

## **NOVEMBER 2023 READING GUIDE: REFUGEES, ASYLUM SEEKERS, IMMIGRATION, MULTICULTURALISM by Kevin Bain (kbkevinbain@gmail.com)**

*This reading list (starting with items recently published) is mostly from the last 20 years and may be useful to those interested in the above interconnected issues. Longer reviews of the more recent books can be often found under my name at <https://refugeeresearchonline.org/> For more, search the Subject heading of library catalogues. (Did you know you can join and borrow from a public library outside your area?) For a list of all holdings at Australian libraries (including universities) see the National Library website <http://trove.nla.gov.au/>*

### **“Cruel Care: a history of children at our borders”, Jordana Silverstein, Monash University Publishing, 2023, 309 pages (at 74 Australian public libraries)**

As a cultural and migration historian, Dr Jordana Silverstein asks why many Australians – certainly those who dominate the public space – play the “drowning children” card to justify “stopping the boats”. Dr Silverstein’s perspective is based on a theory which sees the child-focus through a colonial-settler interpretive lens, which emphasizes a historical continuity: the cruelty towards the Stolen Generation of indigenous children “has later been enacted on refugee children, also under the banner of care.” She endorses Naomi Klein’s idea of “crisis” being used by the state with its own colonial, capitalist and patriarchal agenda, “narrated as problems and cast as opportunities.” An interdisciplinary awareness draws on scholarship in literary, anthropological, philosophical, criminology, geography, queer theory, historical and other fields.

### **“The Refugee System: a Sociological Approach”, Rawan Arar and David Scott Fitzgerald, Polity Press, 2023, 316 pages**

US researchers Arar and Fitzgerald are promoting a sociological “systems approach” to refugee research as an alternative to what they call the prevailing “siloes” approach. The alternative perspective from the authors is that a deficit in context has occurred because the sovereign nation-state is accepted by the mainstream as the natural unit of analysis, with remedies centred on putting displaced people inside a state’s border and have them remain there. This is a book whose substantial content and challenging views will provoke discussion on how a different approach could improve existing institutions, knowledge and refugee outcomes. The deeper understanding they recommend may also expand refugee support. They say that “*nationalist reactions against refugees are a modern phenomenon*”, but unless we find better ways to combat them, dark forces threaten refugees’ future and ours too.

### **“Map of Hope and Sorrow: stories of refugees trapped in Greece”, Helen Benedict and Eyad Awwadawnan, Footnote Press, 2022, 328 pages**

Helen Benedict is a US journalist, academic, novelist and non-fiction writer and, above all, a remarkable activist against war and violence against women (See here). The book’s first person whole-of-life accounts of five refugees crossing Syria, Nigeria, Cameroon and Afghanistan to Europe, goes beyond the refugee experience, and includes much about family and upbringing, religion and politics. For readers seeking oral histories rather than testimonies, it won the 2021 PEN/Jean Stein Grants for Literary Oral History.

### **“Migrations – a history of where we all come from”, Dorling Kindersley, a Penguin Random House Company, London, 2022, 287 pages (at 52 Australian public libraries)**

This attractive and comprehensive, albeit concise, survey of world migration history includes a large section on forced migration from 1900 onwards. It has extensive maps, photos, sculpture, art and epigrams, and will be an authoritative and accessible introduction for young and adult general audiences seeking an alternative to long and detailed written texts. One reason why specialists might also keep the book nearby is to fill gaps in their knowledge of refugee events from a quick yet

expert source. Don't expect depth, this is about breadth, and about history, including religion, imperialism, settler-indigenous conflict, and slavery.

**“My Fourth Time, We Drowned: seeking refuge on the world’s deadliest migration route”, Sally Hayden, 4<sup>th</sup> Estate, an imprint of Harper Collins, , 2022, 480 pages (at 51 public libraries)**

Sally Hayden is a freelance journalist, who travelled all over Europe and North Africa from late 2018 to late 2021, when she got to know hundreds of refugees and migrants seeking to exit by boat to Europe from the notorious Libyan detention centres. Many had come to Libya to work, and found themselves stuck, without the option to return. The EU, national governments and NGO officials needed to be held accountable for the slavery, rapes, executions, violence and starvation conditions, implicated by their local activities or vicarious financing of the Libyan coastguard. By her relaying of refugee messages through Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp, the mainstream media got involved, and then officialdom in Paris, Berlin and Brussels. Recently, a UN investigation has endorsed many of Hayden’s charges of human rights abuses, and the EU’s complicity.

**“Acts of Cruelty: Australia’s Immigration Laws and experiences of people seeking protection after arriving by plane”, Aileen Crowe, Palaver, an imprint of Ethica Projects Pty Ltd, 2022, 228 pages (at 38 public libraries)**

Franciscan nun Aileen Crowe PhD is one of those visitors to onshore centres, with her decades of work for marginalised people in Australia and Papua New Guinea enabling a gritty and grounded view which avoids depersonalised jargon and legal categories. She has seen enough of this already: the compliance officers who pin their nametags to the hem of their shirts so the high counters make it difficult to identify them in a complaint, the correspondence signed with a number than a name, requiring the response to “Dear 603284.” The many individuals and families she came to know and represent, often approaching her at the sharp end of legal decisions as a last resort, all came by plane with valid visas. Yet she found that cultural disorientation often brought on physical, psychological and emotional trauma and decided to research the way cruelty was so common in government decisionmaking; the result is a PhD and this book.

**“Visiting Immigration Detention: care and cruelty in Australia’s asylum seeker prisons”, Michelle Peterie, Bristol University Press, 2022, 176 pages (at 16 public libraries)**

The author investigates the context of volunteer support, and how to see its personal and political dynamics. Is it best seen as a form of emotionally gratifying charity by saviours to pitiful victims, an aversion to political action for change, or taking some rough extremities off an oppressive and violent system, adding up to cooperation with an unjust system and reinforcing the powerlessness of victims? For many, the original motivation was just to be there and offer to help, but being directly and immediately exposed to suffering was transformative, giving greater moral certainty about the cause, and an altered perception of how the world really works. Officialdom seemingly tolerated mental illness and solitary confinement without careful consideration, effectively endorsing the denial of refugees’ human worth within the volunteers’ personal circles. The author found that the increased constraints at the sites of interaction – inside the quasi-prisons – made the visitors temporary prisoners themselves, being inside the facilities, subject to its inflexible rules, and increasingly unwelcomed by authorities. Many apolitical visitors came to see being ‘a friend to the stranger’ as a political act, and their pushback, through advocacy and bearing public witness, as political resistance.

**"The World is Not Big Enough", Vanessa Russell, Hardie Grant, 2021 (at 95 public libraries)**

In 2001, Melbourne refugee supporter Vanessa Grant did what many others have boldly attempted: to contact a refugee stuck inside the Australian detention system and try to improve their life. She lost contact with her Afghan friend, in detention at Port Hedland, and later found out he had been murdered by another former refugee, some time after being released. The book is about the

personal lives of both men, what was revealed at the trial, and from an interview with the defence attorney. She clearly is a good listener, with more general insights provided by local residents near the remote W.A. centres, and the health, security, advocacy, church and legal workers who help, or hinder, refugees.

**'After the Tampa: From Afghanistan to New Zealand' by Abbas Nazari, Allen and Unwin, 2021, 367 pages (at 99 public libraries)**

This is a well-written account by a young Afghan refugee (now 27 years old) of his remarkable life, and the insights he's gained on how the world works, and could work better. Abbas Nazari is modest enough to say that he felt a fraud when asked to write the book, yet his gameness to try all sorts of jobs and studies, his hard work at school and sport, and the award of a Fulbright scholarship to Georgetown University tells us he under-rates himself. The book is very accessible to readers curious about the culture and history of his country as "the graveyard of empires", and the global ecology of the refugee system, including Australia's place in it. He gives much detail about how his family lived as a part of the persecuted Hazara ethnicity, and their many dramatic moments along the way to security, ultimately in New Zealand. His disarming openness will make the most sceptical reader pause before answering the question: "What would I do differently in his situation?"

**'Refugee Journeys: Histories of Resettlement, Representation and Resistance', ed. Jordana Silverstein and Rachel Stevens, ANU Press, 2021, 244 pages (at 21 public libraries)**

The growth in Australian refugee research over recent decades has provided wider and critical perspectives, often from compelling first-person accounts of post-refugee and subsequent generation experience. Originating from a Melbourne University conference on 'Global Histories', these 11 contributions come from a range of fields: refugee integration studies, language and media representations, law and policy, and various types of history – oral, subcultural, international comparisons, and critical/reflective. All these writers are seeking better outcomes, looking for greater clarity about the past and present, and the 'why' of policy, to explore 'what might have been' and could be in the future, in propitious circumstances.

**'Smuggled: An illegal history of Journeys to Australia', by Ruth Balint and Julie Kalman, New South Publishing, 2021, 204 pages (at 105 public libraries)**

Both sides of Australian politics have believed the "people smuggler" card is a potent card to play, although for vote harvesting purposes they do not reproach family members and diaspora networks who often facilitate it. Yet the pervasive neo-liberal economic paradigm and language of the contractor/customer/service provider, as well as many more unregulated and informal businesses should make the population less judgemental about the useful, honest examples of people smugglers, replete in the stories provided here. Unpacking the people smuggler category by numerous examples might be the best way to defuse the heat which has unbalanced the people smuggler debate.

