more particularly of part-time study at Australian universities (accounting for two out of every five internal students in 1961) might have indicated some need to re-assess the cultivation of an academic ‘community’. In 1955 H.H. Hohne, after analysing a mass of data from Melbourne’s science faculties, protested at ‘the ubiquity and ... intractability’ of the apparent commitment in those areas to sustaining a set percentage of failures in each year rather than adjusting to meet greater numbers of able students.

Nonetheless, a new emphasis on ‘the liberal education’ was, if anything, manufactured in the post-war years in an attempt to meet internal and external demands. From Menzies’ insistence that the first committee to investigate university funding in 1950 should consider the position of residential colleges as a training ground for ‘character’, to the concern of the Australian Vice-Chancellor’s Committee in 1960 that ‘greater numbers [of students] are coming from backgrounds which appear to lack stimulus toward independent study’, a recurrent theme in commentary of the 1950s related to the necessity for Australian universities to distinguish themselves from their wider society under the pressure of expansion. If the pace of social change stressed the need for education in the applied sciences, then those demands were to be resisted as much as possible and values maintained. Disciplines which once seemed to fulfil their logic in social reform - as the case of economics indicated - tended instead to serve the purpose of social stability through professionalism. This was not an emphasis dictated by any dominant agency, but one in which social change was accommodated in cultural and institutional networks with their own limited resources.

The evocation of the liberal ideal in the 1950s shared much with the shift to professionalism in the social sciences; both defined for the university a function complete in itself, a series of objectives - either values or methods - disengaged from direct social reference. The application of these disciplines was in the careers of graduates, and conferred little on the universities in return. Psychology was applied in the specific areas of industrial relations, aptitude testing, vocational guidance and social survey. Economics focussed on applied public policy rather than in expanding the critical span of the discipline. Sociology, while partially accommodated in Anthropology departments, fell far short of the status projected for it by some commentators as the examination of the regularities and functional integrations of social life. It was Political Science which seemed to fare best in this environment. If it was slow to secure recognition in ‘the

---


138Hohne, Success and Failure, pp.4; 126-28.

139Menzies, The Measure of the Years, pp.85-6; AVCC, Conference on University Education, Melbourne, 1960, p.11.


media of mass communications', in 'contract research' and in bureaucratic recruitment, it nonetheless
established an academic standing which fitted well with the institutional alignments of the time. Taught
as 'Public Administration' and then 'Government' within the Economics faculty in Sydney, and initially as
'Political Institutions' in Melbourne, R.N. Spann suggested in 1955, in the first issue of the *Australian
Journal of Politics and History*, that 'politics partly filtered through to the university via the extra-mural
class'. It was confirmed there by 'the war, and the sharp increase in the functions of government which has
followed it'. As Australians were seen to move away from a conception of their political organisations
and their culture as derivative, so it seemed that the 'field of political investigation' must become
particularly vigorous. In these ways, Political Science was well positioned to carry some of the interests
of the 1940s into the formation of a university discipline in the 1950s.

Throughout the 1950s Political Science sought to define the structures and mechanisms within which
Australian politics was conducted, yet without challenging them in any substantial way. Essentially
pluralist and inherently anti-authoritarian, it defended the conditions of democracy in terms of a balance of
interests rather than a single national good. 'Paradoxically', as R.S. Parker reflected in 1962, 'academic
political science has bloomed and boomed' in a post-war period 'when popular interest in politics has faded
to a shadow of its pre-War vigour', and when politics itself had become a game for bureaucrats and
lobbyists rather than for politicians or popular movements. Academic practitioners of the discipline

---


143 For an indication of this integration, see Gordon Greenwood's Foreword to the first issue of the *Australian Journal of Politics and History* in November, 1955: 'The scientific study of politics, though slow in developing in Australia, is certain to be sustained and the results, already impressive, are likely to be of moment to the Australian society. ... What is remarkable about [politics] ... is the extent to which in the Universities [it] command[s] the allegiance of a body of young yet experienced and indubitably able men. ... The justification for the publication of this new Journal ... is ... faith in the quality of Australian research and writing, faith in the increasing maturity of Australian society and in the readiness of the community to support such a venture' - vol.1, no.1, 1955, p.ii.

144 Richard Neville SPANN Born in 1916 at Manchester, Spann was educated at Oxford before returning to Manchester as a lecturer in Government between 1939 and 1940, when he joined the Royal Navy. In 1953 he was appointed Professor of Government and Public Administration at the University of Sydney


146 This was the prospect suggested by Geoffrey Sawer's essay on 'Political Science in Australia', published in a UNESCO survey, *Contemporary Political Science*, Paris, 1950, p.323.

147 As Andrew Fabinyi pointed out in 1956, there was no lack of a readership for 'serious' publications on political questions. See Fabinyi, 'Political Books in Australia', *APSA News*, vol.1, no.1, 1956, pp.7-8. By the middle of the decade there were about 800 students were taking Political Science courses throughout Australia - Spann, 'Political Science in Australia', p.89. In 1957 Crisp calculated an enrolment of 1137 pass and 104 honours students, and by 1961 these figures had increased to 2116 enrolments at pass level and 198 at honours level - Crisp, 'Political Science', p.28.

148 For an incisive survey of these themes of 'the mid-century liberal matrix' as it prevailed in America at least, see David M. Ricci, *The Tragedy of Political Science: Politics, Scholarship and Democracy*, New Haven, 1984, pp.99-132. By 1955 the Melbourne three year course progressed from a unit dealing with 'democratic theory and practices, and [with] government and political forces in Britain and the Australia', to 'a comparative study of the political institutions and movements of the U.S.A., U.S.S.R., Germany and Japan', to a third year unit consisting of 'a critical study of certain theories claiming to interpret some of the political life of modern states', ranging from social class, parties, bureaucracy, the 'formation of political opinion' and the impact of economic change - see course listings in the *University of Melbourne Faculty Handbook*, 1955, pp.77-80.

insisted, in the studies initiated by Henry Mayer at the University of Sydney, on models of conflict and
group behaviour in society; or they observed electoral patterns, diagnosed 'characteristic talents for
bureaucracy', and analysed recruitment, federalism, party structure and sectional interests. In these
ways, they established the basis (and the limitations) of good citizenship and for a resigned, piecemeal
reformism. Electoral responses to 'issues' could usually be reduced to inflexible party preferences within
the closed options of a two-party system; that 'principles' and 'settled policies' represented the short-term
intersection of interests; and that political endurance was more characteristic of the groupings which were
most pragmatic in this network of demands, and not those initiating change or defending a cause. Within
this frame of reference, Political Science referred back to the university as the point from which to
co-ordinate research, to develop theories and methods, and also as an institution with its own allocated
interests in the plural society: the maintenance of academic criticism and objective discussion, unhindered
by the demands of other interests or by the state. Political Science was well placed to teach how the
system worked, but its orientations were a long way distant from the academic reformism in the social
sciences of the 1940s.

The students writing for university magazines reflected and contributed to these aspects of a defensive
academic regrouping. For all the celebrations of the inherent radicalism of returned soldiers entering the
universities from 1944 to the early fifties, there were as many observations of the lack of activism
among the generation of the 1950s. 'A feeling of participation in world events, of jobs to be done'

150See Mayer's Introduction to Aaron Wildavsky and Dagmar Carboch, Studies in Australian Politics,
Melbourne, 1958, pp.xii-xxvi. For reflections on Mayer's contribution and emphases in the discipline, see

151The quote is taken from A.F. Davies, Australian Democracy: An Introduction to the Political System,
Melbourne, 1958, p.3. Brian Galligan has observed that while Australian 'political writers' in the first half
of this century, such as Hancock and Eggleston, 'exaggerated' the importance of 'the state', the concept
'was virtually ignored when the discipline was established and proliferated in Australian universities in the
1950s and 1960s'. See Galligan, 'The State in Australian Political Thought', Politics, vol.19, no.2, 1984,
pp.82-92.

152See for example: Leicester Webb, Communism and Democracy in Australia: A Study of the 1951
Referendum, Melbourne, 1954, ch.8; Dagmar Carboch, 'The Fall of the Bruce-Page Government' in

153See for example Webb's argument for 'team' research, and his discussion of the universities’
response to the anti-communist referendum, pp.vii, 87-90.

154A survey of the Australian Political Science Association newsletter in the latter half of the decade
indicates a concern that political science should not be separated from political philosophy, but that this
association seemed unpopular with the quasi-vocational interest of students, particularly those studying
part-time - see for example: Brian Beddie, 'Political Theory and Political Science', APSA News, vol.1,
no.2, 1956, pp.8-9; Sol Encel, 'Political Facts of Life for Students', vol.2, no.1, 1957, pp.4-5; Brian Beddie.
'A Note on Myrdall's 'Value in Social Theory'”, vol.3, no.3, 1958, p.4; also Parker, 'Political Science in
Australia', p.93. By 1962 Crisp noted that 'political philosophy had largely disappeared from most
undergraduate courses': Crisp, 'Political Science', p.30.

