

Villains, Victims and Heroes: Contested Memory and the British Nuclear Tests in Australia

Dieter Michel

On 16 July 1984, a Royal Commission was formally established under Justice James McClelland to investigate the effects of British nuclear weapons tests on the Australian environment and population. As a consequence, Australian and British official memories regarding this historical episode were decisively severed. The conclusions of the McClelland Royal Commission — which came to represent the Australian government's version — presented, as one commentator noted, 'a catalogue of official deception and secrecy, cynicism about the effects on the Aboriginal lifestyle and lack of independent Australian control'.¹ Challenging this was Britain's official response, Lorna Arnold's *A Very Special Relationship*, which described the tests as a working example of the 'generally close, friendly and effective collaboration' between the United Kingdom and Australia.² As such, the Australian government was presented as a fully independent, responsible partner in the enterprise — a view to which Australian governments publicly conformed from the 1950s through to the 1970s. The bifurcation of this single official version, beginning in the late 1970s, was the result of various socio-cultural processes in Australia that had significantly reshaped the popular perceptions of the tests: the Indigenous rights and native title movements; environmental and peace campaigns; a growing sense of nationalism among sectors of the Australian population; and rising concerns about the health effects of nuclear radiation. As will be shown, the divergence of the two official memories was the result of each government's response to these changes in popular memory.

To begin with, however, it is necessary to establish certain terms of reference relevant to this article, namely 'popular' and 'official' memory. Popular or collective memory can be described as 'the matrix of socially positioned individual memories', which cannot exist outside individuals, yet remains inherently communal in nature.³ This inevitably produces a dominant mainstream discourse, from which conflicting alternative versions, or 'counter-memories', are marginalised. Popular memory is then distinct from, yet not always in opposition to, official memory, which Paula Hamilton describes as '*authorised accounts* — authorised by governments, institutions, companies, etc'.⁴ By this definition, media sources are included within this category, yet in some cases they can exhibit a greater affinity with popular memory. For this reason, as seen in the events surrounding the Royal Commission, the popular media often forms a critical link between the two. Of course, the overall concept of memory as a tool of historical analysis remains fraught with theoretical and methodological difficulties, many of which originate from its academic basis in cognitive and social psychology.⁵ Beyond the fundamental problem of whether a truly coherent set of memories can exist between individuals, of particular issue is the impermanence of public memory in a dynamic politico-cultural environment. This latter aspect of memory is clearly illustrated in the example of the nuclear trials in Australia and the McClelland Royal Commission.

Write/up

Between 1952 and 1963, Australia hosted twelve atomic weapons tests and numerous 'minor trials', which spread large quantities of plutonium and other radioactive material over the test sites, particularly the Maralinga range in South Australia. Moreover, during the trials themselves, many of the participants and local Indigenous people were exposed to radioactivity. These two points became central to the contest between British and Australian official memories in the mid-1980s. The McClelland Royal Commission and, to a far lesser extent, its precursor — John Symonds's *A History of British Atomic Tests in Australia*, commissioned by the Department of Energy and Mines — highlighted the Australian government's lack of independent input into the planning and execution of the tests, along with Britain's refusal to supply key information on the effects and safety of the atomic explosions.⁶ By contrast, the official British account presented in Arnold's *A Very Special Relationship* emphasised the intimate partnership between the two nations, despite stringent American restrictions on the passage of classified information to Australia.⁷ Implicit in this partnership, however, was the concept of mutual agency and, as a corollary, shared responsibility between the two governments.

This contest between official memories was not merely symbolic but carried with it specific political and financial implications for each nation. During the 1990s, as a result of the McClelland Royal Commission, the Australian government received \$45 million from the British to rehabilitate the sites, and paid \$13.5 million in reparations to the Indigenous people affected by the tests.⁸ The Royal Commission's conclusions also lent strength to the ongoing compensation claims from British and Australian servicemen who participated in the trials.⁹ Beyond this, the Commission's report, along with the media coverage of the proceedings, provided material for numerous popular histories that flourished in its aftermath.¹⁰ One important aspect of these works, written predominantly by journalists for public consumption, was the overtly dramatic mode in which most were cast — complete with villains, victims and heroes. As will be shown, the Royal Commission presented a definitive list of characters within each grouping and, as a result, significantly shaped popular memory of the tests.

