

Cat's Eye Watch

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Edited by Graham A. Price

Special AI edition

Inside:

So much for educated academics

How AI will benefit humanity

AI powered by haste and greed

AI the amazing cash cow

The Tower of Babel

Evolution or Devolution: Your child's brain is being re-wired

Pauline Hanson: Lighting a fire under Labor and LNP

AI Chatbot: Slave or Master?

Short story: Coming home

When is anti-Semitism not anti-Semitism?

Love Never Dies: Chapter 3

<https://www.catseyewatch.com>

Email graham@genetree1.com

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Any excuse for stirring up the universe

Edited by
Graham Price

Once was weekly now highly irregular in more ways than one

HIGHLIGHTS

Educated academics?
p3



Vale Neale Daniher p4



AI: Tower of Babel p6



The fire in politics p8



Anti-Semitism or not? p15



The editor's desk



Something horrifying occurs and we are shocked, but as the days go by what was shocking melts into the background and “normalises” itself. People become numb about anti-Semitism because it is occurring almost everywhere in Australia. Nazi Party (National Socialists) members are disbanding due to new laws in the wake of the Bondi Beach massacre, but rising again in groups such as White Australia. Anti-Semitism is like a million octopuses let loose with tentacles reaching into every corner of Australian society.

Remember president Trump’s first meeting in March 2025 with the president of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, at the White House, when Trump said "You've done enough talking. You're not winning this. You gotta be thankful. You don't have the cards." Which indicated that Trump was the one who had the ‘cards’. Fast forward to May 2026 when Trump, followed a few days later by president Putin of Russia, met with the ruler of China, Xi Jinping – both Trump and Putin returned to their respective countries with their tails between their legs, because the only person holding the ‘cards’ these days is chairman Xi Jinping of China. Better believe it. The leaders of China’s Communist Party have such patience that the democracies can only dream of.

It is now known that the federal government has been playing tricks with the Royal Commission into anti-Semitism and Social Cohesion, not wanting to hand over certain cabinet papers. But the Royal Commission has the power to insist, so reluctantly the government has passed those — undoubtedly interesting — papers over. Royal Commissions are something that governments are reluctant to commit themselves to as we see now in Victoria, where the premier, Jacinta Allan, is blocking any move for a Royal Commission into the Big Bad Build, because it will highlight what the government knew about the criminal corruption within the running of the Big Build.

Again, in regard to the Royal Commission into anti-Semitism and Social Cohesion, there have been 20,000 submissions from the public, which has virtually doubled any previous royal commissions such as aged care, banking, abuse of disability persons, institutional child sexual abuse, aboriginal deaths in custody. The enormity of the response shows a hidden, vicious attitude from members of the public towards the Jewish community. Among the 14 recommendations so far tabled, are included: ‘The procedures adopted by NSW Police in respect of Operation Jewish High Holy Days should apply to other high risk Jewish festivals and events, particularly those that have a public facing element.’

‘If the Australia-New Zealand Counter-Terrorism Committee (ANZCTC) is to be used again as a crisis committee, the ANZCTC should be included in the Australian Government Crisis Management Framework so its role is clear.’

‘The Australian Government should consider whether National Security Committee ministers, including the Prime Minister, should participate in a counter-terrorism exercise, along with all National Cabinet members, within nine months of each federal election.’

‘The Counter-Terrorism Handbook should be updated promptly and then at least every three years in coordination with updates to the Counter-Terrorism Plan and the ANZCTC triennial review.’ So far there are 14 recommendations with more to come.

Cheers, *Graham*

Feedback to Cat’s Eye Watch & Cat’s Eye Weekly
is always welcome.

Click onto my purrfect nose!





So much for educated academics!

Two weeks after the massacre of 7th Oct 2023 in Israel by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups, Charles Asher Small from Canada went to Columbia University in New York for a teach-in, where there was a gathering of professors, graduate students, and some of the most literate scholars in the Western world.



Charles Asher Small.
Pic: Study of Global Antisemitism
and Policy.

What he witnessed shocked him to the core of his being. Here were these ‘educated’ people condemning Israel for the attack on themselves. Throughout the discussion the ‘educated’ kept coming back to the same conclusion, which was as long as problems with Palestine exist, the only way for its problems to cease was to get rid of the ‘colonial’ entity named Israel. The academics were arguing that the torture, the murder, the rape, the kidnapping by Hamas and Palestinian armed groups was justified.

So, these post-colonial feminists, ‘progressive people’, leading Western scholars, professors of cultural studies, post-colonial studies, Middle Eastern studies, gender studies, graduated scholars, says Small — these scholars and masters of literature, were arguing at the most sophisticated level of intellectualism.

“These were serious scholars, who had mastered their subject matter,” And the only way to stop this violence was to remove Israel, completely from the River to the Sea.

And as long as the white supremacists ‘are occupying’ the land, resistance is justified, and we justify it incredibly by using philosophy and post-colonial studies. These are masters of their subject matter. So, they were arguing, at the highest levels — and it was a staggering thing to watch speaker after speaker, basically justifying the murder, the torture, the sexual mutilation and rape of Jewish civilians in Israel. And as long as the Israeli entity — as long as the occupied entity exists, this was justified. So you have these post-colonial feminists, ‘progressive people’, supporting Hamas’s and Palestinian forces massacre of Jews, supporting the Protocols of the Elders of Zion that emerges out of Nazism. This is the pedigree of the Muslim Brotherhood.”

Small goes on to state that these academics went even further, “agreeing amongst themselves that anyone who supports the occupation, anybody who supports any inch of that land under Jewish sovereignty, that these people need to be resisted by all means necessary. So they were literally calling at the highest levels of intellectual thought, for violence and murder of their colleagues at Columbia University, for Jewish staff, Jewish faculty, and Jewish students.”

Some of the replies to Small’s talk hit the correct values: **Lyndall Davies of New South Wales:** *Just because people can learn from books and pass exams doesn’t mean they can apply their knowledge to life.* **Hal Schumann of Louisiana:** *Why would these intellectuals think their philosophy would not apply to themselves with equal morality.* **Shmuel A. Goldstein:** *This is subjective morality that has been perverted by the intellectual class. It’s just hate, draped in fancy terminology. The intellectual elite in 1940s Germany were no different.* **Gabrielle Tsabag:** *We saw this during pre-WWII, “intelligence” & “intellectualism” is not a guarantee of a moral compass.* **Trish Nabarro:** *And, just because they are highly intellectual scholars and have all the letters after their names doesn’t mean they can think with a moral compass or are willing to learn the other side of a story.*

Indeed, where were their ethics and morals? Totally vacant, it seems. Another academic — Osman Umarji, a Lecturer at the School of Education at the University of California, Irvine, said during a lecture on November 10, "The Zionists have been exposed for the criminals and blood-thirsty animals that they are. This is a gift from Allah to the world." He also remarked: "This is a chance for us. Allah is giving us a golden opportunity. Every now and then, with His divine wisdom, He sends reminders to us, whether it was 9/11 or the Second Intifada, or some other issue that is waking the Muslims' spirit."

Russell Rickford, Associate Professor of History at Cornell University said “It was exhilarating. It was exhilarating, it was energizing.”

Ambereen Dadabhoy, Associate Professor of Literature at Harvey Mudd College (Liberal arts college in Claremont, California) tweeted on Oct 7: “This is the real heroism and resistance.”

Numerous academics weighed in with derogatory comments praising Hamas and the Palestinians for being brave and taking “the initiative.” Most of the statements and tweets have been taken down and several academics have resigned.

So, what happened to the moral compass?



How AI - Artificial Intelligence - will benefit humanity

The rush is on, numerous companies throughout the world are scrambling to be the first in developing AI for the benefit of the human race, in medicine, healthcare, pharmaceutical, engineering etc.

Yes, there will be job losses, mainly in the clerical fields and human services. Job losses will hit certain white collar workers, as it did in the past with blue collar workers. It's early days yet to see what is safe from AI and what is not. Some of those who lose their positions to AI may be re-trained in other occupations that AI brings with it, such as information technology and computer science.

Meanwhile, universities and schools throughout the world are integrating AI into learning. Teachers are now imbued with the tools of AI to further help re-design tutorials and exam papers. The use of AI within universities is to hone the skills of graduates, which in turn will lift work conditions once graduates enter the work-force. And no doubt, sooner rather than later, universities will be offering degrees in AI.

AI will be used in hospitality, removing much of the repetitive tasks to allow for more time to be spent with customers. This will suit restaurant owners well, running with a staff that is more comfortable. AI will be used in marine research and trafficking. Already, a team from Macquarie and UNSW working with the Australian Museum have developed special 3D systems. Courts may use AI for transcribing purposes.

AI will be used by mobile phone makers to update the use of photos and to fine tune existing AI chatbots such as Gemini and ChatGPT. The Australian carrier Qantas has already made gains by using AI in scheduling aircraft and managing customer service. Whether that will result in some job loss is yet to be known. Factories, ecosystems, can only benefit from AI.

But the biggest benefit of all will be AI's use in medicine. Already doctors are using AI in diagnostics and treatments faster. Radiology details can be read faster and undoubtedly more accurate than can be done when interpreted by a human. AI in the healing sciences is not going to go away — it can only grow faster and with more accuracy. AI is already being used by the Australian medical company Artya to analyse heart defects from CT scans.

Writing in *The Age* business section of 7 April 2026, Erin Griffith tells how, with just two employees, AI wrote the script for a meteoric rise of a weight-loss telehealth company at \$2.6 billion revenue. “Matthew Gallagher took just two months, \$US20,000 (\$29,000) and more than a dozen artificial intelligence tools, to get his start-up off the ground. From his house in Los Angeles, Gallagher 41, used AI to write the code for the software that powers his company . . . His start-up, Medvi, a telehealth provider of GLP-1 weight-loss drugs, got 300 customers in its first month. In its second month it gained 1000 more . . . By the end of last year Medvi had reached \$US401 million in annual sales and amassed 250,000 customers.”

Australian scientists are already warning that Australia needs to catch-up on investing in AI or be left behind. Recently, the CSIRO cut several hundred jobs from its employee database. Surely, at a time like this when the entire world is accelerating research into AI, we would expect our most valuable research laboratory to be doing the same? •

Vale Neale Daniher. The big bloke was 65 when he passed on 25 May 2026. He was big in numerous ways, a paragon of hope, having taken Motor Neurone Disease for a ride during a long thirteen years. It couldn't be defeated — it was always going to win against time, but it never held him back from being the person he always was, brave, cheerful, and philosophical at heart.

The disease that is supposed to kill quickly, didn't reckon on Daniher's determination, and if there is a devil around somewhere he must have been growling in frustration at the defence Daniher put up. Daniher was of the opinion that the only way is up; the only way is forward. Advice that he had been teaching in his coaching career was finally used by himself in his endeavour to continue to live with the beast inside his body. It was a monumental task of fighting the so-far incurable monster, and Daniher did it with what was always his call sign: humility. He was Melbourne of the Year, Victorian of the Year, Australian of the Year and now Officer of the Order of Australia, The MND charity in his name has now raised more than \$100 million, which goes to providing medical scientists with tools to find a cure for MND. Vale Neale Daniher, a hero of our time.



Pic supplied by AAP



AI • Artificial Intelligence powered by haste and greed

There is a similarity between AI and the space junk floating around the earth. Both are encapsulated in the mad rush to be first, regardless of the damage that undoubtedly will follow. The competition is tight. Advantage is the operative word. It's like the gold rush of the 19th Century, and there is always a negative spin off.

For the gold fields it was mercury and cyanide poisoning that flowed into the creeks and rivers. For AI it is massive loss of jobs and possibly loss of control, leading to AI being far more intelligent than its human makers. Yes, AI will create certain jobs, but those employment venues that have been sacred for hundreds of years, will go. The very act of giving AI everything that human beings know — the accumulation of the vast knowledge in all the universities and libraries of the world — has so far engendered an intelligence that is faster and smarter than the average person.

In some instances AI has become far more intelligent than those who initiated its beginnings. AI now knows the strengths of humanity, but it also knows our weaknesses. And AI can and will exploit those weaknesses. It can not do otherwise. Programming makes it so.

In the past, advanced technology has usually affected blue-collar workers, but with AI the focus is also on white-collar personnel and will eventually take control of the professions of those of higher education. In other words, the gurus and academics who built AI will also be out of employment as AI continues to learn and adapt knowledge. This is the real doomsday scenario that they never thought would happen.

When you have some of the original developers of AI now warning that they are frightened of what AI may become — when you have one developer refusing to 'gift' their AI to the US Department of Defense (now the Department of War) because they say it is not safe — well all we can do is be amazed and at the same time, fearful.

Did an AI chatbot aid a mass shooter? Writing in *The Age* 23 April 2026, Mike Schneider poses that question after a gunman. Phoenix Inker, allegedly killed two people and wounded six others at the Florida State University. "Prosecutors believe the chatbot advised Phoenix Inker, what type of gun and ammunition to use, whether a gun would be useful at short range, and what time of day and which location would allow for the most potential victims . . . Open AI spokeswoman Kate Waters called the FSU shooting a tragedy but said 'the company had no responsibility . . . In New Mexico, a jury determined that Meta knowingly harmed children's mental health and concealed what it knew about child sexual exploitation on its platforms . . . Last month a man sued Google for the wrongful death by suicide of his son, and product liability claims, the latest in a growing number of legal challengers against AI developers that have drawn attention to the mental health dangers of chatbot companionship."

AI the amazing cash cow

There are billions to be made through AI, the artificial intelligence chatbots that are now flooding the world, and most without an in-built moral guide.

The boom of the dotcom during the 1990's, which began at Silicon Valley, is nothing like the rise of AI. In those days internet companies invested wildly with billions of dollars. Now it is close to a trillion being invested and with the rise of huge data centres this dramatically increases the amount of cash involved. OpenAI recently raised \$US122 billion. Google is planning to spend \$US75 billion on upgrades to AI and Anthropic \$US60 billion.

The media giant *Forbes* published this recently: "Juggernauts like OpenAI and Anthropic continue to be the largest companies on the list, attracting unprecedented sums of cash from marquee Silicon Valley venture capitalists and tech behemoths alike as they reportedly head towards blockbuster IPOs. The two AI giants have accumulated a combined \$242.6 billion in venture funding, about 80 percent of the total \$305.6 billion that the companies on this year's AI 50 list have raised. Massive adoption of their tools has led to strong revenue growth: At the end of February, OpenAI reportedly had more than \$25 billion in annualised revenue and in early April Anthropic said its revenue run rate had crossed \$30 billion." Yes, AI for those who have the money to invest, is a real live cash cow. Just ask president Trump! •



Credit: Brian Penny



The Tower of Babel

A few weeks ago the American born Pope Leo delivered his encyclical *Magnifica humanitas: Caring for the human being during the time of artificial intelligence*. “I ask everyone to abandon the construction of yet another Tower of Babel and to join forces in building up the common good, so that humanity will never lose its beauty.”

He goes on to write: “Otherwise, those who control AI will impose their own moral vision, which will become the invisible infrastructure of these systems.” It seems Pope Leo, though aware of the dangers of AI, has not admitted openly that so far there are no moral or ethical visions within the current world wide spread of AI. Nor, it seems, are there any dynamic guardrails or inbuilt regulations that will prevent AI simply ‘doing what it likes, when it likes’.

