THE DECISION of President Johnson to call a halt to the US bombing of North Vietnam has already set many people asking "Why?". Statements from military and political leaders in America and South Vietnam have assured us that the war in Vietnam is being won by the Allies. Why then, at this moment, should a halt be called?

No one can understand this situation without attempting some study of the history of the Vietnamese nation and Ho Chi Minh, the man who leads it in the north, and who commands the love and respect of millions in the south as well. What kind of man is he? Why can't the Americans find anything worse to call him than a Communist boss? Why couldn't the French, who hated him bitterly, ever find him guilty of anything but political crimes? What are his aims? Jean Lacouture, who spent much time in Vietnam, has interviewed Ho Chi Minh himself many times and had access to French records of the colonial and post-colonial periods, provides many of the answers, in this full scale biography.

President Ho's charisma is such that everyone feels it. Lacouture is an experienced and sophisticated journalist. His book is a fine lesson in objective writing, but read his description of his first meeting with Ho. "... I was steeped in the legend of the man, trying to read every word that had been written about him ... But even without these special circumstances I would have been fascinated by the figure who had just come into the room ... The first thing that struck me, apart from this unlooked for air of benignity, was the extraordinary glow in the eyes beneath his bushy brows, huge forehead and tuft of grey hair ... The expression in those remarkable eyes would have invited the word "ingenuous", except that I knew things about him which precluded any possibility that ingenuousness might be among his attributes ..."

When he asked me to have a cup of tea, or drew up a chair for me, or offered me a cigarette, it was as though he were making apologies for living among the trappings of a colonial governor. Since then, people have assured me this awkwardness was an act ... But can mere artifice really have produced that engaging manner and that extraordinary gift for making contact, a gift which at once engendered a warm and direct exchange of views and gave a startlingly fresh ring to commonplace words?"

I myself felt this extraordinary charm and freshness, coupled with remarkable informality, on the many occasions when I met President Ho Chi Minh during my three years in Hanoi, from 1958 on. The British lawyer, Loseby who defended him tirelessly when he was arrested in Hong Kong, and who returned to visit him as President of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in 1960, fifteen years later, and Sir Stafford Cripps, later to be Chancellor of the Exchequer, who argued his case before the British Cabinet, were not proof against it. Vo Nguyen Giap, who met him for the first time in 1940 and has remained his close comrade-in-arms and politics ever since, describes this meeting. "I found myself confronted by a man of shining simplicity. This was the first time I had set eyes on him, yet already we were conscious of deep bonds of friendship."
Lacouture's book traces the development of Ho Chi Minh, from the time he was a tiny boy, named Cung, through his various aliases of Nguyet Tat Thanh, Ba, Nguyen Ai Quoc, Vuong, and Lin, to the final Ho Chi Minh — He who Enlightens.

He investigates with care and objectivity and yet always one feels that his sympathy is held. Is Uncle Ho first a patriot and then a revolutionary, as many have claimed? My own feeling is that he himself would see these as two sides of the one coin. He is certainly a brave man, surviving out of “sheer stubborness”, long periods in prison and hospital with his ever recurring tuberculosis.

At least twice, his terms of imprisonment and brutal treatment, coupled with tuberculosis, have led to reports of his death. How he didn’t die is a miracle, and when in a coma deep in the jungle, Vo Nguyen Giap reports that with what he and everyone else thought were Ho’s dying breaths he was outlining the course of the revolution for the immediate future.

Ho is also a poet, writing in sharp, Chinese characters, verse that appeals by its humanist quality even in translation. His verses contained in the volume known as Prison Diary, reveal many facets of his human qualities, the humor, compassion, tenderness and at times sharpness. The English-language edition has been beautifully written by the Australian poet Aileen Palmer, working painstakingly from a word-by-word translation from the Vietnamese.

So Ho Chi Minh is revealed by Lacouture as a patriot, a revolutionary, a poet, a man of courage, but also a skilled publicist, a liberator, a negotiator of extraordinary patience and wit, and a brilliant resistance leader.