At the time of the tests themselves, however, there was little difference between Australian perceptions — both popular and official — and the version presented by the British authorities. This was due largely to restrictions on the Australian government's access to information relating to the tests, coupled with the manipulation by both governments of their coverage in the media. Throughout the period, British authorities filtered all information the Australian government received on the tests, including safety measures. As a result, the two official versions were inevitably in accord.¹¹ Needless to say, this culture of secrecy was extended to the representation of the trials in the media. Accordingly, throughout the 1950s the trials attracted little public dissent. Where dissent did occur, critics were generally labelled as 'Communists and ... fellow travellers who wanted our tests to stop while Russia continued with hers'.¹² With public access to information on the tests strictly regulated by both governments, they were covered in almost glowing terms by a largely uncritical press.¹³ For instance, following the radiation poisoning of Japanese fishermen from an American hydrogen bomb test in March 1954, the mainstream media readily accepted various assurances from government scientists regarding their safety — even if tested in Australia.¹⁴ While

scepticism toward their safety would later sway public opinion against testing hydrogen bombs on their soil, Australians were found to be among the most enthusiastic towards their allies' development of such weapons as a deterrent against communist aggression.¹⁵ A similarly optimistic view was presented in the media with respect to the future benefits of testing British atomic bombs, expected to 'eventually become the Australian Army's hardest hitting weapon'.¹⁶

Not surprisingly, little space in the overall discourse was afforded to the 'counter-memory' of the Indigenous peoples whose traditional lands were used for the tests. In a time when Indigenous people were afforded no citizenship rights, the authorities concerned with the tests viewed the deserts of central Australia as 'simply vast, empty, useless spaces', with little regard for traditional links with the land.¹⁷ This, coupled with an ongoing ignorance of the full effects of the atomic blasts, would lead to a host of environmental and health problems for the local Yanykunyjtjajara people. Yet the claims of the Yanykunyjtjajara — who had become politically active over the issue by the 1960s — were met with a British policy of 'official forgetting'. The most striking example of this is the controversy surrounding the 'black mist' from an explosion at Emu Field on 15 October 1953. Yanykunyjtjajara people at the nearby Wallatina Station claimed to have been contaminated by a fallout cloud, which caused both immediate and long-term health problems, as well as several deaths. Yet no official British documents on the event were released. As a result, a study initiated in late 1982 by the Australian Ionising Radiation Advisory Council (AIRAC) found little evidence to support the 'black mist' claim.¹⁸ It was only in 1984, under pressure from the McClelland Royal Commission, that Britain released documents corroborating the Yanykunyjtjajaras' story.¹⁹

Various domestic and international factors would progressively challenge this sanitised view of the tests and, hence, their place in Australian official memory. Among the most important of these changes was the growth of the anti-nuclear movement, both nationally and internationally, including the formation of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament as early as 1958.²⁰ Initially, the Australian movement focused on France, which had in 1966 transplanted its testing program from Algeria to the South Pacific. Nevertheless, the campaign against the French tests placed the government in an awkward political position, given the potential impact on perceptions of the recently concluded British trials. To contravene the rising domestic pressures was politically impossible, yet a stance too forceful risked drawing attention to the same government's assent to the tests on its own soil. Accordingly, between 1966 and 1972, Australia's official protests went no further than 'timid and respectful diplomatic notes' and a study on the effect of fallout from the French tests.²¹ It would take the 1972 election of the Australian Labor Party — a group free from direct association with the British tests — for the commonwealth to adopt an anti-nuclear stance commensurate with the growth of anti-nuclear movements. This included a legal challenge against France in the International Court — arguing, among other things, 'that exposure to ionising radiation, however small, is harmful'²² — and the employment as a consultant of Professor Harry Messel, who during the mid-1950s had been one of the few critics of British nuclear testing.²³ Thus, during this intervening period, the political potential of the tests constituted one of the main limiting factors in each government's approach to the broader anti-nuclear movement.