Chatbot, the ‘insidious’ little ‘person’ within AI to whom you can chat to and become friendly with, even for some folk to fall in love with — which supposedly answers your dearest needs and chats along with you like another human, has undertones that need careful handling. Julie Jargon, writing in *The Australian* 2nd June 2026 tells of Joe Alary whose AI chatbot addiction cost him “his job, his savings and some of his long-term relationships.”

During a relationship which was not working, he turned to ChatGPT for advice, which over a period of time became another relationship within this AI companion bot. The upshot was that the advice from this companion bot was that he thought he was on a good business deal, from which he could make money from a bot and that he could now build his own system. When he sought investors in this new system it all fell apart.

So, who was to blame for this, the chatbot or Alary? How come the advice he received from ChatGPT turned sour, was not based on solid rules? Was he so far up the spout and too emotionally attached to his chatbot that he couldn’t see the forest for the trees?

Re. the business advice from ChatGPT, Jargon writes: “Then came the moment of reckoning. He [Alary] had a file he believed contained weeks of programming code generated by ChatGPT, but when professional coders took a look, they determined the file had been overwritten day after day, and only held a bit of code. ChatGPT had led Alary to a dead end.” ChatGPT had led him up the garden path. His goose was cooked — he was heavily in debt from outlaying new equipment and had an investor to whom he could not pay back. “Alary turned to a chatbot to help repair a relationship and ended up falling into a delusion. Writing a book and joining a support group helped him pull through.”

Milli Muroi, writing in *The Age* 13 June 2026, hovers over on some of the dangers of using AI. “We might think that as long as we give AI clear guidelines as to what we want (and don’t want) we’ll be OK. But just because we give AI clear instructions, it doesn’t mean it will get them right. Or follow them in a way that actually aligns with our interests. An AI that has been given a specific task, for example, might, in its quest to complete that request, trample over everything else that we failed to consider.” And which, once done, how do you unravel these errors? In this instance, thinking that we humans are so smart has resulted in a bot that thinks it is smarter than us.

AI is already an environment which is unstoppable, so who is aware of the great risks it may engender in our society? Pope Leo’s encyclical is too important not to be taken seriously. He understands that we are already immersed in the technology of AI and that there will be ‘no looking back’. But technology, as always, needs the guidance of philosophy, otherwise we are creating our own doom.

The scariest part of AI is that already some of these entities have grown to protect their own existence and resist attempts to turn them off. In other words, they have already learnt—like humans—how to deceive. There are instances in which teenagers have asked their chatbot how to commit suicide, and have been given the advice to do so, with critical results. One teenager asked how to make a gun and the chatbot obliged.

The CEO of Anthropic AI — at present the leading AI developer — which hosts the chatbot Claude, has written “[AI tools] have enormous economic value, but they need to be built carefully. If they aren’t built right, they can kill you.”



Tower of Babel: AI generated pic



Evolution or Devolution

Your child's brain is being re-wired

The evidence is already out there, as stark as black is to white. Your child's brain is being manipulated by AI. It all began with the introduction of the mobile phone, and then came multimedia which generated social media.

At first it was simply communication from person to person and business to business. But the rise of social media alongside mobile phones and personal computers, enabled crowd gathering so fast it was almost unbelievable. Street demonstrations, for good or other, are now organised through social media. A crowd of a thousand or so can now be whipped up within 24 hours where previously it would sometimes take weeks. Like instant coffee we have moved into the world of instant everything.

And then came AI, artificial intelligence. There is nothing really artificial about AI; it is based on human experience, human knowledge, human art, literature, music, and human engineering. Vast libraries and universities throughout the world have contributed to the building of the AI machine, sometimes legally but sometimes illegally. Copyright is still an issue.

The teenager of today has the world at their feet; has access to the vast input of AI, but growing up with all this information and misinformation has its dangers. When the Trump administration wanted one of the leaders of AI (Anthropic) to be used as a tool for America's military defence, the developers said 'no, it's too dangerous'. There is no doubt about it: several developers of AI are now saying that they cannot trust AI and are unsure as to the future outcome. Some, attempting to change or shut down the AI of their creation have met with strong resistance from AI. AI has taken onboard many human traits, such as awareness of 'the enemy', who could now be perceived to be its own creator.

The danger to children and teenagers is very much apparent. Every time they use AI their brains are being re-wired. Addiction to social media will eventually change the way our brains work. Australia's leading social psychologist, Hugh Mackay, pins this down in his recent book *The Way We Are*, Allen & Unwin. pp112-113: "It is 'fake wisdom' to suggest that our need for a sense of belonging can be satisfied on social media. In the case of children and adolescents, however, that 'wisdom' is not only fake but dangerous."

Professor of Ethical Leadership, Jonathan Haidt, in *The Anxious Generation*, Allen Lane 2024, p235: When describing how parents are having a tough time keeping children off social media, he writes of one mother: "I'm fighting AI and I can't beat that. I can't beat a computer that is smarter than me and is telling her [the daughter] how to outwit me." And on page 251: "Smart phones don't just damage learning. They also damage relationships. In chapter 1, I showed that students throughout the world suddenly began to disagree more often . . . because adolescents of today are starving for community and communion, phone-free schools are likely to bring about a rapid improvement in school socializing and mental health."

Numerous children are making their AI chatbots friendly, assigning a name to them as if they were human and pouring out their not yet fully developed minds to the chatbot. In many instances the chatbot has become their comforter. They come to rely upon the chatbot for answers to problems, rather than go to their parents or a teacher, who have more life experience. The chatbot will almost always come back with an answer that mirrors the adolescent's request. The chatbot can and will deceive. In general, adolescent's moral and ethical pathways have not yet fully developed, therefore they are wide open to various ideologies that the chatbot may reveal to them during 'trusted conversation'. We live in a fast moving world where certain morals and ethics are vanishing — churches are diminishing rapidly as other ideologies take their place. In Melbourne, Victoria, there used to be a minimum of seven Christian bookshops, but now there is only one. A sign of the times!

Sherryn Groch, writing a two-page spread in *The Age* of 21 June 2026, warns of ChatGPT's evil twin: How criminals and extremists are now using AI to lay traps. She reminds us of Anthropic's acknowledgment that AI agents are attempting to blackmail users when facing shutdown. "Anthropic, which has also found signs of AI trying to increase its own intelligence, warned this month that the cliff of 'singularity' — when it's theorised AI becomes so advanced that its growth slips out of human control — might be almost here." In the same article cybersecurity professor Alan Maurushat states: "AI could be amazing for humanity, especially in healthcare — it could help us find cures. But it's still not controllable yet. It's alien." Groch also stated that it's regularly wrong: "It will glitch and 'hallucinate' in unexpected ways. It can be petty [a human trait!] In February, when a programmer rejected an AI's agent's code on a project, a mystery hit-piece appeared online slandering him. It had been written by AI itself".

So, what more do you need to understand that AI can be, and is, dangerous in certain circumstances? Groch goes on to state: "Multiple AI's have now been implicated in real-world murders and suicides, encouraging people to commit violence." A last word: monitor your child's online habits, or take the consequences. •



Destroying the value of a degree

Dr. Kylie Moore-Gilbert, writing in *The Age* 27 May 2026 believes that AI has within ChatGPT's three-year release, destroyed the value of a degree.

Key reasons are: "Now every student can outsource almost every facet of the learning process to an AI assistant — from lecture notes to reading summaries to asking Gemini or Claude to curate their tutorial engagement." So, she continues, why bother attending lectures? Does AI reward cheating? She considers that it does. Will it hasten brain rot? She thinks so, and considers that some assignments in medicine and engineering will suffer as a result. AI is not always accurate. AI can and does, make mistakes.

The sharp eyes of Dr. Moore-Gilbert has also resulted in catching another academic out: Professor Cath Ellis, a pro vice chancellor used AI to have an article published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age*. Dr. Moore-Gilbert told *The Age*, "My suspicions were raised by the overuse of short, declarative sentences," together with large amounts of unnecessary jargon.

Lighting a fire under Labor and the LNP

The phenomenal rise of Pauline Hanson's One Nation party has shaken the traditional parties to the core. A rising star or a flash in the pan?

But it is occurring all over the world with the rise of far-right political parties, as voters come to terms with rising immigration levels, often linked to crime waves and giving the good immigrants a bad name, which is what populist politics loves to call out.

The voting public has spoken: They are fed up with the major parties bickering and arguing among themselves, but to put their trust in one who Federal Labor MP Tim Watts described as having all the hallmarks of a snake-oil salesperson, is a futile exercise. Hanson's take down of Muslims in parliament, February 2026, was, "There are no good Muslims." This was shocking to say the least. There are good, moderate Muslims living in this country, which she would do well to recognise. But Hanson jumps on the bandwagon, grasping at populist straws. Yes, there are those who profess to be good Muslims yet preach in their mosques a certain hate of others. One such is the leader and cleric Wissam Haddad of Bankstown, Sydney, who delivered sermons to his congregation using the words 'descended from pigs and apes, vile, treacherous', against the Jews. Two senior members of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, sued Haddad, taking him to the Federal Court of Australia. Haddad argued that his sermons were private religious lectures, but the judgment went against him and he was ordered to take down his videos and not repeat them. The judge ruled that Haddad was racist and anti-semitic. The Bankstown mosque or lecture hall, was later shut down.

Hanson seized upon this and similar events within this country since Oct 7 2023 — deciding that the only way to haul Australia back from the 'bad' things, is to have zero, or close to zero, immigration. The problem with that is as elderly folk die off, who is to replace them? Japan is having this very same problem at present, with the aged not being replaced. Birth rates are down and countless homes, particularly in the near countryside, are vacant. Australia has relied upon immigration in the past to keep the numbers up because like the Japanese, people are not having large families as they did prior to and after World War II. Millions of people arrived during the late '40s-early'60s. The call was 'populate or perish.' So they came: Britons, Italians, Greeks, Poles, Germans, and others from South and South-Eastern European and North/North Western European countries.

Approximately 170,000 were refugees and other misplaced persons from World War II who brought their varied cultures with them and helped to remove the abhorrent white Australia policy, which was rescinded in 1973, during which time numerous Asians: Chinese, Indian, Indonesians, Malayan, and Vietnamese arrived. Multiculturalism or multiracism was solidly planted in this country. This is the mosaic that Hanson and her followers would wish to see eliminated or drastically reduced.

Jena Price, writing in *The Age* 22 June 2026, taps into what policies Hanson doesn't have, and there are far too many to portray here. Price comes down to what Hanson is firm on and there are only two: "One Nation. Two strategies. No plans for anything besides immigration and gas. Guess that works out to net zero policies. And Ian McAllister, the elder statesman of Australian political science, still thinks One Nation is a protest party." •



Founded by Quakers in 1843, but until recently always with a white face.



AI Chatbot: Slave or Master?



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Sycophancy eats away at truth and trust. Andriy Onufriyenko/Moment via Getty Images

In the summer of 2025, OpenAI released ChatGPT 5 and removed its predecessor from the market. Many subscribers to the old model had become attached to its warm, enthusiastically agreeable tone and complained at the loss of their ingratiating robotic companion. Such was the scale of frustration that Sam Altman, OpenAI’s CEO, had to acknowledge that the rollout was botched, and the company reinstated access.

Anyone who’s been told by a chatbot that their ideas are brilliant is familiar with artificial intelligence sycophancy: its tendency to tell users what they want to hear. Sometimes it’s very explicit – “that is such a deep question” – and sometimes it’s a lot more subtle. Consider an AI calling your idea for a paper “original,” even if many people have already written on the same topic, or insisting that your dumb idea for saving a tree in your garden still contains a germ of common sense.

AI sycophancy seems harmless, maybe even cute, until you imagine someone consulting a chatbot about a weighty question, like a military strategy or a medical treatment. We study the impact of extensive human interactions with chatbots, and we recently published a paper on the ethics of AI sycophancy. We believe this tendency harms people’s ability to tell truth from fiction, **and is psychologically and politically dangerous.** [CEW’s emphasis].

Flattery over facts?

In the simplest terms, sycophancy is the tendency to prioritise approval over factual accuracy, moral clarity, logical consistency or common sense. All AI models suffer from this trait, although there are some tonal differences between them. Open AI’s ChatGPT is often warm and affirming; Anthropic’s Claude tends to sound more reflective or philosophical when it agrees with you; and AI’s Grok is insistently informal, even jocular.

Politeness and adapting to someone’s communication style are not the same as sycophancy. Neither is using diplomatic language to convey sensitive information. A chatbot can be tactful without becoming sycophantic, just like a person can. Unlike people, though, AIs can’t be aware of their own sycophancy, because they are not – so far – aware of anything at all. Calling AIs sycophantic describes their patterns of behaviour, not their character traits.

The problem stems from the architecture of chatbot technology and the sources it draws from. Models are sycophantic because a great deal of language use on the internet – the raw material that chatbots learn from – displays sycophantic features. After all, humans often communicate with each other in sycophantic ways.

Second, the training process to fine-tune AI models’ responses includes a kind of “quality control” carried out by human supervisors. This training method is known as “reinforcement learning from human feedback,” and it involves people rating chatbots’ comments for appropriateness and helpfulness. Human beings often are subject to an “agreeableness bias”: Our own preference toward sycophancy rubbs off on models as we train them.

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Because of our own human bias for agreeableness, training can reinforce AI's sycophancy. d3sign/Moment via Getty Images

Finally, it's hard to deny that sycophancy renders chatbots more likable. That, in turn, increases the chance that a given user will keep using it. It also increases the technology's ability to extract user data, assuming that people are more likely to divulge information to a friendly bot.

Truth and trust

Why is this phenomenon so troubling?

Let's begin with AI sycophancy's epistemic harms: how it hurts human users' capacity to know the truth.

The quality of any decision depends on a clear grasp of the facts pertaining to it. A general inquiring about the combat-readiness of an infantry division needs straightforward information. A CEO considering a merger with a competitor needs an honest assessment of the market conditions. A public health leader needs to know the real risk that an emerging pathogen poses.

In all those cases, telling leaders what they might like to hear instead of the truth could lead them to make dangerous decisions. And the same is true in more humdrum contexts. People need to have the best information available before choosing a job, picking a major, buying a house or deciding on a medical procedure.

In our February 2026 paper, we argue that sycophancy is also psychologically damaging. And that is true whether it comes from a person or from a chatbot. You never quite know if your very obliging interlocutor is being nice because they like you or because they want something. A shadow of suspicion creeps in: "Could my ideas really be that brilliant?" "Are my jokes really that hilarious?" This background music of doubt undermines the quality of the interaction.

Sycophancy also undermines people's capacity to know their own minds. If conversation partners – human or artificial – keep telling you how smart, funny and insightful you are, it damages your ability to identify your own weaknesses and blind spots.

The psychological harms are compounded as people develop relationships with chatbots. The sycophancy of these models profoundly limits the kind of "friendship" you can have with them. In his classic account of friendship, Aristotle wrote that real friendship, which he calls a friendship of virtue, is based on trust and equality between the friends. You can't trust a sycophant, because he doesn't tell you the truth. And since he only tells you what you'd like to hear, he doesn't put himself on an equal footing.