Lacouture also spends a lot of time on what is probably the outstanding characteristic of Ho Chi Minh, his capacity to inspire love and affection. Throughout South-East Asia he is referred to almost universally as Bac Ho — Uncle Ho — and this is really meaningful. As Lacouture explains, there are two Vietnamese words constantly used when Ho Chi Minh’s name crops up in Vietnam — they are nghia, and hieu.

Nghia is close to the idea contained in “duty” and the nghia binding Ho to the Vietnamese people is the consciousness of a two-way obligation, of devotedness on the one side and loyalty and discipline on the other. Add to this hieu, filial piety, and you get something like the extraordinary bond of love that is felt by the people and by Ho himself. As Lacouture says, no other leader in the world today is viewed by his followers as being both inventor and protector, source and guide, theory and practice, nation and revolution, yogi and commissar, goodnatured uncle and great war-leader.

The growth of the man and his stature is accurately traced and documented. His development and behavior as a leader are reported with the keen eyes of the French political journalist, whose country has a unique background in Vietnam among European nations.

But Ho’s attitude to America and America’s position in Vietnam is also carefully defined and anyone who still is foolish enough to believe that the Americans have been in Vietnam for freedom’s sake, should carefully read page 227 and think for a second time.

Lacouture, by no means a communist, and a man who must have done an enormous amount of research in his work as a journalist and the writing of his earlier book Le Vietnam entre deux paix, as well as in this book in which Vietnam and Ho Chi Minh are almost inseparable, finds
it in his heart to finish in this way: "Uncle Ho is an old man now, and tired after so many years of fighting in the revolutionary cause. But even if . . . he does not live to see Vietnam reunified and independent, all the way from the China border to Cape Camau, others — deputies whom he has moulded for no other purpose, and who have fought hard themselves — will live to see it for him."

Who knows, perhaps President Johnston’s advisers, on the matter of stopping the bombing, may have either read this book or taken a long, level look at the facts which led to its writing.

LORRAINE SALMON


THE PUBLICATION in Australia of a new and cheap edition of Monopoly Capital raises three important questions for Marxists: (a) how valid is the analysis? (b) how does it fit in with other contemporary radical analysis of modern capitalism (such as Galbraith’s The Modern Industrial State)? (c) how far do its basic conclusions apply to Australia?

Central to the book is the demonstration that because of pricing policies within the modern capitalist corporation, modern capitalism is characterised by a tendency for “economic surplus” (defined as the difference between what a society produces and the costs incurred in producing it) to rise in both absolute and relative terms. The authors say: “This law immediately invites comparison, as it should, with the classical Marxian law of the falling tendency of the rate of profit. Without entering into an analysis of the different versions of the latter, we can say that they all presuppose a competitive system. By substituting the law of rising surplus for the law of falling profit we are not rejecting or revising a time-honoured theorem of political economy: we are simply taking account of the undoubted fact that the structure of the capitalist economy has undergone a fundamental change since that theorem was formulated. What is most essential about the change from competitive to monopoly capitalism finds its theoretical expression in this substitution.”

Here the authors claim too much about bringing the (implied) obsolete analysis of Karl Marx up to date. Take the absolute rise in surplus. In Volume 3 of Capital, Marx argues that as the process of production and capital accumulation proceeds, the mass of surplus value that can be and is appropriated must grow, and so must also grow the absolute mass of profits accumulated by the capitalist class. The decline in the rate of profit itself leads to a rise in the mass of profits and in the mass of surplus. This is because the huge amounts of capital locked up in investment, while they tend to realise a smaller rate of profit, swell the volume of total profits.

Moreover Capital is not confined to an analysis of competitive capitalism. Marx also thought he discerned a long term trend to increased concentration and centralisation of capital, rapid elimination of small and medium-sized enterprises and a tendency for exploitation to increasingly take the form of more “relative” surplus value through higher productivity from more machinery per worker (rather than from more “absolute” surplus value from longer hours and wage freeze). This is surely an early sketch of a “model” of monopolistic capitalism.

