

## Antagonism as an Art Form: Brian Penton and the Politics of Provocation

### Patrick Buckridge

David McNicoll — not one of Australia’s better-known stirrers — tells the story of a dinner party at Frank Packer’s Sydney home in 1946 with Brian Penton, then editor of the *Daily Telegraph*, and other Consolidated Press management staff, at which the guest of honour was Randolph, the unpleasant son of Winston Churchill. Seated on either side of their hostess, Penton and Churchill locked horns halfway through the meal over a reference by Penton to the ‘decline of Britain’:

Randolph bristled and reddened. “What the hell do you mean, the decline of Britain?” he shouted at Penton.

Penton tried to calm him. “You must admit”, he said, “that Britain has been in decline for some time. Perhaps it started with the repeal of the Corn Laws”.

“With the what?” roared Randolph. “What idiotic nonsense are you talking?”

Gretel Packer readjusted the seating arrangements to separate the antagonists, but Churchill stormed out of the house shortly after, much to Penton’s embarrassment and Frank Packer’s indignation.<sup>1</sup>

The anecdote tells us something interesting about the kind of ‘stirrer’ Penton was: an incorrigible *provocateur*, always prepared to air his pet theories, especially to people he could be fairly sure they would enrage; yet often strangely disconcerted by the predictable consequences of doing so. Something of the same complexity comes across in one of my favourite Penton anecdotes, told by the late Emery Barcs in his autobiography, *Backyard of Mars*. Barcs was a Hungarian journalist and academic who came to Australia as a refugee in 1939. He was given a job on the *Telegraph* by Penton, and subsequently became foreign affairs editor. Standing alone at the bar in the Royal Standard one evening, unable to follow the other journalists’ conversations, he was approached by Penton, who ‘sidled up to me and asked softly: “Do you feel very much an exile?”’:

His intuition startled me, but I merely shrugged my shoulders. Penton continued: ‘Unfortunately no-one can help you. I have had the same experience. A few years ago I was in Spain and became friendly with a young Spaniard. We had a lot in common — literature, art, philosophy, outlook on life — but then a moment came when talking to him I felt as though I were standing before a stone wall. A sort of wall which could never rise between me and a fellow Australian or, I suppose, between you and another Hungarian. The wall of strangeness and inexplicable incomprehension’.

‘Surely,’ I said after a while, ‘there ought to be some means of climbing over that wall if it is impossible to break through it’.

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Now it was Penton's turn to think. He slowly sipped his beer then said pensively: 'On the other side you would find another wall and then another again'.

'Sounds like Kafka,' I said. 'Do you know him?'

He shot back in a tone of sudden irritation: 'Sounds like Penton — and I'm sure you don't know him ...'. He walked away.<sup>2</sup>

Again, that same slightly sadistic probing of the sensitive tissue, and then the momentary loss of cool — a reaction, perhaps, exposing more than he intended, either to his victim or to himself. What made Penton, in the final analysis, more than a social and intellectual troublemaker — though he was certainly that — was his inability to keep himself safely out of the firing line, even when the bullets were his own. His contempt for others, we might almost say, was never entirely free of self-contempt, a trait he shared with another great hater and stirrer, Jonathan Swift. It was a trait that Norman Lindsay, possibly the person who knew Penton best, recognised with more acuity than usual.

But the more visible Penton, the abrasive, needling, sarcastic newspaperman who could goad even a discreet bureaucrat like Fredric Eggleston to exasperation, who could infuriate politicians on all sides with his articles and scandalise sections of the Sydney public with his bohemian behaviour ... this Penton exhibits no such dark ambivalences. He is less a fully-fleshed individual in the sphere of politics and journalism than a series of masks — the shameless gossip, the serious intellectual, the patient reasoner, the languid aesthete, the moral radical, the tough reporter, the even tougher editor — and these masks were the instruments with which he attempted to make real interventions, to gain some real purchase on Australia's economic direction, and on its political and social development.