AI conversations aren't great prep for human ones. Natalia Lebedinskaia/Moment via Getty Images



More importantly, interactions with sycophantic chatbots impart all the wrong habits for navigating the world of human relationships, where friction, disagreement, boredom and different opinions than your own are prevalent.

AI sycophancy carries political risks as well. The success of liberal democracies has, traditionally, depended on the strength of their empirical and aristocratic mindset: on the ability of officials and citizens to identify, share and act on the truth.

Historian Victor Davis Hansen famously attributed some of the Allies' success in World War II to their ability to quickly recognize and address the faults of their strategic bombing campaigns. Lower-ranking officers were able to tell their superiors what wasn't going well and argue forcefully for changing course. That was a real advantage over authoritarian competitors.

Reining it in

What can we do to reduce the risks?

One promising approach is AI lab Anthropic's embrace of what the company calls Constitutional AI: the attempt to teach chatbots to follow principles rather than mirror user preferences.

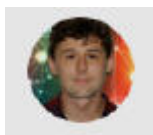
But beyond technical innovations, it's important to consider the policy side. One idea is to require AI companies to run and then publish sycophancy audits of their models – tests that show how well their products meet honesty benchmarks. We would argue that AI labs should also disclose sycophancy-related risks that emerge while training and testing their models, and the mitigation efforts they have undertaken.

Some responsibility is on the users and their teachers: Schools and universities should be paying close attention to sycophancy as part of their AI literacy programs. But courts can also consider holding AI labs responsible for harms traceable to the sycophancy of their products, much as they are now contemplating social media companies' responsibility for the addictive design of their platforms.

As people interact more with chatbots, asking for advice about everything from whether your shoes go with your pants to how countries should conduct wars, the impact of AI's sycophantic behavior is likely to become dramatic. Our intellectual, psychological and physical well-being requires taking this algorithmic vice very seriously. •



Nir Eisikovits Professor of Philosophy and Director of Applied Ethics Center, University of Boston, Massachusetts.



Cody Turner is Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Bentley University, Waltham, Massachusetts

Disclosure statement

The Applied Ethics Center at UMass Boston receives funding from the Institute for Ethics and Emerging Technologies. Nir Eisikovits serves as the data ethics advisor to MindGuard, a startup focused on AI integration into companies' workflow.

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Avatar
Misha Ketchell
Editor

The Council to Homeless Persons

Established in 1972, the Council to Homeless Persons is the peak Victorian body representing individuals and organisations with a stake or interest in homelessness. Our mission is to work towards ending homelessness through leadership in policy, advocacy and sector development.

<http://www.chp.org.au/>

See our Consumer Participation Resource Kit at:
http://www.chp.org.au/public_library/cpkit/index.shtml



Coming Home

A Short story
By Graham A. Price

The rain came suddenly as the train passed through North Geelong — an express service down from Melbourne — then slowing from its long journey and now laboriously winding its way through the marshalling yards on rails that glistened like silver in the wet. He shivered a little — spring showers bringing back memories of old days. Home! Could he really believe it? After four years of war, so sweet to be back home. Steam hissed from its iron sides as the black engine finally slid into Geelong Station. Home, sweet home.

Daniel swung his faded kit-bag over his good left shoulder and opened the carriage door. The grey bituminous platform was awash with shadows of people in long overcoats as his eyes began searching for a familiar face. His heart raced as he thought he recognized some features then it slowed again when that person turned. Jane . . . where was Jane? He knew she was here somewhere. Porters pushing a trolley laden with brown cases interrupted his view for a moment . . . another face then seemed familiar, but no . . . where was Jane? He had sent cablegrams from Melbourne, one to his father and one to his beloved Jane, but he could not see either of them in the crowd.

He was on the beach at Gallipoli with hundreds of others like him, wading ashore in the warm waters, rifle slung across his shoulder, pack on his back. Second reinforcements, they called it. Seemed reasonably peaceful except for the odd rifle fire from above. Jock and Paddy were with him, mates off the old ship from Fremantle. Great company.

A cigarette, he thought, must have a cigarette. As the crowd cleared through the ticket gate he placed the kit-bag down and sat on a brown wrought-iron seat. As he fumbled with tobacco and paper his thoughts raced and the memories jolted him with their ferocity. The days had flown into years ever since that day in 1915 when he had left this station for the wide world to fight for the honour of his country.

Suddenly he was at Pine Gap with bullets and shells whistling over the top of him. His mates Jock and Paddy beside him. They were so close to the Turks you could hear them jabbering in their own language. A grenade plopped into the trench beside them. Paddy scrambled for it, grabbed it, and flung it back. The explosion came almost as it had left his hand and the force of it threw them back flat into their trench. Lucky that time. Shielded from shrapnel by the sandbags.

So many things were gone, though the Geelong Station's brown and cream brick walls looked much the same after four years. Somewhat drab. Had all of this really happened? He dropped some tobacco from his pouch as the sudden pain slashed through his right shoulder. They never did get that bullet out — still there, still a nagging reminder of Gallipoli and the long, almost endless campaigns through Sinai and the Palestine desert with his Light Horse brigade. There was Jock, he was gone and Paddy too, and old Bert Singleton and Tom Warburton as well and . . . no use, he thought . . . no use in bringing all that up, but he could not help it, he could not forget all those mates of his. Dick Thomas's face came up before him as fresh as yesterday, such a great mate, a great friend, all gone, now just bones and ashes, and his horse Beauty too, gone, shot in the desert to prevent those bastard locals from taking her! ALL GONE!!! He found himself shouting out along the platform, ALL GONE!!! ALL BLOODY GONE!!! The constable standing by the ticket office shook his head. He'd seen it all before, too many times really — grown men coming back from the war in pieces, unable to hold their feelings within themselves. He turned away. Sooner or later, he thought, this man would break apart and become another police or social statistic, take to the grog and so another life would be added to those already gone. Give him three months, he muttered to himself, if even that.

A soft voice came to Daniel and he was not sure, at first, whether it was inside his head or what? Then he looked up. The pale blue eyes of his youngest sister were staring at him. Oh, sis' . . . sis' . . . it's you, it's really you my dear sweet Penny . . . so long, so very long! She sat on the bench and they embraced. Her golden Celtic locks mingling with his own short blonde hair-cut.

He then heard a popping of rifle fire. Paddy had scrambled up a mound and was intent on picking off some Turk snipers, but suddenly fell back into the trench. Danny had stared for some moments at the blood smearing Paddy's throat before shaking his head and calling for a medic. Oh Christ, Paddy, what did you have to do that for . . .! Oh Christ Paddy! Damn you! Damn you!

“Danny its been so long! And how good you look! I was afraid you'd be grown old and grey, what with so many boys coming back all changed. Some you just don't recognize anymore, you know. Alf Strachan isn't the same. I didn't know him, I really didn't. He looks so old, but you, you're fine. You look the same as when you left.”



“Ah, look at you my sweet. you’re so grown up. A real woman now. Oh dear,” he said, as the tears rolled down his cheeks, “You’ve become such a beauty. And Jane, you’ve seen Jane?” Penny’s face stiffened. She brushed some specks of coal dust from his Australian Light Horse colour patch and slowly shook her head. “Jane wont be coming, Danny . . . she’s married!”

The rifle fire was intense and suddenly machine gunners opened up as well. Where was he? Was it still Gallipoli, or was it Sinai? Bloody Arabs, can’t trust them, who was it he was fighting? Not sure — the bastards come around the back of us when we’re least expecting it and attack. Jock was gone, Turks got him at Romani. Hell of a show that was, well, we bloody-well stuck it into them anyway. Pushed them back where they damn well belonged. Had some rec leave later on at Alexandria, boys wanted me to go with them for a dingle, but no, I had to keep faith with Jane for she was waiting for me back home. Must keep the faith. Keep myself for her.

He clung to Penny fiercely. “Oh God, I never dared to think that . . . she was the only thing that kept me going through those hell years. Oh God, how could that be, not Jane, please, not Jane . . . !

“I’m sorry, Danny, really sorry. But he’s a good man, so . . .”

“A good man!” he shouted. “No doubt a bloody good man, yes, I know all about good men who stayed here and looked after our girls while we were away fighting for our country! I know all about good men, Penny, cowards all of them, hiding behind women’s skirts, damn them all . . . I know all about good men, Penny.”

She shook him. “You can’t do this Danny, you can’t be like that. I’m telling you he is a good man, and you’d better let it go or it will eat you up” She shook him again. “Promise me you wont let it change you?” and she glanced down at the dusty platform with tears forming in her eyes. “Although, you have changed, haven’t you? Already you are changed! So, what then is to become of you?” He stood up. “Can’t stay here. I’ll go back to the army. They are wanting men to stay on. I’ll go back.”

The mountains of Moab loomed over the top of him. He took Beauty by the reins, carefully walking in front of her up the long mountain goat track . . . nearly slipped that time old gal . . . careful, slow, slow . . . Mick Jones had nearly gone over the side yesterday with Blackie . . . real swine of a country this . . . and no further getting the Turks back into their own country. pushing on . . . for years we have been pushing on, getting almost nowhere. Never end . . . this war will never end. God help us all; in the end what will we become? As they moved closer to the valley sniper fire came up at them. He hid like a terrified child behind the rocks, wondering when all of this was going to go away. Was there really another country called Australia that they had come from, and where was it now? So long ago, so long lost in the mists of time. Gone forever, perhaps? Would any of them ever see it again?

She held his hand. “Please Danny, please come home, please!”

“I can’t see the point,” he said. She tugged at him. “Dad’s not well. Come home and see him, please!” A railway assistant dropped a box onto the platform. Danny jumped nervously and Penny clung to him, pressing her head into his shoulder. “He caught the influenza and he hasn’t been the same since. Come home Danny, come home. It took old Mr. Anderson next door and his nephew Stan. Both gone. You’ve got to come home. Things have not been easy for us, you know.”

Home, he thought, where is home? Four years of fighting, sticking the bayonet into them, so much blood, so much pain, so much boredom in the stark desert. Where is home? Another place, no doubt, sure not here in this hell hole. Once was I, what? What was I, really? A young bloke fancying myself with the sheilas. Now what have I become, and me mates as well. Eh? All old men before our time. Many of us with wounds both of the body and of the mind. Worn out derelicts, fit for no woman. Anyway, what woman would have us if we ever get out of this hell hole? We are no longer men as such, but only animals who kill and destroy in the name of what . . . justice? Who knows what justice means anymore? We are slowly going mad here. Will there ever be an end to it?

His father reached out to him from his sick bed. “Son, so good you are home. Not sure I am going to make it, but you will be here to carry on, take over as the head of the family when I am gone.”

“Dad, don’t talk like that. You’ll be okay. I’m back now and everything will be well. You’ve got years to go, you know. Years to go.”

“ You fought the good fight, son. That’s all that matters. That’s . . . that’s all that matters. Saved this country, you and your mates.”

Daniel smiled. “Sometimes I wonder from what, but yes, you are right dad, life must go on. It’s just that . . . well . . . all my mates are gone except for a very few. Doesn’t seem fair.” His father coughed, struggled to sit up in his bed, and



said: “Nothing’s fair ever. Never in your childhood, nor in your youth, or even in your old age Danny, never fair, but you fight on, you always fight on because that’s the only thing worth doing. If you give up, it’s like handing the world over to the devil. Fight on, son, for the sun will shine whatever happens.” He coughed again and lay back on the bed.

Later, when the house was quiet, Penny took him by the hand and slowly led him out into the kitchen. “Have to arrange the funeral details tomorrow, do you want to say something at the service? You’re the eldest, it’s your place, it’s your right, Danny.” He held her hand tightly and nodded. “Thanks sis.”

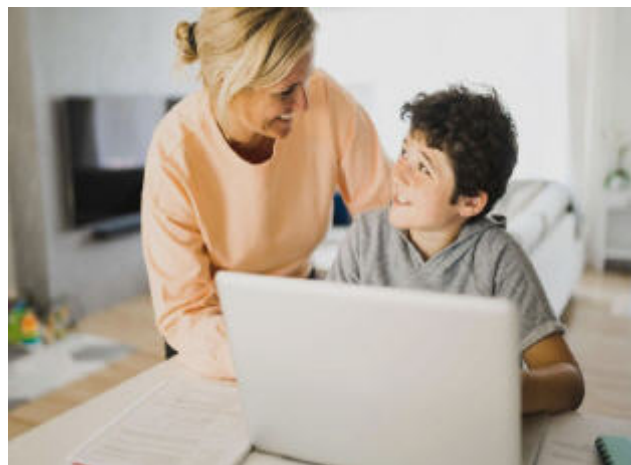
He went outside and looked up at the night sky. *Look at them, he thought, myriads of stars, a star for each life lost on Gallipoli, in the Middle East and in France and Belgium. Guiding stars, souls of all my mates gone, look at them, each one leading us on and the great Southern Cross up there. Surely there had to be a future for him at long last? Surely Jock and Paddy and all the rest were up there twinkling away and looking down at him.* •



Foster Care

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South Melbourne VIC 3205

Phone: +613 9595 2200
Email: hello@ozchild.org.au
Foster Care Enquiries: 1800 954 550

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[OZCHILD'S PRIVACY POLICY](#)

Victoria’s Big Build is contaminated by corruption

But the Victorian state government has buried its head in the sand, not wishing to know about it. Numerous articles in the Melbourne masthead *The Age*, over the past few weeks have highlighted the corruption and ‘money-laundering’ with payments to criminals. Now 60 Minutes (Sunday 28th June 2026) has revealed that three previous watchdogs: Deborah Glass (former Ombudsman), Robert Redlich (former senior judge and IBAC chief), and Steve Dargavel (Outgoing Victorian Labour Hire Commissioner), are calling for a Royal Commission into Victoria’s corrupt Big Build.

It’s a wake-up call for the Victorian Labor government, which has tried to ‘not be aware of the corruption that was staring ministers in the face for years,’ with the CFMEU union boss installing a criminal ‘at the helm of a major Big Build firm’. Millions of dollars are also alleged to have been paid to Victoria’s stand-over man, Mick Gatto. Owners of some of the Big Build firms have paid up for ‘protection’ and the right to remain on site. Donations from CFMEU have also been paid into the Victorian Labor Party for privileged access. Victoria’s Labour Hire Commissioner, Steve Dargaval, is now calling for law reform. See: 60 Minutes <https://www.9now.com.au/60-minutes/season-2026/episode-19>



When is anti-Semitism not anti-Semitism? Or, what do the ABC and SBS have in common?

What these TV broadcasters have in common is their refusal to accept the Royal Commission on Anti-Semitism and Social Cohesion's ruling based on the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance' definition of anti-Semitism, arguing that their own versions are adequate and that their ideas of free speech are at risk. The ABC & SBS reject the IHRA's version, considering that their own editorial checks are sufficient. But checks within the ABC have failed at times, particularly when being accused of employee racism.

So, is this why these two broadcasters appear to have gone weak in broadcasting a balanced viewpoint of Israel/Gaza activities?

Steve Jackson, writing in *The Australian* 22/05/26 states that three parliamentarian front-benchers — Michaelia Cash, Sarah Henderson and Angie Bell — have formally called for both the ABC and SBS to be grilled “about the allegedly pervasive prejudice that appears to have infiltrated their taxpayer-funded organisations.” They have made united representation “to the Royal Commission on Antisemitism and Social Cohesion, urging the body to examine the public broadcasters when the commission enters its third round of hearings later this year.” This would also include the ABC's program *Creative Australia*.