The authors, history professors at UNSW and Monash University respectively, have a personal connection with the subject matter, through their own European Jewish families. Many non-European stories of refugee flight are also told here, from the Vietnam War, Hungary 1956, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, the Middle East, the Prague Spring of 1968, Burma. The book includes comments or stories from well-known Australians providing illustrations of the smuggler role.

**"Escape from Manus", Jaivet Ealom, Penguin Viking, 2021, 347 pages (at 60 public libraries)**

Much of this well-written book is an exciting story of escape and human ingenuity, with false IDs, disguises, accents and bravado getting Jaivet Ealom, a Rohingya Muslim interned on Manus Island, to Bougainville, Fiji, Hong Kong, then Toronto, where his asylum application and settlement was successful in 2018. He gradually comes to reject hope that a solution will appear – from religion,

outside supporters, the official process – and his future is up to him. After a failed suicide attempt, he gains new strength from literature, including a Holocaust survivor story.

There is also much personal detail about what daily oppression by the military caste in Burma means in practice, blended well with the historical events which have brought this about. This is an entertaining book with a ‘big picture’, objective side, and an expansive story of personal revelation as well as flight.

**“White Russians, Red Peril, a Cold War History of Migration to Australia”, Sheila Fitzpatrick, La Trobe University Press, 2021, 368 pages (at 75 public libraries)**

Fitzpatrick is a well-known Australian historian of Stalinist Russia, from a famous leftwing family, but her background with this subject comes from her Latvian-born husband, Michael, the son of a displaced Hungarian father. Russians were a small part of the post WW2 immigration wave, and came from two directions. The European DP (displaced persons) camps, but also from China (the White Russians.). The latter group had left Russia after the civil war in the early 1920s, settling in Harbin (Manchuria), and coastal cities such as Shanghai and Tianjin, before the Maoist victory in 1949 made them uncomfortable with the new Communist state.

They were seen as a valuable economic resource both to Soviet Russia, which asserted ownership and their repatriation, and the new world states seeking immigrants, under the guise of defending their “chosen freedom” to live outside a communist state. Those who were Soviet émigrés often brought, despite their anti-communism, some socialist values and pride in Soviet achievements with them, attracting surveillance from Australian security interests. Stories of ASIO, Russian spies and Nazi war criminals in Australia figure prominently, as well as the ambiguities and complicated lives of her interviewees.

**“Where the water ends: Seeking refuge in Fortress Europe”, Zoe Holman, Melbourne University Press, 2021, 300 pages (available at 56 public libraries)**

Holman is a journalist, historian and poet who made a road trip through Greece to investigate the outcome of the EU refugee controls post-2015, when over a million refugees and migrants arrived. Turkey was designated by the EU as a ‘safe third country’ (this is disputed), legally allowing transfers from Greece of refugees designated eligible under the Refugee Convention, with substantial financial and other sweeteners provided to Turkey as incentives. Since then, the Turkish PM Erdogan, claiming four million refugees within Turkey’s borders, has pushed back for more money, so the refugees yet to be moved from the camps in Greece have become a bargaining chip.

Subsequent events demonstrate that reducing migration flows rather than providing protection is the EU motivation. And yet, Holman notes that the three million asylum claims during the 2015 peak are very small compared to the EU population of 508 million. Brutalisms include returning boats to jail detention in the hellhole of Libya where civil war continues, and enforcement action with penalties against rescue boats operating in the Mediterranean. Squalid and dangerous living conditions for those still in Greece ‘hotspots’ (180,000 at the start of 2020) are seen in [this photo-essay](#) of the fire at Moria camp (on Lesbos) in September 2020.

Except for Afghanistan, Holman has visited or worked in all of the dozen countries of refugee origin relevant to the EU migration. Her close attention to the individual circumstances of the people she meets along the way and her later followup with them, gives rich insights into who is on the journey and why. She also draws on her historical knowledge to compare it to the 1920s forced population exchanges of about 1.5 million Muslim Greeks and Christian Turks, after the 4-year war between the two countries. These wide-ranging capacities make the book an important documentary effort.

**“Beyond Calamity – A South Sudanese Refugee’s Story”, Esther Simbi, Vivid Publishing, a division of Fontaine Publishing Group, Fremantle, 2019, 145 pages (at 10 public libraries)**

The author was born in South Sudanese village in the early 1980s; her father and brother were killed in the Sudan civil war, and the family fled to Uganda, and then to Australia. Her story — which includes polio affliction, rape by a family friend, and therefore rejection by her church— is one of survival by pursuing education and counselling, the latter after she came to Australia. She is now a social worker in Adelaide, mother of two, and advocate for those affected by disability.

**“The Ungrateful Refugee”, Dina Nayeri, Canongate, 2019, 370 pages (at 53 public libraries)**

As well as being a thinker and intellectual with many insights, Dina Nayeri has 30 years of activist roles and lived experiences in many countries, after she and her professional parents fled revolutionary Iran in the 1980s. The book’s title shows that she continually challenges the reader to reflect on their perspectives too. She digs deep in discussing the suspicion of “moving for a better life” which informs the default scepticism of asylum officers who seek an inconsistency to justify refusal, and for Iranian claimants, the validity of the religious devotion test and its “cousin” the sexual orientation test. For advocates, friendship not salvation or charity is what brings dignity and belonging, so she objects to the “barbaric argument” or rationale that open borders will benefit the host nation, quoting Chinua Achebe: refugees don’t have to build “cathedrals and pyramids before they can be entitled to peace and safety.” An earlier version of her compelling and honest view is expressed well [here](#).

**“We Are Not Refugees: True Stories of the Displaced”, Agus Morales, (Translator Charlotte Whittle), Imagine Books, Watertown, USA, 2019, 271 pages (at 26 public libraries)**

For about ten years to the end of 2018, the Spanish journalist Agus Morales covered the trail of those on the move in a number of countries in Africa, Central America, Europe, the Middle East and South Asia. He focuses here on ‘internally displaced people’ (IDPs in the jargon). IDPs are basically people without an entitlement to Refugee Convention support, because they have not fled outside their nation’s borders. The definitions are not just about labelling semantics, or the jurisdictions for resolution - the relative proportions may help to understand the issues and point to solutions. He reminds us that many don’t identify as refugees, but as people with the same behaviours and values common elsewhere, but are caught up in a temporary situation of diminished power.

**“The Road Before Me Weeps: on the refugee route through Europe”, Nick Thorpe, Yale University Press, 2019, 332 pages (at 25 public libraries)**

As a long-time BBC correspondent in Budapest, Nick Thorpe is well-placed to write up a road trip with the 3.7 million refugees who fled to Europe during 2014-2018. A strong grasp of European history and politics enables him to explain the EU’s inadequate ‘architecture’ of response, focusing on the three major players, being Orban of Hungary, Erdogan of Turkey, and Merkel of Germany. By 2018 the flow was much reduced, and Thorpe sees the EU financing deals with Turkey and Libya as largely effective in that respect, partly by boosting their economies but also by domestic containment of their population. The horrific results of people smuggling – drownings and mass asphyxiation in lorries– led to debates on how to respond.

Another strength of the book is his detailed reports of many encounters with migrants, refugees and locals, NGOs, volunteers and smugglers, politicians and their operatives. The cases detailed here are arguments for why the “complementary” reasons for protection under the Refugee Convention need to include contemporary realities. His experience and knowledge qualifies him to sketch out a sustainable policy response (at June 2018), based on sharing the burden between states, controlling the inward flow with less self-selection, and putting newcomers to work and school.

**“Refugee Rights and Policy Wrongs: a frank, up-to-date guide by experts”, Jane McAdam and Fiona Chong, UNSW Press, 2019, 277 pages (at 89 public libraries)**

This book by legal academics from the Kaldor Centre at the University of New South Wales is a lay person's introduction to the requirements of international refugee law. It also makes the comparison with current Australian policy and practice, which comes up well short. As well as the Refugee Convention, the following relevant treaties are covered: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the Convention against Torture (CAT), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Its coherence and focus make the book accessible to non-lawyers, and it reflects the views of refugees and experts. The complexity of legal and bureaucratic arrangements necessitates technical and complicated explanations at times, and it is another strength of the book that it provides these. There is an index and extensive endnotes.

Readers expecting something new should note that this is an updated version of the 2014 book *"Refugees: Why Seeking Asylum is Legal and Australia's Policies are Not"* by the same authors, and largely follows its structure and content. The Liberal National government changes are reported, such as new visa categories, fast track reviews, Temporary Protection Visas (TPVs) and various Migration Act amendments. A second warning: being a legal guide, this book skims across the politics and debates and is not a guide to the many issues which are so challenging to policy and politics.

**Griffith Review 61 "Who We Are", 2018, 296 pages**

This quarterly issue of the literary and topical magazine declares it is "time for a national conversation" about "settling and making a place" in Australia, in the words of the editors Julianne Schultz and Peter Mares. They've compiled a group of fine Australian writers, of diverse and often deeply personal perspectives. Reading this is like attending a conference of many different streams, as migration and refugees, multicultural and indigenous issues are addressed in 34 essay, memoir, reportage, fiction, poetry and photo essay contributions. All that's missing is the conversation buzz after each presentation. Few are more than 20 pages, making this accessible and reader-focused.