155See for example Manning Clark, 'On First Seeing Ian Turner' (1979) in Clark, Occasional Writings
and Speeches, pp.257-60; Stephen Murray-Smith in Hume Dow, Memories of Melbourne University:
Undergraduate Life in the Years Since 1917, Richmond, 1983, pp.119-36.
proclaimed in 1945\textsuperscript{156} was unlikely to be repeated five years later. Responding to the allegation that the 1953 Melbourne University Magazine 'might have been compiled by members of the Path to Rome League, the Spiritualists Circle and the Baby Facists Club', Michael Roe, a young history student, keen to re-establish the respectability of Labor politics in the University after years of communist association, argued that it was no longer possible to be an intelligently idealist radical: too many trusts had been broken.\textsuperscript{157} Geoffrey Serle observed that it was not only that the generation of students who followed the returned soldiers were younger and less experienced. They were also 'uncommitted, ideologically sceptical, and less gullible',\textsuperscript{158} concerned to preserve the values of the institution to which they had been admitted, not to undermine its privileges. The questions that provoked discussion, whether relating to the demands of compulsory National Service training on study time, the raising of funds for an Aboriginal Scholarship Scheme, the contribution of Asian students to the life of the institution, or the political affiliation of the student union, and the attendance of its delegates at conferences in communist countries,\textsuperscript{159} all touched on a sense of the particular importance of the university experience. An 'adult institution' in which 'the undergraduate is an adolescent', the university must combat 'self-interest' and fulfil its task of 'social formation' within the community of learning.\textsuperscript{160} In 1949 it had been suggested that the 'classical tradition' of a university education was 'incongruous with the contemporary world in which class divisions run deep and open conflict is continually in evidence'.\textsuperscript{161} In 1951 the solution to such impending crisis seemed to take the form of a return to established values. 'Intellectuals must assume the task of asserting the dignity of the person against the depersonalisation that comes from modern over-organisation', a writer in the 1951 University of Sydney journal, Hermes, asserted: failure 'could entail the disintegration of civilisation'.\textsuperscript{162} In turn, the university was defined as the necessary bastion from which to resist such assault. While in Melbourne University's Farrago, Jim Cairns called for co-operation with unions, businesses, farmers, technicians and governments, the more representative argument among student journalists opposed any

\textsuperscript{156}Editorial, The Black Swan, 1945, p.3. Perhaps the most remarkable evidence of this enthusiasm was the MUM of 1947, edited by K.D. Gott and G. Serle. In their 'Manifesto', the editors argued for a balance between an active 'internationalist outlook' and the need to 'face up to the questions arising from our own environment'. Part of that need related to the integration of all the elements of the university - p.6. Other contributors to the magazine reflected a diversity of recent experience and of interests: Peter Ryan wrote on 'Australia's Challenge in New Guinea', J.F. Cairns on 'The Road to Full Employment', Ian Turner on 'The Growth of Film Documentary', Max Charlesworth on 'Tolerance in the Catholic Church', and Stephen Murray-Smith on Pinchas Goldhar, a Jewish writer living in Melbourne, whose life testified that 'it was essential that cultural barriers be broken down here, whether the alien communities be Jews, Greeks or Italians': p.22.


\textsuperscript{158}Serle, 'R.M. Crawford and His School', p.5.


\textsuperscript{160}University in Search of Itself', Hermes, 16 July 1953, p.20.


\textsuperscript{162}H.B. Harrison, 'Prophets of the Modern Age', Hermes, 1951, p.30.
suggestion that the university should address issues leading only to 'the mass production of technically proficient men and women' who would lack values and 'sensibility'.

These themes were not unique to Australia at that time. In 1949, in an internationally-discussed essay, *The Crisis in the University*, Sir Walter Moberly argued for the need to reinstate Christian values within tertiary education, adopting an evangelical commitment to a close engagement between academics, students and contemporary issues. The Chairman of the British Universities Grants Commission, Moberly suggested that the universities had not only to find some answer to moral decay, but they had also to deal with the 'proletarian' and 'technocratic' culture that a new generation of students were bringing to their cloisters - a culture which pronounced the 'liberal education' to be an aristocratic remnant. Moberly argued that there was a need to reconcile classes as well as the 'two cultures' - the sciences and the humanities - discussed by C.P. Snow in 1959. In Australia, student and academic journalism was equally concerned by the challenge of science, but often adopted a form of analysis contrary to Moberly's central themes. Australian university magazines in the fifties also suggested the vitality of Christian student groupings. Proclaiming that 'present day Industrial Society is hostile to life', and searching for 'an all-inclusive theology' which would resuscitate intellectual commitment, organisations such as the Ecumenical Union, the Student Christian Movement (SCM) and the Newman Society, all hoped to find in the university a synthesis between education and faith. Yet while receptive to Moberly's call for a pilgrimage to save the university from 'materialism' and 'fragmentation', this writing was less characterised by a receptive attitude to either the intellectually or socially-integrating aspects of the scientific age. Seeking a concept of 'community' within the universities, and pre-occupied by the urgency of their intellectual mission, there was little enthusiasm to incorporate those who were most associated with the direction of change.

This attitude was particularly strong for those among the Catholics who 'thronged the universities' with the assistance of Commonwealth scholarships after 1951, and who hoped to extend the 'intellectual renaissance' begun by the Melbourne University-based Campion Society in the 1930s. An exchange in

---

163 Cairns, 'Crisis in the University', 29 April 1953, p.5; Alan Nicoll, 'Our Universities Problem', 20 July 1954, p.3; Brian Buckley, 'World Cultural Crisis Affects Our Universities', 13 July 1954, p.5.

164 Moberly, *The Crisis in the University*, London, 1949, pp.15, 43-7, 49, and also ch.11.


166 Arthur Burns, 'Athens or Jerusalem', *MUM*, 1953, pp.43-9. See also the manifestos offered by these societies in the orientation issues of student newspapers.

167 Christianity, it was argued, offered 'the basis for a new humanism, the principle to give order and purpose to the different branches of secular knowledge'. See Geoff Chapman and Sue James, 'Some Comments on the Structure of the University', *MUM*, 1953, p.39.

168 'Invitation to a Pilgrimage', vol.53, no.1, 1950, p.2.


170 See Patrick O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church and Community in Australia*, Melbourne, 1977, pp.381-2. For one account of the move in Catholic intellectual circles at this time to escape complacent resort to cliches of 'political liberty' and 'material progress', see Manning Clark, 'Melbourne: An Intellectual Tradition', *Melbourne Historical Journal*, no.2, 1962, p.22. Perhaps reflecting the greater security of Protestants in the university community, the SCM's calls to 'witness Christ' in its journal, the *Australian Intercollegian*, also incorporated issues such as the need for co-operation between scientists and Christians, for interest in international affairs, and in social conflicts and missionary work.
the 1951 MUM between Vincent Buckley\textsuperscript{171} and Max Charlesworth\textsuperscript{172} - both of them at the beginning of academic careers - indicated the central themes of this Catholic ‘renaissance’. Distressed at the presence of those, as Buckley put it, ‘who would be more appropriately dressed in leather aprons than academic gowns’, Charlesworth considered the option of a purely Catholic university.\textsuperscript{173} Buckley replied that Catholics must remain within secular universities, working ‘as a leaven, not only of theological but of cultural faith’.\textsuperscript{174} This mission was central to the formation of the University Apostolate, a movement which was strongest in Melbourne but active also in Sydney.\textsuperscript{175} Drawing on the models of Catholic Action, their impetus was essentially European, based on the need to ‘reassert the human personality against the levelling and depersonalising’ pressures of industrial society.\textsuperscript{176} A conference in Melbourne in 1955 expanded on the object of an ‘incarnation’ within the university in which Christian values would enrich every aspect of academic life, and in turn ‘nodalise the cultural ideas informing society’.\textsuperscript{177} For Buckley, whose thinking was pre-occupied by the absence of a central, cohering social or national image,\textsuperscript{178} the university community offered at least a vestige of local certainty. Such inspiration, however, was deeply imbued with a Catholic ‘mystique’ and an intellectual mission self-consciously defined away from the ‘older trauma’ of the Labor Party split of 1954. In place of such political entanglements, and deploying a form of cultural criticism owing much to F.R. Leavis, Buckley sought the recovery of human values even to the extent of ‘a sense of the tragic in human life, of spiritual independence, of the freedom and responsibility which both an individual and a nation may have before God’.\textsuperscript{179} Within the academic security of this mission, a campaign against philistinism shaded into a defence of privilege not in terms of

\textsuperscript{171}Vincent Buckley Born in 1925 at Romsey, Victoria, Buckley was educated at the Universities of Melbourne and Cambridge, and in 1958. He first book of poetry was published in 1954, and Buckley also wrote widely on literary criticism. In 1958 he became Lockie Fellow at the University of Melbourne.