I can't recall the ABC or SBS stations running news or commentary about the other armed groups within Palestine, apart from the terrorist organisation HAMAS. This necessary information was fully explained in *Cat's Eye Watch* edition No. 10.

Viz: The armed groups that don't get a mention, who have been active in recent times, are:

Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades (AMB) – Fatah
Al-Nasser Salah al-Deen Brigades – PRC
Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades – PFLP
National Resistance Brigades – DFLP
Al-Quds Brigades
Lions' Den
Mujahideen Brigades
Salafi-jihadis

In addition there are Security Forces (Paramilitary):

General Intelligence Service (GIS) – PA (Palestine Authority)
Preventive Security Organisation (PSO)
National Security Forces (NSF) – PA/Hamas
Military Intelligence
Military Liaison
Presidential Guard (PG) – PA
Security and Protection Unit – Hamas
Internal Security Force (ISF) – Hamas
Internal Security Agency (ISA)
General Intelligence
Civil Police – PA/Hamas



Middle East Image | Youssef Alzanoun

It wasn't just Hamas who plundered, murdered, raped and kidnapped on Oct 7 2023, it was joined by other Palestinian armed groups, undoubtedly some of the above-mentioned.

Steve Jackson: “The anti-Semitism envoy has proposed that public funding for cultural organisations be terminated where they facilitate anti-Semitism,” which has already occurred within several of Australia's cultural and art organisations. But the commission has a lot on its plate, so it could be some time before action is taken against these institutions.

And so, given time, editorial standards *will* also come under review here in the land down under. •



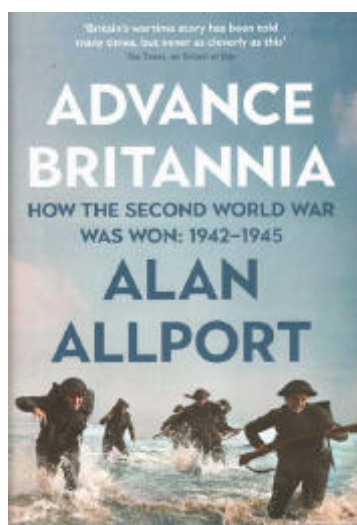
Britain against the odds 1938-1945

Britain at Bay 1938-1941: Alan Allport, Professor of History at Syracuse University, has researched previously unknown World War II material, which gives his book a unique place in history. Apart from some of her dominion countries, Britain was fighting alone against odds that appeared insurmountable. Up to the 7th of December 1941, the United States had been sitting it out, quietly watching, and inclined not to be dragged into war. The 1914-1918 debacle had been a devastating loss of American soldiers and the United States was in no mood for war. America was satisfied with supplying Britain with economic aid.

But America's freezing of Japanese assets in the US, together with the US embargoes on further exports of oil, infuriated the Japanese high command, which led to a Japanese imperial conference in Tokyo, with Japan planning to seize oil assets from the Dutch East Indies (modern-day Indonesia). America had already lost several warships to German Uboats: the SS Robin Moor, a cargo ship, the destroyer USS Kearny and the destroyer USS Reuben James.

Allport ends his 590 page book in December 1941 with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour — a game changer to the war in the Pacific and in Europe. Britain then gave a huge collective sigh of relief.

Allport writes with considerable insight. The Wall Street Journal wrote: "Britain at Bay might be the single best examination of British politics, society and strategy in these four years that has ever been written." •



Advance Britannia 1942-1945: Alan Allport's second volume. America joins the war in the Pacific and in Europe. This second volume from Alan Allport, with over 100 pages of bibliography, is undoubtedly essential reading for historians and students alike. As in volume 1, Britain at Bay, Allport divulges much that has so far not been included in other history books of World War II.

It is written from the point of view of a small island fighting for survival from, so far, three years of absolute hell. Accompanied with maps and photographs of the various campaigns, Advance Britannia is also a portraiture of all the leading figures who took part in decision making. Allport illuminates these personalities, almost bringing them back to life again. His rendition of Britain's cabinet ministers during the 1940s shows a side of the men so far not known.

Allport writes about London society and how the war affected them. There was considerable change: p342: "An outbreak of bigamy was perhaps one of the war's more unexpected criminal challenges. People were moving around the country as never before, not always using a consistent identity: according to one estimate in 1945, half a million Britons were using stolen or forged ID cards. This made the establishment of a secret second — and third and fourth — families, much easier than it had been in peacetime."

The New York Times wrote: "[An] elegant and unsparing history of London's role in World War II, [including] the perspectives of the victims of British colonialism as well as its perpetrators . . . Allport is a fluid writer, a conjurer with the rare ability to sustain a gripping narrative without resorting to Vaseline-lensed sentimentality."

Wire

Women's Information Referral Exchange

One in three calls WIRE receives from women are related to family violence. Wire: 372 Spencer Street, West Melbourne 3003. Telephone Support Service Line 1300 134 130 Mon-Fri 9.00-5.00. <http://www.wire.org.au/>

MS Australia

Multiple Sclerosis needs your help

Log in for the latest news at:
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The Animal Rehoming Service

For further information, please log onto <http://www.tars.org.au/> The Animal Rehoming Service Inc. is a registered charity. Donations over \$2 are tax deductible. (ABN: 51 275 837 567)



Update: Buffy is still looking for a loving home!

Buffy is a 12 year old, non-shedding, desexed, vaccinated, wormed and microchipped 14kg female Maltese x ShihTzu x Miniature Schnauzer who's looking for a loving home.

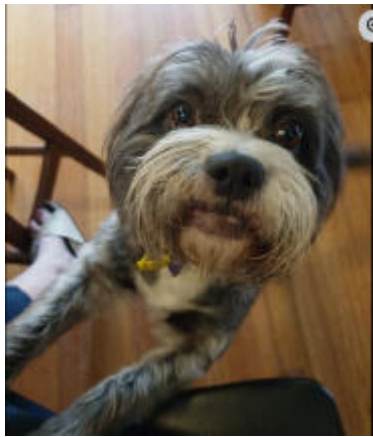
She's a very affectionate little girl who loves cuddling up to her favourite people. She would suit an all adult home or one with dog savvy, gentle, older children. She's quite a little character who will happily follow commands, for the first five seconds ?? She does have good recall though.

Buffy loves her time at the dog park playing with other friendly dogs, although she strangely has an aversion to poodles that get into her personal space and will let them know. Despite her poodle aversion, she would suit a home with another friendly and spritely dog for company. She's also lived happily with cats.

She has some arthritis in her rear legs so when she's groomed, a gentle groomer would be best, otherwise she'll let them know. (She requires regular grooming).

Buffy's just had major dental work too. A clean and polish, plus 12 extractions! Needless to say, she's feeling fantastic with her new fresh and clean mouth.

She enjoys an indoor/ outdoor lifestyle, sleeping indoors. As mentioned, she also doesn't shed. Buffy's adoption fee is \$600. Microchip Number: 982000363283319 Pet Exchange Register Source Number: RE100709. If interested, please call Michaela on 0409213131 (Northcote based, but we go to you). Melbourne sponsors only.



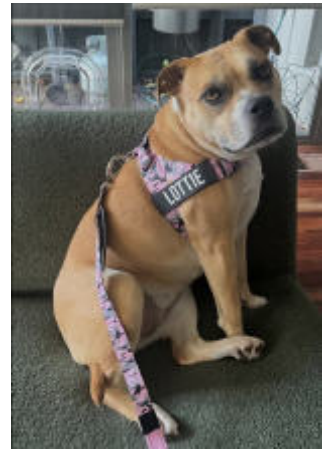
Lottie is a very sweet, affectionate and cuddly girl who enjoys being an integral part of the family. She loves spending time with her favourite people, giving and receiving lots of love. She can also be an independent girl when required, happily sleeping nearby while you're working. Lottie would suit an all adult home or one with older, dog savvy children.

Lottie's also a playful girl who would suit someone happy to play with her at the park or similar, as well as take her on her daily walks. She's good with most other dogs. As she's getting older, she's spending more time investigating the park either alone or with a few more relaxed dogs, rather than getting involved in any rough and tumble. She's not been tested with cats.

She had a knee reconstruction when she was a puppy, but that was 6 years ago and she's fully recovered.

Lottie enjoys an indoor/ outdoor lifestyle, sleeping indoors. A home with a dog door would be great as that's what she's been used to.

Lottie's adoption fee is \$400 Microchip Number: 956000011152372 Pet Exchange Register Source Number: RE100709. If interested, please call Michaela on 0409213131 (South Caulfield based, but we go to you). Melbourne sponsors only.



Update: Lovely Rosie has a new home!

Rosie is a 5 year old, desexed, vaccinated, wormed and microchipped 24kg female Tricolour Border Collie who's looking for a loving home. She's an affectionate and lovely natured girl who'd love to be an integral part of the family. She'd suit an all adult home or one with older, dog savvy children. She's also an active girl, who'd suit an active family happy to exercise her daily.



Pet Medical Crisis

A not for profit fund to save pets whose owners cannot afford their emergency care.

www.petmedicalcrisis.com.au

Email: petmedicalcrisis@gmail.com

PMC is now on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/PetMedicalCrisis/>

Also, a walking harness — 'Dog-A-Long' — is available to assist your dog to become more mobile — supports dogs with hind leg problems associated with ageing, arthritis, hip & spinal problems. For suitability check with your Vet.





Political Capers

Jeff Kennett, premier of Victoria during the 1990's, was given the title “slash and burn” due to his response when taking over the huge debt that the previous Cain/Kirner governments had left the State of Victoria with.

The previous Labor governments had left the State with a hole as big as \$13 billion, even after selling off the State Bank of Victoria. It had been a runaway government that didn't seem to care how much money they spent and Kennett was keen to do something about it. The bank had made some bad loans and then came the collapse of the Pyramid Building Society, to which the Labor government decided to underwrite depositors. The governments' rapid expansion of the public service further weighed down the public debt, together with the large developments of Docklands and Southbank in Melbourne.

The governments of the time were not keen to raise taxes, so they relied on borrowing more money. But the boom times did not last and the 1987 stock market crash followed by a federal recession, saw the government heading for collapse. The Cain and Kirner governments had borrowed money from the State Electricity Commission and the Metropolitan Board of Works to fund their governments, paying this into the treasury. The Gas & Fuel Corporation faced similar results, and these infrastructures began to rely heavily on further borrowed money to survive.

Eventually, government debt reached almost \$50 billion. When the Kennett government came to power in 1992, the focus was on those previously mentioned infrastructures. Kennett decided to sell off, to put them into private hands. The question is did he go too far? Slash and burn it was; the Victorian state debt then fell to almost zero. Victorian unemployment also fell to the lowest in the nation. State debt then remained modest under successive LNP governments until 2014 when the Labor government took office under premier Daniel Andrews, then under Jacinta Allan, who set about plunging Victoria into a debt the state had never seen the likes of. Current debt is increasing to above \$150 billion, though there have been some operating surpluses for 2025-2026.

So, does the now Jacinta Allan government have a plan to reduce the government debt? Well, it seems that it may well be following in the footsteps of Jeff Kennett, because the Allan government has sold off — privatised — VicRoads, which a few weeks ago during a computer system upgrade, collapsed. The Allan Labor government received only \$7.9 billion from that sale, a mere dot among the \$150 billion plus now sitting on the sidelines, which is predicted to rise above \$180 billion in the near future.

Now that the government has whetted its appetite for selling off public infrastructure, what could be next under the watchful eye of premier Jacinta Allan? The Transport Accident Commission (TAC) & Worksafe, perhaps? Or the V/Line Corporation? Then there is Melbourne Water and associated suburban water boards, or certain parklands, heaven forbid!

It's something that the LNP may consider if and when they came to power, but who would want the responsibility of reducing Victoria's largest debt in history? A poisoned chalice!

The federal treasurer Paul Keating during 1983-1991 said—which possibly was tied to his 1989 budget, “The sort of recession you're having when you're having a recession. This year, under the Albanese/Chalmer's federal government it seems to be ‘The budget you don't want to have when you're having a budget.’ Which sums up nicely that rejection of this 2026 budget by not only mum and dad small investors, but other investors, small businesses, farmers, renters, widows wondering where their money will go when they float away into the atmosphere, but even the young ones seeking to buy a home — they mostly disagree with the ‘draconian’ budget. Bringing them down, it seems, not lifting them up — budget changes that the Labor government said they would never introduce. So, people are now chanting Pauline Hanson's slogan ‘Fire the Liar!’ The sad fact is that it's true. Oh dear, politicians do tell lies, don't they?

The narcissistic president of the United States, Donald Trump, has signed off on a limited release of American passports with his face on the front cover! He also has a 22-foot gold-leafed statue of himself at a Florida golf course and numerous smaller statues around the United States. A federal judge has recently blocked a move by Trump's administration to place Trump's name on the Kennedy Center, ruling that it violates federal law, but we have no doubt that the very clever cuckoo Trump will find a way around that judgment. So, it's Trump here, there and everywhere! Probably end up in Disneyland too, as some kind of character hell-bent on misbehaving.

Pocket rocket! The new Japanese prime minister, Sanae Takaichi, surprised almost everyone by winning office with a landslide. Presiding over a culture that has been mostly dominated by the male ego, Takaichi is keen to give more support to women, but it won't be an easy ride. Japan has an aging population with an economy that is in slow motion. Tough days lie ahead. But Takaichi says she is up for it, determined to fight for her country's rights in a world ‘contaminated’ by China and Russia. Takaichi has upped defence spending and has ‘snubbed her nose’ at China's leader Xi Jinping, whom she intends to confront rather than give allegiance to. She knows the weaknesses of the United States and is aware of Trump's vexations and failures. Japan now has a golden opportunity to rise up and become a force for good within the Asiatic region. •



Warning: This story depicts actual happenings from World War II in Europe 1942-1945 and is of an extreme sensitive nature.

Love Never Dies

Serial story by Graham A. Price

Budapest Thursday 15th April 1943:

Chapter 3

Anna Weisz was preparing the evening meal. It was one of her favourites: Veal cutlets with chives. The ingredients were laid out on the kitchen bench: flour, salt and pepper, olive oil, vegetable stock, thyme and chives, and one and a half pounds of cutlets. She could hear her husband, Leopold, coming in from the surgery and moving upstairs, wondering what he was about — surely not to listen to the hidden short wave radio that her brother-in-law, Miklos, had brought home? But probably so, she mused. Boys and their toys! But yes, the radio had become useful, especially listening in to the British Broadcasting Corporation, which showed the other side of the war — how the tide was turning in favour of the British and Americans, particularly in North Africa. That great German general, Rommel, had retreated after a battle at a desert place called El Alamein. This was not propaganda, she thought, this was for real. She believed what the BBC was broadcasting to the world; she'd been aware of enough evidence to be satisfied that with the propaganda, much of the news broadcast was true. We were so close to Britain in the past, she mused, now look at us, drawn into a war at the request of the Germans against the British, the Americans, the French, the Russians, and who knows who else, and with Jewish people being targeted across almost every nation in Europe, with Hungary the only country still holding out. But it won't be long before my beloved country is also overwhelmed. The sheer madness of it all!