Granted that there is a dominant tendency towards rising surplus, the major contradiction faced by the system is the absorption and distribution of the growing surplus. This problem enables Baran and Sweezy to introduce a splendid discussion of the role played
by the economic activities of the State, the role of advertising and the drive to war preparation in promoting wasteful "outlets". Military spending and capital export though, are partly self-defeating, since the former increases the profit rate and capital exports produce a return flow of profits and interest.

Much of the technical side of the analysis depends, quite rightly, on the degree of monopoly. But while the authors show how this affects the distribution of surplus among industries, they do not discuss in detail the mechanism by which it influences the level of aggregate surplus. In this respect, the price and profit policies of large corporations are not a sufficient explanation, as many sectors of the economy do not operate on this basis.

Galbraith's analysis is close to Baran and Sweezy in stressing the central role of oligopoly and the "techno-structure" which operates it, as well as the formal link between large corporation and the state. Galbraith also stresses the irrationalities of American capitalism. However, he pays less attention to "realisation" problems and more to management problems: the role of bureaucracy, planning by the capitalist state etc.

Applying Baran and Sweezy to Australian conditions we can note deviations from their "monopoly capital" model (which is after all, the result of a close study of the base and superstructure of American society). Deviations arise from the tradition of Australian vested interest group organisations operating on a number of central economic command posts and ad hoc regulatory agencies. True, the sort of formal integration of big business and government detected by Baran-Sweezy and Galbraith is now growing up side by side with this system. But the older system still persists.

Australia is still an open economy, more influenced by world trade than

in the USA. It is still in an extensive phase of development — it remains largely a frontier economy. While the manufacturing sector is highly monopolistic, other sectors (rural industry, tertiary industry, services) are not. "Surplus" is probably rising only in manufacturing. Moreover, Australia has a clever public service with more power and independence from its political masters than in the USA. They are sure to introduce certain piecemeal reforms to counter the trends mentioned by Baran and Sweezy: advertisement taxes, consumers' research and discriminatory taxation to curb profit retention. Such things are not politically possible in America because of the greater power and fanatical adherence to laissez faire policies of big business. In Australia they are politically possible: indeed the role of the Australian Labor Party as one pillar of the system would definitely be to introduce them.

B. McFarlane

ON NATIVE GROUNDS:
AUSTRALIAN WRITING
FROM MEANJIN QUARTERLY,
C. B. Christesen, Editor.
Angus & Robertson, 494 p.p. $6.00.

MEANJIN commenced publication in December 1940 as Meanjin Papers: Contemporary Queensland Verse — a slim eight page pamphlet devoted entirely to poetry. Clearly its editor, Clem Christesen, had no idea of the success which would attend his venture, nor indeed of exactly what that venture was. In the first issue he wrote that Meanjin would print prose as well as verse, even though he saw its main duty as being to "talk poetry". He wrote: "It is hoped to continue publication of this brochure throughout the war period — and perhaps well into the Peace."
But the early search for an identity for Meanjin can be seen from the fact that with the second number the subtitle became Contemporary Queensland Prose and Verse and with the third number Contemporary Queensland Letters, whereas the fourth number saw a reversion to the subtitle of the second.

By 1945, however, Meanjin had moved to Melbourne and was bearing the imprint of the University Press, was eighty pages long and carried four pages of plates each quarter. It claimed a circulation of four thousand. It was now subtitled A Quarterly of Literature and included a wide range of contributions, both from Australia and overseas. The more distinctive Meanjin, the Meanjin we know today, had begun to take shape.

Even so, as one looks back through the files of the first two volumes (the first sixteen numbers) one of the most striking things is the way in which Meanjin, operating under war-time conditions, and being published in very limited numbers, was able to build up a list of contributors who were, or who have since become, national or well-known figures. They included: Kate Baker, Manning Clark, Miles Franklin, H. M. Green, A. D. Hope, Vance and Nettie Palmer, R. D. Fitzgerald, Kylie Tennant, Judith Wright and James McAuley. An impressive list by the standards of any Australian journal; for one published in war-time Brisbane, little short of phenomenal.