\textsuperscript{172}Maxwell John Charlesworth Born at Nurmurkah, Victoria, in 1925, and educated at the Universities of Melbourne and Louvain, Charlesworth was appointed to a lectureship in Philosophy at the University of Auckland in 1956, returning to Melbourne to take up a similar position in 1959.

\textsuperscript{173}Buckley, ‘Shall It Be?’, p.60; Charlesworth, p.60.

\textsuperscript{174}Buckley, ‘Shall It Be?’, pp.61-5.

\textsuperscript{175}See for example M. Davey, ‘Catholic Action Here!’, Honi Soit, 19 September 1957, p.5.


\textsuperscript{177}The booklet resulting from this conference was published as The Incarnation Within the University by Pax Romana in London,1957, indicating the standing of the proceedings as a model for the international Apostolate movement. The quote is from William Ginnane’s chapter, “The Incarnation Here and Now”, pp.87-8.

\textsuperscript{178}See Buckley, ‘Shall It Be’, p.65. In his literary criticism, for example, Buckley attempted to forge a new paradigm more appropriate to an understanding of Australian culture than the bosh-nationalist stereotype, and to analyse the fragmentation of the literary audience into a mass with no central moral premises - ‘Utopianism and Vitalism in Australian Literature’, Quadrant, vol.3, no.2, 1959, pp.40-51; Poetry and Morality: Studies in the Criticism of Matthew Arnold, T.S. Eliot and F.R. Leavis, London, 1959, esp. pp.16, 22, 29. Buckley’s poetry of this time was redolent with personal evocations of childhood and of father figures, or drew on the powerful symbols of the Australian Catholic lexicon, such as Quiros and the rallying cry of the Spanish Civil War: ‘Viva Christo Rey’. See for examples, The World’s Flesh, Melbourne, 1954, esp. pp.41-51.

class but of culture. Although very different from Anderson’s critique in its origins, Buckley’s defence of the university from ‘social expectation’, by 1962 ranging from the pressures of expansion to the servitude of scholarship students, was not dissimilar in its implications.

In 1956 a group of Canberra academics debated the evidence of a contemporary ‘trahison des Clercs’ in the failure of their Australian colleagues of agnostic or atheistic views to challenge the Christian hegemony in the universities. The re-emergence of Christianity among intellectuals was not peculiar to Australia at that time, yet H.W. Arndt saw it as ‘particularly pronounced here’, perhaps reflecting the desire of the educated to espouse ‘organised religion’ as ‘a necessary instrument of social control’ over ‘the masses’. While such a specific allegation was perhaps provocative, there was also some point to it. Elements of the Christian movements provided one formulation of a more general disposition in commentary within the universities to secure an institutional autonomy and integrity in terms of a cultivation of academic values separate from social issues and demands. A sense of embattlement and a defence of principle was understandable, but that defence can not be isolated from its social and political context. Not only was the ‘liberal tradition’ a departure from the emphases of earlier ideals of social role, and itself characterised as much by internal conformity as freedom from external manipulation, but it was also a response which, in terms of the relationship between bodies of knowledge and the needs of society, aligned the universities with the conservatism of defensiveness and disengagement.

***

Implicit in these academic responses was the fact that the universities were becoming more centrally a part of Australian political and intellectual culture. With the expansion of scholarship provisions, a university education became accessible to more Australians, and gradually greater attention was given to resources and some to matters of teaching. In the following years, politicians, artists, private and public sector administrators, and journalists were increasingly likely to have some form of academic

---


181 See Buckley, ‘Threats to Freedom in the Universities’, *Prospect*, vol.5, no.3, 1962, pp.10-14. The influence of this thinking - although in a secularised form - on the intellectual orientations of the Melbourne and Sydney English Departments has already been studied by Ian Lennie, ‘English Studies in Australia’, *Arena*, no.20, 1969, pp.41-49; John Docker, *In a Critical Condition*, esp. ch.4. Lennie summarises his analysis of the political assumptions of this influence in academic English study in these terms: ‘A static metaphysical view might well produce conservatism, because the important things are unchangeable anyway, and if the interest is in individual spiritual states, then bourgeois democracy allows this pursuit without intervention from outside’ - p.48.


183 Arndt, ‘“Trahison des Clercs?”’, p.33. For one indication of the Christian theme in intellectual discussion, see the symposium on ‘Religion and the Intellectuals’ run in the *Partisan Review* from February 1950 (vol.17, no.2, 1950).

qualification.\textsuperscript{185} If academics moved away from a conception of themselves as a reformist elite, they nonetheless consolidated a sense of professionalism based not least upon a degree of demographic homogeneity.\textsuperscript{186} Towards the end of the fifties, journals of opinion, such as Quadrant, Nation and The Observer, drew heavily on the universities for contributors, and an older generation of journalist commentators gave way to the status of academic analysis.\textsuperscript{187} As Vincent Buckley argued in 1962, Australian intellectual life had come to be almost exclusively defined by the universities, 'a fact that ... makes the isolation seem more bearable and, in a way, more natural'.\textsuperscript{188}

This increasing prominence of the universities in itself edged them further into the sphere of Commonwealth responsibility. If this was a process with which Menzies later associated himself, he was at first careful to avoid any suggestion of centralised direction. 'It is of great importance', he insisted in 1953, 'that [the universities] ... should retain their individuality and their local character and quality'.\textsuperscript{189} By the middle of the decade it was evident that the expansion of student numbers, and the demands of maintaining standards and keeping pace with international developments, were causing strains that these individual institutions, still largely accountable to State governments, were incapable of meeting. The inadequacies of such piecemeal growth, and the pressure of academic lobbyists, mounted to prompt Menzies to initiate a comprehensive inquiry into the Australian university system in 1957. For three months the Committee on Australian Universities, under the Chairmanship of Sir Keith Murray (Moberly's successor on the Universities Grants Commission of Great Britian), toured the nation's universities, following the lines of inquiry Menzies had outlined: the social role of the universities; the extension and co-ordination of their facilities; the place of technical education at a tertiary level.\textsuperscript{190} This inquiry drew together many of the assumptions current in Australian commentary on the universities' position at that time, and established a model for the future.

The Murray Report drew its inspiration from the British 'manner of education by a sharing of a way of life': 'When the student enters the university, he should be entering a community with an intellectual and

\textsuperscript{185}In 1955, for example, the Editor of MUM noted the candidacy of several Melbourne graduates in recent elections, naming 'Phil Lynch, Barry Jones, J.F. Cairns, Austin Dowling and Frank Cranston'. Only Cairns had been successful: p.9. Donald Horne's autobiographies indicate something of the persistence of university connections into professional life at this time.

\textsuperscript{186}See Hsin Yuan Tien, 'The Australian Academic Elite: Their Family Origins and Structure', PhD, ANU, 1959.

\textsuperscript{187}For one observation of this change, see Manning Clark, 'R.C. Mills and M.H. Ellis: A Note', Historical Studies, vol.14, no.53, 1969, pp.95-7. At a Summer School for professional journalists, held in Canberra in 1965, there was some debate over whether there was a need for a Chair of Journalism - possibly at the ANU - to provide journalists with education in areas in which specialised knowledge was required to make sense of issues. See esp. Henry Mayer, 'Higher Education for Journalism', First Summer School of Professional Journalism, Canberra, 1965, pp.36-7, 61-3.

\textsuperscript{188}Buckley, 'Intellectuals' in Peter Coleman (ed.), Australian Civilisation: A Symposium, Melbourne, 1962, p.98.


\textsuperscript{190}Report of the Committee on Australian Universities, Canberra, 1957, p.5.
social climate of its own'.\textsuperscript{191} It was this communal exchange - life in ‘common rooms and playing fields’ as well as ‘in class rooms and libraries’ - that characterised a university education.\textsuperscript{192} In turn, ‘the corporate life of a college’ would assist the adjustment of students to the ‘academic ... environment’ which they were experiencing ‘perhaps for the first time’.\textsuperscript{193} Yet the Committee had also to consider how the universities should function in contemporary Australian society, where the pace of development was such that ‘the national interest’ required the optimal utilisation of each individual’s ‘brain power’.\textsuperscript{194} This need was particularly pressing in the sciences, where technical capacity seemed to leave ‘the appreciation of human values’ steadily further behind, but also where the ‘pursuit of enlightenment’ faced perhaps its purest and most exciting frontiers. While ‘the work of applying new knowledge is roughly predictable’, Murray looked to academic scientists for a reconciliation between ‘the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake’ and the development of research which was ‘indispensable to the welfare of the nation’.\textsuperscript{195}

In these ways, the Murray Committee accommodated the three imperatives which had emerged in the post-war discussion of the universities’ social role. They sought to consolidate a sense of the necessary privileges, despite the universities’ increasing reliance on public funding; they acknowledged the challenge of scientific change, and the broader social mission (and larger student enrolment) associated with it; and they were careful to distinguish between an industrial need for technical training and the function of the university in free enquiry. By way of criticism, they regretted the poor quality of teaching and high failure rates in many areas, calling for the more general implementation of the ‘tutorial system’ together with the encouragement of ‘corporate life’.\textsuperscript{196} They were concerned that ‘public opinion’ did not appreciate the magnitude of the problems confronting the under-funded and unco-ordinated provision of higher education in Australia.\textsuperscript{197} It was in these terms that the Report called for greater Commonwealth support for the comprehensive development of the nation’s universities, recommending a clear distinction between university and technical college responsibilities. In addition to assisting critical study in the humanities and the social sciences, the universities should assume the responsibility for a professional education while a system of technical colleges would address the needs of ‘technicians and craftsmen’.\textsuperscript{198} On the one hand, the Murray Report sought to secure in formal terms the institutional integrity and the expanding national function of Australia’s universities. On the other, that recognition was informed by an ideal of ‘community’ for the universities which emphasised the need to conserve values and to secure professional standards within an exclusive, singular conception of institutional role.