**"The Human Tide: how population shaped the modern world", Paul Morland, John Murray (Publishers), London, 2019**

Everybody has an opinion on the whys and wherefores of global demography - the trends and mathematics of fertility, mortality and mobility. That's why the late Hans Rosling did us a great favour with his stunning and accessible videos which referenced the data, and causal factors. He starts with the big social, industrial, economic and military factors, and the mathematics and momentum of the "demographic equation" whereby much of the future is already "baked in." Economics, technology and organisation play their role, but also more autonomous cultural factors, such as "herd" decision-making, and policies toward migration and population growth. Yet demography is only part - not all - of destiny because of contingencies: 'people move'.

What's the connection with refugees? Instead of wars between states, the dominant form since 1945 has been civil wars, where ethnic or religious groups are locked in bitter struggles for control of territory or polity, and these are repeated not resolved. So central government resettlement policies to influence local demography can promote the political marginalisation or diminution of identity of subordinate groups .

**"Refuge Lost: Asylum Law in an Interdependent World", Daniel Ghezelbash, Cambridge University Press, 2018, 206 pages**

This book by Daniel Ghezelbash, a legal academic at Macquarie University, reports on what is probably less known, namely the collaboration for decades between the US and Australia on avoidance and deterrence strategies in the cat and mouse game of refugees versus governments and domestic law in destination countries.

The author writes about the history of mandatory detention, maritime interception and extraterritorial processing in both countries (up to June 2017), and compares the jurisprudence and institutions in the 2 countries. International law covering these areas is explained. Practices in other countries, including Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia, Canada and New Zealand are surveyed, and the successes in law, program and processes reported. As well as circumstantial evidence, the author provides direct evidence from official sources and interviews of US and Australian decisionmakers. As a record of recent Australian refugee events it is also useful.

However, the interdependent world mentioned in the book's title means the loss of a refugee treaty would be disastrous for the international order. Management of inevitable refugee situations demands a degree of international co-ordination, and governments need a stable order for domestic legitimation, so there is a political cost if they jettison the Refugee Convention.

**“Making Migration Law: The Foreigner, Sovereignty, and the Case of Australia”, Eve Lester, Cambridge University Press, 2018, 373 pages**

The state's assertion of “absolute sovereignty” over unsolicited migration across national borders is virtually unchallenged in today's dominant social, political and legal consciousness, but this only emerged over the last hundred years or so, according to Dr Lester. But the nineteenth century emergence of a common law doctrine of absolute sovereignty coincided with the appearance of racialised and non-European foreigners, and the desire to regulate their labour and movement. The first two substantive laws passed by the new Australian parliament in 1901 expressed the White Australia policy, described by PM Edmund Barton as “not merely the realization of a policy, but a handsome new year's gift for a new nation.”

In Part One, the book explores the issue's genealogy (historical origins and rationale) and in Part Two discourse analysis (case studies and framework). Actions by a number of Australian immigration ministers are discussed in the book, including Alick Downer, Menzies' minister in the postwar period. He had been a Japanese POW for 3 years, and this seemed to have tempered his view about compulsory detention, which could be ‘arbitrary’ and ‘capable of the gravest abuse.’

**“Manus Days – the Untold Story of Manus Island”, Michael Coates, Connor Court Publishing, 2018, 315 pages**

Michael Coates is a former soldier turned security guard at the MRPC (Manus Regional Processing Centre) in the period 2014-17, and gives his participant account of what happened there and why it happened that way. Since security staff are happy to supply violence on demand for big bucks, many will receive the author's story doubtfully, but his unsurprising values are not the point. His version has an unvarnished rawness and transparency which is useful for understanding what sort of people work as gaolers, and the changing and ambiguous operational context. The official secrecy about Manus means that the vivid descriptions and dramatic stories will also interest those curious about the relationships amongst the various groups of hired staff, local people, corporate management at G4S and subsequently Wilson Security on behalf of Transfield, the Canberra principals and PNG government, and disparate groups of refugees. The details about the transition to the East Lorengau refugee resettlement program from Manus, and ultimately to the rest of PNG, will be of interest to historians and I expect to academics in disciplines such as criminology and management.

This is also a prison drama, so for those attracted to personal stories, it's your book too — there's lots of colour about good and bad guys, eccentrics and manipulators, and the tragic endings of Reza Barati and Hamid Khazaei. Despite the sugar hit from the foreign capital injection, this warts-and-all story shows the damage done to everyone involved, including the Manus Island residents where the MRPC was planted.

**“No Friend but the Mountains: Writing from Manus Prison”, Behrouz Boochani, (translated by Omid Tofighian), Pan Macmillan Australia, 2018, 374 pages**

Behrouz Boochani has achieved widespread praise in literary circles for his book, and there are extensive reviews available, which I don't intend to repeat. The translator's introduction and later reflections are an important inclusion with the remarkable backstory to the book. As a gaol diary from a refugee prisoner, it is a counterpoint to the Coates book, so provides some points of comparison.

It is described in the Foreword as the personal thoughts and intellectual observations of an educated journalist and writer, rather than a close record of events. However, it is a gritty record of how a prison type model, with detention effectively indefinite, takes a heavy personal toll on non-criminals. Boochani is a close observer of his fellows, and documents their desperation, both on the boat trip and at Manus itself. Group identification gave personal value, with initial bonding at Manus based on shared boat experience, but this changed after a few months to room swapping, to match those with a common language or ethnicity.

Good and bad behaviour patterns emerge in this human zoo, with its cigarette currency, manipulative characters, encroaching madness, fights during food shortages, and acts of petty resistance. He also reports the great concern by parents for their children on the boat trip, the initial positivity towards the "Papus" (PNG staff), and the occasional kindness from guards at Manus. Smiling medical clinicians in white coats do not compensate for the "caged" experience.

**Ramzy Baroud, "The Last Earth, a Palestinian Story", Pluto Press, London, 2018**

This is a portrayal of the painful history of Palestine by selecting 9 interviews from many others, to give a detailed account of personal journeys, in their own words. The stories date from pre-Nakba (the 1948 expulsion) through to the present day. As told by the victims, they are vivid and provide great insight into what people do and why. This is a work of literary beauty and highly recommended.

**"Best We Forget: the war for White Australia 1914-18", Peter Cochrane, Text Publishing, 2018**

In this alternative perspective to the "sacrifice for Mother England" version of Australia's enthusiasm for WW1, this historian explores the motivations which informed the diplomatic, strategic and domestic politics of Australia's involvement. He starts with the racialism of pre WW1 Australian leaders, especially against Japan. The belief in a racial hierarchy based on supposed intrinsic values had been dominant in all western countries, but Japan's shock defeat of the Russian navy in 2005 began a correction, and led to Britain's alliance with Japan in WW1. So Australia was a difficult wartime ally, as PM Billy Hughes didn't name Japan but still aggressively promoted Asian exclusion. The fear of British abandonment also caused much conflict with Whitehall, around their commitment to Australia and expectations of Australian resourcing support. His final chapter, 'The politics of popular memory, or the art of national forgetting' describes the current context, where distortions and suppressions by military historians and journalists, as well as politicians, are assigned some blame for the omission of the White Australia influence. In fact Charles Bean, the official WW1 historian, later dropped his biology-based racialism, having seen the atrocities of WW2 which disproved that the moral qualities of any nation are "in the blood."

**"Lights in the Distance: Exile and Refuge at the Borders of Europe", Daniel Trilling, Picador, 2018, 282 pages**

Trilling's years of experience reporting on refugees at the front line informs his pen-portraits of typical journeys to Europe by African and Arab refugees in recent years. He describes a border crisis not a refugee crisis: the proportion of refugees in the world's population hasn't changed much from 1960 (3 percent). But globalization is a very unequal process - the countries of exit are much greater now and those of destination much smaller. Most refugees are neither heroes or villains, just people trying to control their lives and come to terms with their world. His detailed stories of their decisions and how they make them humanises them to us, giving knowledge and empathy. The Afterword



gives his reflections on how these events are changing both refugee producing and receiving countries. The current historic events may change the values and practices of European governments towards their own citizens.

**Pietro Bartolo and Lidia Tilotta, “Lampedusa, Gateway to Europe”, Maclehose Press, Quercus, London, 2017**

The tiny island of Lampedusa, situated between Tunisia and Sicily, came to international notice in 2011 as the European foothold for refugees fleeing from North Africa. Famously, Pope Francis went there in 2013 and called for a "reawakening of consciences" to counter the "indifference" shown to them. Dr Bartolo is a local success story, the barefoot son of a fisherman who went to Sicily for his education, married then returned in 1991 to practice as the island's GP. This is an engaging story about how he dealt with the big responsibilities thrust upon him, for starters being the only medic on an island with no airport, many hours away from Sicily by sea. His anecdotes and insights from the front line reveal much about the terrible shipwrecks and tragedies he saw, how the island responded, and the refugees he treated. His stories of the refugees, and his struggles with authority, and with himself, to humanise the response is frank and challenging. He has received many awards for his work

**Dawn Chatty, “Syria: The Making and Unmaking of a Refugee State”, Hurst and Company, London, 2017**

Chatty is an anthropologist and former director of the Refugee Studies Centre at the University of Oxford. She relates her research into the role of Syria, and its predecessor Bilad ash-Sham, as a place of refuge over the centuries by Armenians, Circassians, Kurds, Palestinians, Iraqis and others. This explains why millions of Syrian refugees since 2011 have been welcomed in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan (but not in the West), and why they pursue alternatives to camps.