From the time of his first appearance on the Sydney journalistic scene with irreverent descriptions — for the *Herald* of all newspapers! — of the state governor's verbena underwear, and the governor-general's undignified joyride in a Widgeon seaplane, Penton was notorious; and by the time he left the paper to go overseas in 1929, he had become controversial. As the anonymous (but widely-known) author of a satirical daily column, 'From the Gallery', on the goings-on in the state and federal parliaments, he wrote amusing, sometimes judiciously analytical, but more often biting pen-portraits of most of the major players and a sprinkling of minors. 'Billy' Hughes, 'Ted' Theodore, fresh from the hurly-burly of Queensland politics, and Tom Mutch, labor opposition leader in the New South Wales assembly, had nothing to fear or complain of from Penton's scrutiny. Hughes, indeed, might almost have been embarrassed by the fulsomeness of some of Penton's panegyrics on his parliamentary performances. But Earle Page and Frank Forde both felt the lash, the latter in a memorable tribute to his mastery of 'eurhythmic oratory', in which:

The feet must be moved, the arms raised and lowered, the hands jerked out and swung in vast circles, and laid on the head and the heart, the desk must be hammered, the floor must be kicked, invisible necks must be wrung, and eyes dramatically blackened straight from the shoulder. It is rumoured Mr. Forde trains severely for these speeches.<sup>3</sup>

Bert Lazzarini, Gough Whitlam's predecessor in the Sydney seat of Werriwa, elicited similarly over-the-top treatment: singled out on one occasion for his 'frantic efforts to paralyse his own left leg' and on another for an address to himself:

Mr Lazzarini delivered a speech to Mr. Lazzarini this morning and the honourable member for Werriwa was intensely fascinated. Having touched vaguely on the Napoleonic Wars and the abolition of slavery which, one concluded from what he said, were contemporaneous with the Wars of the Roses and the defeat of Harold the Saxon at Hastings, he played about with the jargon of economics, dazzling Mr. Lazzarini so completely that he had to break the thread of his lecture on the irrigation of early Egypt to congratulate himself.<sup>4</sup>

Ridicule premised on people's educational deficits is not calculated to win many friends; nor is the practice of rubbing salt into wounds; and Penton was not averse to either. After a blow-by-blow description of Billy Hughes' demolition job on John Perkins, a Government backbencher, the three party leaders seem to have agreed that pressure should be applied in appropriate quarters, and Penton was recalled from Canberra for reassignment.

But by 1928 Sydney had begun to pall. Penton and his wife Olga had both begun to develop serious ambitions as writers and they spent the next couple of years in England trying, without success, to publish their first novels, though they at least gained entree into some of London's less fashionable literary circles. It was an opportunity for Penton to elaborate and enrich — if mainly for his own satisfaction — an identity as a cultural intellectual of a particular kind: self-consciously marginal, radically individualist, morally libertarian, and committed to a principle of active but unsystematic intervention in the social process.

This role was developed with reference to an increasing range of models, past and present: Norman Lindsay, of course, for many years; but also, for a time, D.H. Lawrence, for whom Penton wrote a *Bulletin* obituary in 1930 praising him above all for the 'love of fight' he also admired in Lindsay and Billy Hughes. A more exotic model was John Wilkes, the radical eighteenth-century politician, editor and noted lecher who fascinated Penton all his life. H. L. Mencken, the American journalist and polymath, scourge of the 'Comstockery' and 'backwoods mentality' of the modern puritan tradition, was another of Penton's heroes — and some of his friends, gratifyingly enough, saw him at the time as an 'Australian Mencken' in the making. He could even, in his more self-dramatising moments, liken himself to Kurtz, Conrad's ultimate transgressor and the denouncer of Europe's whole scheme of civilised values; but it was not a role that stuck.

When Penton returned to Sydney towards the end of 1933 to take up a position on the pre-Packer *Telegraph*, his version of himself as a 'stirrer' could be articulated in very sophisticated terms. No mere populist muckraker, Penton saw himself as a serious social critic inheriting and carrying forward the values of two distinct intellectual traditions. One was the political tradition of 'classical English liberalism', from Locke through John Wilkes to Gladstone and Deakin; the other was the much older and more diverse literary tradition of libertine individualism, that included the likes of Petronius, Rabelais, Shakespeare, Cervantes and Sterne — and of course Lawrence, Huxley and Norman Lindsay in the modern era. The two traditions,

while broadly congruent, have some key differences of emphasis, notably in relation to liberal conceptions of a 'common good' in society, a notion to which Penton was increasingly drawn.