\textsuperscript{191}Report of the Committee, p.9. This British emphasis was hardly surprising, given the character of the Commission Menzies’ assembled. Two of its members were British citizens - Murray himself, and Sir Charles Morris, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Leeds. All but one of the five members had close associations with British universities, either as a Rhodes scholar (J.C. Richards, then Assistant General Manager of Broken Hill Proprietry), or as a post-graduate student (Sir Ian Clunies-Ross). The exception was A.J. Reid, former head of the Western Australian Treasury and at that time Chancellor of the University of Western Australia.

\textsuperscript{192}See Tannock, A Study of the Role of the Government, p.446.

\textsuperscript{193}Report of the Committee, p.54.

\textsuperscript{194}Report of the Committee, p.8.

\textsuperscript{195}Report of the Committee, pp.9-10.

\textsuperscript{196}See Report of the Committee, p.39.

\textsuperscript{197}See Report of the Committee, pp.26-7; 94-5.

\textsuperscript{198}See Report of the Committee, pp.78-9.
Generally, the Report was well received by academics, who noted that its stress on the 'liberal' values of the humanities was the best that could be hoped for given the range of contemporary demands. Here was 'the siren-song of the nineteen-fifties - we must, like the United States and Russia and even the U.K., mobilise our scarce brain-power in the national interest'. R.D. Wright similarly noted that the 'power' of the university would increasingly be 'compulsively' sought by Western governments 'since Sputnik assumptus est'. For John Anderson, the Report was conclusive proof, despite its 'pious phrases', that the universities had become mere subjects of public policy; while outside the universities there was criticism of the privilege accorded to tertiary study over the pressing needs at secondary level. Nonetheless, Murray secured - at least for the next thirty years - the academic security of a concept of the 'liberal education' which had been hastily assembled in the late 1940s and early 1950s as way of distancing the universities from political alignment, of addressing society from the perspective of professionalism rather than reformism, and of accommodating a less economically self-selecting student body within their precincts.

While the older universities were pre-occupied by the demands of expanding student numbers and the extent of public regulation, in Canberra through the 'fifties the Australian National University sought to define its own role in the midst of change. Early in the decade, the venture attracted considerable public attention as its first substantial budget allocations were made, and as research work commenced either on site in a 'temporary shed-like structure', or in the departments of other universities in Britain, Melbourne and Dunedin. By March 1950, the ANU News estimated that there were 30 academics and 40...

202 Anderson, 'Classicism', p.45. There was some practical evidence for Anderson contention on grounds of principle, given that the independent University Grants Commission, which Murray had recommended on the British model, was established by Menzies only with a minority of strictly academic representatives - see Report of the Committee, pp.104-5; B. Bessant, A Critical Look, pp.16-19.
203 For an account of the reaction of the Australian Teachers' Federation, see Tannock, A Study of the Role of the Government, p.495; also see Whitlam, CPD (H of R), vol. 20, 26 September 1958, p.751.
204 In the next Commonwealth enquiry into tertiary education, instituted in 1961 under the Chairmanship of Sir Leslie Martin, a former professor of physics, it seemed that Menzies was conceding the need to modify this pattern to meet the needs of expansion and 'balanced development’. The Martin Commission was conducted over a much longer period than the Murray Commission, and drew its models from America - from California especially - rather than from Britain. Martin outlined a more comprehensive sense of institutional responsibility to society, making recommendations in terms of 'supply and demand', the need for a continuing revision of curricula to maintain relevance, and for study in those areas of the social sciences required 'to meet the conditions of modern technology', such as law, government, politics, psychology, economics and social anthropology - see Tertiary Education in Australia: The Report of the Committee on the Future of Tertiary Education in Australia to the Australian Universities Commission, Canberra, 1964, pp.4, 12. In meeting these needs for social responsiveness, however, Martin built on the segregation between technological and academic study formalised by Murray, and outlined the basis of the binary system in tertiary education, distinguishing between vocational study in 'community colleges' and a university education. As Susan Davies argues, this systemic division was based more on economic considerations than 'any social or educational philosophy' - S.L. Davies, 'Establishing the Martin Committee: A Study of the Setting-Up of the Committee and its Preliminary Discussions', M.Ed. thesis, Monash University, 1981, p.124. See also B. Bessant, A Critical Look, pp.20-1.
205 See 'Canberra University Has Staff Worldwide', SMH, 28 August 1950, p.2; Sir Howard Florey, 'Medical Research', Australian Journal of Science, vo.13, no.4, 1951, p.93.
postgraduate students then attached to the university.206 Laying the foundation stone for University House in 1949, a building designed to combine 'the features of the English college and the American faculty club',207 J.J. Dedman distinguished the ANU from the 'pious' and 'feudal' origins of 'older foundations': 'by contrast', he stated that 'this National University' is a manifestation of the concern and responsibility felt by a government of the people for the advancement of science and education and civilisation on this side of the world.208 Even the physical conception of the university, as proposed by Brian Lewis, Professor of Architecture at the University of Melbourne, was as a unified complex, opening out over Acton ridge, establishing an axis complementary to those of Griffin's city plan - a sense of monumental integration into the nation's civic culture.209

Once established, the expectations of the new university could no longer be confined to a small group of idealists. With its unprecedented status as a purely research institution, some uncertainty began to surround its objectives and the terms of its accountability. 'Inevitably', the Sydney Morning Herald considered, 'popular interest will centre on the Research School of Physical Sciences, which is to be devoted to nuclear research'.210 Yet as the first Director of the School, Oliphant allowed in 1952 that 'at first sight it might seem that the inclusion of the physical sciences was an afterthought' - a hasty addition to a university previously defined essentially with reference to the social sciences in an attempt to keep it contemporary with the new age created by the atomic bomb. Oliphant preferred to believe that the 'hard' sciences were there to give the 'embryonic' social sciences some idea of what real scientific work entailed.211 As Oliphant frequently implied, the social sciences had become conspicuous in their claims to shape comprehensive interpretations of needs and objectives.212 Nor was this a perception confined to scientists, for even the national prestige of the ANU did not preserve it from the reassessment of an academic contribution to social reformism.

In 1952, in recognition of the status of the ANU, and of the prominence of the social sciences, the university's Vice-Chancellor, D.B. Copland was invited to give the Presidential Address to the ANZAAS conference. Taking as his title 'Authority and Control in a Free Society', Copland suggested that the growth of centralised government, as one expression of a human desire to trust their lives to systems and institutions, was a dangerous tendency in which the social sciences were deeply implicated. Of the 'full-employment' rhetoric of the 1940s, he argued that 'it was an attempt to impose untried economic techniques in advance of the social milieu'. If the 'path to glory' had been 'clear to the reformer half a century ago', Copland argued that it had become 'blurred' for the present generation. Authoritarianism

209 Lewis, 'Australian National University', Australian Engineer, 1 January 1950, p.218.
211 Oliphant, 'The Research School of Physical Science at the Australian National University', ANZAAS, Sydney, 1952, p.31.
212 In 1954 Oliphant declared that the social sciences were often taken and taught 'by earnest men and women who lack elementary training in mathematics or scientific method ... They are dogged by emotion and preconceived adherence to political philosophies. ... Well-meaning mediocrity gives voice as loudly as genius. Because opinion is often as important as fact, the social sciences attract the cranks as do no other subjects'. See 'Difference on Trends in Universities', SMH, 25 September 1954, p.6.
might not be implicit in the social sciences, but contemporary social and political pressures had so recast
the form of 'the Modern State' that those who contributed to its expansion, perpetuated the closure of
avenues to individual initiative, and the rise of 'the mass'. The social sciences needed to take a lead from
their 'social milieu' - to devise 'means of promoting the right of initiative and to fostering the enterprising
spirit' - and not to assume the function of leadership themselves. With regard to his own charge, the
Research School of Social Sciences, Copland recommended that any quest for 'a social philosophy for
Australia' should be deferred: 'It would be highly desirable to call a halt, to allow an opportunity for the
community to digest what its has already accepted or had imposed upon it in the way of authority and
control'.213 If Copland maintained that the social scientist still had a vital role to perform in defining 'the
basic social structure he thinks desirable and enduring';214 then that role - like his notion of economic
statesmanship, discussed in Chapter Three - seems to have been in an essentially circular relationship to the
presumed consensus of a 'social milieu'.