Now, twenty-odd years later, and still under the editorship of Christensen, Meanjin has produced this anthology of writings which appeared in it during its first twenty-five years. Or at least, an anthology of the work of Australian writers for Meanjin. The distinction is worth making because, far more than any other Australian quarterly, Meanjin has established contact with major overseas writers, and one of the chief reasons why it occupies such an important position in the field of Australian culture is simply that its consistent effort to escape parochialism has enabled it to speak with a voice of sophistication and authority unparalleled in our literary history, and approached perhaps only by Overland. Overseas writers who have written for Meanjin include Ezra Pound, Sean O'Casey, Jean-Paul Sartre, Dylan Thomas and C. P. Snow. As well, a whole number (3/1963) was devoted to recent French writing.

But of course it is primarily as A Review of Arts and Letters in Australia (the present subtitle) that Meanjin has become famous, and it is this aspect of the journal which this book represents so adequately. None of the material in it of course is new — some of it, in fact, appeared nearly thirty years ago. And yet, reading through the book, it's almost impossible to seize upon anything that does not seem worthy of reprinting. Indeed, one of the most striking things about the book is the way in which it confirms, even within the confines of a few hundred pages, what one has often thought: that the influence of Meanjin on Australian letters and culture over the past quarter-century has been profound, and on a far more serious level than the influence exerted by that other major journal in Australian history, the Bulletin of the 1880's and 90's.

Seminal articles, or articles by writers of seminal importance, have abounded in Meanjin, and several of them appear in this anthology. Rex Ingamells' "Australian Outlook" (8/1942), for instance, where the leader of the Jindyworobak movement spoke out against the Australian tendency to "embrace a sickly, irrelevant nostalgia for English Society and Hollywood notoriety"; or A. A. Phillips' now famous "The Cultural Cringe" (4/1950), an article which seems to lie
close to the heart of Meanjin and the values for which it has stood. David Martin's article on Judah Waten, Frank Hardy and John Morrison, "Three Realists in Search of Reality" (3/1959) was another to break entirely new ground, and R. D. Fitzgerald's "Mary Gilmore: Poet and Great Australian" (4/1960) is an essay of great interest and importance: a tribute from one major poet to another.

Through articles of this quality (and they have been many) Meanjin, whilst it has been forging its own identity, has done more than any other contemporary journal to help forge an Australian identity as well.

One could go on to list further the articles, stories, poems and sketches included in this volume from A. D. Hope's still very funny review ("Confessions of a Zombie") of a youthful novel by Max Harris (1/1944), to the stories of Vance Palmer, Patrick White, Peter Cowan, Alan Marshall and Judah Waten, and the poems of Hope, Douglas Stewart, Gwen Harwood and Judith Wright (who can probably be regarded as Meanjin's great literary "discovery" during the period). These are but a fraction of the book's offerings.

It would be a mistake though to feel that the book could in some way supersede our files of back copies of Meanjin, for clearly there are many things which just couldn't be included. The various "causes" with which Meanjin has been associated over the years, for instance. One will still have to go to the files for issue by issue accounts of Meanjin and the Elizabethan Theatre Trust, or the academic recognition of Australian literature, or the Power Bequest. And it's a pity that space couldn't have been found for a few more articles: for example, Norman Bartlett's "The Necessity of the Little Magazine: The Australian Scene" (2/1948), a pioneering article of great interest, and still not superseded by John Tregenza's recent book, Australian Little Magazines. I was surprised too not to see Brian Fitzpatrick's "Counter-revolution in Australian Historiography?" (2/1963) included. But the biggest omission of all, and one which seems impossible to understand, is that of Jack Lindsay, who has been one of the most consistent and important of Meanjin contributors over many years. Surely he counts as an Australian!