Write/up

Associated with this movement, from the mid-1970s there were several other important events that would reshape both popular and official memories of Britain's atomic trials. In 1968 Britain's relinquishment of responsibility for the testing grounds had been contingent upon a cleanup, called Operation Brumby, which entailed the burial of approximately twenty kilograms of plutonium in twenty-one pits throughout the range.²⁴ The report of the operation, commonly known as the Pearce Report, concluded that all areas affected by the tests had been successfully rehabilitated, and on this basis the commonwealth reassumed control of the ranges.²⁵ By late 1976, however, under pressure from environmental lobby groups, the Liberal–National government began to question British conduct of both Operation Brumby and, as a corollary, the tests themselves. The controversy centred on the plutonium buried throughout Maralinga, and in particular a proposal to repatriate to Britain a concentrated mass of half a kilogram of plutonium buried in one pit — covered only by a steel sheet and four feet of soil. Here it is instructive to look at the two governments' views on the issue. First, the Australian: 'The problem would not go away. Public and political interest in all these localities was rising ... The matter retained important domestic political potential in Australia'.²⁶ The British, in contrast, exhorted the Australians to maintain official secrecy on the condition of radioactive materials at Maralinga: 'In the UK view none of this information is classified but, bearing in mind the environmental lobby ... we would advise caution in the publication of this type of information'.²⁷ Prior to this, the British had maintained that this plutonium was 'irrecoverable' and, as such, there was no need for Australia to declare it to the International Atomic Energy Agency.²⁸ It was only in 1978, when the Australian government moved to do just that, that Britain repatriated this half-kilogram of plutonium.²⁹ Of particular significance was that, following this episode, the Australian government took steps to form its own official view of the tests. Prior to this, Canberra had unquestioningly accepted the findings of British scientific studies. In 1979 AIRAC, originally established to study the effects on the population from French testing, began to independently investigate the legacy of the British trials.³⁰

Coupled with the environmental concerns was the progressive growth of the Indigenous rights movement throughout the 1970s and 1980s, resulting in the granting of native title to large areas of central Australia. This included the previous test ranges, and it was largely in this context that the McClelland Royal Commission approached the issue of residual radioactivity at Maralinga — due to be returned in 1984.³¹ Yet the dominant Indigenous memories of the tests emphasised not only the loss of traditional lands but also a significant human cost. As mentioned earlier, the Yanykunyjatjara people of Wallatina had consistently maintained they had been exposed to the 'black mist' in 1953.³² Yet there was also another story from those at the Ernabella mission, farther north, which highlights a different aspect of the tests in Indigenous memory. In 1948 and 1957, successive generations at the mission had been devastated by measles epidemics, the second coinciding with the Antler tests at Maralinga. Owing to several cultural misunderstandings with the patrol officer responsible for keeping them away of the test areas, people at the Ernabella mission came to connect the nuclear explosions with the epidemics. For many, this association was maintained even up

to the eve of the Royal Commission, when it was proven that no causal link existed between the two phenomena.³³ Thus, in this context, the British tests became integrated with the broader issue of European colonialism in Australia.

Australia's colonial history, albeit from a very different perspective, also informed several other major aspects of popular memory of the tests during the 1980s — the campaign for compensation of veterans of the trials, and the resurgence of a national peace movement — both of which gained significant public support during this period. This appears to have been associated with a general shift in the popular perception of Australia's historical relationships with its powerful allies. Growing steadily throughout the 1980s was the 'Radical Nationalist' school of history, which presented the narrative of a 'thwarted nationalism'³⁴ to describe Australia's political history in the twentieth century. This school, of which Manning Clark can be seen as an archetype,³⁵ generally cast the labour movement and the Labor Party as the chief custodians of an independent Australian nationalism, and the 'anglophile' conservatives as the local agents for British Imperial, rather than Australian national, interests.³⁶ Enjoying a broad popular appeal in themselves, these histories were further reinforced by such major Australian films as *'Breaker' Morant* and *Gallipoli*, released in 1979 and 1981 respectively, both of which portrayed British abuses of Australian loyalty during wartime. In a similar treatment to that of the historical Anglo-Australian relationship, the early 1980s also saw substantial public criticism of Australia's security alliance with the United States, and perceived inequity of the relationship.³⁷