**“Rescue: Refugees and the Political Crisis of Our Time”, David Miliband, TED Books, Simon & Schuster, 2017, 137 pages**

After being UK Foreign Secretary from 2007 – 2010, Miliband became head of the IRC (International Rescue Committee) in 2013. This short and engaging book is the companion to his 2017 [TED talk](#). We learn of his personal formation in the Labour party, and his family of Polish Jews who escaped the Nazi period in Europe: “the first refugees I ever met were my parents”. He is savvy about politics but admits to a steep learning curve in the refugee sector: “I always say that government has more power than an NGO but more obstacles in its way”. The self-effacing conversational style, with its stories of personal revelation, refugee encounters and insights gained, make this a very readable book.

He declares himself as instinctively a public policy “big picture” man, but does not come across as dry and technocratic; his strong and inspirational values permeate the book. The aim is to provoke new thinking to apply idealism and pragmatism to the current context: “I truly believe this, that the biggest question in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, concerns our duty to strangers...why they're displaced, how they survive, what help they need, and what our responsibilities are.” There is much to consider here for those who seek answers and alternatives to the awful future which looms for most of the world's refugees.

**“The Mess We're In – Managing the Refugee Crisis”, Andrew Bennetts, Trabagem Publishing, 400 pages, Camberwell 2017**

Bennetts applies a business analysis approach to produce a well-written book of 3 parts: Situation, then The Complication, Principles and Assessment, and Options and Recommendations. It fairly covers the law, ethics, history, cost benefit measures, and the perspectives of all sides. His structure

gives clarity to the explanation, and it deserves to be a comprehensive reference book for senior secondary and tertiary students.

**“Letters to a Young Muslim”, Omar Saif Ghobash, Picador 2017, 244 pages**

The author was stimulated to write these public letters to his teenage son after the 9-11 events, to rescue his religion from political extremists, but also from backward-looking and repressive attitudes which he sees as widespread within it. On discovering that his son was being educated in an environment of hatred and Puritanism, he wants to leave him a record of his views; his own father was assassinated when he was very young. As the ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to Russia - his mother is Russian - he is well-travelled and US educated, and wants young Muslims to embrace the diversity and difference of the modern world through their personal agency.

**“The Road to Somewhere: the new tribes shaping British politics”, David Goodhart, Penguin 2017, 278 pages**

David Goodhart, a UK political and social analyst, attempts an explanation of the Brexit and Trump votes in terms of what he calls the new value divisions in developed democracies. There are 2 core groups, the majority being Somewheres who are often from the “disappearing middle” class – less well-educated, less mobile and valuing security, familiar group identities and statist/protectionist economics, yet more socially tolerant than often presumed. The minority Anywheres are comfortable with and have benefited from social and technological change, and dominate society and politics. His focus is largely on the UK, where he delves deeply into institutional functioning eg. education and training. He tells us that recent (2016) European elections and opinion suggest the Anywheres are fighting back, which may manifest in either Left or Right values and cuts across his binary framework. It may be that “admonished Anywheres” can provide reconciliation with a new compact which accommodates class and socio-cultural factors, and rejects TINA (There Is No Alternative) economics. A thoughtful and informative book.

**“The Strange Death of Europe: Immigration, Identity, Islam”, Douglas Murray, Bloomsbury, 2017, 343 pages**

The book jacket of Murray’s book starts by telling us it is “a highly personal account of a continent and culture caught in the act of suicide”. Yes, it is highly personal, and its call to arms - “Whether the European people choose to go along with this is, naturally, another matter” - has the old-fashioned nostalgia of an Empire lost, and resentment of those returning to obtain some compensation. He travelled widely around Europe (but apparently not to Africa, Central Asia or the Middle East), yet was disappointed to meet refugees “who seemed...not to be approaching our continent in a spirit of generosity or gratitude.” With language like this, he has become a popular writer in British and Australian anti-immigration circles. Colonialism and racism is best forgotten for him, and he spends many pages telling Australia, Canada, the US - “a group of noticeably homogeneous nations” (proving he’s not very observant) - to not fret too much about it: “This is a mania, clearly. A specific and common European mania.” All the right wing complaints about the modern world are here. But what is the value of his book for others?

Most of the book is reportage and opinion where he skates over the usual grab bag of events and issues rather than the deeper explorations in Caldwell’s book (see above). Ironically, his report of the current people movement through Turkey towards Lesbos and neighbouring Greek islands includes the comment that three million Greeks fled from Turkey in the early 1920s, and one in three Lesbos residents is descended from those refugees. This example is referred to by Betts and Collier (in their 2017 book “Refuge”) as a precedent for turning the current refugee influx into a development opportunity; while aware of the history, unfortunately Murray can’t join the dots to get solutions.

**“Refuge –Transforming a Broken Refugee System”, Alexander Betts and Paul Collier, Allen Lane imprint of Penguin Random House, 2017**

This evaluation of the global refugee system draws on a range of knowledge disciplines and case studies to tell us what good policy looks like, and why the system – due to its post-WW2, Cold War origins - is not delivering on it. The new foundational elements should be the *humane duty of rescue*, *sustained autonomy* and an *eventual way out*. Their argument is that the unintended consequences of the Merkel decision to open the German door contributed to Brexit, the rise of the far-right in Europe, and a virtual closure of European borders. This analysis of the European situation over the last few years will challenge the thinking of many readers but comes from two highly-credentialed authors, and must be considered. They also provide an ethical yet pragmatic program to win more popular support.

**“Beautiful Balts – From Displaced Persons to New Australians”, Jayne Persian, NewSouth Books, June 2017**

Post-war immigration was not promoted as a moral responsibility to a devastated Europe but as an economic (national development) policy with political (Cold War and defence) benefits. Blonde, blue-eyed Baltic people were the cream of the crop and Jews were not — a racism rationalised as preserving harmony. By the late 1960s, pluralist organisations – churches, sports groups and scouts – grew to support migrant identities and multicultural aspirations. Despite many flaws in the settlement process, the author notes a “strong political will” to improve public attitudes.

**“Asylum by Boat: origins of Australia’s refugee policy”, Claire Higgins, UNSW Press, 2017**

Historian Claire Higgins examines caseload decision-making and policy implementation during the first wave of Indochinese boat refugees, during the period 1976-81. She draws on other correspondence and interviews with key players to give the inside story. The book has an accessible story-telling style, artfully guiding the general reader from the end of the Vietnam War up to the Howard government.

**“Bridging Troubled Waters – Australia and asylum seekers”, Tony Ward, Australian Scholarly Publishing Ltd, North Melbourne, 2017**

Tony Ward applies his economic and government background to review the Australian evidence about boat journeys and minimising deaths at sea. Ward seeks a “balancing act” between “stop the boats” and “bring them here”, and he ultimately supports the argument that “any softening” of current policies would re-start the boats. There is much in depth examination of policy and research consolidated in this book.

**“They Cannot Take the Sky: Stories from detention”, Ed. Michael Green and Andrew Dao, Allen & Unwin, 2017**

These are first person stories from the oral history group Behind the Wire, organised into longer stories of ten pages, and “Voices” of a few paragraphs so readers can select from the many stories and personal responses. A related website at The Wheeler Centre provides podcasts and more, making it an educational source for all ages.

**“What is Populism?” Jan-Werner Muller, 142 pages, Penguin Books, 2017**

This influential politics professor notes that populists often speak of “we the people”, but who do they mean? Collectively, analysts and commentators lay the charge against anti-establishment leaders and movements of all stripes, yet in the US for instance “everyone runs against Washington.” One test is what they do, especially when they have influence. His own theory is that anti-pluralism must be added to anti-elitism for the charge to stick: the opposition is corrupt and lacks legitimacy because it is not properly part of “us”, justifying populist repressiveness. Some of their theorists have claimed fascism is more democratic than democracy itself. He rejects as a shallow defensiveness the tendency to psychologically label critics as angry or frustrated losers, with national “therapy” as the answer (while the mainstream copies populist proposals in the meantime!). The

dismissive approach of twentieth century intellectuals towards the masses was exclusionary; by exercising our duty to reason we find there are often reasons for frustration. Populists degrade democratic language, but he urges talking to them, while not talking like them.

Most of this short book ranges widely over modern history, assessing populist influences, but I found the latter part of his book, the Seven Theses on Populism, and the Afterword: How Not to Think about Populism less discursive and focussed on a response.

**“Journey of a Thousand Storms”, Kooshyar Karimi, Viking, 2016, 263 pages**

This autobiography begins with his account of growing up in Iran, and its politics and religion is partly responsible for the unhappiness and violence within his mixed Muslim and Jewish family. He becomes a political dissident (monarchist) around 1999 and is tortured and blackmailed by the state, so flees with his wife and children to Turkey, then to Australia in 2000. Turkey is not Iran where the state executes large numbers of its opponents, but the refugees are called ‘evsiz’ (homeless savages) and there is much fear, violence and poverty. The picture of life in both countries is disturbing.