Implicitly, in his reference to the prospects for a 'social philosophy', Copland rejected Frederic
Eggleston's attempts to frame the mission of the ANU around comprehensive social analysis;215 explicitly,
in referring to H.C. Coombs work on full-employment, Copland distanced the new university from the
prospect of co-operation with governmental policy which had appealed to those in the Department of
Post-War Reconstruction who worked to establish the institution.216 Quoting Emerson, Copland
proclaimed that 'the multitude have no habit of self-reliance or original action'; from Shakespeare he drew
the moral that 'an eagle's life is worth a world of crows'.217 Within this emphasis, Copland secured
professors whose experience was not necessarily strictly defined by university qualifications,218 but nor
was it always appropriate for co-operative research. Amid wrangles over priorities and personalities,
Copland left the University in 1952, and his successor, L.G. Melville, with a 'administrative' conception of
his duties, did not challenge this new direction.219

The early reports of the ANU Council to Federal parliament recorded international interest in the
institution's growth, and announced that work in the Physical Sciences had 'begun in earnest'.220 In the
Research School of Pacific Studies there was also evidence of intellectual enterprise geared around that
sense of 'guardianship' in introducing the peoples of the Pacific region 'to a new way of life' which was

213Copland, 'Authority and Control', pp.1, 2-3, 7, 11-14, 17, 20, 22.
214Copland, 'Authority and Control', p.21.
215p.20. For an account of Eggleston's extensive involvement in the planning of the ANU, see Osmond,
Frederic Eggleston, pp.264-77.
216Copland, 'Authority and Control', p.2, fn.1.
217Copland, 'Authority and Control', pp.10, 15.
218See R. Höhnen, 'Leadership in the Academic Community', Economic Record, vol.36, no.73, esp.
pp.167-8. The case of C.P. Fitzgerald is perhaps most notable: appointed as Reader, and later Professor in
Far Eastern History, Fitzgerald possessed no formal academic qualifications, but had lived in China for
many years - see 'Under China's Star' in John Hetherington, Uncommon Men, Melbourne, 1965, p.73.
219See Alan Hodgett, interview with Melville, ANL Trc.182, p.6. For an example of Melville's approach
to his position, see his Graduation Address for the 13 May 1960, repr. in Vettes, vol.3, no.3, 1960. Melville
spoke proudly of the ANU's achievements in the sciences, of the quality of buildings and grounds, and
devoted one sentence each to the Research Schools of Social Sciences and Pacific Studies - pp.26-31.
220Report for the Period 1 July 1951 to 3 December 1951, p.11.
discussed in Chapter Two. An equivalent sense of purpose was lacking in the Research School of Social Sciences. It was clear that this School was providing an effective point of co-ordination for national research. By 1960, over a third of the membership of the Social Sciences Research Council, founded in 1953, were based in Canberra. This organisation certainly proposed areas of research which were broad in scope: ‘International Thinking in Australian Politics’; ‘Social and Psychological Factors in Australian Industry’; and, in 1958, a symposium on ‘The Role of Women in Public and Professional Life in Australia’. Yet this scale of analysis was not easily translated into the specific projects funded by the Council and, in the context of the ANU in particular, they were resisted as inappropriate to an institution based on the recognition of scholarly excellence. At the level of postgraduate study, for example, a system of seminars was introduced in 1952, requiring ‘the student to relate his speciality to some broader or integrating sense of principles’. By 1953 this expectation was reduced on the basis that in an institution where students are mature persons pursuing very varied and individual research topics, the attempt to establish compulsory uniformity was ‘unworkable’. Facing the difficulty of attracting students from more lucrative positions in government and industry, the Social Sciences could not risk further alienating or compromising academic talents by suggesting that methodological or social questions were something these scholars might have in common.

In this context, not all the Departments which had been seen as integral to earlier formulations of the ANU’s role were consolidated as research units and those which were more successful demonstrated reassessments of their field of contribution. The Department of Social Philosophy, for example, dedicated to ‘the examination ... of the more general assumptions and principles which are employed both in the several social sciences and in the thinking of ordinary men about the organisation of political and social life’ attracted several research students to work in relatively co-ordinated fields. Yet in 1955 the Department’s foundation Professor, P.H. Partridge, made clear in his inaugural lecture that this area of inquiry was dominated by a need for consolidation rather than further advance. The tradition central to Western political philosophy - the relationship between ‘the rise of the sovereign state’ and ‘the conception

---

221 By 1953, Pacific Studies had attracted 18 postgraduate students - see Report for 1953, pp.6, 18. Nadel’s encouragement of the sociological study of Australian society in the Department of Anthropology was noted in Chapter Two. See esp. Jean Craig’s work on migrant assimilation.

222 See the Annual Reports of the Council, 1955, p.3; 1958, p.2. The members of the Council are listed in these Reports.

223 These are also listed in the Council’s Annual Reports.

224 For one complaint against this resistance, see Lord Lindsay of Birker, ‘The Way to Reform - The National University’, Observer, 8 August 1959, pp.491-92.


228 A Chair of Law, for example, was the first to be established in the Social Sciences, perhaps demonstrating the residual influence of Eggleston who regarded the study of law, ‘as the expression by the social unit ... of the pattern of ideas which it regards as essential’ - Eggleston, Search for a Social Philosophy, Melbourne, 1941, pp.20-22, 119. Geoffrey Sawer was appointed to this Chair, and worked with great industry, particularly on constitutional law; yet the Department did not attract a student until 1956, when R.J.L. Hawke enrolled to study basic wage decisions - Report for 1956, p.53.

of the individual as an independent, autonomous moral agent' - was 'more-or-less exhausted': there seemed
to be 'few signs of another struggling to be born'. In the midst of conflicting values and aspirations lacking
any dynamic element of resolution, Partridge suggested the necessity of returning to a study of the relevant
meanings of established concepts: 'freedom', 'equity', 'security', 'consent', 'representation'.230 If this
impasse was to be broken, then it seemed to Partridge that the nature of academic enquiry made it an
unlikely pioneer: initiative would return to the 'publicists' who had initiated political philosophy in the first
place.231 This counsel was a long way from the post-war enthusiasms which had led to the foundation of
the ANU. Partridge, albeit reluctantly, defined a more conservative sense of his discipline's role in
sustaining a basis political consensus.

In 1956 W.K. Hancock returned to take up the Directorship of the Research School of Social Sciences
which he had turned down in 1949. The Report to parliament in 1958 carried what was, in effect, a
manifesto from the new Director, stating that the battle over the social sciences had been won: 'I assume
that this School is not a centralised research institute working to a programme (or programmes) determined
by a sovereign will: on the contrary, it contains seven departments, each of which enjoys a large measure of
autonomy'. These departments, Hancock continued, were not equal: from time to time one might be
engaged in more creative work than the others (to be judged, presumably, by someone slightly less than
sovereign), and should be favoured accordingly. While expressing a concern to maintain the 'coherence'
and 'co-operativeness' of the School, this foray was clearly intended to end any anachronistic reference to
older visions. With his entrenched distrust of the social sciences, Hancock opposed any diversification of
the School into Psychology. Calls for a Department of Sociology met with the statement that: 'I would not
be interested for the time being in adding a builder of sociological concepts and terminology'. Social
Philosophy, Hancock argued, could satisfy whatever need existed for sociological information232 - yet it
was clear that Partridge's concentration on political thought would be no substitute for social analysis.
Hancock, like Copland in this respect, saw no need for any jargonistic invocations to social reform, and
perhaps no need for an academic contribution to reform at all. The School had its work to do, satisfying
academic criteria with no forced reference to social purpose.

These realignments at the ANU were not only similar to those occurring in Sydney and Melbourne in
theme, but, given the specific origins of the institution, they indicated that over-and-above the limitations
imposed from outside the universities by state and public demands, within the universities a self-conscious
attempt was also being made to distance academics from social issues. If a reaction against external
interventions and a defence of academic integrity was justified by the scale of those demands, this internal
realignment only reinforced a general intellectual conservatism in areas ranging from the scope of public
policy to the more basic concepts of social equity in a university system culturally and institutionally
remote from the areas of social change.

230Partridge, Thinking About Politics, Melbourne, 1955, pp.3-4, 12-13, 17, 19.