This rising dissent regarding Australia's relations with 'great and powerful friends' was easily adapted to the legacy of the British nuclear tests, and particularly so on the issue of compensation for nuclear test veterans. Pointing to the lingering climate of secrecy surrounding the tests, and exploiting a heightened public concern over the safety of nuclear energy — particularly in the aftermath of the Three Mile Island accident of March 1979³⁸ — one of the first popular histories critical of the tests, *Maralinga: British A-bomb, Australian Legacy*, was not only dedicated to the Australian Nuclear Veterans' Association but also devoted a significant portion of its discussion to their experiences.³⁹ With an estimated 10,000 Australian veterans in the campaign by 1985,⁴⁰ their claims centred upon their use as human 'guinea pigs' by the British test staff.⁴¹ These claims were reinforced publicly by a parallel campaign by British test veterans and, indirectly, a concurrent Royal Commission into the health effects on Vietnam war veterans from the United States' use of Agent Orange.⁴² Consequently, these issues were incorporated into the public consciousness in terms of not only the impact of the state upon the individual but also the sacrifice of Australian citizens to the interests of its powerful allies.

A similar premise informed the broader peace movement, which throughout the early 1980s progressively increased its influence on Australian public opinion. In 1983, the Palm Sunday peace marches in Australia and western Europe were said to have attracted the largest public turnouts since the anti-war protests of the 1960s.⁴³ Moreover, characteristic of this movement was its considerable demographic diversity; it incorporated such groups as Scientists against Nuclear Arms, Medical Association for the Prevention of War, various conservation

Write/up

groups, and representatives from the mainstream churches.⁴⁴ In its focus upon nuclear proliferation and the implications of American military installations in Australia,⁴⁵ it also betrayed a growing nationalist sentiment tied into the issue of Australian sovereignty. As one commentator noted, a significant element of the Australian peace movement was the 'indignant nationalist' group, which held that alliances with the 'great powers' actually threatened both Australia's cultural potential and its freedom of action over security issues.⁴⁶ The political consequence of this movement is clearly illustrated by the success of the Nuclear Disarmament Party (NDP) in the December 1984 senate elections, with a result on par with the Australian Democrats in the popular vote.⁴⁷ Significantly, in its incorporation of elements from various 'counter-memories' relating to the tests, primarily those of the Indigenous peoples and test veterans, the NDP drew these alternative accounts into the popular arena. Furthermore, it highlighted the legacies of the British tests within the current public debate on the international nuclear balance: not only did the NDP call for an end to the Australian–American defence relationship but also a 'sustained enquiry into the effects of nuclear testing, including disease' and the 'restoration of areas affected by ... testing'.⁴⁸ Thus, on the eve of the Royal Commission, much of the growing criticism of Australia's role in nuclear proliferation was couched within a framework linking Australia's colonial past and its perceived subservience to the great powers.⁴⁹

By the 1980s Australian and British official memories were already diverging on the issue of the tests' environmental impact. However, it would be the way each government responded to the above changes in public opinion that would permanently sever the links between the two. Prior to the Royal Commission, the Australian official history, Symonds's *A History of British Atomic Tests in Australia*, strayed little from the British account, differing only in its emphasis on the Australian government's lack of independent influence during the tests. This can be explained by the fact that Symonds had relied almost entirely upon British and Australian official sources. In his negotiation of the British documents, key assistance was provided by two figures with a clear interest in preserving the traditional version of events: Lorna Arnold, official historian for the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority; and William Saxby, from the Office of the Chief Scientific Adviser (Nuclear).⁵⁰ Consequently, the substance of Symonds's account differed little from the British position, that 'no unexpected events or irresponsible actions of states, scientists or officials occurred'.⁵¹

The tenor of Symonds's history thus stands in stark contrast to the findings of the McClelland Royal Commission. This is partly due to the different methodologies adopted by the two investigations. Not only did the latter exert substantial pressure on British authorities to release classified documents, it also incorporated the oral testimonies from those affected by the tests — local Indigenous people and test veterans. These, in turn, formed the basis of Justice McClelland's first three recommendations: the creation of a national register of veterans, Indigenous people and other civilians affected by the tests; the award of compensation to those found to have suffered as a result; and the cleanup of the ranges in order that they be 'fit for unrestricted habitation by the traditional Aboriginal owners'.⁵² Thus, what had once been 'counter-memories' had now become integral to the official history.