The rich content of the book also includes his adverse circumstances and those of the people he meets along the way, their compromises and human frailties, and the sometimes decisive ‘random acts of kindness.’ Karimi was a risk-taker and hard worker from a young age, prepared to take shortcuts to become a translator, author, and medical doctor, and the Australian environment has allowed him to be successful despite difficult adaptations. His personal determination and conviction that he and his family are entitled to a better life challenges the official conventions and laws we impose to constrain individual aspirations. He says he has done very well from his father’s advice to do three things in life: ‘The first one is fight. The second is gamble. And the third is go to jail – it’s where real men are formed.’

**“Violent Borders: Refugees and the Right to Move”, Reece Jones, Verso, 2016, 212 pages**

Jones is a geographer, and argues that the increasing enforcement of border controls by modern states has the inherent effect of enforcing the distribution of world poverty. Historically, it only slows the process, and administers different forms of violence while doing so. An elevation of the interests of citizens over human beings generally has happened, but the militarisation of border surveillance diminishes citizens’ rights also: “posse comitatus” (the military and police distinction) is blurred when defence guns are turned inward. His discussion of political philosophy and world history helps to explain why current environment, strong state and “global commons” policies have emerged.

**“Nauru Burning: an Uprising and its Aftermath”, Mark Isaacs, Editia, 2016, 87 pages**

Isaacs had been a worker at Nauru Regional Processing Centre but left prior to the July 2013 riot, and was briefed on the event by a current worker who was unable to speak out. He gives voice to the firsthand reports and reviews the official reports, bringing his experience to bear in explaining why the events occurred. Lack of accountability from service providers and detachment from Canberra made the outbreak of violence inevitable.

**“International Migration – a very short introduction”, Khalid Khoser, 118 pages, OUP 2016**

The author, an international expert connected to Australia’s Lowy Institute, covers a wide range of issues in this guide, one of OUP’s excellent Very Short Introduction series (see their online catalogue). This new version is updated for the recent dynamics of migration and displacement such as increasing “circular migration”, but it’s not just about people: financial remittances from migrants are just below oil and almost double international aid and charity, although they can exacerbate divisions in the home country. As well as migration, chapters on refugees, globalisation, development, migrants in society, and the future are covered, referencing history and law. The mini-reading guide at the end is also useful.

**“What is a Refugee?”, William Maley, Scribe 2016**

If you thought this book's title an easy question, Professor Maley, an ANU Afghanistan specialist and board member of the Refugee Council of Australia, will broaden your thinking. Most refugee books describe current events, but this one is analytical, reflecting deep knowledge of history and politics, as well as how language 'frames' social issues.

**“The New Odyssey- the story of Europe's Refugee Crisis”, Patrick Kingsley, Guardian Books/Faber & Faber, 2016**

Patrick Kingsley is The Guardian UK's immigration correspondent and 2015 Foreign Affairs Journalist of the Year, and reports his encounters in 17 countries of exodus in an 'epic and personal' way as the liner notes say. It is indeed very readable, like galloping and racy despatches from a war front, with long interviews with refugees and migrants, people smugglers and traffickers. It also includes deep reflections on policy options.

**“Offshore: Behind the wire on Manus and Nauru”, Madeline Gleeson, Newsouth 2016**

A chronicle of Australian political history, events and investigations since 2012 which draws on the public record of media sources, government statements and evidence to government inquiries. It gives particular voice to people who have worked inside, or have been closely involved with the regional processing centres, and outlines the alternative policies which conform to Australia's international obligations.

**“Not Quite Australian: how temporary migration is changing the nation”, Peter Mares, Text Publishing, Melbourne, 2016**

Peter Mares sees the *metics* of ancient Athens - resident foreigners with limited rights – as a metaphor for the drift in Australian policy from permanent to temporary immigration. Previously, “the passage of time carried a moral force that cannot be ignored” but a citizenship for insiders goes against the dynamic of greater democracy and poses threats. This is a very readable book on a current issue. A longer review is at <https://independentaustralia.net/>

**“Across the Seas: Australia's response to refugees, a history”, Klaus Neumann, Black Inc., 2015**

This is an immigration history of Australia from the post-WW2 European exodus up to 1977, the end of the first Indochinese exodus; the former was migrant recruitment and the latter a reluctant response to refugees. Swinburne historian Klaus Neumann shows how a country shaped by its insularity and White Australia objectives influenced party leaders Calwell, Peacock, Whitlam and Fraser, who had shifting and inconsistent approaches when controversies erupted. A longer review is at <https://independentaustralia.net/>

**“We Are Better Than This: essays addressing policies on asylum seekers” ed. Robyn Cadwallader, ATF Press, 2015**

A wideranging collection of essays of research and argument from activists, fieldworkers, religious, lawyers and academics: Frank Brennan, Stephen Pickard, John Minns and Kieran Bradley, Julian Burnside, Mark Isaacs, Eileen O'Brien, William Maley, Emily Rutherford. The 8 poems by Sister Elizabeth Young, reflecting on her work at Curtin detention centre, are a nice inclusion.

**“Global Migration: the Basics”, Bernadette Hanlon and Thomas J. Vicino, Routledge, 2014, 175 pages**

This short but focussed book examines the social, economic, historical and political issues around the movement of people, from various disciplinary perspectives and in different places. Its clarity of terminology and interpretation of statistics is important and useful. Migration for work is the emphasis, and the different theories are explained. The circumstances which have led to different

ethnic dispositions around the world are covered, and much empirical knowledge is distilled and presented. The writing is balanced and deeply informed.

**“This is Still Breaking People – update on Manus Island”, Amnesty International, May 2014** (online at [http://www.amnesty.org.au/resources/activist/This\\_is\\_still\\_breaking\\_people\\_update\\_from\\_Manus\\_Island.pdf](http://www.amnesty.org.au/resources/activist/This_is_still_breaking_people_update_from_Manus_Island.pdf)) and **“This is Breaking People – human rights violations at Manus Island”, Amnesty International, Dec 2013** (available online at [http://www.amnesty.org.au/images/uploads/about/Amnesty\\_International\\_Manus\\_Island\\_report.pdf](http://www.amnesty.org.au/images/uploads/about/Amnesty_International_Manus_Island_report.pdf))

**“Walking Free”, Munjed Al Muderis with Patrick Weaver, Allen and Unwin 2014**

The true story of a young Iraqi doctor who fled Iraq at the time of Saddam Hussein, came here by boat, was detained at Curtin detention centre, and is now a pioneering surgeon implanting prostheses to patients who have lost limbs. The short version is at <http://www.almuderis.com.au/images/stories/pdf/Womens-Weekly-Munjed-Al-Muderis.pdf>

**“Sri Lanka’s Secrets: how the Rajapaksa regime gets away with Murder”, Trevor Grant, Monash University Publishing, 2014**

This documents the brutal ethnic cleansing directed towards Tamils by the regime over a long period, in particular the murderous hunting of civilians in the last period of the civil war in 2009. (The film <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eEtAp0s9QkQ> bears shocking witness to these events.) Also shameful are the Western countries (including Australia), China and Russia, who turned a blind eye for their strategic ends. A compelling case, which shows the dirty diplomacy behind the smiling faces of our current and previous foreign ministers.

**“The Undesirables: Inside Nauru”, Mark Isaacs, Hardie Grant 2014**

A shocking eyewitness account of the treatment of men at Australia’s offshore asylum-seeker processing centre. In July 2013 asylum seekers had rioted and razed it to the ground. For Mark Isaacs, who had worked with the men in the Nauru Regional Processing Centre over the previous 10 months, this riot was an inevitable outcome of a cruel and degrading policy.

**“Refugees – why seeking asylum is legal and Australia’s policies are not”, Jane McAdam & Fiona Chong, UNSW Press 2014**

Noting that Australian policy changes continuously, two refugee law academics explain how it operates in Australia, and how much of it is at odds with our voluntary international obligations. Updated to the end of the Gillard govt. it is a useful primer, with chapters on definitions and common myths, offshore processing, turning back boats, and the effect of decreased legal assistance, with an important chapter on the feasibility of a regional protection framework.

**“The Drownings’ Argument Australia’s inhumanity: offshore processing of asylum seekers”, ed. Robin Rothfield, Labor for Refugees, 2014**

A short book with chapters by well-known opponents of offshore processing (Julian Burnside, Tony Kevin, Pamela Curr, Anna Burke, Melissa Parke etc.) which critiques the current policy and canvasses alternatives.

**“Becoming Australian: Migration, Settlement, Citizenship”, Brian Galligan, Martina Boese & Melissa Phillips, MUP, 2014, 246 pages**

These Melbourne academics draw on a 4-year Australian Research Council project, centred on interviews with 85 migrants and refugees about their pre-arrival, and settlement experience, including employment, available supports, belonging and identity, and their futures. The

respondents' comments illustrate the authors' conceptual approaches to policy analysis and social interpretation of the categories of race, culture and ethnicity. The push-pull binary understanding of pre-movement decision-making is rejected in favour of a psycho-social understanding, and pre- and post-migration trajectories are explored. The book also explains notions of citizenship and multiculturalism, the history of both migration and refugee policy (including the White Australia influence) and its resultant demographics, and surveys the data aggregates on employment, migration, and internal dispersion of settlement. It is a sophisticated review of migration dynamics.