At many levels, by the end of the fifties, this conservatism was coming into question. Not only were students moving towards more active public campaigns on social issues, but by the late 1950s those political issues which had unmistakably intruded into the universities began to prompt protests from academics themselves. The controversy surrounding the dismissal of Professor Sydney Orr from the University of Tasmania, for example, emerged from the awkward status of being a 'ticklish matter', confused by legal and anecdotal details and entrenched in a depth of 'personal enmity', and became one of a principled struggle for academic freedom and the necessity of university self-government rather than 'community'. Orr was far from alone in raising these issues. Similarly, as technological change continued to reshape society and the economy, questions were raised about the moral 'freedom' of science on the one hand, and the usefulness of the exclusion of advanced research in technological fields from university status. Nor, as Sol Encel argued, was there any higher education system in Australia adequate to attract and educate students, who in turn would address the increasing economic and cultural lag between Australia and other industrialised societies, through teaching or research in technological fields. There were those, such as Clement Semmler, Controller of Programmes at the ABC, who insisted that if scientists like Oliphant had 'become a species of witch-doctor to the masses', then the best that could be hoped for was the strengthening of a 'minority culture' based in the humanities. Others, however, wondered at the paradox of a society by custom hostile to elites, which was nonetheless prepared to tolerate universities which were separated from a practical contribution to other institutions. The great need, as P.H. Partridge argued, becoming more reconciled to social diversity in the 1960s, was to devise a flexible system, which might itself diversify and specialise, offering 'absolutely first class' education outside the

---


234 From the early 1960s *Vestes*, the quarterly journal of the Federal Council of the University Staff Associations of Australia, provided regular commentary on the cases of academic discrimination raised by Russel Ward, Frank Knopfelmacher, Gluckman and Brenner.


exclusive fragmentation of the academic and the applied, the universities and the technologies. It was in this context that greater attention was gradually given to assumptions and methods in teaching.

Just as it would be simplistic to describe the institutional and cultural adjustments in the universities in the 1950s as merely 'ideological', so it was that these re-appraisals of the 1960s could only occur within the context of an established system, developing through the competing claims of technological growth and cultural values, tradition and criticism, and the role of analysis in relation to social reform and planning. In their expansion during the 1950s, Australian universities had been reshaped and consolidated in ways which were integral to the defensive conservatism of that time. Intellectuals working within them sought to retain a sense of institutional integrity through a manufactured tradition of 'the liberal education'. While other conservative forces outside the universities made claims which necessitated some re-appraisal of academic engagement, it was also true that realignments within the universities contributed to the general themes of intellectual conservatism at that time.

---


240 In 1965 an Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee survey found that few Heads of Department gave much thought to teaching the majority of their pass students. See AVCC, *Teaching Methods in Australian Universities*, Canberra, 1965.
Conclusion

On either side of the 1950s in Australian historiography there are periods customarily defined by 'movements': by developmentalism, emerging nationalism, or by liberal reformism leading up to World War Two; by the protest of conscience, by increasing cultural diversity, and the rise of new issues of 'the quality of life' in the 'sixties and 'seventies. The 'fifties, however, are rarely discussed in comparable terms. Donald Horne wrote of 'the Age of Menzies' as if much of that time was symbolised by the endurance of the Prime Minister, and of all that he represented - or at least 'until time passes and later generations forget why any of it mattered'. As the best that might be said of those driest of the 'years of unleavened bread', as Susan McKernan argues, is that they were, for many intellectuals, a time of commitment: a time in which it seemed imperative to take a stand on principle rather than to seek new directions or extend existing resources. The 'fifties, then, might be easily characterised as a period of a basic conservatism, defined by resistance to change and an attempt to give greater definition to the familiar and the established. For intellectuals, they were years in which the injunction to 'possess the time' had much appeal.

This customary periodisation of Australian history into stages of initiative and reaction serves many purposes well. The themes identified in a wide range of studies are persuasive and coherent as interpretations. As argued in the Introduction, however, this periodisation usually does not offer an explanation of the transition between these stages. The distinguishing features of the 1950s, as Horne suggested, tend to assume an irrelevancy to the major currents in social, political and cultural development as they characterised the periods of 'movement' on either side. The 'fifties, then, become a period of lapse: a time to be recovered from rather than integral stage in the shaping of the major themes of Australian history. The conservatism of that time can seem in these interpretations to be either innate, and awaiting new challenges, or imposed by figures eventually to be pushed aside.

It has been the objective of this thesis to attempt an explanation of the formation and character of Australian intellectual conservatism in the 1950s that disputes both of these assumptions. First, it has been argued that post-war conservatism, in both its cultural and institutional forms, was shaped by and developed from many of the components of earlier reformist movements. Second, the intellectual conservatism of the 1950s was neither latent nor an 'orchestrated' ideology of distinct interest groupings. It represented an attempt to comprehend and address social change in ways which were integrated within a diverse range of agencies, and with bodies of specific expertise. The issues intellectuals addressed, if not the terms in which they addressed them, continue to be relevant, whether in the area of objectives in international relations, the management of private consumption in economic policy, priorities in social development, or the role of the universities. It must be a crucial part of any contemporary discussion of these questions that the historical context in which responses were formed is not rejected as irrelevant, but analysed as a part of the process by which these issues acquired any meaning in the first place.

What, then, was the essence of the social change that so challenged the self-perceived role of intellectuals in Australia in the 1950s? Why were they prompted to reassess reformist objectives and to adopt a more

243McKernan, A Question of Commitment, see esp. pp.1-19.
conservative emphasis on the need to restrain the impact if not the pace of that change, to preserve a public cohesion from private aspirations? Many factors have been identified in other studies of the period. These factors, noted in each of the chapters, range from a stress on economic change, to the international realignment of the Cold War and of Asian nationalism, to the vehement popular rejection of planning and the enthusiasm to defend a new, affluent ‘way of life’. All of these factors - and the list could be extended - nonetheless required not only adaptation from previous attitudes, but also to be understood. Each chapter of this thesis has suggested that a crucial period in the formation of that understanding was that of wartime mobilisation and post-war reconstruction planning. It was a time which inspired the shared commitment to a war-effort and the prospects for peace. In preparing for a ‘new order’, intellectuals were drawn into vital areas of government. Yet it was also a time in which social analysis began to shift from concepts of managing society in programmes of development, most often under guidance from the state, to those of adjusting the individual as the basic unit in social planning, and seeking to identify the individual not with the abstractions of class, nation or race, but with the services, the rights and duties of ‘community’. Given the extent of their involvement in government during those years, an awareness of the political consequences of close ties to the state also began to overtake intellectuals’ earlier ideals of co-operative reform. If the formation of Australian intellectual conservatism in the 1950s can be traced to a definite period, then that period was in the midst of reconstruction rather than in a reaction against it. Much of the commentary of the 1950s seems to have involved an attempt to comprehend that experience of unprecedented intellectual influence - or at least accommodation - in reform programmes, coupled to the compromises of politics, the complexity of popular demands, and a new awareness of the individual as citizen, as consumer and as ‘personality’. In this context, the assumptions of an evolving social consensus which had informed inter-war reformism were often translated into a new consensus now to be engineered within the static figure of the individual citizen.

The approach of this thesis has itself been one of synthesis - of attempting to draw together a range of themes rather than to concentrate on particular aspects or personalities of the ‘fifties. This approach has been based on the belief that the study of post-war Australian intellectual life needs first to revise some of the dominant themes of the historiography before it can be usefully pursued studied in further detail. The basis of this revision will centre on replacing the ‘break’ thesis - the interpretation of a political discontinuity around 1949 - with a study of the cultural and institutional continuities that might help explain why that period was seen in the way that it was by those who sought to understand and influence their society. That explanation, it is suggested, will be more likely to come from an appraisal of the resources available in meeting that change - the expertise, the career patterns, the forms of knowledge and established practices of social analysis - than by defining the construction or manipulation of an ideology. It will involve, most importantly, an attempt to return intellectuals to society - both biographically and institutionally - rather than to further abstract an ‘intellectual field’ or a ‘site’ of ‘contest’.

It is possible to identify, in each of the areas discussed in this study, a suggestion that by the end of the 1950s Australian society, and the roles available to its intellectuals, entered a period of transition in many ways even more dramatic than that of the late 1940s. Defined for the purposes of social management in the 1950s, the figure of ‘the individual’ began to assume something like a life of its own in the 1960s, in a society increasingly characterised by openly contested political controversies and campaigns over personal

244 Two recent studies which have been successful in these ways are Warren Osmond’s biography of Frederic Eggleston, and Greg Whitwell’s study of the Commonwealth Treasury. See Osmond, Frederic Eggleston, and Whitwell, The Treasury Line.
If in the 'sixties it seemed that a new generation of intellectuals were more prepared to become 'a child of the time', then it can be added that they did so by developing from, rather than merely 'breaking' with, the patterns of cultural and institutional analysis consolidated in the previous decade.