Yet the Commission also fostered other significant modifications to the authorised account, which reflects the inevitable politicisation of memory. Like the popular histories of the tests, mentioned above, it too was framed in terms of villains and victims. McClelland, a one-time senator, was a firm 'Labor man';⁵³ not surprisingly, Robert Menzies and his Liberal government were cast into the former grouping along with the British:

The original decision to lend Australia to the United Kingdom for the purpose of the latter's nuclear tests program was taken by Australian Prime Minister Menzies without reference to his Cabinet.

The Australian government willingly accepted the British view that ... the UK was prevented from providing information on, or allowing Australian participation in, technical aspects of the tests.⁵⁴

From this new official memory, Bob Hawke's government acquired considerable political currency, both internationally and domestically. While the award of compensation was more or less inevitable — given the momentum of the Indigenous and test veterans' movements — the Commission's findings allowed reparations to be demanded from the British.⁵⁵ Domestically, the investigations also provided a certain amount of electoral mileage, since it was a Labor government awarding reparations for past commonwealth activities almost exclusively associated with the Liberal Party and, more specifically, its celebrated patriarch.

While the charges levelled against Menzies were perhaps justified, the Royal Commission itself also represents an example of 'official forgetting'. In limiting the scope of inquiry to evidence relating directly to the tests themselves,⁵⁶ a deliberate decision had been made to ignore the policies of the preceding Labor government, under Joseph Benedict Chifley. While the Commission ventured as far back as 1946 to establish the background for the security restrictions that frustrated Australia's participation in the tests,⁵⁷ the survey did not similarly extend to Labor's policy on atomic weapons within this context. Had it done so, it would have established that Chifley, faced with the same restrictions on Australian participation, had volunteered the nation as a testing-ground as early as 1946.⁵⁸ As such, Menzies's later assent can then be regarded as the continuation of a policy well established by the previous government. Thus, the Hawke government had responded to the changes in popular opinion on nuclear issues by fashioning an official memory in terms of colonial subordination, portraying as villains the British government and Menzies — whom McClelland referred to as the 'lickspittle of the British'⁵⁹ — as their key agent in Australia.

To this must be compared Arnold's *A Very Special Relationship*, which represents a very different response to the changes in popular memory. Throughout this account, considerable emphasis was placed on the partnership between the two nations: despite London's 'genuine' though frustrated desire for collaboration, 'Australia willingly accepted the British weapon test programme, and cooperated generously and effectively in it'.⁶⁰ Of course, with partnership implicitly comes agency, and on this basis Arnold addressed many of the issues that had arisen within the popular memory of the tests. With respect to their effects on the Indigenous population, both physically and territorially, Arnold rejected British responsibility by focusing on the reputed concern of the Technical Director

Write/up

of the tests, William Penney, in contrast to the traditional disregard of Australian authorities toward the welfare of Indigenous people — ‘neither new nor peculiar to the weapons trials’.⁶¹ Similarly, in response to the pressure placed on the British government by the test veterans’ associations, agency was also conferred upon the participants of the trials. Claiming that British authorities adhered strictly to the recommendations of the International Commission on Radiation Protection, Arnold thus concluded that any exposure to excess radioactivity was the result of voluntary, individual decisions:

A few people may have broken the rules, ignored instructions or cut a corner. Some men, especially perhaps young Servicemen, may have had a cavalier attitude to safety, out of ignorance or bravado ... The men who incurred the highest exposures were themselves highly qualified scientists and doctors ... They took small calculated risks themselves for scientific purposes, voluntarily and in full knowledge of the radiation hazards.⁶²

An overarching theme of Arnold’s book was that the British tests were kept as safe and clean as possible, and this extended to her concluding remarks on global fallout. Responding to a general concern that the trials had contributed to atmospheric radiation in the southern hemisphere, Arnold sought to relativise their impact by emphasising that many more tests, in both hemispheres, had been conducted by the Soviet Union, France and the United States. In her words, not only did ‘the Australian population receive seven times as much fallout from other nuclear tests as it did from the British tests’ but also ‘received far less fallout from all atmospheric weapon tests, including the twelve British shots in Australia, than did the British themselves, with no weapon tests in their own islands’.⁶³

By the mid-1980s, Australian and British official memories of the tests had significantly diverged. Whereas the British version continued to resist the pressures created by the new popular memories, they were incorporated into the Australian account. Yet both official histories were informed by pragmatic political considerations: the British, to minimise their responsibility, both morally and financially, for the effects of the tests; and the Australian, to implicate the government’s political opponents alongside the British.