**Asylum Seekers and Immigration Detention”, ed. Justin Healey, Issues in Society Vol. 353, The Spinney Press 2013**

Intended as a text for high schools, this is surprisingly comprehensive in scope, and distils much of the arguments and facts into 60 pages and its three chapters: Australia's Obligations to Asylum Seekers, Immigration Detention in Australia, Offshore Processing Policy Debate.

**“To Bonegilla from Somewhere”, Wanda Skowronska, Connor Court Publishing, 2013, 276 pages**

The author writes of her Latvian and Polish heritage, and her parents' post-WW2 emigration to Australia. First stop was Bonegilla, the migrant camp near Albury which received 320,000 “DP”s and migrants up until its closure in 1971. Much of the book is a historical view of Europe in the centuries before WW2, and its lasting influence on her parents' generation. Her learning about their hidden experiences, sufferings and “untellable” events leads her to empathise with Australia's indigenous culture, and those from Vietnam, Laos, Lebanon and Somalia through “the language of the soul.”

**“Profits of Doom: how vulture capitalism is swallowing the world”, Antony Loewenstein, Melbourne University Press, 2013**

Investigative journalism about the companies which have gained a major role in “the privatised state.” This includes those operating detention centres in Curtin (W.A.) and Christmas Island, and each merits chapters in the book. In 2001 the WA Inspector of Custodial Services described Curtin as “gulag conditions.”

**“Alternatives to Offshore Processing”, ed. Robin Rothfield, Labor For Refugees 2013**

A critique of the Gillard-commissioned 2012 Expert Panel on Asylum Seekers (“Houston”) report in terms of its contradiction of ALP policy, and later developments and implications. A summary of 33 important submissions is included as well as the Recommendations of the Expert Panel.

**“A Country Too Far”, ed. Rosie Scott and Tom Keneally, Penguin 2013**

An anthology of personal stories, fiction, “faction”, reflections, poetry and documentary reports from 27 of Australia's top writers; all in short form, so can be dipped into as thought pieces.

**“Exodus: Immigration and Multiculturalism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”, Paul Collier, Allen Lane imprint of Penguin, 2013, 309 pages**

This is an important book by a development economist which draws on the economics toolkit for his analytical framework and prescriptions.

**“Diaspora: a Very Short Introduction”, Kevin Kenny, OUP 2013, 123 pages**

Diaspora is a fashionable word often used loosely, with hidden and misleading assumptions about the migration experience. As well as picking apart the variations in meaning, Kenny points out how governments also use overseas connections to expand their influence. Usefully, he gives a detailed historical explanation of the Jewish diaspora, Rastafarianism, and the Back to Africa movement of black Americans. This pocket size booklet is a model of clarity and concise yet deep analysis.

**“The Politics of immigration”, James Hampshire, 185 pages, Polity, 2013**

The author lists the four aspects of the liberal state salient to immigration, two which favour it (constitutionalism which protects human rights, and capitalism which seeks bigger markets and profits), and two which favour restrictions (representative democracy with its bias to majority insider interests, and nationhood which reinforces native identity). The interplay of these factors in nation states and their relative strength broadly guides its politics and culture. He looks at history to test his theory, and sees the process of national self-definition in settler states as behind the racist eugenics supported by both elites and masses in the US. This has parallels with Australia, as does the "US National Origins Quota" of 1924-65, with its anti-Asian and pro-N W Europe bias. Post WW2 Europe was different: nation-building had already taken place over centuries, and post-colonial immigration fulfilled its new labour needs. After "the myth of return" for guestworkers was dropped belatedly (around the 1990s), major European countries moved from *jus sanguinis* to *jus soli* as the marker of citizenship.

In contemporary world politics, identity - based on cultural preservation not race - is more important than economics to anti-immigration voters, so pro-immigration politicians are wary: messaging is difficult and they mute opposition with "strong borders" rhetoric. In many countries, even political leaders who declare their scepticism towards immigration increase the numbers – dramatically in Australia in the first decade of this century. Australia now has the highest proportion of immigrant workers of any OECD country (26.5% in 2010). We are one of many countries which aspire to be a "competition state", so policy has a large element of "welcome the skilled and rotate the unskilled", the latter being temporary workers.

He discusses how the liberal state produces illegality, and many other paradoxes and counter-intuitive observations such as the "organised hypocrisy" of the Refugee Convention signees actively limiting claims: the summary chapter 8 is entitled "Living with Contradictions." There is much explanatory power in his framework for those prepared to look beyond the players who strut today's political stage, and evaluate the historical proof he provides.

**"Hope. Refugees and their Supporters in Australia since 1947", Ann-Mari Jordens, Halstead Press 2012, 239 pages**

Being an experienced Immigration officer who conducted resettlement programs in Canberra, the author was commissioned by the ACT government to raise local awareness of the refugee contribution. This led her to interview 12 refugees from a range of countries and types of conflict over the period from post-WW2 to now. She is a careful listener and provides rich understanding of the many facets of entering an alien society as a refugee. As well as personal stories, she also backgrounds the personalities (including politicians Kate Carnell and Jon Stanhope) who pushed hard for refugees. The parents of success were the many service and advocacy organisations in Canberra, such as the Good Neighbour Movement, Migrant Resource Centres, the Refugee Council, Indo China Refugee Association, ethnic associations, Canberra Refugee Support, Rural Australians for Refugees (in its first version 2001-7), and the trauma counsellor Companion House, a late 1980s response to the increased incidence of tortured refugees from South America, and Bosnia. The author's social history of the refugee movement and how it saw and responded to challenge adds substantially to the event-based histories in its understanding of how we got to where we now are. The impacts of the government's refugee policy changes from then are also reported, with the Hanson/Howard shift towards Temporary Protection Visas seen as a watershed.

**"The People Smuggler: the true story of Ali Al Jenabi, the 'Oskar Schindler of Asia'", Robin de Crespigny, Penguin 2012**

This is the confronting and true story of an Iraqi man seeking to rescue his family, which answers many questions about the movements of people from conflict zones and "transit" countries, and the complexity of motivations and influences on those who facilitate it. A memoir and thriller described as "engrossing" by Tom Keneally which has won many awards.



**“Immigrants Turned Activists – Italians in 1970s Melbourne”, Simone Battiston, Troubador Publishing, 2012, 147 pages**

This history of the Melbourne-based FILEF (Italian Federation of Migrant Workers and their Families) draws on interviews and personal papers to give a rich picture of its beginnings in the emerging migrant support organisations of the 1970s, its involvement with Melbourne’s Italian community and institutions, and its political controversies and connections, both locally and internationally, especially with the Italian Communist Party (PCI). Some of its originators are still in public life, such as Joe Caputo (Federation of Ethnic Communities’ Councils), and Stefano di Pieri, (nowadays as a famous chef in Mildura), while others are ex-political figures, such as Brian Howe (ex-deputy PM, formerly a Methodist minister in the Fitzroy-based Centre for Urban Research and Action), and Giovanni and Anne Sgro (he a former state ALP member and she a social activist).

With its inception as a conscious attempt by progressive social activists towards self-activism by exploited and marginalised Italian working class immigrants, an alignment with the local Left was inevitable to develop political and institutional influence – in unions, neighbourhoods, and the media. Perhaps a sign of its success was the 1977 expulsion to Italy of its leader, Ignazio Salemi, the target of an anti-communist media campaign which found support from the Immigration Minister Mackellar, despite a vigorous and wide public defence campaign. The author’s strong Italian background has produced extensive analysis of the internal debates and conflicts in FILEF, and why it developed the way it did. While diminished, many FILEF leaders subsequently moved into other areas of Australian life, and Italian Australians came to occupy a strong position in Australian life.

**“Reluctant Rescuers”, Tony Kevin, self-published, 2012**

A former diplomat which gives him a vantage point to ask how far Australia’s legal obligations are being ignored for partisan politics, and how that threatens the culture of the public service. He quotes Peter Mares: “Despite the ‘universal’ rhetoric, refugees are human beings who are in essence citizens of nowhere. Which is to say, they are human beings with no rights worth speaking of.”

**“Border Vigils: Keeping Migrants Out of the Rich World”, Jeremy Harding, Verso 2012**

A short book which manages a historical survey of the issue over the last 100 years, which illustrates many situations, and goes beyond asylum seekers to the wider issues which propel people to move. Documents the sudden rise of unwanted immigration from the 1990s to Europe and the US, and the reaction of “receiving” states.

**‘Refugees – a cruel, discriminatory and unjust policy’, Mirko Bagaric and Peter Faris QC, in “The Greens” ed. Andrew McIntyre, Connorcourt Publishing 2011**

A conservative critique of the UN Refugee Convention, based on its existing race, religion, political criteria, preferring famine, war, natural disasters.

**“Refugee to Resident”, Ibtihal Samarayi 2011, Hybrid Publishers, Melbourne 2011**

The memoir of an Iraqi refugee about her oppressive life under Saddam Hussein’s regime, her escape to Iran and Turkey, and experiences with the UN and INGOs before being accepted by Australia. She reflects on the trials of refugees during their journey, how art has been cathartic for her, and how culture and religion interact.

**“Immigrant Nations”, Paul Scheffer, Polity Press 2011 (translated from 2007 Dutch edition)**

A fascinating book by a sociologist with deep and broad experience of the European and North American experience of post WW2 immigration. It’s complicated, and he imparts much historical knowledge and explanation of the debates on reconciling loyalties of religion and foreign cultures to receiving nation states, and the new phenomenon of second-generation terrorism. Prepare to be challenged by his controversial conclusions; read the Epilogue first.