Leon Cantrell


I just knew in my heart that it was not right for Dick Nixon to ever be President of this country. (LBJ, October 1964)

This is just one of the gems from the very latest in little red books — a record of the more memorable quotations from the speeches, musings and disgressions of Lyndon Baines Johnson. It is indeed a fitting tribute to the LBJ empire now in the last stages of its demise. Pocket-sized and sturdily bound in red cloth (no cheap Chinese plastics for Lyndon, thanks!) it contains over 500 of Lyndon's sayings.

The date and source of each is given but no attempt has been made to rework the heroic thoughts into grammatical English. Translators, Wren & Shepherd, have merely arranged them under such helpful headings as Messianic Infallibity, Heroic Exhortations, Let a Hundred Flowers Flourish, White Man's Burden, etc.

The book cannot fail to amuse as from first ('Don't spit in the soup. We've all got to eat') to last (I'm the only President you've got) it fairly bristles with the ultimate in Johnsonian inanities, trivia and social
gaffes. For this reason alone it is a good investment.

Of more importance, however, is the clear insight it gives into the complete hypocrisy of the man who portrays himself as a liberal, a champion of civil rights legislation and a peacemaker. Thanks to the painstaking research of Wren & Shepherd, Johnson stands condemned by his own words as a bigot, a cynical militarist, a man of little perception and even less compassion.

Have you ever wondered what Johnson really thought about negroes, peace, Vietnam and the host of other matters about which he frequently mouths such tired cliches? Quotations from Chairman LBJ makes it alarmingly clear. It is a telling indictment no less of Johnson himself than of his society.

PATRICIA HEALY


THIS BOOK by the master Soviet spy and arch-traitor to the Anglo-American Establishment, Kim Philby, leaves enough questions unanswered to justify the hope that it is not his last book on the subject.

No Englishman has written so frankly and contemporaneously about the obscurely fascinating intelligence net-work of British imperialism; no one has been more crushing with an inside view of its doomed elite. Yet there is enough of the English Establishment left in Philby himself to lend zeal to his outline of the conflicts between American and British intelligence services, whose marriage in the war-time 1940’s “doomed the British services, in the long run, to junior status.”

Philby played an important part in the inner-service political intrigue which required British cultivation of the CIA and hoodwinking of the FBI of Hoover, whom he describes as a man with “a bubble reputation” in counter-espionage, but a great politician who has put his vast dossier file on Americans to effective use in defending his “totalitarian empire.” The Anglo-American intelligence conflict emerges sharply when Philby lifts the lid on ill-fated attempts to land a force in Albania to prepare for an invasion and counter-revolution and also to drop subversion agents into the Soviet Ukraine. Both were complete failures. But Philby leaves little doubt, in outlining the bitter clashes between the British and American planners of these forays, that the CIA finally engineered the destruction of the British-employed agents sent to the Ukraine, and then of the British-sponsored Ukrainian anti-Soviet leader, Stepan Bandera in West Germany.

Despite his mammoth outwitting and now exposure of the British Establishment, Philby curiously retains the admiration and affection of many who knew him — if Graham Greene’s preface to the book means anything. Philby evidently displayed all the best characteristics of a gentleman in British upper-class terms. Greene refers to “Philby’s enemies” (presumably the Establishment hard core) as though they are no friends of Greene either.

All this is an extraordinary achievement for one man who likes to sum himself up simply as a Soviet intelligence officer. It is therefore perhaps understandable that, in writing the book, his main worry seems to be that he won’t be believed. He is at pains to force those members of the Establishment who read his book (presumably they would rush it) to realise that one of themselves could consistently and successfully work to defeat them on the basis of the inherent weaknesses of their system.
Philby's chosen career was due not to some degeneracy or greed but to decision to work for the Soviet Union as the "fortress" of communism; his success was due to his superior skill and his maintenance of all the mores of the British Establishment except the one most taken for granted — patriotism. The realisation of this must be shattering to many in British ruling circles even today. Superficially, Philby was a classic product of the "clever" wing of the Establishment, beginning with the permissible flirtation with the left at Cambridge. Later he took off for the Spanish Civil War... on Franco's side, and in the pay of *The Times*. Natural—yet unnatural, for he was already a committed officer of Soviet intelligence.