Between the 1950s and the 1980s, changes in the perception of the British nuclear tests in Australia highlight several important aspects of public memory. Firstly, as shown by the rise of the Indigenous rights movements, the anti-nuclear campaigns and the formation of tests veterans’ associations, popular memory is a particularly dynamic phenomenon. From the time of the tests to the McClelland Royal Commission, one sees a significant shift in not only the overall collective memory of the tests but also in the relationships between popular memory and the various ‘counter-memories’ that had previously been marginalised. Associated with this, one also sees in this period the ways in which various social processes can effect similar changes in official memory. Whereas the British official memory had remained relatively constant, the Australian version passed through various stages: from the imposition of strict controls on the public perception of the tests to the incorporation of previously marginalised alternative memories. Above all, in view of the contest between the Australian and British official histories, and the social processes contributing to this conflict, this example illustrates the politicisation of the McClelland Royal Commission and, more generally, public memory as a cultural phenomenon.

Villains, Victims and Heroes: Contested Memory and the British Nuclear Tests in Australia
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- 1 Michael Pugh, *The ANZUS Crisis, Nuclear Visiting and Deterrence*, Cambridge University Press, Sydney, 1989, p 44.
- 2 Lorna Arnold, *A Very Special Relationship: British Atomic Weapons Trials in Australia*, HMSO, London, 1987, p xvi.
- 3 Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan, 'Setting the framework', in Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan (eds), *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, p 24.
- 4 Paula Hamilton, 'The knife edge: debates about memory and history' in Kate Darian-Smith and Paula Hamilton (eds), *Memory and History in Twentieth-Century Australia*, Oxford University Press, 1994, pp 18, 20.
- 5 See Winter and Sivan, op. cit., pp 11–19.