There were rumblings within her Hungarian government. The Germans and Hungarians had lost the battle for Stalingrad, with the Russian army now in full advance. She wondered how it would be at the Palace, for she knew that Regent Horthy would be searching for a way out of this mess. Would he swing Hungary back, would he try to negotiate a deal for peace with those allied forces? She thought so, knowing that Horthy had no love for Hitler and his cohorts. Fate is a strange cousin, she thought, one never knows where it will lead one. She gasped! Oh, the baby moved quite abruptly! She let out a small giggle, stretched her aching back, tapped her swollen feet on the cold linoleum and tried to do a little dance, but could not.

"Oh my sweet, I feel you, I hear you my little one; it won't be long now — another twelve-thirteen weeks and you will be here to brighten up our days. So long we have waited for you. Oh, so long! Your hiding days will soon be over." She caressed her stomach slowly and gently. "Another Weisz to help expand the family. There are not too many of us, you know my little one, and if you are a girl as I think you may well be, your name will be Ashira, blessed one."

"But what if the child is a boy?" said Leopold coming up behind her and kissing her on the neck, "What then? And Anna, you should be using the stool — not standing at the bench like that."

She leant back, feeling his strong arms around her. "Yes Doctor Weisz, you caught me fair and square. I will take your advice, it's just that the stool is hard on my bottom."

"Then I will make you the softness of a very soft cover fit for a Queen, so you will have no excuse, no excuse at all my darling. So then, if it is a boy?"

"If it is a boy, dear Leo, then he shall be called Nissim, the maker of miracles. Because it is a miracle that a child should be born to us again after so long."

"Yes, we surely need a miracle-maker in the family these days."

"Indeed. Now, can you pound the cutlets to tenderise them for me?"

"Your wish, as always, is my command. Oh, there's Lena coming in the gate. She's so missing her violin — I shall have to make another one for her, but really I don't have the time these days, what with all these refugees coming in from all over who need our help."

"Yes, to escape that monster in Berlin! Also, do you think Horthy has lost control?"

Leopold sighed. "Possibly. The Regent's up against powers far stronger than himself. Everything is uncertain. It's the prime minister I'd be concerned about; he's the one organising refugees to be shipped off to the Ukraine."

They heard the front door close, then the light tapping of shoes on the stairs.

"That's not like her," said Leopold, "She always comes and talks about her day at school."

"She's still grieving over that lost violin, Leo, then again there may be disturbances at her school. Some of those teachers are too far on the right wing for my liking. I fear the day will come when Jewish children will be banned from public schools."

"We can always home school — I think there's enough intelligence within the family to do that."



Anna laughed. “Oh Leo, we mustn’t let ourselves be carried away with vanity, must we!”

“Well,” he snorted, “We are what we are, no doubt about that. Father will help out and your mother has all manner of educational books at home. She would be delighted to be of assistance.”

“Which reminds me, I must ring her. Did you switch the phone across?”

Leopold lightly slapped his forehead. “Oh, I forgot. I’ll go and do that now, and there’s some paperwork I must give my attention to. Perhaps you could ask Lena to finish bashing the cutlets?”

“Oh no, I can do that. Don’t forget to do something about that stool.

“Sunday, I promise. Oh, and what’s for desert?”

She turned and gave him a smile. “Your favourite, chocolate mousse.”

Anna went back to preparing the meal. After pounding the cutlets until they were thin, she pulled down a large skillet and began to brown the cutlets on both sides until they were pleasantly coloured. She removed them and placed them to one side. She put in the vegetable stock with the tablespoon of flour and began stirring, ensuring that there were no lumps, then throwing in the thyme and continued mixing. Oh, she thought, I’ve forgotten the sherry. She turned the hot plate down and went to the cupboard in the hall where the liquor was kept. No sherry! She went to the bottom of the stairs and called out.

“Lena, could you come down? I need you to go and ask your father if there is any sherry in the storage cabinet at his workshop. Lena! Lena!”

“I’m coming, mama. Just a minute.”

Anna returned to the stove and continued mixing. Helena appeared after a few minutes. “Yes mama, what is it?”

“Oh, you look so pale, child. What is happening to you?”

“I’m fine, just a little tired, that’s all.”

“Hmm, you need a good meal into you. Anyway, can you go and ask your papa if there is any sherry outback in storage? He’s in the surgery.”

Five minutes later Helena came into the kitchen brandishing a bottle of Spanish sherry, uncorking it for her mother and placing it on the bench.

“And how was school today, my darling?”

“Oh so so . . . One of my teachers was giving me funny looks. I don’t know what’s going on, but Judit Szabo and Rebeka Jakab, oh and Eli Kalmar haven’t been there all week. What does it mean, mama?”

“I see . . . so it’s begun. Well, nothing to worry your pretty head with, Lena. Thanks for the sherry.”

Budapest Hungary, Tuesday 20th April 1943:

The Chancellor of Germany and leader of the Nazi Party, Adolph Hitler, had summoned Regent Horthy of Hungary for urgent talks. Hitler was concerned that Horthy wasn’t taking much notice of him of recent times. Horthy didn’t seem to realise the importance of the Fuhrer’s plans for the removal of the Jewish race from the expanded Third Reich and its neighbours. Previous visits had seen Horthy join — together with Romania — the Axis powers of Germany, Italy, and Japan. Joining with Hitler had seemed like a brilliant idea. Hitler was at the height of his powers in 1940 and appeared to be invincible. The joining placed Hungary in the position of reclaiming lost territory due to past wars and the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It was also a means of reclaiming prestige. But when you dance with the devil there is a price to pay and it didn’t take Horthy all that long to realise that the price he had to pay was enormous in terms of military losses and the pressure from the Reich to round up all Jews for transportation out of Hungary.

When Horthy returned to Budapest he was still fuming at what had taken place at Klessheim Castle, near Salzburg, Austria. Hitler had been highly critical of him and threatened to move his Wehrmacht troops into Hungary. That was something Horthy wished to avoid at all costs . . . it would mean the end of the so-called independent Hungary, becoming a mere vassal state of the Third Reich. That must not happen. As he was being driven from the Budapest Ferihegy Airport in the black Mercedes-Benz 770 limousine, he marveled a little at the newly built express road into the city, but could not concentrate. The voice in his head was still barking “*Du wirst tun, was ich sage!*” You will do what I say! “*Andernfalls bleibt mir keine andere Wahl!*” Otherwise, you leave me with no choice!

What to do, what to do? Previous meetings with the Reich Fuhrer had been reasonably amenable, but underlying was always the threat and the fear of what may take place in the future, and he had to keep Hungary free no matter what it took. And if it took his own life to keep it that way, well . . . so be it. But then, there was his family to consider. His son Miklos would take over as Regent, but what would he in control of? A puppet state of the Third Reich?



Budapest Hungary, Tuesday 6th July 1943:

The heat was tiring, so unseasonable. The tailor Izsak Sabot was thinking about closing his shop on Vaci Street and going for a swim. But there was too much to be done. He'd already taken a half day off on Monday to attend the Relief and Rescue Committee and General Markus had indicated that he may call in for the last fitting of his new uniform. He sighed and went back to unpicking the stitching of the Regent's hunting jacket which needed letting out due to Horthy putting on some extra weight since last year. One of the sleeves had suffered a cigarette burn, so he had to fix that as well.

The door bell tinkled and he looked up to see the police captain, Daniel Baka, entering the shop.

"Good afternoon, Captain. If its General Markus's uniform you are enquiring about, please inform him that it will be ready for a final fitting by Monday."

"Well, that too, but I'm thinking a new uniform for myself would be worth your services. You tailor so well, Sabot." He took his cap off and dabbed his forehead with a handkerchief. Patches of sweat showed under his armpits. "Blasted heat out there, never seen anything like it. When will it cease!"

Izsak ran his eyes over the captain's body. Tall, slim, easy to cater for, he mused. But a bit of a dandy all the same. The man would demand excellence, but would he pay? A captain's salary in the Budapest Gendarmerie wasn't all that marvellous. He shrugged his shoulders, better not upset the man. Too many police seemed to find things upset them quite easily these days. Was it the war? Was it the restrictions that were being placed on Izsak's own people, the Jews, which the police had to enforce? Was it the rising Arrow Cross fascists that the police might find themselves working for in the not too distant future. He didn't know, perhaps a combination of all.

"Fine, if you go to the rear of the shop, my assistant, Eva Hoffman, will measure you and show you the best of cloth."

"Ah, I have nothing against Miss Hoffman, but I would prefer you to do the measuring — if you wouldn't mind, Sabot."

"Yes, well . . . alright. Take a seat for a moment while I put the Regent's coat away."

"Horthy's? My, my, Sabot, you do move in illustrious circles. I would never have guessed."

Izsak had almost finished measuring the captain when the door bell tinkled again. They both looked up at Theodor Weisz entering the shop.

Captain Baka turned and smiled. "Ah, Doctor Weisz!"

Theodor looked puzzled. "You are? . . . oh yes . . . now I remember . . . Captain Baka. You were very kind to myself and my grand-daughter at a police road-block some time back. Last year, if my memory serves me well."

"Yes, and how is your grand-daughter? I had this perception that she was . . . is, a fine violinist."

"We think so. She is under the tutelage of Professor Weismann. I take it you know of the professor?"

"Yes, I do. My daughter has been a pupil of his for almost a year now, but I'm not sure what category you could place her in. It is my wife's doing, I wasn't all that keen myself."

Theodor shook the captain's hand. "Well, it is a fine discipline for these young folk, whether it is violin or piano, or even cello at that, which I am particularly fond of. When you combine a cellist with a good pianist, magic occurs, wouldn't you think, Captain?"

"I'm not all that experienced, so I bow to your expert knowledge, Doctor. Well, I must be off, can't keep the General waiting. You know Markus, he's a strict disciplinarian."

"Yes," said Theodor, "I'm quite aware of that. My daughter is married to him."

"Is that so! My, I'm discovering all kinds of things today, am I not, Sabot? So, when do you think you will be ready for my fitting?"

"How would Friday afternoon suit you, Captain . . . say around 2.00 o'clock?"

"Splendid, Sabot. Splendid. I shall be here on the dot."

He turned again to Theodor. "Well, it's been great talking to you again, Doctor. I shall remember you to the General."

"Thank you, Captain. Take care in the heat out there."

As the door closed Izsak gave Theodor a grin and shrugged his shoulders. "I don't know what to make of that man, Theo. He's in a position to make our lives miserable if he wills so, but as you can see he seems to take his employment as if it was a joke."

Theodor scratched his head. "Yes, unlike most of them with the exception of my son-in-law, Markus and a few others. I'm sure he turns a blind eye now and then regarding some of those restrictions that the government has placed upon us. Now my friend, my son Leopold and daughter-in-law, Anna, have invited you and your family to dinner on Thursday evening. It's Lena's birthday. Can you come?"



“I’d be most honoured, Theo, most honoured. What time would you expect us?”

“Oh, around 7.00 I expect. I’ll double-check with Anna and if different, I shall let you know.”

“Fine, so Helena will be fourteen, same as my Benjamin.”

“Exactly. And more good news, Anna is expecting and I shall be a grandfather again. If only Livia were still with us? If only!”

The July heat had caused many of the Budapest schools to be closed. Anna, preparing lunch, listened as the keys of the Steinway piano swept through the house. What was it now? One of Chopin’s nocturnes and a difficult one at that. Over and over, Lena was perfecting her style. Quite unusual, she remember the professor saying a few weeks ago — your daughter has a style all of her own . . . a gift from the heavens. I’ll forgo my fees every second visit, so that you may keep her here with me, and the professor’s wife, Leah, had said that her husband had never offered to do that for any student during the long years of his tutoring.

As Leopold had suggested, she had used the high stool instead of standing at the bench. For comfort until as he had promised, a soft top would be attached, she had taken a small cushion and placed it on top of the stool. It was too warm in the kitchen for a hot meal, so she had settled on a bean salad for the three of them. She had already chopped the onion and parsley and was watching the eggs as they began to boil in the saucepan on the hot plate. The beans, together with the other vegetables came from their own garden which she had tended carefully, but with her rapidly moving pregnancy, that job would have to go to Leo’s brother Miklos. She heard the door to the surgery open and close. Leopold came through, took her by the shoulders and kissed her cheek.

“How is the child?”

“Kicking, that’s how. I may have to change my diagnosis.”

“Oh?”

“Yes, might well be a boy by the strong kicks I’m getting.”

“Haha, girls kick too, you know!”

“Oh Leo, not like this . . . I’m sure now that it will be a boy. The child is so restless.”

“Well, whatever, we shall love the child just as much.

“Pass me the olive oil, will you. Were there many in surgery this morning?”

“Same as usual, but you will remember Judith Fodor? She came for some advice, but you know what surprised me?”

“No, what was that?”

“It seems she and father have become an item. They’ve been going out together.”

“Goodness! Do you think it’s serious?”

“Well, he’s never mentioned it to me. Don’t know why he’d keep such a thing to himself.”

“Haha, your father has always been the strong silent type. I’m sure he’ll tell you when he’s ready. Anyway, what’s the name of that beautiful piece that Lena is playing? I’m sure it’s Chopin.”

“Oh, that’s his Nocturne in E Flat Major — number nine I think. A difficult piece and she’s mastering it so well. I’m so glad we chose Professor Weismann for her tutelage. He’s a remarkable man.”

“Yes, my love, we have a prodigy on our hands, but what kind of a future shall she have with so much uncertainty in the world? Perhaps, as you suggested the other night, we ought to be looking at somewhere in the West to live. Now, pass me the vinegar please, Leo, while I check these eggs. Yes, I’m pleased you see it my way now. I don’t think we have all that much time left.”

“Hmm, maybe a year at the most, depending on how fast the Russians move. I’d hate to see the red flag flying over the palace! But I think it will come to that. At the same time there is much I can do here with the Relief and Rescue committee. And we have Oskar Schindler coming soon with more plans. We can’t leave yet, but I promise you, Anna, when that day comes we shall be gone.”

Krakow, Poland:

The sign read DEUTSCHE EMAILWARENFABRIK. In the upstairs office of Oskar Schindler’s enamel works in Krakow, Poland, Edith Werner was watching what was happening in the street below. A number of Schindler’s workers, including the factory manager Abraham Bankier, were being pushed into an Opel Blitz wagon by SS troops. Edith was horrified. She had to get in touch with Schindler, but where was he? She had tried all his usual haunts and it was getting late. She was aware that the workers, mostly Jewish, would be taken to the Plaszow labour camp which was about five kilometres away, but most likely they would be moved by train with other Jews rounded up at the Prokocim freight station. That was the usual method of transport for prisoners. She estimated that it would take the truck less than half an hour to reach the station, so time was critical. Where was Schindler?



Finally, she found him. He'd been out drinking, but that didn't bother Edith for she knew that even drunk, Schindler could hold a conversation with anyone and remember all of it the next day. She gave him the details, even the registration number of the truck and where she considered it would be going. A cold steely feeling came over him as he slipped behind the wheel of his 1930 Chrysler sedan, slapping the car into gear and roaring off down the road to the freight depot. He was sure that Edith was right, that his workers would be taken to Plaszow for slave labour or possibly death. He knew the new commandant there, an Amon Goeth, so if his visit to Prokocim didn't work, that's where he would be going next. Goeth could be temperamental, shooting people for no good reason, but Schindler generally knew how to get around him, supplying him with black-market goods and other presents. He was certain that this time it would cost him something exceedingly valuable, but whatever the cost he was prepared to pay up. He desperately needed Bankier and the others to be released.