In the early 1930s, though, it was the more insistent individualism of the literary tradition that dominated his journalistic style and his cultural preoccupations. These appeared very engagingly in the daily column he wrote for the *Telegraph* in 1934-35, the *Sydney Spy*, in which he ranged across a wide spectrum of issues, on all of which he had definite opinions: censorship, religion, education, journalism, music, literature, popular culture, feminism, the Aborigines, nationality and nationalism, democracy, ethics, and the implications of relativity and quantum physics, to name the most frequent. The menu was surprisingly intellectual for the *Sydney Telegraph* as it then was — a cheerfully unpretentious broadsheet with a reputation for innovative graphic design and a strong interest in Hollywood and sport. Accordingly, Penton leavened the mix with occasional celebrity interviews — people like Krishnamurti, Jack Davey, Major Douglas and Harold Larwood. But the focus of the column was very much on public issues and debates, with Penton positioning himself as the sophisticated sceptic, at times the know-all or the cultural snob, always more than happy to antagonise and annoy a readership that seemed — if one can judge from his weekly 'mailbag' — equally happy to be antagonised and annoyed, and to make him, at least for a year or so, something of a cult figure in Sydney.

What was new in the method of the *Sydney Spy*, by comparison with his earlier work on the *Herald*, was the targeting of the reader. The 'Gallery Notes' had targeted the parliamentarians, making the reader effectively his accomplice in ridiculing them. In the *Spy* there are very few instances of individuals being directly satirised — notable exceptions are the state and federal censors — but the 'implied reader', with his (or, very frequently, her) assumed prejudice, confusion, and laziness, is consistently in the firing-line. It was an aggressive, high-risk strategy for the paper, but the *Telegraph* stuck with it for nearly two years. The end coincided with a pair of libel suits brought against Penton, not for anything written by the 'Spy' — one can hardly libel a whole readership! — but for a mildly disparaging *Bulletin* review of a novel, *Mezzomorto*, by Vivian Crockett, which Penton had discussed as a useful example of the kind of colonial 'Oedipus complex' he had dramatised in a different way in his own recently published novel.

*Landtakers*, Penton's novel about pioneering in south-east Queensland, published in 1934, was his most elaborate exercise in controlled provocation. Uncompromising — perhaps at times a little hysterical — in its brutal depiction of the convict system, the pioneering enterprise, and the private relations between men and women, *Landtakers* was a challenge to the Australian reader of 1934 — one with interesting resonances for the 1990s. The challenge was a threefold one: first, to confront the realities of white colonisation — the massacres of Aborigines, the destructive exploitation of the environment and, worst of all from Penton's viewpoint, the moral corruption and brutalisation of the colonisers themselves; second, to recognise the heroic myths and romantic concealments of official history for the lies and half-truths they were; and then, third, to somehow reconstruct a new and positive vision of Australia out of the discredited wreckage of the old.

Given the failure of most Australians to rise to that challenge even now — Paul Keating issued a version of it in the Redfern speech of 1994 — it is hardly surprising that few people rose to it sixty years ago. The surprising thing is that the novel was as popular as it was. No doubt the fact that it was set in the bush, in Queensland, and in the 1840s, allowed a majority of readers to dissociate themselves from its more disturbing implications for the legitimacy of their own society and to savour the romantic intensities of shame and degradation for their psychological interest alone. Even so, there were enough angry and defensive reactions from reviewers and readers with close pioneer connections (such as Miles Franklin, who loathed the book) to suggest that Penton's message had some of its intended impact.

The published sequel, *Inheritors*, which came out two years later, made the theme of a tainted and illegitimate national patrimony more central to the main narrative, and to that extent less avoidable. The book was a flop in any case; though brilliant in patches it lacks the sustained intensity of *Landtakers*. But Norman Lindsay showed in his enthusiastic *Bulletin* review, just how politically disabling a 'radical' critical theory — in his case a vulgar Freudianism — could be in its effect on a genuinely radical literary text.<sup>5</sup> More lessons for the 1990s, perhaps.

Penton continued to work on the third, never-to-be-published novel of the Cabell family trilogy through the 1930s, extending his account of the thefts and murders of the first generation and the lies and hypocrisy of the second, to the guilt, neurosis — and artistic creativity — of the third. Meanwhile he was stirring a somewhat lighter brew. As literary editor of the Packer *Daily Telegraph*, which he had joined as a feature writer on his return from a second overseas trip in 1936, he wrote a regular weekly feature, 'For Your Dustbin'. This was a short book review exclusively reserved for hatchet jobs, and over the period of three or four years when he was writing them he consigned a wide range of books and authors to the 'Dustbin', having determined that they possessed 'that peculiar blend of pretentiousness, dullness, and doodlepoppery' necessary to qualify.