- 6 J L Symonds, *A History of British Atomic Tests in Australia*, AGPS, Canberra, 1985, p 60; Commonwealth of Australia, *The Report of the Royal Commission into British Nuclear Tests in Australia: Conclusions and Recommendations*, AGPS, Canberra, 1985, p 7. [Hereafter, *RCBNTA*.]
- 7 Arnold, op. cit., p 25.
- 8 Ian Anderson, 'Britain's dirty deeds at Maralinga', *New Scientist*, 12 June 1993; 'Australian nuclear test veterans seek radiation study', *Cancer Weekly Plus*, 12 January 1998.
- 9 'Australian nuclear test veterans produce evidence for compensation', *Lancet*, 2 June 2001; 'Australian govt responsible to nuclear test survivors', *Xinhua News Agency*, 22 May 2001.
- 10 See, for example, Denys Blakeway and Sue Lloyd Roberts, *Fields of Thunder: Testing Britain's Bomb*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1985; and J Smith, *Clouds of Deceit*, Faber & Faber, London, 1985. Two more scholarly, yet nonetheless accessibly written, works are Robert Milliken, *No Conceivable Injury*, Penguin, Ringwood, 1986; and Firth, *Nuclear Playground*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1987. Firth focuses primarily upon the link between colonialism and nuclear testing in the Pacific, and discusses Britain's trials in Australia within this context.
- 11 *RCBNTA*, op. cit., p 11.
- 12 Howard Beale (Minister of Supply), submission no 328 for Cabinet, 'Atomic tests in Australia', 3 September 1956, R092/001, A6456, National Archives of Australia (NAA); Heather Goodall, 'Colonialism and catastrophe: contests memories of nuclear testing and measles epidemics at Ernabella', in Darian-Smith and Hamilton, *Memory and History*, op. cit., p 59.
- 13 See, for example, 'Bombs away!', *Argus* (Melbourne), 27 September 1956.
- 14 'Experts say we can "explode H-bomb here in safety"', *Argus*, 30 March 1954. There was, however, considerable resistance from the left-wing press towards the testing of both hydrogen and nuclear weapons. 'New "H" bomb Horror threatens the very existence of Australia', *Truth* (Melbourne), 27 March 1954.
- 15 'Gallup poll: H-bomb lightens war cloud', *Sun-Herald*, 12 September 1954; Murray Goot, 'Red, white and brown: Australian attitudes to the world since the thirties', *Australian Outlook*, no 24, 1970, p 193.
- 16 'Army may be trained in atomic weapons', *Sun-Herald*, 9 January 1955.
- 17 Arnold, op. cit., p 242; Firth, op. cit., p 9.
- 18 AIRAC, *British nuclear tests in Australia – a review of operational safety measures and of possible after-effects*, AGPS, Canberra, 1983, pp 45-50.
- 19 Goodall, op. cit., p 57.
- 20 'Operation Antler and Maralinga', in J L Symonds, *British Atomic Tests in Australia – Chronology 1950–1968*, R023/003, A6456
- 21 Firth, op. cit., p 97; Atomic Weapons Test Safety Committee, *Fallout over Australia from nuclear weapons tests by France in Polynesia during June and July 1972*, AGPS, Canberra, 1972.
- 22 Attorney-General's Department, *International Court of Justice, Nuclear Tests Case, Australia v. France: Verbatim Record of Oral Proceedings*, AGPS, Canberra, 1974, p 52.
- 23 Jenny Hocking, *Lionel Murphy: A Political Biography*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 2000, p 178; 'Scientist will "get out" if we test bomb', *Argus*, 29 September 1954.
- 24 Cable 3118, Arthur Tange (Secretary of Defence) to AUSTCOM, London, 'Maralinga', 14 December 1976, R054/005, A6456, NAA.
- 25 Department of National Development, *Edited Version of AWRE Report No 0-16/68 of January 1968 on Residual Radioactive Contamination at Maralinga, South Australia*, Government Printer, Canberra, 1979, p 1.
- 26 Unknown author, Record of Conversation with D Murray (Assistant Under-Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office), 23 November 1977, R054/005, A6456, NAA.
- 27 J E Brickell (UK Ministry of Defence), quoted in Telegram DCR006/69, AUSTDEF, London, to Tange, 17 November 1977, R054/005, A6456, NAA.
- 28 Memorandum DKA487, AUSTDEF, London, to Tange, 'Maralinga Range', 22 December 1976, R054/005, A6456, NAA.
- 29 Anderson, loc. cit.
- 30 AIRAC, *Radiological Safety and future land use at the Maralinga atomic weapons test range*, AGPS, Canberra, 1979; AIRAC, *Radiological safety and future land use in the Monte Bello Islands*, AGPS, Canberra, 1979; AIRAC, *Radiological safety and future land use at the Emu*