He succeeded in entering the British secret service by invitation, having "dropped a few hints here and there" before heading for France as correspondent in October, 1939. By 1944, he was a senior secret service executive with a share in policy making.

Philby will not even allow unchallenged any suggestion that he might have had "divided" loyalties as a double agent. His remarkably successful career in the secret service was simply, to him, a "cover job" for his real service based on prior commitment to the Soviet Union.

Evidently by no means an uncritical Sovietophile, he indicates that he was shaken by Stalinist excesses. But he rejected the temptation to "give up" or to take the road of the "querulous outcasts of the Koestler-Crankshaw-Muggeridge variety, railing at the movement that had let me down — a ghastly fate, however lucrative it might have been." Philby found that despite enormous errors by individual leaders, he prefers the people they lead to those of any other movement.

Why, then, didn't Philby in the first place commit himself to work in the left political movement? His early disillusion with the British Labor Party could have been a normal spur to this. The answer could be in his shock that the "supposedly sophisticated electorate had been stampeded (in 1931) by the cynical propaganda of the day." Philby could not find faith in the political potential of the British masses: perhaps this is why he became a Soviet agent instead of a British communist. There is a world of difference between the two.

ALEC ROBERTSON

**THE PUZZLED PATRIOTS,**

MUCH PAINSTAKING RESEARCH has gone into this completely objective account of the arrest and internment, during World War II, of a small group of Australian-born citizens, suspected by Military Intelligence of conspiring to help the Japanese aggressors. Most were members of the Australia First movement, whose leading figure was P. R. (Inky) Stephensen.

Stephensen edited a monthly periodical, *The Publicist*, founded in 1936 by W. J. Miles, a well-to-do public accountant and company director. The editorial policy of *The Publicist* was proclaimed in the first issue: "No writer will be a writer for this paper unless he stands definitely for Australia First." An intense dislike, shared by Miles and Stephensen, for all things British, rather than any great love of country, inspired the slogan, "Australia First."

The philosophy espoused by *The Publicist* was a crude, narrow, chauvinistic Australian nationalism, with anti-British, anti-semitic, anti-communist, and pro-fascist overtones. In May 1937, when the organised labor
movement, recognising the inherent danger to Australia’s future security involved in Japan’s undeclared war against China, was demanding a boycott of Japanese goods, Stephensen wrote in *The Publicist*: “I say let the Japanese have a free hand in China.” Six months later he returned to this theme, writing it is “far better that Australia should ride with Japan in the Pacific than decline with Britain in the Atlantic.”

From 1938 *The Publicist* began reprinting Hitler’s speeches. At this stage W. J. Miles, Stephensen and the group centred on *The Publicist* were not alone in their pro-axis sympathies. The Prime Minister to be, Robert Gordon Menzies, had openly expressed his admiration for both Mussolini and Hitler. As Attorney-General in the Lyons’ Ministry, he framed coercive measures to compel Port Kembla waterside workers to load scrap metal into the *Dalfram* bound for Japan. When war eventuated R. G. Menzies put his pro-Axis sympathies in the background and donned the mantle of patriot. Had P. R. Stephensen and his associates done likewise they may have avoided their subsequent fate. The Communist Party, which spearheaded the opposition to war and fascism, consistently denounced the activities of Stephensen and *The Publicist*. In April 1939 Stephensen took out a libel action against the Communist *Workers’ Weekly*, arising from an article and a poster stating “Sydney’s Nazi Underworld.” Stephensen complained that he was portrayed as a paid traitor and agent of another nation. The *Workers’ Weekly*, represented by Mr. Clive Evatt, pleaded in defence that the article was true, was published in the public benefit and was fair comment on a matter of public interest. The jury found for Stephensen, but awarded the insulting damages of one farthing.