---

Appendix 1


Source: Ebenezer Howard, *Tomorrow* (1898), repr. in Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow*, p.92.
## Appendix 2

### Indicators of University Expansion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Ratio Staff: Stud., (Syd. &amp; Melb.)</th>
<th>Government Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>830</td>
<td>10657</td>
<td>12.5:1</td>
<td>£259 939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>1252</td>
<td>11676</td>
<td>9:1</td>
<td>£509 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>1837</td>
<td>25585 (CRTS) 8519</td>
<td>14.5:1</td>
<td>£761 240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>2247</td>
<td>32453 (CRTS) 12464</td>
<td>15:1</td>
<td>£1 202 504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>2388</td>
<td>30630 (CRTS) 7236</td>
<td>13:1</td>
<td>£1 967 625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>2998</td>
<td>29641 (CRTS) 2316</td>
<td>10:1</td>
<td>£3 539 109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>3091</td>
<td>28720 (CRTS) 1122</td>
<td>9.5:1</td>
<td>£4 816 118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>3377</td>
<td>30793 (CRTS) 224</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>£8 646 256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>4210</td>
<td>41865</td>
<td>10.5:1</td>
<td>£13 103 769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>5093</td>
<td>53780</td>
<td>11.5:1</td>
<td>£19 728 773</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Ratios are approximate, and are intended to be indicative only. Throughout the period covered, the ratio of students to staff was much greater at the University of Melbourne than at the University of Sydney.

*Source: Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia, selected years.*
Bibliography

This is a select Bibliography. Research for this thesis ranged widely in published material, and to include here every item cited in footnotes would make it an unwieldy reference guide. The major works consulted are specifically listed, but when a journal is discussed in the text as a whole, individual articles are not separately recorded. In many instances, the use of sources established no clear distinction between primary and secondary material, and so texts are listed by type rather than period. The categories adopted in this listing are, in order: official papers, published and unpublished; unpublished manuscripts and private papers; newspapers; journals, including regular information bulletins; interviews and transcripts; articles and selected chapters from edited collections; monographs and edited collections of relevant essays; theses.

Government Papers and Archives

PUBLISHED

Australian Army Education Service,

Commonwealth of Australia,
Full Employment in Australia, Canberra, 1945.

Commonwealth Department of Labour and National Service,

Commonwealth Department of Post-War Reconstruction,
Regional Planning in Australia, Canberra, 1949.

National Security Resources Board,

K.A.H. Murray (Chair),
Report of the Committee on Australian Universities, Canberra, 1957.

L.H. Martin (Chair),

UNPUBLISHED

Report the Committee of Review into Civil Staffing of Wartime Activities, (Pinner Report), Australian Archives, CRS A2760.

Commonwealth Universities Commission Files, Australian Archives, A1361 AA49/5/2.

Manuscripts and Papers

Australian Association for Cultural Freedom Papers, National Library of Australia, Mss.2031.

Australian National University, Department of Economics, Correspondence and Notes, Series 9.6.1.0.

Richard Boyer Papers, National Library of Australia, Mss.3181.

C.R. Hall Papers, National Library of Australian, Mss.4674.
Donald Horne Papers, Mitchell Library, Mss.2144.
Lewis Lett Papers, National Library of Australia, Mss.2039.
Sir Keith Officer Papers, National Library of Australia, Mss.2629.
W.E.H. Stanner Papers, Menzes Library, Australian National University.
A.K. Stout Papers, Australian Film and Sound Archives, Mss.5712.

Newspapers

*Age* (Melbourne)

*The Bulletin* (Sydney)

*Farrago* (University of Melbourne, Students' Union)

*The Financial Review* (Sydney)

*The Herald* (Melbourne)

*Honi Soit* (University of Sydney, Students' Union)

*The Land: The Countryman's Weekly* (Sydney)

*Sydney Morning Herald* (Sydney)

Journals, Bulletins and Digests

*ABC Weekly* (Sydney)

*Journal of Adult Education* (Melbourne)

*ANZAAS - Proceedings of Congresses*

*Architecture* (after 1955 *Architecture in Australia*) (Sydney)

*Australian Geographer* (Sydney)

*Australian Outlook* (Sydney)

*Australian Quarterly* (Sydney)

*Bulletin of Industrial Psychology and Personnel Practice* (Melbourne)

*Current Affairs Bulletin* (Sydney)

*Current Notes on International Affairs* (Canberra)

*Economic Record* (Melbourne)

*The Free Spirit* (Sydney)

*Hermes* (University of Sydney)

*IPA Review* (Sydney)

*Meanjin* (Melbourne)

*Melbourne University Magazine* (University of Melbourne)

*Nation* (Sydney)

*Overland* (Melbourne)

*Quadranti,* (Sydney)

*South Pacific* (Sydney)

*The Spotlight* (Canberra)

*Talk* (Sydney)

*Vestes* (Sydney)

*Voice* (Sydney)

*Wild Cat Monthly* (Sydney)
Interviews and Transcripts

Vincent Buckley, Interviewed by the author, University of Melbourne, 12 July 1984.

Richard Krygier, Interviewed by the author, Sussex Street, Sydney, 10 December 1984.

Dr. Frank Knopfelmacher, Interviewed by the author, University of Melbourne, 12 July 1984.


Sir Leslie Melville, Interviewed by Alan Hodgett, National Library of Australia, Trc.182.

Dr Lloyd Ross, Interviewed by the author, Hunter’s Hill, Sydney, 10 December 1984.

B.A. Santamaria, Interviewed by the author, Queen Street, Melbourne, 12 July 1984.

Sir Roland Wilson, Interviewed by the author, Empire Circuit, Canberra, 5 April 1987.

Articles and Selected Chapters


'B A Note on Regionalism', *Australian Geographer*, vol.4, no.8, 1946, pp.217-225.


'B Foreword', in *Australian Outlook*, vol.1, no.1, 1947, pp.3-4.


'Twentieth Century Australia', *Prospect*, vol.7, no.2, 1964, pp.6-7.

Burton, H. 'Sir Douglas Copland and the Melbourne Commerce School', *Economic Record*, vol.36, no.73, 1960, pp.139-143.


Cain, N. 'Economics Between the Wars', *Australian Cultural History*, no.3, 1984, pp.74-86.


Cranston, H.V. 'The Position of Geography in Secondary Education', *Australian Geographer*, vol.4, no.8, 1944, pp.207-211.
Crawford, J. 'Australia as a Pacific Power', in Duncan, W.G.K. (ed.) Australian Foreign Policy, Sydney, 1938, pp.69-121.

'Crawford, J. 'Australia as a Pacific Power', in Duncan, W.G.K. (ed.) Australian Foreign Policy, Sydney, 1938, pp.69-121.

'Crawford, J. 'Australia as a Pacific Power', in Duncan, W.G.K. (ed.) Australian Foreign Policy, Sydney, 1938, pp.69-121.

'Crawford, J. 'Australia as a Pacific Power', in Duncan, W.G.K. (ed.) Australian Foreign Policy, Sydney, 1938, pp.69-121.

'Crawford, J. 'Australia as a Pacific Power', in Duncan, W.G.K. (ed.) Australian Foreign Policy, Sydney, 1938, pp.69-121.

'Crawford, J. 'Australia as a Pacific Power', in Duncan, W.G.K. (ed.) Australian Foreign Policy, Sydney, 1938, pp.69-121.

'Crawford, J. 'Australia as a Pacific Power', in Duncan, W.G.K. (ed.) Australian Foreign Policy, Sydney, 1938, pp.69-121.

'Crawford, J. 'Australia as a Pacific Power', in Duncan, W.G.K. (ed.) Australian Foreign Policy, Sydney, 1938, pp.69-121.

'Crawford, J. 'Australia as a Pacific Power', in Duncan, W.G.K. (ed.) Australian Foreign Policy, Sydney, 1938, pp.69-121.

'Crawford, J. 'Australia as a Pacific Power', in Duncan, W.G.K. (ed.) Australian Foreign Policy, Sydney, 1938, pp.69-121.

'Crawford, J. 'Australia as a Pacific Power', in Duncan, W.G.K. (ed.) Australian Foreign Policy, Sydney, 1938, pp.69-121.

'Crawford, J. 'Australia as a Pacific Power', in Duncan, W.G.K. (ed.) Australian Foreign Policy, Sydney, 1938, pp.69-121.

'Crawford, J. 'Australia as a Pacific Power', in Duncan, W.G.K. (ed.) Australian Foreign Policy, Sydney, 1938, pp.69-121.

'Crawford, J. 'Australia as a Pacific Power', in Duncan, W.G.K. (ed.) Australian Foreign Policy, Sydney, 1938, pp.69-121.

'Crawford, J. 'Australia as a Pacific Power', in Duncan, W.G.K. (ed.) Australian Foreign Policy, Sydney, 1938, pp.69-121.

'Crawford, J. 'Australia as a Pacific Power', in Duncan, W.G.K. (ed.) Australian Foreign Policy, Sydney, 1938, pp.69-121.

'Crawford, J. 'Australia as a Pacific Power', in Duncan, W.G.K. (ed.) Australian Foreign Policy, Sydney, 1938, pp.69-121.