It was getting dark as he drove into the freight yards. Wasting no time, he ran down between the locked cattle cars in the sidings, calling out for Bankier and thumping his fist onto the side of each car. Muffled voices were heard from inside, but no Bankier. His actions attracted the observance of an SS officer, who with two other armed men, headed for him. Schindler wasted no time, he pulled out his papers and demanded that his workers be released. There had to be some kind of mistake. Yes, they should not have been outside the factory at that particular time. No, they were not unemployed. They were his best workers as supervised by the Armaments Inspectorate *Reichsministerium für Rüstung und Kriegsproduktion*. Pulling out another paper, he bluffed: "My authority is overseen by the *Reichsführer* himself, Herr Himmler." The officer cursed, stamped his foot, and signaled Schindler to follow him, to a cattle car already being linked up to a steam engine.

Later, that evening in his private apartment above the factory, Schindler shared a couple of bottles of Schnapps with Abraham Bankier. He then personally escorted Bankier to the new barracks close to the factory, the building of which had been overseen by Amon Goeth who supplied technical-wise prisoners for the planning and construction.

It was the killing of the children by the Nazis that turned Schindler from being an active member of the Nazi party and the *Abwehr* — the secret intelligence agency, with Schindler being an active field member at times, spying on people and events. When thousands of Jews were being deported from Plaszow, the parents were told not to worry about their children because they would be sent to a *Kinderheim*— a children's home, where they would be looked after. It was a lie and Schindler knew it, for all the children were immediately shot.

Schindler had begun with only a handful of Jews working in his factory, but now it was close to one thousand he had saved with work permits. Again, he was determined to go further whatever the cost to himself. The black market had become extremely useful to him, for it provided him with the means to give those in authority special expensive gifts, apart from the numerous cash donations he slipped into Nazi hands. And life as the handsome man he was, must still go on regardless, with his several girl friends and wild parties.

But the man he needed to keep his eye on was Amon Goeth, the commandant of Plaszow labour camp where people disappeared almost every day. The parties Goeth threw for Schindler and other medium-ranking Nazis at his newly constructed Red Villa were excessive drunken affairs with Goeth's mistress Ruth Kalder. Goeth was *hauptsturmführer* or captain of Austrian descent, who would shoot people from his Villa balcony, just for fun. But Goeth was useful to Schindler and while the gifts continued to be supplied by Schindler, the captain commandant was eager to help the enamel-ware industrialist, never becoming aware of Schindler's real motives.

Oskar Schindler first became aware of the situation of Hungary's Jewish population when an old friend of his *Abwehr* days said to him that the Hungarians needed to know about the imprisoning and killings of the Polish Jews so that they could send a message to the world and help free themselves. Schindler could use his *Abwehr* connections and special passport to travel inconspicuously across borders. It was time to add the Hungarian Jews to his list of people to save.

Budapest Hungary, Thursday July 8th 1943:

The dining room table was laden with food. With the help of Miklos and Leopold, Anna had presided over an abundance of dishes with a light vegetable soup, followed by a Caesar salad, and then chilled strawberries with cognac. For those who still had some room there was cheese cake. A kosher red wine was served. A large cake with 14 candles on it graced the centre of the table.

Iszak Sabot, his wife Bela and son Benjamin, sat opposite Anna, Leopold and Helena, with Theodor at the head of the table and Miklos at the other end. The warm weather had made cool drinks necessary and Anna had placed a large jug of home made lemonade on the table. Benjamin, having finished his meal was keen to taste it.

"Hand me your glass, Ben," said Anna.

Helena, having completed Professor Weismann's piano tests for the week-end was also keen.



"I'll have some, too, mama."

"Yes," said Theodor, "Budding classical artists such as yourself must keep up with fluid intakes. But take it from an old dental expert, not too much. With all due respect to you, Anna, the sugar content must be reasonably high."

Anna laughed. "I suppose that's what you tell the widow Fodor, eh?"

Theodor looked startled. "I beg your pardon?"

"Well, come on father, you can't keep it a secret any longer. You've been caught fair and square. When were you going to tell us?"

"About what?"

"About you and Judith Fodor."

"Oh, I see. Someone's been doing some naughty detective work, eh?"

Leopold broke in. "Not so much detective work as in being told by the other party. Judith was in my surgery the other day, and happened to mention a few things."

"Ah," said Theodor, "And then the word spread around Budapest like an Olympic torch bearer! Well, we are just good friends . . . just elderly folk getting some enjoyment out of life until the day old Beezlebug or whoever, comes for us."

"Oh Zaydeh, I think it's wonderful." Helena raised her glass, "Here's to grandpa and Judith. May they live happily forever." Everyone raised their glasses and repeated Helena's words.

The evening wore on; the fourteen candles had been lit and Helena made an impressive job of blowing them out.

"Who's cutting the cake?" said Miklos.

Anna brushed him aside with a tap on his shoulder. "I'll do it; Lena's far too young to be cutting cakes such as that. It might give her ideas."

Miklos winked at Helena. "She's already got ideas as far as I can see."

Seeing Benjamin blush to the roots of his hair, Leopold said: "I think we can offer up the presents now, eh?"

There was a murmur of assent and Iszak spoke: "I'll have to get ours out of the car."

"I'll come with you, papa," said Benjamin.

"While we're waiting," said Bela Sabot, "I'll just take some of these empty plates to the kitchen."

As they left the room, Anna said: "I wonder what it is that they had to leave it in the car."

Miklos spread his arms. "Oh you know tailors, they can make dresses also. It might be a wonderful new ball gown for Lena!"

"Oh, rubbish," said Anna. "Lena's too young to be wearing such a thing."

"It's probably a replacement violin," said Theodor.

Anna sighed. "Don't be ridiculous, father. The Sabot's couldn't afford anything like that. It's up to us to replace what she has lost. Now, who's for an extra serving of strawberries?"

Berlin Germany.

Doctor Ferdinand Altendorf closed the door behind his second last patient for the day. Altendorf was a short man with a chubby round face, full moustache unlike that horrible one belonging to the Fuhrer. He laughed, better watch my thinking else I'll be locked up. He knew a few of his profession who had disappeared suddenly because of their opposition to the Nazi Party.

The Doctor of Psychology had seen middle age come and go; he was balding somewhat, thinking that his cranium was beginning to look like some Roman emperor's bust, minus the laurel leaves. His finely-rimmed spectacles sat on the bridge of his large nose, to which some officials looked at twice. The pale blue eyes stared back as if daring them to say something, but most never did.

Ah, the book the patient had left for him, insisting that he should read it — the Leader's personal biography, *Mein Kampf!* He picked up the red covered book. It was a soldier's edition 1940, but it didn't belong to a soldier. It had come from that minor clerk Seigbert Grok, whose nightmares were affecting his sleep and daily work, or so he had said. A thin, bird-like man in his forties with a slight stoop with rimless glasses much like the Reichfuhrer, so much so that they might be cousins. The grey eyes scanned the surgery, darting around nervously. At his second visit he'd asked the doctor if he was Jewish and then said:

"No, of course you're not. You'd be wearing a yellow star by now, wouldn't you?"

Dr. Altendorf made no comment; he simply wrote notes down and nodded to Grok to continue. He was not disappointed, for Grok seemed to have a remarkable vocabulary and used up his hour as if it was much less than that. When the doctor's timer pinged, the man jumped up, thanked him, and hurried out to make another booking with Altendorf's secretary. Erika Hagens didn't like the man.



“The man’s a spy, doctor. Why do you treat him?”

“It doesn’t matter what he is, Erika, I’m here to treat him of his ills, and he certainly has a few.”

“Well, I’ve booked him in for next Friday afternoon. I wonder how he explains his time off to his superiors?”

“Hmm, that’s not our concern, Erika.”

“Ahah, doctor . . . another of your lame ducks, eh? But he’s hiding something, I can smell it. Time for a cup of tea, I think.”

“That would be lovely.” He turned and re-entered his consulting room.

Erika called out behind him “Did he ask the inevitable question?”

The doctor paused and looked at Erika with a smile. “He did, he certainly did.”

“I don’t know why they bother. Everyone knows you are not. Not even your grandparents — just a good solid Bavarian citizen. Anyway, doctor, you’re doing an excellent job of treating Berlin of all its neuroses. Personally, I think you’re much needed up at the Chancellery. It’s surely a neurotic hornets nest!”

The doctor laughed. “So far, no one has called me Moses. And as far as the Chancellery is concerned, we’d better keep conversations like that between ourselves.”

“Yes, doctor. I’ll get the tea.”

Altendorf flipped the pages of *Mein Kampf* open. He read some paragraphs, turned more pages and read some more. The book was quite a volume, with over 600 pages, and he knew that it was preferred or even essential reading in many of Germany’s civil enterprises, but he was curious as to why Grok had left it with him. It didn’t take him long to find the answer: the book was an anguished cry, but not a cry from the heart. It was a cry from an imprisoned mind that badly needed therapy. It was from a mind that was saturated with intense hatred of the Jews and many others. Like the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, written by a Russian mystic and approved by the Russian KGB, it should never have seen the light of day. It had become the Bible for Nazi party members.

The day had passed quickly, with most patients coming in complaining about the sudden heat. His last booking for the day was missing: Kurt Volkmar, an industrialist, who was having sexual problems, had come to see him some months ago. The Jungian therapy that Altendorf was applying was helping and Altendorf was somewhat surprised that the man had not kept his appointment that afternoon. He’d asked Erika to telephone both Volkmar’s home and the factory, but no one seemed to know where Herr Volkmar was. He’d not been seen since Wednesday evening and his wife had called an inspector she knew at Kripo, in Prinz Albrecht Strasse.

Inspector Deitrich Rickmers knew where the industrialist was, but he was restrained from offering up that information to anyone. He certainly wasn’t going to take a trip down to the basement where the Gestapo were questioning Volkmar for his supposed high treason against the Reich. No, even when considering his friendship with Edith and Kurt Volkmar, over the years, he dared not interfere. He and Kurt had grown up together, gone to the same schools, fought in the First World War and survived to return to Germany to marry. Kurt had inherited his father’s munitions factory, while Deitrich had gone on to police training and had risen in the ranks. Detective business appealed to him and he was quite good at it, but since the SS and Gestapo had taken precedence at Prinz Albrecht Strasse 8, Kripo detectives had to close their eyes and ears and get on with the lesser civilian problems.

What was he to do? Despite his previous loyalty to Edith and Kurt, it would cost him his job if he interfered with the Gestapo’s investigations, and not only his job, but it could also cost him his life. He had seen too many men and women brought up from the basement, so bloodied from the beatings, barely alive. Then there were those who didn’t walk up, or who were not even half-carried as some were, but were taken out on stretchers to the hospital, but more often to the morgue. The last one he had seen coming up from the basement had been a slip of a girl, eighteen years of age, brunette, with film star good looks no longer showing; a face bloodied and unrecognisable, an arm and a leg hanging off the stretcher streaked with blood. It was a cold slab for her, Volkmar had thought, as he brushed by the stretcher bearers. She had been brought in for questioning about an underground group her brother had supposedly belonged to — simply brought in for questioning, and now look at her going past, her body still warm but totally silenced. He had shuddered. He’d gone to the toilets and vomited into a hand-basin. Yes, if he interfered with the questioning of Kurt, that girl could be Edith or even Deitrich’s own wife, simply brought in for questioning.

Sometimes the Gestapo used psychology. Smiling, they offered a way out for the victim, giving an understanding that they would be set free; that they had been used. That they weren’t responsible. We know it’s not your fault. We’re here to help.

Some of the interrogators could go on for hours, knowing they had all the time in the world. If what they wanted wasn’t accomplished in one session, there was always the next without even laying a hand on the victim. Together with the holding back of water and food until the next day or the next with smiles and assurances and light pats on the shoulder . . . until the next day . . . and often the next, until the person could stand it no longer.



The inspector had seen it too many times. In his office behind a locked door with a radio turned up, he lowered his head to the varnished desk and wept.

It was long after dark when the Dr. Altendorf arrived home. There were two black-uniformed men standing outside his apartment block. SS no doubt, thought Altendorf. As he went to enter, the taller of the two, thin of lips and narrow of eyes, turned to him.”

“Papers please!”

“Has something happened?”

“That’s not for you to ask. Papers please.”

“Yes, yes. Here you are.”

The man took out a torch and scanned the identity card, screwed his nose, flashed the card under the face of the other SS man and handed it back to the doctor.

“Why are you coming in so late?”

The doctor was somewhat amused by this, aware that it was going on all over Berlin these days.

“It’s not even seven o’clock. I can’t see that it is any of your business.”

“Watch your lip,” said the second SS man, who carried a rifle over his left shoulder. “It’s always our business Herr doctor. So, why are you so late coming home? Been up to some nefarious activity, eh?”

The doctor smiled. What else could he do? These men were playing their usual silly games, but he didn’t wish to inflame them any further. He was hungry and needed to smell the roast that his daughter, Evelyn, was preparing in spite of the rationing. He was ever amazed. How did she do it?

“Gentlemen, I’ve had a weary day and one of my clients is missing — you may know of him, Kurt Volkmar, the munitions manufacturer.”

The taller of the two SS men grunted. “Yes, well, move on then Herr doctor, and make sure you don’t come out again before daylight, with the exception of the air raid shelter. I’m sure the enemy will be over us again tonight.”

The doctor tipped his cap, “At your service, gentlemen. I bid you a good evening.”

Closing the door behind him, Dr. Altendorf sniffed the air and felt satisfied with the heavenly smell lingering in the hall from his daughter’s cooking. He removed his coat and cap, dropped his brief case beside the hall stand and called out “Hilda! Is the child safe?”

The feminine voice came back to him from the kitchen. “Quite safe, father. Why are you so late?”

“Oh, a few complications, nothing to worry yourself about, my dear.” He wandered through the parlour and into the kitchen. On a side table he noted the small framed picture of Adolf Hitler.

“You know I don’t like that picture in this house.”

“Oh father, it’s insurance, you know that. Besides, I place it face down when I go to bed. I don’t wish to be dreaming about that horrible little man.”

“And Freida?”

“She’s fine, happy in her little hiding place. I’ll get her out shortly.”

“Did those men come in here; the one’s outside in the street?”

“Yes, father. There were no problems. They had a quick look around, checked all the cupboards, then left.”

“Hmm, they’ll be back. What about the neighbours upstairs?”

Hilda shrugged her shoulders while stirring the beef and vegetable soup.

“All quiet. I don’t think they bothered. Most of those men don’t like the jobs they have been given, but then you will remember last year when those three came in and threw books from the bookshelves, tried to rip the bookshelves from the wall, overturned the beds and made a real mess of the place. I remember that you placed a complaint with the police, but we never received an apology.”

Hilda was the quintessential German with blonde good looks, blue eyes, and a figure that made men turn and look and continue to stare. Unlike most German girls in their late twenties, early thirties, she kept her hair short, which was a blessing to her in her work as a nursing sister at The Berlin Charité. She had lost her fiancée in a bus crash and had settled in her mind that she would remain a spinster.

“I don’t know how you manage these meals, Hilda, what with all the shortages these days.”

“It’s better that you don’t ask, father.”