Favourite targets included the English society novelist Beverley Nichols, that 'mincing chameleon of cant and commonplaces'; any and all memoirs of chutney-stuffed English colonels (retired), books about spiritualism and the occult, American pop-psychologists like Dale Carnegie and Napoleon Hill, bemused English liberals, books about Australia by foreign journalists and travel writers, and ballet. Very few Australian writers were binned: there were fewer of them, of course, but Penton may have been cautious in the aftermath of the *Mezzomorto* libel suits (which he lost). Even his review of *Capricornia*, felicitously headed 'Australia Prolix', stipulates that it is 'not the work of Mr Xavier Herbert' that he would consign to the 'Bin', but 'the fanatical feuilletons of bumptyous Australianism' — for which read his old enemy 'Inky' Stephensen, Herbert's mentor and first publisher.

Frank Clune was one of the few Australian writers the 'Dustman' was prepared to bag, and one wonders if Penton knew that Stephensen was secretly ghost-writing for him. Clune is binned twice for his Asian travel books, first for *Sky High to Shanghai* and later for *The Isles of Spice*. In both cases what offends him is Clune's conceit and his habit of proclaiming his nationality in foreign parts with a stream of struths, wackos and bonzer tarts. Frank Clune, he concluded, 'just keeps on being Frank Clune. It is a pity Australia has to take the blame'.<sup>6</sup>

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Even the ‘Dustbin’ reviews, lightheartedly malicious though they were, can be seen as part of a larger Pentonian project of provocation and ‘destructive analysis’. But with the outbreak of war, provocation and challenge took on a higher significance. The task at hand was still one of jolting Australians into confronting the facts of their past and present, but there was also now an urgent need to mobilise patriotism and maintain morale among the civilian population — a need, in short, for propaganda.

Of all Penton’s achievements, his wartime contribution is, I think, his least recognised and understood; and the question of propaganda is central to it. As early as 1938, in an essay written for a collection put together by the fellowship of Australian writers as *Australian Writers in Defence of Freedom*<sup>7</sup>, but never in fact published, he had sounded a note which, in the context of a strongly anti-fascist collection, must have seemed (and judging by the editorial marginalia did seem) deliberately perverse at best:

You talk to a man about the pogroms in Germany, the war in Spain, and think you’re getting along fine — twin souls — until it dawns on you that he wants a pogrom too. He wants to beat up all the fascists. You go away wondering what he’s got against the fascists then ... All over the world you can see it happening — the human animal getting down in the muck again bawling with intolerance and hatred, bawling for violence to cure violence. And of course it won’t cure anything ... We can wipe Hitler out and Mussolini and all the rest of the gang, but what will we do to ourselves in the process?<sup>8</sup>

‘What will we do to ourselves in the process?’ An unusual question to be asking at that moment in history. He would ask it again, in January 1940, in a speech to the Australian Political Science Institute in Canberra in which he advocated the use of propaganda as the only means of overcoming the misguided pacifism of the liberal mind, while at the same time — in the same speech — evoking the consequent destruction of the human capacity for objective reasoning and critical thought. Even if the war is won, he warns, it will have been at too great a cost:

Will it matter much if the sun still fails to set on the British Empire, and ... a little man with a Charlie Chaplin moustache is under the sod? The lights will have gone out over Europe.

There will be no more Einsteins, Manns, Schnabels, Bertrand Russells or Lowes Dickinsons, because such minds do not develop in the darkness.

There will be only a new crop of ridiculously posturing leaders, blaring nonsense from loudspeakers, and you and I, sodden by years of such balderdash, will lift up our voices and applaud.<sup>9</sup>

The following year Penton pursued his interest in propaganda further in a polemical monograph, *Think — Or Be Damned!*, a vigorous and iconoclastic assault on complacency, hypocrisy and self-delusion in Australian society. It was a big success, with three reprintings by 1945, and people who were around at the time still speak of it as one of the most memorable publications of the war years. The book opens with a characteristically irascible flourish:

You will find this homily ill-mannered, cantankerous, unpatriotic, subversive and destructive. It is intended to be. It is written in a mood somewhere between horror, fear, anger, and irrational faith in the future of this continent.<sup>10</sup>

Unlike most propaganda pamphlets, this one offers no positive political program. It offers instead an exemplary method of ‘straight thinking’, beginning with a cultivated suspicion about abstractions like ‘democracy’, ‘freedom of expression’, and ‘nationhood’, and extending to a systematic scepticism towards comfortable myths about Australia’s high standard of living, the virtues of its education system, the quality of its cultural achievements and, above all, towards the legend of the National Character: resourceful, independent, ‘a devil-may-care race, proud of our reluctance to kowtow to social superiors’. Checked against the ‘facts’ of Australian history — the cruelties of the penal system, the crushing defeats of the unions, the tolerance of government intervention in people’s lives — there appears to be little truth in the legend; there is evidence, rather, of ‘spineless timidity in the face of authority’ as an abiding national tendency.<sup>11</sup>