'Crawford, J. 'Australia as a Pacific Power', in Duncan, W.G.K. (ed.) Australian Foreign Policy, Sydney, 1938, pp.69-121.

'Crawford, J. 'Australia as a Pacific Power', in Duncan, W.G.K. (ed.) Australian Foreign Policy, Sydney, 1938, pp.69-121.

'Crawford, J. 'Australia as a Pacific Power', in Duncan, W.G.K. (ed.) Australian Foreign Policy, Sydney, 1938, pp.69-121.

'Crawford, J. 'Australia as a Pacific Power', in Duncan, W.G.K. (ed.) Australian Foreign Policy, Sydney, 1938, pp.69-121.

'Crawford, J. 'Australia as a Pacific Power', in Duncan, W.G.K. (ed.) Australian Foreign Policy, Sydney, 1938, pp.69-121.


Greenwood, R.H. 'The Rural Pattern of South-Eastern Queensland', *Australian Geographer*, vol.6, no.6, 1956, pp.3-19.


Hasluck, P. 'A Policy for New Guinea', *South Pacific*, vol.5, no.11, pp.224-228.


Legge, J.D.  'Asian Studies: From Reconstruction to Deconstruction', Australian Culture History (Australian Perceptions of Asia), no.9, pp.93-102.


'Mechanisation, Collectives and Native Agriculture', South Pacific, vol.6, no.1, 1952, pp.278-291.

'What Are Co-operatives?', South Pacific, vol.6, no.9, 1952, pp.498-500.

'Australia's Future in New Guinea', South Pacific, vol.6, no.11, 1953, pp.544-547.


'What Must Be Developed?', South Pacific, vol.8, no.1, 1955, pp.3-5.


Rosenthal, N. 'What Will We Do With Television?', *Adult Education*, vol.1, no.4, 1957, pp.13-16.


Santamaria, B.A. 'A Pacific Confederation', *Quadrant*, vol.6, no.1, 1962, pp.33-34.


Shaw, A.G.L. 'Some Principles of International Relations', *Australian Outlook*, vol.6, no.3, 1952, pp.137-144.


'St on the Next Phase in British Colonial Policy', *Australian Outlook*, vol.6, no.2, 1952, pp.99-104.

'St on the Interpretation of Cargo Cuts', *Oceania*, vol.29, no.1, 1958, pp.22-25.


White, R. 'The Australian Way of Life', *Historical Studies*, vol.18, no.73, 1979, pp.536-540.


Williams, R. 'Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory', in *New Left Review*, no.82, 1973, pp.20-34.


Wilson, J.S.G. 'Post-War Economic Planning', *Australian Quarterly*, vol.16, no.3, 1944, pp.7-12.


**Mongraphs and Edited Collections**


Alexander, F. *Adult Education in Australia*, Pasadena, 1953.


Ashby, E. *Are We Educated?,* Sydney, 1941.

*Universities in Australia*, Melbourne, 1944.


Austin-Broos, D. (ed.)  

Australian National Research Council  
*Social Science Research in Australia*, Sydney, 1945.  

Badger, C.  
*Adult Education in Post-War Australia*, Melbourne, 1944.

Bailey, K.H. (ed.)  
*Studies in the Australian Constitution*, Sydney, 1933.

Bales, J.  
*Regional Councils and Regional Associations - How and Why?*, Sydney, 1953.

Ball, W.M.  
*Japan: Enemy or Ally?*, Melbourne, 1948.  

Barbalet, J.M.  

Barnett, F.O. & Burt, W.O.  
*Housing the Australian Nation*, Melbourne, 1942.

Barrett, M., Corrigan, P., Kuhn & A., Wolff, J. (eds)  

Beer, S.  

Behrens, R.  

Berman, M.  

Blainey, G.  
*A Centenary History of the University of Melbourne*, Melbourne, 1957.  

Bland, F.A. (ed.)  

Bosanquet, N.  

Boyd, R.  

Braddon, R.  

Buck, P. (ed.)  

Bunning, W.  

Burgmann, E.H.  
*The Regeneration of Civilisation*, Sydney, 1942.

Burke, E.  

Butlin, N.G., Barnard & A., Pincus, J.J.  

Cain, N.  

Cain, N.  

Caldwell, J.M., Storey, R.T.C. & Mainerd, A.  
*Regional Councils: A Review of the Local Government Structure Designed to Establish a Need to a the Creation of Regional Councils*, Sydney, 1951.

Campbell, D.A.S. (ed.)  
*Post-War Reconstruction in Australia*, Sydney, 1944.

Canaway, A.P.  

Casey, R.  
Chapman, G.  The Conduct of Australian Foreign Policy, Brisbane, 1952.

The Advance to Social Security, Melbourne, 1943.

Clark, M.  Occasional Writings and Speeches, Melbourne, 1980


Copland, D.B.  Commerce and Business: An Inaugural Lecture, Melbourne, 1925.
Studies in Economics and Social Science, Melbourne, 1927.
The Chinese Social Structure, Canberra, 1948.
The Changing Structure of the Western Economy, Montreal, 1963.


Crocker, W.R.  The Racial Factor in International Relations, Canberra, 1956.


Essays in Political Sociology, Melbourne, 1972.


Docker, J.  In a Critical Condition: Struggles for the Control of Australian Literature - Then and Now, Ringwood, 1984.


Duncan, W.G.K. (ed.)
*Trends in Australian Politics*, Sydney, 1935.
*Australian Foreign Policy*, Sydney, 1938.
Ellis, U. *Electricity and Progress*, Sydney, n.d.
*Why New States are Vital to Australia*, Sydney, 1948.
Fabian Society of Victoria *Trading Banks, Inflation and Depression*, Melbourne, 1953.
Foster, L. *High Hopes: The Men and Motives of the Australian Round Table*, Melbourne, 1986.
Hancock, W. *Australia*, London, 1930.


Hasluck, P. *Black Australians: A Study of Native Policy in Western Australia 1829-1897*, Melbourne, 1942.


*Success and Failure in Science Faculties of the University of Melbourne*, Melbourne, 1955.


Inglis, K.S. *This is the ABC*, Melbourne, 1983.


Konrad, G. & Szeleny, I.

Kramnick, I.

Kuper, A.

Lawrence, P.

Legge, J.D.

Le Mahieu, D.

Lett, L.
*Papuan Achievement*, Melbourne, 1942.

Lloyd, C.J. & Troy, P.N.

McAuley, J.

McCormack, G.
*Cold War, Hot War: An Australian Perspective on the Korean War*, Sydney, 1983.

McDonnell, R., Radford, W. & Staurenghi, P.,

McFarlane, B.

McIntyre, A.J. & McIntyre, J.J.

Macintyre, S.

McKernan, S.

McQueen, H.

Maddock, R. & McLean, I.W. (eds)

Maher, F.K. & Sullivan, J.L.
*Regionalism in Australia*, Melbourne, 1946.

Mair, L.P.

Marshall, T.H.

Matthews, J.J.
*Good and Mad Women: The Historical Construction of Femininity in Twentieth Century Australia*, Sydney, 1984

Matthews, P., Ogilve, K. & Walker, F.J.,
*Housing - A Report to the Commonwealth Housing Commission*, Sydney, 1944.

Maughan, D. et. al.
*Constitutional Revision in Australia*, Sydney, 1944.

Mauldon, F.R.E.
*A Study in Social Economics: The Hunter River Valley N.S.W.,* (W.E.A. Series), Melbourne, 1927.

Mayer, H. & Rydon, J.

Medley, J.D.G.

Melanson, R.A.

Mellor, D.P.

Menzies, R.
*The Place of the University in the Modern Community*, Melbourne, 1939.

*The Forgotten People*, Sydney, 1942.


Mills, R.C. The University and Business: A Lecture, Sydney, 1940
Nadel, S. Anthropology and Modern Life, Canberra, 1953.
Renwick, C. Economists and Their Environment, Sydney, 1947.
Roe, M. Quest for Authority in Eastern Australia 1835-1851, Melbourne, 1965.


Smith, B. Discipline, From Classroom to Community, Griffith University, 1989.


Spaull, A. Australian Education in the Second World War, St Lucia, 1982.


Stevens, B.S.B. The Next Year in the Pacific, Sydney, 1940.


Stoneham, C.P. Colonial Trusteeship in Transition, Sydney, 1944.


Taylor, F. A Pot-Pouri of Eastern Asia with Comparisons and Reflections, Sydney, 1935.

Thomas, A. Broadcast and Be Damned: The ABC's First Two Decades, Melbourne, 1980.


*Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, London, 1976.


**Theses**

Darwell, M. ‘*Quadrant: A Patchwork of Incompatible Elements*’, B.A. Hons. (History), University of Sydney, 1984.


McDonald, B. ‘*Women as Wives in Western Australia in the 1950s: A Study of Divorce and Marriage Guidance Council Evidence*’, B.A. Hons. (History), Murdoch University, 1987.