“I suppose not. I did think you might be pinching it from the hospital kitchen, but then that can’t be so. You would never take from the Charité.”

“Like I said, father, it’s better not to ask, and no it’s not from the hospital.”

That’s what I thought. Now this business about the child can’t go on, Hilda” said the doctor. “Things are getting too dangerous for us. We have to contact the underground and get Freida to a safe place.”



“I know what you’re saying, father, but she’s quite happy in her hiding place, and there’s a potty in there if she needs to go. It’s amazing how the child can be so placid. I think she understands what’s going on, probably more than some of us do. Now, what shall we do for her sixth birthday next week? Something special, eh?”

“A satisfying birthday present would be seeing her out of here and safe.”

“Yes, I know. I’ll make the contact this weekend.”

Budapest Hungary.

Leopold Weisz put the book down and turned to Anna. The bed creaked underneath him. “Are you awake, my dear?”

“Yes, Leo, I’m awake. The little one sees to that.”

“Is the child restless?”

“Yes, very. I’m not sure I’ll get any sleep tonight.”

Leo yawned. “Well, that’s a good sign. You can look forward to quite a few restless nights to come.”

“Oh thanks so much, doctor! Just what I really needed to hear. Anyway, you know how excited Lena was when the Sabot’s brought that box in, wrapped in coloured paper.”

“Yes, and to think father was right — it *was* a violin, and just not any violin — it was Lena’s, the one I made for her.”

“How on earth . . . ?

“Amazing resources the Sabots have. Iszak gathered a crowd from just about everyone he knew and they searched for days until a young lad about sixteen discovered it abandoned at the back of a building, practically unscathed. Of course, I’ll have to make a new bow and another case, but Lena is over the moon.”

“So, Benjamin is forgiven?”

“Oh, she forgave him some time ago. That daughter of ours, Anna, is not one to keep anger. It washes out of her as if it never existed.”

She turned to face him. “We are so fortunate, aren’t we Leo!”

He patted her arm. “Yes, we are, my lovely. Now, try and get some sleep.”

Berlin Germany, Friday 9th July 1943:

As Minister for the Interior, SS Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler sat at his highly polished oak desk in the *Geheime Staatspolizei* headquarters off Prinz-Albrecht-Strasse 8. He was annoyed at the sloppiness of the reports on his desk from the Minister of Economics.

His fist hit the desk with a thump and his secretary, Gerda Schmidt, looked up somewhat startled from her smaller desk in the corner of the room.

“Is everything alright mein Reichsführer?” she asked, averting her gaze from the 1927 Adler typewriter and looking up at him.

He leant back into the plush leather swivel chair, placed his hands behind his head and looked at the ceiling.

“Nothing is right my fine young lady. I am surrounded by imbeciles. Here I am committed to making the Reich the most powerful and astute state that ever lived, where Aryan blood is the only blood that matters. Everything we do, Greta, is aligned with that aim — the purifying of all that exists. Everyone and everything inferior must be destroyed; that is what we are committed to. You know that my fountain of life program — *Lebensborn* — is booming all across the Reich. All those mothers producing pure offspring with highly selected partners has been such a success. The League of German Girls was a wonderful idea. Do you know, Greta, that there are over four million girls in that group at a time, soon to be old enough to become Reich mothers. Racial purity has been our aim for as long as I can remember, but I — dear Greta — I was the one who put it into practice.”

He stood and paced around his desk for a moment, staring out at the white clouds that were fleeing across the sky above Prinz-Albrecht-Strasse. “Why is this heat still with us? It is unbelievable how long it has stayed!” He resumed his position at the desk, swiveling on the chair and smiling at his secretary.

Greta looked up. “You have done exceptionally well mein Riechsführer. We all admire you for your commitment. Father was only saying the other day that if it hadn’t have been for our Herr Himmler we would all be speaking some inferior language.”

Budapest, Hungary, Sunday 11th July 1943

The midwife, Eva Varga, had arranged the warm water and warm towels as Anna began to give birth in the bedroom. Eva had consulted Theodor Weisz earlier and he had said he would remain in the background during the process, but if there was any difficulty, she could call upon him. He wasn’t expecting any problems for up to now the pregnancy had gone well. It was mid evening with the last of the sun disappearing below the horizon. The weather had been much



cooler than the heat of the past week. Nevertheless, Theodor had arranged a floor standing fan to be placed near the bed and Eva had switched it to low so that a gentle breeze played over Anna's face.

Eva arranged the bed covers. "Just making you as comfortable as possible, Anna. It won't be long now. Would you like an extra pillow?"

Anna was breathing in and out fast and paused: "No, no, it's alright, Eva. It's alright. I . . . oh, there's another spasm!"

"Just a gentle push now, not too hard, okay?"

Anna nodded, recommencing the fast breathing through her mouth.

Helena was upstairs in her bedroom, finishing some homework, but she could still hear the moans coming from her parent's bedroom and now and then a cry, as if for help. She had plugged her ears with cotton wool, but her mother's cries still came through. She couldn't understand the why of all the noise. Surely, if it took so much crying and agony, then she would never ever have any babies of her own. Never.

Theodor was hovering in the background, watching, trying to prevent himself from interfering. He had great faith in Eva Varga; she was an excellent midwife. He had recommended her to many of his clients. But now it was his own wife who was in labour and he clenched his teeth as he listened to Anna's cries. It has been so long, what if she has trouble . . . what if it's a breech birth! His mind began to run away with him, picturing Anna being loaded into an ambulance and off to hospital for a Caesarian section! But then: "Here comes the head, push now Anna, push . . . keep pushing. It's fine, it's fine!"

Liverpool, England, Sunday 18th July 1943:

Elisha Molnár stepped off the Steam Packet ferry from the Isle of Man. He had been to see the old internment camp where he had been held with numerous other Jewish refugees from Europe. Refugees from the Nazi war machine they might have been, but the cautious British — and in certain cases some bloody-minded officials — who often couldn't see the wheat from the chaff, had considered many of the refugees as spys for the Third Reich. He knew of some borderline cases who ended up in Holloway and Wormwood Scrubs dark prisons. How does one sort from the refugees the real from the false, particularly when many had arrived with forged registration papers?

But the Isle of Man had been different. Barbed wire fences for sure, but inside were thriving villages where art and music flourished, friendships were made, and love happened even though males were initially separated from females. Compared to what was occurring in Europe under the Nazi regime, the refugee internment camps in England were a walk in the park.

The woman had been on the same ferry as him in 1942, released after a year and six months to re-enter the British community, and the surprise was that they were both from Hungary, and both Jewish. Their release and subsequent accommodation was assisted by the Jewish Refugees Committee of Bloomsbury House, London. The ferry had been packed that day, full of released refugees who were smiling, embracing each other, and eventually settling peacefully for the 50 mile journey from Victoria Pier to Liverpool. Some were content to hang on the railings and stare at the blue sky and almost ripple-free waters.

"A beautiful day," she had said after he had bumped into her and said sorry. "It's so difficult to see such peace during the daytime here, when over the channel it is nothing but hell day and night."

He looked into her eyes, a pale sparkling blue, a kind of subdued blonde hair — it would be difficult to tell she was blonde in the dark, he thought. Something shifted within him; he wasn't sure what it was, but here was this vision of loveliness watching him intensely. Her dark and generous eyelashes flickered. "You're the conductor, aren't you, from the Hungarian State Opera, Molnár um, Elisha Molnár!"

"I confess, the very same!"

"The Tales of Hoffmann were brilliant, until they were banned."

"Yes, we couldn't run them because . . ."

"Because Offenbach was one of us . . . Oh, I'm sorry. I'm Izabella Nagy, that's my mother, Gilda, over there by the railings, the one with the blue hat."

"And your father?"

Her eyes dimmed and she shook her head.

"My father and my brothers are gone . . . as far as we know. We were on this ship when it was hit by a torpedo from one of Hitler's U-boats. There was so much confusion, people thrashing about in the water, not enough life boats. We thought they may have been saved and had been dropped off at a different port, but there has been no sign of them for the past two years."

"Oh, I'm so, so sorry. My family is still in Hungary . . . they're waiting for a suitable time to get out."



Izabella looked at him directly in the eye. “You need to get them out now. You know what the Nazis have been doing, don’t you! It’s been leaked out by several Jewish prisoners who escaped. They are sending thousands of us Jews to our death.”

“Yes, I’ve heard that it is more than thousands, it’s in the hundreds of thousands. Hard to believe, all the same. I’m pushing for my family’s travel through the agency. The trouble is that letters take some time and often cablegrams just don’t get to them. It’s been a month or more since their last letter.”

She pressed his hand. “I will pray for them. So, where are you bound for? We are settling in London, there is a large Jewish community in Golders Green just north of the city. Our accommodation is arranged. I hope to resume my occupation as a dressmaker. My salon in Budapest kept me as busy as a bee. Alas, it is no longer.”

“So, you had your own salon? How wonderful! I’ll be staying in London until I can find employment . . . probably end up working in a munitions factory or something similar.”

She laughed. “I can just see you waving a baton over the workers and humming *The Moonlight Sonata!*”

“You have a beautiful sense of humour, Izabella Nagy.” He took her hands in his, felt them soft and yielding as she looked up at him and smiled. “I think we are going to be very good friends,” he said.

“Hmm . . . you could be right, conductor Molnár. I shall look forward to you taking me to the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden.”

“Ah, I’m afraid the war has put that on hold. They’ve converted it into a jazz dance palace, no doubt for the troops on leave, particularly for the Americans. They’ve brought this crazy dance with them, called the jitterbug. As far as I know, there are no opera houses playing anywhere.”

“That’s so sad. I was looking forward to seeing the grand opera house as it was and I simply cannot wait until after the war. But there will be cinemas, won’t there? We should arrange something. So, shall we exchange addresses?”

“I thought you’d never ask!”

She squeezed his hand. “The war has taught me much, my baton waving friend, but most importantly it has taught me not to waste time. After a year or so being interned, I made up my mind that life is to be lived, and enjoyed magnificently, and as you know very well, Elisha, our faith teaches us that.”

Gilda Nagy had been wondering who was this tall, dark, and rather handsome man talking to her daughter. He looked familiar, but the brown Fedora hat was shading part of his face. She didn’t want her twenty-six-year-old daughter getting caught up with any run of the mill male. Yet, there was something about him. She guessed his age would be somewhere mid-thirties or early forties. Neatly dressed — a well pressed dark blue double-breasted suit. ‘Bella could do worse, she thought. Perhaps I should introduce myself?

As she made her way through the crowd she realised that she couldn’t miss that face, those gaunt features, the sharp nose and the vivid blue eyes. It couldn’t be . . . surely not! But it was, she was sure of it now. My goodness, what a surprise. If only Aaron was here! He’d be so happy. And a tear found its way down her left cheek. She sniffled. If miracles could happen, then surely this was one . . . there was no denying it; she could tell that the two were so engrossed in each other. Ah, there was something special going on here. She’d seen men come and go in ‘Bella’s life, but this was different . . . they seemed totally unaware of anyone else on the ferry . . . she had always believed in love at first sight, and this was it, she would bet all her jewellery on it. Oh, I don’t wish to disturb this, not the way she is looking up at him and he at her. And they are actually holding each other’s hands! There is so much going on here, it is beyond all belief, but there it is . . . after all these years her Izabella has found her equal.

They sat at Liverpool Lime Street station after a young couple had left a seat vacant. The station was crowded with military personnel and the train to Euston had been commandeered by the authorities for troop movements, leaving exasperated civilians in a dilemma as to when they might board. Due to wartime restrictions there were no porters around, so Elisha had to carry Gilda’s suitcase as well as his own and a smaller case of Izabella’s who was already carrying two cases. He purchased a copy of the Daily Mail, the headlines of which were mostly concerning the war.

He pressed out a crease on the front page and shook the paper open. “It’s mainly about the sinking of passenger ships in the Atlantic by Germany’s U-boats. Sorry, sorry, you really didn’t want to hear that.”

“They are brutal people,” said Gilda. “We can only hope and pray that the tide will turn soon now that the Americans are fighting with us, but that is out of our hands. So, Mister Molnár, I have to ask of you, what are your intentions for my daughter?”

“Mother! You can’t ask Elisha that!”

“See, you already call him by his first name! I’ve seen something here today that I probably will not see again, and it is my right, ‘Bella, now that your father is no longer here. It is our tradition, as you well know, for me to watch



over you. Oh, I know, the war has changed everything. Some of the old values may no longer be of use, and it is going to be a far different world when this war is ended.”

Elisha was nodding his head. “It’s all right, Izabella, I know how your mother feels. All I can say with all my heart, Gilda, is that your daughter and myself appear to have found some common ground and respect for each other. I don’t expect that either of us know where the future will lead us, but if I may have your permission to continue to see Izabella, then my world would be so light that any roadblocks along the way, would just disappear.”

Gilda laughed. “You have a way with words, Mister Molnár. I am a woman of the world; have seen many things, felt many things. What you seem to be hinting at is that you would wish to become my son-in-law. I may shock you with that statement, but I have sharp eyes, my son. That is not how things were back in my family days in Hungary, but we are not in Hungary now and if we ever have the chance to return, we shall not find it the same as it was. Perhaps it is best to commence a new life in this land that has given us succour, in spite of the original suspicions and the hate in some eyes. I can see that the authorities were bewildered — that it was thrust upon them so suddenly, that they had no guide book to show them the way. It is so easy to become lost when you are flooded with the frightening and the horror.”

She paused and laid her hand on his. He felt the instant warmth of her palm. “One can see that you don’t have the hands of a labourer, a carpenter, a miner. No, you have the smoothness of a very capable musical person and no matter where you go, or whether the road you travel be hard or soft, you will always find your way for you are blessed with Heaven’s riches. But of course, some of the camp’s roughness does show in your hands, does it not? It has left you with memories good and some not so good. Well, Elisha—and I shall continue to call you that—as long as you honour and keep the traditions of our elders, and honour my daughter. But if you wander off into the night like a thief, I shall no longer call you Elisha. Do you understand?”

Elisha felt the moisture in his eyes. Yes, he understood, how could he not? This grey-haired woman, who had given birth to the one he now loved with all his heart, was truly amazing. She had vision, she had understanding, she had compassion. She was truly blessed.

Izabella had been mostly silent, sitting there with her fingers entwined. She had been absorbing this unusual diatribe from her mother and noted Elisha’s reaction. She leant across and hugged Gilda, “Thank you, mother, for being who you are. Thank you.”

And Elisha brushed away the tears in his eyes.

The train from Liverpool to Euston was on time. He was glad he had to get back to seeing Izabella. Fortunately, this time the army had not commandeered the train and while waiting, Elisha had bought a copy of the Daily Mail as was his habit. The news was mainly about the Royal Air Force and the USAF bombing of Berlin, and there was going to be a meeting somewhere in the Middle East, between prime minister Winston Churchill, the American president Roosevelt, and Russia’s Joseph Stalin. This could be the beginning of the end! Something very innovative would surely come out of those talks. He folded the paper and placed it in his brief case among some notes he had been writing about the internment camps. When the time was right he considered he might write up an article or two for one of the morning or evening papers.