**“Essays on Muslims and Multiculturalism”, edited by Raimond Gaita, Text Publishing, 2011, 232 pages**

Melbourne philosopher Raimond Gaita has included 2 of his own essays with those by Australian academics with politics, social theory, and history backgrounds—Geoffrey Brahm Levey, Waleed Aly, Shakira Hussein, Graeme Davison, and Ghassan Hage. The book’s post-9-11 publication show themes of reflection and comparison: Gaita starts with how the ‘war on terror’ moved multiculturalism from a culture war debate on the fringe, to the centre stage of politics. In Australia, unlike Europe, it was not immigrants per se but Muslims and apocalyptic versions of their religion who were rejected and feared. The prospect of an existential threat was publicly raised by some politicians, who suggested that diminished freedom was in prospect and a reduced humanitarianism towards refugees. In the final essay, he examines how multiculturalism requires love of country as well as dutiful citizenship, but not aggressive nationalism.

Levey points out the hyperbolics and hypocrisies of the obsession with Islam, and its dissonance with how actual multicultural societies work, both here and abroad. Aly reports the media myths and folk tales, and Hussein’s Pakistani background gives her comparative insights into how the moral panic affects Muslim women and men differently. Davison reviews the citizenship and national values debate in the UK and Australia, and how economic liberalisation has affected notions of community. He sees 3 positions in the “national values” debate: the conservative authoritarian (‘unifying’), liberal-pluralist (self-expressive) and civic-republican (republican, participatory, democratic). Citizenship conditions which reflect domestic political urges and exclude, may hinder rather than help. Hage considers the role of the Cronulla events and Islam as an anti-racism posture, after 10 years of rhetoric against unwanted refugees and migrants, and integration directed at minorities rather than dominant groups.

**“Boat People: personal stories from the Vietnamese exodus 1975-1996”, ed. Carina Hoang, Carina Hoang Communications, 2010**

This glossy illustrated book gives first person accounts by refugees about the situation they fled from, their boat voyage to HK, Philippines or Indonesia, and the horrors of Thai pirates, starvation, and what people do in desperate situations. A shocking book which is rich in content, and includes copies of original refugee documents, and stories by officials, journalists and aid workers. Some of the heroes were simple Indonesian and Chinese fishermen and villagers who took pity on the refugees and shared their scarce food and water with them.

**“Pacific Solution”, Susan Metcalfe, Australian Scholarly Publications, 2010**

A persistent advocate and researcher, she reports her visits to Nauru, extensive interviews conducted with refugees and advocates, media reports, long-distance correspondence and new research.

**“Border Crimes: Australia’s War on Illicit Migrants”, Michael Grewcock, Sydney Institute of Criminology 2009**

This presents an argument of Australian “state crime” based on restricted rights granted to refugees, who are mostly “forced” migrants, dating from the White Australia policy to the Pacific solution. Detention has enabled violence and abuses, underpinned by legal restrictions on refugees. Why there was a break with the policy towards Indochinese refugees in the late 70s is explained.

**“Reflections on the Revolution in Europe”, Christopher Caldwell, Allen Lane, an imprint of Penguin Books, 2009, 364 pages**

The tagline of Caldwell’s book is Immigration, Islam and the West. He asks “Can Europe be the same with different people in it?”, a question he had been writing about for ten years before this book. In particular, his chronicle of people movements and debates since WW2, as well as earlier history, is

very useful. He is worried about the growing conflict between Islam's strong and holistic approach to social and political issues, and what he sees as the overly accommodating and naïve response from the secular and fractured culture of post-Christian Europe. As it should, hypocrisy, racism and lazy thinking gets short shrift, but he's not a polemicist. He is reflective and philosophical, and those looking for confirmation of their existing views will be challenged by his fair-minded and extensive reporting and discussion. For Australia these are distant debates, usually with simple-minded posturing and ignorance of why mainstream European leaders have become interventionist about protection of individuals and society. Greater understanding is available here even without agreement.

**"Australia's Immigration Revolution", Andrew Markus, James Jupp, Peter McDonald, Allen and Unwin 2009**

Three of Australia's academic experts write on Australian policy (which has changed a lot since the book was published), global trends (population issues, immigration and the nation state), and the Australian experience (residential concentration and dispersion, multiculturalism, public opinion, social cohesion).

**"Haneef: a Question of Character", Jacqui Ewart, Halstead Press, 2009**

Dr Haneef, an Indian doctor working on the Gold Coast, had a family connection with one of the 2007 Glasgow terrorists to whom he had lent a SIM card some years before. He was imprisoned for three weeks, but found to be an innocent man presumed guilty by overzealous police and prosecutors, and over-excited politicians and pressmen." This started as a case study of how the media report issues relating to Muslims, ethnicity and terrorism, but the Immigration Department pulled the funding. It is a work of comprehensive and dispassionate reportage, and Ewart interviews almost all of the key players.

**"Us & Them: Muslim-Christian Relations and Cultural Harmony in Australia", Abe W. Ata, Australian Academic Press, 2009**

This book of 12 essays is intended to give secondary and university teachers classroom material – questions, critiques, bibliographies – which together create an 'anti-bias' curriculum which challenge stereotypes. It includes survey information about private/govt, and muslim/non-muslim school students, and suggests that personal experience is much more effective than didactic knowledge in combating prejudice, which has implications for multiculturalism: schools are not the sites of change, unless they deal with 'social distance'. Reports from practitioners and participants in interfaith marriage, attitudes to bereavement, differences in the religious-culture-ethnic/racial-family nexus reveal much about the state of co-existence and potential trajectories.

An interesting chapter for me was about Lebanese immigrants, with religious or sect identity having less importance as faith, but conflated with ancestry, nation and politics. A large number of communal societies based on village origins and replicating traditional hierarchies and rituals provide social outlets and marriage opportunities, with the great majority of immigrants having no membership of Australian clubs, charities or unions, perhaps explaining observed lower assimilation and employment levels. Well over half see themselves as temporary Australian residents, and are uncomfortable with many aspects of Australian culture.

**Destination Australia: Migration to Australia since 1901, Eric Richards UNSW Press, 2008.**

A chronology by a local academic, of how the British White Australia policy became the White Australia policy and today's non-racial policy. He defines Australia's uniqueness as a settler state as due to its convict origins, distance from Europe, assisted migration as a design and selection tool, non-indentured immigrant labour as a powerful, free and democratizing force, equality of assisted and non-assisted immigrants, heterogeneous and temporary factors such as the gold rush, union

influence in giving outsider status to Chinese, Kanakas, Italian immigrants. The 19C waves of European emigration did not consider Australia as a destination. He makes special mention of the difficulties and subjectivity of many immigration statistics, and the increasing complexity of categorising immigrants in today's highly mobile world.

**"Family journeys : stories in the National Archives of Australia " 2008**

**"Drawing the Global Colour Line: white men's countries and the question of racial equality", Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, MUP, 2008**

This is a transnational history of the institutional entrenchment of "whiteness" as the basis of national identity in the settler states of North America, Australasia, and South Africa, around the late 19<sup>th</sup>, early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and how that influenced policy and attitudes before the civil rights, human rights and anti-racist reforms after World War 2. The deep roots of the White Australia policy are explained, and how the discrediting of 'race thinking' occurred.

**"The Rugmaker of Mazar-e-Sharif", Najaf Mazari & Robert Hillman, Insight Publications, 2008**

This memoir from an Afghani refugee of 2001, now living in Melbourne, is a famous best-seller, being included on the VCE reading list for some years. It deserves to be there, as a well-written literary work which is convincing and empathetic in conveying the emotions and decisions of Mr Mazari's life from childhood to Australian citizenship. It tells much about Afghanistan, including its history, the influence of tribalism and religion on day to day life, and his experience of escape and transit to Indonesia and Australia. The atmosphere of detention camps and government control is revealing and credible. An unforgettable must-read book.

**"Human rights overboard : seeking asylum in Australia" ed. Linda Briskman, C. Goddard, S. Latham 2008**

**"Acting from the Heart: Australian advocates for asylum seekers tell their stories", ed. Sarah Meares and Louise Newman, Finch Publishing, Sydney 2007, 242 pages**

This remarkable record of activists' experiences with refugees and their struggles also tells us how the activists themselves were changed: in their relationships with friends, family, and the Australia they thought they knew, so that they began to see themselves differently. As well as support from scores of refugee supporters, the book's editor/curators, both child psychiatrists who worked with refugees, were backed up by literary figures such as Tom Keneally and Judith Rodriguez. The first person stories from about 70 people are each a few pages long, and its accessibility is enhanced by the powerful insights of cartoonists Cathy Wilcox, Fiona Katauskas, Ron Tandberg, Alan Moir, Hinze (David Pope) and Peter Nicholson.

The stories come from professionals working with refugees, social and "accidental" activists, public and media figures. The origins of Chilout, Circle of Friends (Adelaide), the Romero Centre (Brisbane), A Just Australia, Rural Australians for Refugees, and others are recounted. Those of us who came to this issue after 2007 are schooled in past events from the Woomera and Baxter detention centres, the 2001 MV Tampa rescue, the SIEVX drownings, and Cornelia Rau's imprisonment. This is a very readable and diverse anthology which reminds us how much of the relationship between the state and desperate and marginalised outsiders is unchanged from 15 years ago.