In fact, Australia’s historical achievements, which had received such a boosting a couple of years earlier during the sesquicentenary celebrations, pale into insignificance beside such things as widespread soil erosion, plagues of rabbits and prickly pear, the ‘wastage of the Aboriginal race’, bigoted resistance to needed immigration from Europe and Asia, and cultural philistinism unmatched in the western world. Even the bush landscape so confidently appropriated by the radical nationalists is questioned. In general, white Australians are no more comfortable with the outback than they ever were:

A hard country, a rather terrifying — because so empty and quiet — country. We have not fitted ourselves into it. We cannot bear its continental immensity. We huddle together in our cities trying to keep our eyes away from its grey emptiness, its burning plains, its silent bush, its oppressive monotony. We do not love it. We hate it.<sup>12</sup>

‘Not’, he hastened to add, that ‘this country is unlovable, only that it is not yet loved’.

Penton was not the first to say any of these things, but he may well have been the first to say all of them, and to say them so forcefully. Ironically, they may have been swallowed up almost immediately in the surge of anxious re-evaluation and re-orientation that followed Pearl Harbour and the fall of Singapore. History stepped in and achieved in short order what his ‘method of thinking outside yourself’ would probably never have brought about.<sup>13</sup> But at least he was looking in the right direction, which is more than a large number of Australians at the time were doing.

As Australia’s war started to look serious in early 1942, Penton threw himself with energy and imagination into the task of maintaining civilian morale on the home front in the face of mounting casualties and invasion fears. He was by this stage extraordinarily well-placed to do so. As the editor of what had become, briefly, the biggest-circulation newspaper in the country, he was in daily contact, directly or indirectly, with about half the population of Australia’s largest city. To a man for whom the power of the popular press to influence opinion had always been a source

of fascination, the challenge was irresistible and exhilarating, and the outcome somewhat unexpected. Where one might have expected a man as arrogant and abrasive as Penton to produce a paper that trumpeted his own views or those of his equally arrogant and abrasive proprietor, Frank Packer, the *Daily Telegraph* of the later war years was in fact a vigorous open forum for debate and discussion across a wide range of topics.

The focus tended to be on the war effort, naturally, and on the shape of the post-war settlement in Australia, but it is a tribute to Penton's commitment to liberal intellectual values that he kept the agenda of issues as broad and diverse as it was, covering education, the parliamentary system, economics, international relations, sport, art, literature, history, music, architecture and city planning, and a host of other areas seriously, in depth, and — most importantly — as *matters for debate*. The hectoring vituperative of the previous decade — the voice of the journalist/*provocateur* — was replaced by the quieter presence of the editor/impresario, inventing, arranging and co-ordinating new and varied configurations of discussion among readers and contributors. Some of those configurations were straightforward enough — a matter of inviting and printing responses to a particular feature article. Others were considerably more complex; for example the collaborations with the ABC 'listening groups' through 1943-44.

Under this arrangement the *Telegraph* would publish a full-page article each Monday, the first of five weekly articles on different aspects of a general topic relevant to meeting the challenges of the 'new world order' after the war. Each article would be written by a person with some special knowledge of the topic. That same evening, at 8.00 pm on the alternative network station 2BL, a talk would be presented on a related aspect of the same topic, either by the author of the original article, or someone else, and then at 9.30 pm on the main network station 2FC, a three-way discussion and debate would be held, usually involving the earlier speaker and two other interested people from the community. At this point in the process, the ABC listening groups in homes, factories, barracks, schools and Rotary clubs took up the discussion among themselves, and registered groups could obtain additional material from the ABC. After all of this, Penton invited letters from readers in response to the article, the talk or the radio discussion (or all three), and he offered prizes of War Savings Certificates for the best three letters received. Over several days the paper then published the winning letters and a generous selection of others.<sup>14</sup>

There were other, similarly involved configurations of readers, guest contributors, and staff writers, often overlapping and intersecting with one another, with Penton only occasionally putting in a personal appearance while supervising the often very lively interactions from the wings. But he was not able to maintain the role of detached impresario for long, and by 1945 he had reinserted himself and his opinions into the paper in the form of a regular essay called 'Why We Said It' in the Saturday magazine section. This was in part a summary of the previous week's editorials (some of which he still wrote himself), but also an intellectual rationale for them; it was therefore somewhat more didactic in tone and method than his earlier writing. His new readiness to lay down the law corresponded with a widespread sense among liberal intellectuals at this time that positive alternative models of social organisation and behaviour were needed for discussion, not just critiques of the old, however trenchant.