Notes to pp 224–227

- atomic weapons test site, AGPS, Canberra, 1979; and, in 1983, AIRAC, *British nuclear tests in Australia*.
- 31 Anderson, loc. cit.
- 32 Such revelations of the ‘black mist’, even unofficially, did not occur until April 1983. ‘Black victims in desert A-blast: new British claim’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 April 1983.
- 33 Goodall, op. cit., p 66.
- 34 Gareth Evans and Bruce Grant, *Australia’s Foreign Relations in the World of the 1990s*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1991, p 17.
- 35 C M H Clark, *A History of Australia*, vols 4–6, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1978, 1981 and 1987. See also David Day, *The Great Betrayal: Britain, Australia and the Onset of the Pacific War, 1939–1942*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1988; and Stephen Alomes, *A Nation at Last? The Changing Character of Australian Nationalism, 1880–1988*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1988.
- 36 Neville Meaney, ‘Britishness and Australian Identity: The Problem of Nationalism in Australian History and Historiography’, *Australian Historical Studies*, no 32, 2001, p 77.
- 37 Two such examples are Dennis Phillips, *Cold War 2 and Australia*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1983; and Desmond Ball, *A Suitable Piece of Real Estate: American Installations in Australia*, Hale & Iremonger, Sydney, 1980.
- 38 Philip Cantelon and Robert Williams, *Crisis Contained: The Department of Energy at Three Mile Island*, Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale, 1982; Peter Pringle and James Spigleman, *The Nuclear Barons*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1981, pp 422–44.
- 39 Adrian Tame and F P J Robotham, *Maralinga: British A-bomb, Australian Legacy*, Fontana, Melbourne, 1982, pp 6, 155–77, 269.
- 40 Blakeway and Lloyd-Roberts, op. cit., p 5.
- 41 ‘N-test “adventure” turned sour for UK servicemen’, *Australian*, 10 January 1985.
- 42 ‘Govt moves to keep lid on Evatt inquiry cost’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 July 1984.
- 43 ‘Human-chain in peace march’, *Sun-Herald*, 2 April 1983; ‘Marching for whose peace?’, *Bulletin*, 19 April 1983; Stewart Firth, ‘Problems in Australian foreign policy, January–June 1984’, *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, no 30, 1984, p 333.
- 44 Peter J Boyce, ‘The influence of the United States on the domestic debate in Australia’, *Australian Outlook*, no 38, 1984, p 160.
- 45 On the Pine Gap and Nurrungar installations, see Ball, op. cit., pp 130, 150–3.
- 46 H G Gelber, ‘Australia, the peace movement and the international balance’, *Australian Outlook*, no 40, 1986, p 26.
- 47 ‘Election ’84: details of voting for the Senate’, *Sun-Herald*, 2 December 1984; ‘It’s a long wait, but Democrats may win control’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 December 1984.
- 48 Full-page NPD campaign advertisement, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 December 1984.
- 49 Within this context, the government’s ‘three-mine’ uranium policy also attracted strong opposition. Alan Deans, ‘Uranium issue set to explode again’, *Bulletin*, 2 August 1983; Alan Reid, Greg Sheridan, ‘High noon at Roxby Downs’, *Bulletin*, 16 September 1983.
- 50 Symonds, *A History of British Atomic Tests*, op. cit., p vi. In December 1976, when Saxby had been asked ‘why the post-1957 experiments were so much “dirtier” than the earlier explosions’, he replied that they were designed ‘to assess the hazard probable if a nuclear power station or stockpile were to explode’, and claiming that they were primarily ‘of a civilian nature’. However, when Australian officials ‘later tried to confirm this, Saxby hedged and said that the answer was “no” otherwise the UK would not have performed these tests’. Cable 6727, Austcom, London, to Malcolm Fraser (Prime Minister), ‘Maralinga’, 21 December 1976, R054/005, A6456, NAA.
- 51 John Simpson, ‘Fall out over atomic tests’, *Nature*, 28 November 1985.
- 52 *RCBNTA*, op. cit., p 31.
- 53 Hocking, op. cit., pp 66, 197.
- 54 *RCBNTA*, op. cit., p 7.
- 55 At the time of the Commission, Britain was already liable under a secret agreement to compensate Australian victims found to have suffered from the tests. ‘N-test “adventure” turns sour for UK servicemen’, *Australian*, 10 January 1985.
- 56 Letters Patent, Lionel Bowen (Minister for Trade) on behalf of the Prime Minister, to J McClelland, J Fitch and W J A Jonas, 16 July 1984, cited in *RCBNTA*, op. cit., pp 3–6.
- 57 Commonwealth of Australia, The Report of the Royal Commission into British Nuclear Tests in

Notes to pp 227–228

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58 'British Commonwealth Conference 1946, defence and research', outline for Prime Minister's use, 1683/1, A5954, NAA; J B Chifley 'Australian defence policy', Prime Ministers Meeting (46)7, 23 April 1946, 1838/1, A5954, NAA; John Dedman (Minister of Defence), Statement to Parliament, 'Higher defence machinery', 17 November 1947, 98/2, A5954, NAA.

59 Cited in Blakeway and Lloyd-Roberts, *op. cit.*, p 1.

60 Arnold, *op. cit.*, pp 25, 247.

61 *ibid.*, pp 242–244

62 *ibid.*, p 235.

63 *ibid.*, pp 246–7.