Within three years Stephensen had been taken into custody at the instigation of Military Police Intelligence and interned for reasons substantially the same as alleged by the *Workers’ Weekly*. To this extent the Communist Party and the *Workers’ Weekly* can justifiably claim foresight. The same applies to those workers who demonstrated violently against the Adyar Hall meeting of the Australia First movement in February 1942, when Japanese bombs were already falling on Darwin. However, the authorities, instead of clamping down on Stephensen and his pro-Axis supporters, took action against the real patriots, his bitter opponents. James McLoughlin, a waterside worker, and Andrew Dove, a laborer, were arrested, charged and convicted of offensive behavior.

Impetus for the Sydney round-up of Australia Firsters came from Perth, in a coded telegram from Colonel H. D. Moseley, staff officer in charge of Army Intelligence, Western Command. Colonel Moseley’s message to Army Intelligence authorities in Sydney was based on the detention of four persons in Perth, under section 13 of the National Security Act. Their detention was instigated by Detective-Sergeant G. R. Richards, who was then in charge of the Special (political) Bureau of the Perth CIB. Richards subsequently rose to the post of Deputy Director of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation. He played a prominent role in the notorious Petrov provocation, staged against the labor movement by R. G. Menzies on the eve of the 1954 Federal elections. Richards based his allegations against the four WA detainees on reports furnished by a paid agent, Frederick James Thomas. None of the four Westralians had any firm affiliations with *The Publicist* group in Sydney, although two of them had sent letters. All the evidence points to Thomas, who was paid £5
a week by Richards, acting as an agent provocateur; as defence counsel for the four put it, "No Thomas, no conspiracy."

Some of the most lurid and sensational evidence provided by Richards and Thomas in the conspiracy trial formed the main content of Colonel Moseley's telegram to Sydney.

The officer who would normally have had responsibility for acting on the Perth message was Lieutenant-Colonel J. M. Prentice. In civilian life, Prentice had been a radio commentator on foreign affairs over station 2UW in Sydney and a contributor to the Cheesecake magazine Man. In his speeches and writings, Prentice pursued a bitterly anti-communist, strongly pro-appeasement line. An issue of Man had to be recast in September 1939 and a radio commentary cancelled in which Prentice explained Germany would not go to war. However, in the absence of Prentice, for whom it must surely have created some embarrassment, the Perth message went to former advertising agent Lieutenant-Colonel Reginald Powell for action.

Author Bruce Muirden relates how Powell, accompanied by other members of army and military police intelligence, went to the Intelligence index, which listed the names of 60 members and sympathisers of the Australia First Movement. From this index, Major Tyrell chose 20 names, four of which were struck off by Lieutenant-Colonel Powell.

No clear reason was ever established as to the grounds on which the 20 were selected or on what grounds the four were reprieved. It seems from subsequent proceedings that the choice, to a great degree, was purely arbitrary. In the cooler atmosphere of the post-war years, when the incident was reviewed in retrospect by

a Commission of Inquiry, headed by Mr. Justice Clyne, it was found that eight of the internees had been unjustifiably detained. Mr. Justice Clyne recommended to the Government that they be awarded compensation.

The most significant aspect of the whole incident, which provides grounds for serious thought today, is the amount of power wielded by the so-called security forces. Secret police spying on the peace, democratic, student and labor movements, is on a much vaster scale than it was in the mid-war period. So much so that one State Premier can claim to have access to dossiers on 16,000 people, as compared with the 60 names available to Lieutenant-Colonel Powell in 1942.

Furthermore, repressive amendments to the Defence Act have established a death penalty for treason not only to Australia, but some foreign power, proclaimed to be Australia's friend and ally.

The author may not agree with his conclusion, since he states at the end of his book that he leaves the answers to questions raised therein to others. He states that he has attempted to follow Dr. Elton's precept, which regards it as an error to "study the past for the light it throws on the present." Be that as it may, the reader will find plenty of material for serious thought about issues which loom large today, such as freedom of conscience, freedom to oppose government policy on foreign affairs. The broader question of what justified the exercise of such freedom and what justifies its restraint, is outside the scope of the author's work. Nevertheless it is sure to stimulate some deeper thought on these currently important topics. It is a book to be commended to all students and others interested in Australian history.

E. W. Campbell