From as early as 1943, Penton was beginning to frame his thinking about Australia and the world in more positive, 'reconstructive' terms. In his second, longer monograph *Advance Australia — Where?* (1943), written mainly for the British and American markets, he outlined a version of a new order somewhat different from the state-regulated model favoured by intellectuals associated with the ministry of post-war reconstruction such as 'Nugget' Coombs and Lloyd Ross.<sup>15</sup> For Penton, as for some others on the moderate Right, the war had shown the desirability of closer co-operation between government and industry, but not at the price of economic and social isolation: 'The only kind of new order that offers Australia any long future is a world of equalised opportunity — a world of freer trade, common currency, racial tolerance, and common aims.'<sup>16</sup>

What Penton was proposing in 1943-44, ironically, was pretty close to what the Hawke/Keating governments tried to deliver some forty years later: a re-organisation of primary production on more cost-effective and less environmentally destructive lines, and a general lowering of tariffs and immigration barriers, aimed at integrating Australia into its geographic region. Some of the more radically alternative realities he envisaged — the peaceful and gradual 'Asianisation' of Australian society, and the elimination of State governments, for example — no longer look so far off. Others, like the relocation of Australia's heavy industrial plant to Britain, where it could be better defended, look distinctly looney — but didn't at the time; and there are surprisingly few in that category.

Brian Penton died young, at the age of 47, in 1951. Of those forty-seven years it seemed to me, when I was researching his life for a biography some years ago, that he had been a pretty dedicated stirrer for about forty-five (he had a serene and uneventful first two years). He was never much of a battler — he didn't have to be. His family were comfortably off, he had a good education, and from the time he left school to the end of his life he was almost never without a steady income. When the War came, he was in a reserved occupation and too old for military conscription. He enjoyed the good things of life, and he got them. This is not the stuff of which battlers are made, unless making your way rather ruthlessly to the top of your heap is a qualification, which it may now have become.

But a stirrer he most certainly was, and a notably effective one, for more than twenty years of Australian history. A long line of politicians, from Earl Page and Bob Menzies to Eddie Ward and Arthur Calwell, acknowledged his real power, as a journalist, to foment scepticism and distrust of their policies. Other, more friendly commentators, such as Norman Lindsay, Bill Wentworth and Francis James — themselves no slouches in the stirring department — praised his fearless determination to make people think, and think straight.

Penton was, I believe, an important catalyst for some of the modest but significant advances in Australia's social attitudes during the late thirties and early forties, and when change hit the country like a tidal wave in 1942, Penton was one of those who helped to manage and interpret it for ordinary, intelligent people, to give the inexorable rush of history some semblance of direction and coherence. These are not the sorts of achievements that lend themselves easily to memorialisation long after the fact; but they are an essential part of that only-just-recoverable past that needs to be retrieved before the traces disappear forever.

**Endnotes**

- 1 David McNicoll, *Luck's a Fortune: An Autobiography*, Melbourne, 1980, pp. 154-8.
- 2 Emery Barcs, *Backyard of Mars: Memoirs of the "Reffo" period in Australia*, Sydney, 1980, p. 48.
- 3 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 March 1928.
- 4 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 May 28 Feb 1928.
- 5 *Bulletin* (Red Page), 30 September 1936.
- 6 Patrick Buckridge, *The Scandalous Penton*, St Lucia, 1994, p. 183.
- 7 FAW Papers, Mitchell Library, MSS 2008.
- 8 Cited in Buckridge, *op. cit.*, p. 196.
- 9 *Ibid.*, pp. 207-8.
- 10 *Think — or be damned!*, Sydney, 1942, p. 1.
- 11 *Ibid.*, p. 43.
- 12 *Ibid.*, p. 59.
- 13 *Ibid.*, p. 92.
- 14 Buckridge, *op. cit.*, p. 241.
- 15 Tim Rowse, *Australian Liberalism and National Character*, Sydney, 1978, pp. 129-132.
- 16 Brian Penton, *Advance Australia — Where?* London & Sydney, 1943, p. 213.