**"Big White Lie", John Fitzgerald, UNSW Press, 2007**

This China expert's first history book is about how Chinese people in Australia saw and reacted to Australia, and its supposed unique values of individualism, equality and patriotism. The double mistake of White Australia was that its values were not invented here, and its view of Chinese people as - if not inferior - inherently a slavish, dependent and hierarchical race, was greatly

mistaken. The author provides much documentation and evidence of how Chinese migrants demonstrated that their aspirations and practice was very similar to those of their new country.

**In the Interest of National Security – civilian internment in Australia during World War 11, Klaus Neumann, NAA, 2006, 121 pages**

This short book draws on National Archive documents and unpublished sources to report the Australian government's policy towards foreign nationals from Europe, Japan and Java in Australia, and its legacy at the end of the war. His case studies of 10 persons provide details of their diversity and varied experiences. Some were arguably justifiably interned, but others were anti-fascist opponents of their original country's objectives. Flawed and arbitrary processes often applied and there are parallels with the bureaucratic discretion and custodial power we see today.

**" The Longest Journey: resettling refugees from Africa", Peter Browne, UNSW Press, 2006**

Covers the period from early 1990s when conflicts in the NE of sub-Saharan Africa led to large numbers of international refugees and internally displaced persons. It documents how the Australian humanitarian resettlement program, historically reflecting labourforce and political (Cold War) objectives, changed significantly towards Africa and Sudanese refugees, as local integration and repatriation alternatives dried up. It also reports on UNHCR, the history of international treaties, recipient and resettlement country policies, and the real story of "the lost boys of Sudan."

**"Following Them Home: the fate of the returned asylum seekers", David Corlett, Black Inc. 2005**

In mid-2004, David Corlett travelled to meet asylum seekers whom Australia had returned to Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

**"From under a leaky roof: Afghan Refugees in Australia", Phil Sparrow, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 2005**

An experienced aid worker mainly in the Hazari regions of Afghanistan, Sparrow says professionals, academics and advocates alike generally assume that coming to Australia causes inter and intraethnic conflicts to melt away, which is not the reality. He says this is a strong feature of the current situation, more so than for the Balkans and Indochina refugees, but rarely discussed by experts, advocates and commentators, and explains the detail and complexities and how the cultures should be understood in Australia: primarily as family groups not as a community promoting their common interests. The distortions of translators/interpreters, the vulnerability of TPV holders with little security and incentive to settle down and, even for many highly motivated refugees, the competition for favour from arbitrary and ignorant decisionmakers fosters suspicion and non-cooperation. The Australian fear of small numbers of arrivals and the official slide into fostering terrorist suspicions, feeds the negativism yet there are better ways, with the past providing templates.

**"The Long, Slow Death of White Australia", Gwenda Tavan, 298 pages, Scribe 2005**

An elegantly written history which goes beyond documenting events to explain what was behind the swings in national mood to arrive at a general acceptance of non-European immigration, despite persistent anxieties and prejudices. The book is a response to the "conspiracy by elites" view that the jettisoning of racist policies and some acceptance of multiculturalism were changes undemocratically foisted on the populace by unrepresentative or self-interested groups. The pragmatic and incremental – messy in fact - nature of reform occurred during a time of changes in the way Australians thought of themselves - less Anglo-centric and racialised, and more tolerant of diversity. However, the decline of civic bodies which connect leaders and society opens up a space for less grounded policies and populist agitation to restore the politics of fear.

**"The ethics and politics of asylum : liberal democracy and the response to refugees", Matthew J. Gibney Cambridge University Press, 2004.**

A rigorous academic survey of philosophy and politics of ethical policies in this , and a detailed history of the UN refugee convention, and its application in US, UK, Australia and Germany.

**"Refuge Australia – Australia's humanitarian Record", (127 pages), Klaus Neumann, UNSW Press, Sydney, 2004**

This book records the history of Australia's response to refugees up to 1973. Neumann documents its complexity and ambiguity, cautions against sweeping conclusions about "good" and "bad" periods, and reinstates the moral reason for refugee support. He shows the continuities in Australian culture and government policies, such as the conflation of immigration and refugee policies, and the big discontinuity: the end of the Cold War (about 1990) when containment and repatriation began. He reflects on Australia's practice prior to 1973, when our international legal obligations were minimal, and the Cold War influence on the 1951 Convention, including the choice of "persecution" as the criterion for refugee.

**"Lives in Limbo" M Leach and F Mansouri, UNSW Press 2004**

This well-written book provides the refugee experience - especially those from Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan - in their own words, both before their flight and in Australian detention camps. Also explains the problems and administration of Temporary Protection Visas and Australian law, the 1951 Refugee Convention, the UNHCR role and practice, 'push' and 'pull' factors, psychological effects, media representations of refugees, and the language of 'queues', deterrence, economic migrants. While published 10 years ago, this is mostly still relevant because re-cycled policies and their problems are still with us.

**"Asylum: voices behind the razor wire", Heather Tyler, Lothian Books 2003**

This includes 7 refugee stories, but Tyler is a well-informed journalist and also includes much knowledge about political events in their countries at the time, the Australian history of the issues, including details of detention centre events and Australian organisations working in the field.

**"From Nothing to Zero – letters from refugees in Australia's detention centres", Lonely Planet Publications 2003)**

**"Tampering with Asylum – a universal humanitarian problem", Frank Brennan, UQP 2003**

Includes a detailed account of the Indochinese refugees who came from the 1970s-90s.

**"Borderline : Australia's response to refugees and asylum seekers in the wake of the Tampa", Peter Mares, UNSW Press, 2002**

A major book which won many awards when it came out (2 reprints and 2 editions from 2001 to 2002), it is the major report and analysis of what happened and why to the policy direction during those crucial years; Peter Mares is an expert who writes regularly on these issues for Swinburne University's "Inside Story" magazine (free online at <http://insidestory.org.au/> )

**"From White Australia to Woomera" – the story of Australian immigration", James Jupp, Cambridge University Press, 2002**

Jupp's strength is his insider and granular account of politics, policy and personalities, including the emergence of multiculturalism, human capital theory in migrant selection, population policy debates, and an assessment of the department's operations. The immigration department's longstanding role in population formation (preferring the young, healthy and employable) is unique to Australia amongst developed countries, with its dual role of 'policeman' (border control) and

'parson' (welfare of arrivals). Fear and control in Australia have been around forever, and his analysis of refugee issues could be written unchanged today.

**"The Changing Face of Australia: a century of immigration 1901-2000" Kate Walsh, Allen and Unwin, 2001**

This photo collection is richly informative about Australian multiculturalism, illustrating the full range of migrant and refugee lives from arrival to settlement, and beyond to following generations. The photos are mainly from family collections, echoing Max Frisch's quote "we asked for workers; we got people instead". . Kate Walsh is the curator of the SA Migration Museum, and James Jupp, a noted immigration historian, writes explanatory paragraphs about the photo context.

**"Refugees: perspectives on the experience of forced migration" ed. Alastair Ager, Continuum 1999**

This book of readings by ten scholars analyses the framework of support and identification of refugees as outsiders, as well as their own diverse responses to alien circumstances both within and without their countries of origin. So political and policy trends are discussed, including the emergence of new expectations and controls by nation states, as well as the changed objectives of humanitarians towards gate-keeping, and how these affect the restoration or disablement of refugees' lives. How refugees construct their own identity, whether in their transitional state, in repatriation or adjustment to a new society is discussed, with case studies, including psychological reports of torture effects. This is a scholarly book of analysis, reflecting on modern versus postmodern perspectives, and how globalisation and the frequent wars since 1980 have changed the responses towards ethnic group conflict.

**"Behind Barbed Wire: internment in Australia during World War II" Margaret Bevege, UQP 1993**

Bevege says there were during WW2 internments of 7,000 resident Australians, including Australia First sympathisers and those of foreign descent, and a greater number of foreign nationals, but these have been much less reviewed compared to WW1. She reminds us that decisions of scope for internment included the consequences for national morale, achieving reciprocity from the enemy for our nationals in their custody, as well as cost factors, a crucial element when resources for the war needed to be conserved. The responsibility was largely on Arthur Calwell, the Minister for Immigration, and the government's settings for postwar policies, such as extending immigration to non-British but not to Asians, were developed during this period.

The rate of internment was high (32-45%) in the outlying states (despite local support for Italian family sugar farms in Queensland) but very low in Victoria (3%) and NSW (11%), the latter explained by Bevege as due to ease of surveillance, trust with local migrant communities due to local history and relationships, and generally humane treatment by the political elite and their agents; Rough justice at best, arbitrariness at worst occurred but in the postwar period there was rapid reintegration and little general resentment amongst internees for internment decisions, the majority which were less than 2 years.

**Quarterly Essays (most public libraries stock these, sometimes also in online version; also see the subsequent issue for feedback comments.)**

No. 53 "That Sinking Feeling: Asylum Seekers and the Search for the Indonesian Solution", Paul Toohey 2014 No. 13, "Sending Them Home: Refugees and the New Politics of Indifference", Robert Manne with David Corlett, 2004 No. 5 "Girt By Sea: Australia, the Refugees and the Politics of Fear", Mungo MacCallum 2002

**END**