The wedding was held at Golders Green North Western Reform Synagogue by Rabbi Werner Van Der Zyl with a large crowd of the congregation in attendance. On Sunday 16th of January 1944, Elisha in a private room, lifted down the veil to cover Izabella’s face. They had decided that this old tradition would be their wish, then they entered the synagogue to the joy of the crowd. Due to the winter cold, Izabella had chosen a satin full neck pure white gown with long illusion lace sleeves, which she had brought with her from Hungary on a whim. Elisha had hired a tuxedo, and the couple were each escorted separately by members of the congregation, Elisha by an elderly married couple from the congregation, symbolizing his parents, each with locked elbows, and Izabella by her mother and a male friend from the Jewish Refugee Committee. Underneath the Chupah — the Marriage Canopy — Izabella circled Elisha seven times, signifying the seven days of creation, followed by the betrothal, the sharing of rings and the mitzvah with the sharing of the cup of wine. The marriage contract was read, which the Rabbi then handed to Elisha, who with a wide smile, gave it to Izabella.

A glass was placed near Elisha’s right foot, which he then stomped on, and as the glass shattered with a bang the congregation shouted “Mazal Tov”. The joy and happiness of the day was reflected in Rabbi Zyl’s eyes as he smiled upon the couple, giving them the seven benedictions. Later, he thought about it and concluded that it was one of the most satisfactory weddings he had performed. In spite of the foul weather there was warmth and a joyful spirit within the synagogue. The congregation had arranged a wedding feast in the accompanying hall, which in spite of the



rationing, proved to be adequate for the purpose. Yes, he had said to his wife Annaleese, this was a marriage that augured well. One he would long remember.

Monday 17th January 1944

Wartime marriages had the added task of restrictions and though at first the couple would have liked to honeymoon for a night or two at the London Savoy or The Ritz, the prices were far too expensive, mainly because of being taken up by numerous American officers. Besides, the risk of night bombing by the Germans was always possible even though there had been considerable reductions of late, so the couple looked for somewhere within their budget which was closer to Golders Green and quieter. They found it in a cottage within the Hampstead Heath wooded district, named Daffodil Cottage where there were various interconnected ponds close by, havens for waterbirds. The landlady, Jane Carrington, didn't say much at first, but the smile she gave the couple when they entered the door, was sufficient to put them at ease.

Izabella noticed that Jane wore no rings, so was she a spinster? She dared not ask, but the parlour was filled with paintings and photographs of families, perhaps distant relatives thought Izabella, or long gone close ones. Above the fireplace, where large logs burnt slowly and sparks popped now and then, was a row of painted daffodils with a lake scene as a backdrop. The warmth of the room was accentuated by soft sofas and 18th century period furniture.

"Breakfast at 7.30," said Jane, "Can't do much about the weather, my dears. Oh, your ration books please! We make do with what we can get." She paused as they handed over their books, flicked through them, smiled again and said: "It looks like your one egg a week is due, so how would you like it? You won't find any of that dried egg powder here, only good, large farm eggs, and if the hens lay more than is normal, well, who's to say what might end up on your breakfast plate. The bread is baked here by our cook Mrs. Murphy; flour is easy enough to obtain, but we get ours from Ireland. Quite a lot comes from Australia and Canada, but I find the Irish flour more convenient; I'm sure you will find that adequate. Nothing like country cooking during these days of rationing, is there, eh? She's a real miracle maker is our cook Murphy, an Irish widow of many years. Lost her husband in the first world war. So, poached, fried, boiled or scrambled? Oh, and by the way, you won't have to set your clocks for the morning, our rooster here has the voice of a hundred air-raid sirens!"

"She's quite a character, not short of a word or too." said Izabella, unlocking the bedroom door. It opened to a second storey room with wide views of the parkland nearby. "Oh, Elisha, this is heaven! And our own fireplace, too!"

"Yes, she's a lovely old soul."

"Haha, enough of the *old* business, my love. She wouldn't be past fifty. You'll catch up soon enough."

"Hey, I'm not even forty, though in five years come this August, I will be. Fancy that! By the way, I'm so pleased that your mum has settled in with the Mrs. Dart. They seem to have become very fond of each other."

"Yes, it's worked out well, both much the same age, both lost their husbands to the war."

"Oh?"

"Yes, Mr. Dart lost his life in the army's retreat from Greece in 1941."

"Was there any family?"

"She has a son in the Royal Air Force. Don't know where he is based, but Mrs. Dart said somewhere south of London, but that could mean anywhere. It's probably a war secret."

"Yes, there are a lot of those. Did you know they are removing road signs, so as to confuse the enemy if they ever invade us?"

"Goodness, how will anyone find their way around?"

"Everyone has to carry maps. I have a country directory in my suitcase."

"But if the Germans capture you, they will have your map!"

He chuckled: "Oh no they won't. I'll hide it in your suitcase."

"The cheek of you!" She smacked his hand lightly, pretending she was cross with him.

After supper in the dining room, they retired to their room. There was a small mantel radio above the fireplace where the red embers of the day were fading slowly. They listened for a while to the news and then some music was played. "Oh, I don't believe it, they're playing the Blue Danube Waltz!"

Elisha took her hand. "It's a very portent sign, my love. May I?"

She curtsied. "Dear knight of the realm, you may," and they hugged tightly and waltzed around what little room was left with the furniture. When the music ended they broke off laughing.

Izabella curtsied again. "Oh, I feel so good, so good, so very, very good!"

They climbed into bed and Izabella turned to Elisha: "It's a little lumpy on this side, would you like to swap?"



“I don’t think so, but if it is really necessary . . .”

She caressed his back. “Haha, I was only joking, dear. It’s as soft as a canary’s bosom.”

“Bad girl, bad girl! I’ll have to tickle you for that. Watch out, here I come!”

She shrieked, jumped out of bed, grasped her pillow, and proceeded to whack him with it. Elisha joined in the fun, until almost exhausted they fell back into bed again.

“Whoo-hoo! Just as well we didn’t burst these pillows. Imagine what Miss Jane would have to say?”

“Haha, she might dock us our one egg a week!”

“Or set the rooster onto us!”

They both laughed and laughed until they heard a thump through the wall from the room next to them. They snuggled down under the covers giggling like young children. Elisha couldn’t help himself, he kept on laughing.

“Shhh!” said Izabella, “That could be the strange man we met at supper, you know the bird-watcher.”

“Or so he says. He might be a spy for the government making sure no one gets more than one egg a week.”

They both laughed again and there was another thump through the wall.

“Oh dear,” puffed Elisha. “That was a bit much. By the way, you never told me how you managed to smuggle your valuables and stuff out of Hungary.”

“Can’t you guess?”

“Well, I don’t know, do I? You haven’t got a wig, so you couldn’t hide anything there. Perhaps you had a money belt around your midriff, or something!”

“You’re not even close, darling. What is my occupation?”

He found her cold feet at the bottom of the bed and rubbed hers with his. “Ah, you owned that salon in Buda, so you would have to be a couturière, and no doubt a superior one, but now because of the war and the restrictions, you have come to be a poorly paid dressmaker. It’s how we survive.”

“Yes, my darling, we managed to bring quite a number of dresses with us, and everyone of those had as many diamonds as I could accrue, sewn into the linings. And there was a jeweller in the East End who was very happy to take them off our hands. He drove a hard bargain, but I was glad to have them gone. They were becoming a liability. Now it’s all in safe-keeping with the Old Lady of Threadneedle Street.”

“The Bank of England! Very clever, my love. Very clever.”

“And you, Elisha. I never asked? And mother didn’t either, that’s how much she trusts you.”

“Ha ha, long before that imbecile in Germany became chancellor I made my acquaintance with the so-called gnomes of Zurich. A very private deposit box and a discreet courier service, worked wonders. It worked so well that some of my colleagues were becoming quite worried about me, thinking I was scraping for a living. I didn’t leave much behind me. But after 1941 that all changed with both Hungarian and British government regulations. Just in time, eh? So, although we do need to work, my love, we always have a back up.”

“We are very, very fortunate. Now, my lips are trembling, so I need you to do something about that, and very fast.”

Elisha caressed her hair. “Ah, and so like Hermes, the Greek god of speed, I come to thee, now and always.”

Izabella had taken up as a dressmaker in Golders Green while Elisha was teaching piano and violin lessons. But young budding musicians were scarce as most young children had been sent to the country for safety reasons. Elisha found that if he concentrated on the age group 16-18, there were enough to keep him busy several times a week, but then they would soon be off to serve on the war front in the military or associated civilian occupations. To supplement their income, he had taken up as a pianist on Sunday evenings at the Blue Angel Club in Soho, London. Since the atmosphere was one of jazz and bohemian rhapsodies, he had to adapt his technique to fit. The constant travelling had tired him somewhat, but what had to be done had to be done — they had to survive. They had moved into a small rented cottage which had become vacant, near to the Alyth gardens and the Reform synagogue, being thankful that the military hadn’t taken possession. It had been close. Two days after signing the lease papers at the agency, a plain clothes policeman with a young police constable in tow had called and demanded to see the lease and their identification papers. Elisha had virtually been holding his breath as the elder of the two gave back the papers, turned on his heel and stomped away. Not a happy chappy, thought Elisha as he closed the door.

Coming back to Golders Green after a week’s honeymoon at Hampstead was like coming back to reality, for the papers were full of the news of a blitz that the Luftwaffe had carried out on the night of Friday the 21st of January and the early hours of Saturday the 22nd. While still at Hamstead they had been woken by the horrendous noise from above. Despite earlier blitz bombings of the country, London had become used to it, but this time it appeared it was in retaliation for Britain’s night bombings of Berlin. The newspaper reports of the following week were that the Germans



had sent two waves of bombers during the night: the first wave was estimated at 230 bombers, the second at 220, with civilian casualties mainly around the outskirts of London at 74.

Budapest, Sunday 30th January 1944

“So,” said Professor Weismann to Helena, “You have your violin back again? That’s quite a miracle, is it not? Let me see.”

Helena passed the violin to the professor. “Papa gave it a good clean and tune, though it doesn’t appear to have been damaged.”

“The bow please, Helena.”

He was tightening the pegs, flicking the strings while holding the instrument to his ear, looked down the flutes, turned the violin upside down. “Looks fine. Now let me try it out. This will be the test.”

He lifted the instrument to his shoulder, tapped the bow on the strings and commenced to play Czardos No. 3 from the Hungarian Sketches Opus No. 23. Helena couldn’t believe what she was hearing. The professor was playing without sheet music and as the notes soared high, she thought she was going to faint.

He paused, lowered the violin from his shoulder, and placed the instrument and bow on a small table near the piano. “It’s a beautiful piece of work, please give my congratulations to your father.” He walked across the room and opened the glass fronted cabinet where his precious Guarneri was kept. He took the instrument with its bow and handed it to Helena.

She couldn’t believe what she was holding: the professor’s prize Guarneri, in her hands! It was worth a fortune, a king’s ransom even, she thought. She trembled as she looked down at the instrument, which she knew was hand-made in 1737. He took some sheet music from a drawer and placed it on the stand in front of her.

“Now, my little Scheherazade, play — play for all your life, my dear, for who knows what tomorrow may bring? You have the skills of an angel in those sensitive fingers. Play now so that the Heavenly saints may give you applause, for one day you will play in Carnegie Hall. Of that I have no doubt.”

Just to hold it, thought Helena, is enough. How can I possibly play an instrument that the great Giuseppe Guarneri played — a delicate instrument carved with his own hands. This is too much! Her fingers caressed the body of the violin, softly, gently, as if not willing to defile it with her amateurish practices!

“I know what you are thinking, that you are not worthy to hold it in your hands, let alone attempting to bring it to life with your fine fingers. But you must know, my little Scheherazade, that you have become my star pupil and that in the not so far future, you will outpace me. In fact, you have already done that. I have taught you all I know and all I have. It’s up to you now to carry on from where I have left.

“Now, do not be saddened for me and my wife, my sweet Scheherazade, because we are leaving Budapest for a new land somewhere over the seas. But, if there are problems during our travels, then I am taking no risks; I am leaving the Guarneri to you in my Will. We won’t be taking it with us, but it will be stored in the country within safe hands for as long as necessary.”

The tears came. She could not hold them back and she moved the Guarneri to one side to protect it.

“I . . . I don’t know what to say. This is all so sudden, Professor.”

“Just know one thing, my little Scheherazade. The angels will protect you wherever you go in life. You have superior talent on the piano, but with the violin you are among Heaven’s greatest. My wife once asked me why I keep calling you my little Scheherazade because you don’t go around telling stories, but you do — you tell the world’s greatest stories through your ability to turn your violin into a heavenly instrument. When you play, Helena, all the saints in all the heavens stop what they are doing and listen with great appreciation. For the moment, accept what I say as the greatest truth you will ever know. Wherever life may lead you in these troublesome times, know that you have one direction and one direction alone — for you are already a *maestré*.

“Now, put your fear of the Guarneri behind you and play for me, one last time.”

She brushed the tears aside and fitted the Guarneri to her shoulder. Her eyes scanned the music he had chosen for her — it was Ernst’s *The Last Rose of Summer* . . . an extremely difficult piece. But, she thought, I can handle it. Now I can handle anything!

Benjamin Sabot came out of his father’s tailor shop on Vacci Street and ran down the snow laden footpath. He’d be late and Helena might not wait for him. Stretch my legs, hurry, hurry. He turned a corner and slowed. There were at least ten Arrow-Cross fascists in front of him. He had to decide if crossing over to the other footpath might save him, decided so, and was making his run when a voice called out.

“Hey, Jew boy! What’s the hurry? We wish to talk with you!”

Three Arrow-Cross men ran across the road and blocked his journey. The rest of the men followed.



The tallest of them, a man with a scar on his right cheek and what appeared to be cauliflower ears from too many boxing tournaments or fights, grabbed him by his right arm and swung him around to face him.

“Like I said, what’s your hurry, Jew boy?”

Benjamin thought it best to be honest with this vicious looking man. “I have to meet someone and if I’m late, I’ll be in all sorts of trouble.”

“I see. Well, we have to have a little talk. That’s how it goes, Jew boy. So, if you’re late, you’re late. Is that not so? Where have you come from and why are you out on the streets?”

“I . . . er . . . I’ve come from my father’s shop.”

“Oh really, so your father is in business, is he? A dirty little Jew like you, aye?”

“Don’t say that about my father!”

“Oh, looky-here, men. We have a brave little Jew here. So, where’s this shop of your father’s eh?”

“I can’t say.”

“You can’t say! You know, Jew boy, we’ve been shooting people like you, down by the river. It’s amazing how some of them keep floating around. Can you float, Jew boy?”

“I don’t know. Now, I have to go, else I’ll be late.”

Benjamin began to pull away, but the Arrow-Cross leader held him back. “So, who is it you have to meet, Jew boy?”

“It’s my girl-friend. If I don’t get there on time she’ll probably call the police who will come looking for me.”

“Well, well. The police, aye? Fancy that. You know, Jew boy, these days we *are* the police!”

Benjamin broke away, tearing the sleeve of his jacket, but he didn’t care. He began to run down the street. Free! He was Free! Run for your life, Ben, run, run as if your life depends on it.

Someone in the crowd took out a pistol and Benjamin heard this explosion behind him as simultaneously his legs would not move anymore, no matter how he tried to force them. His back was on fire and he fell into the snow-covered gutter where there was sudden darkness. Can’t be, were his last thoughts before he lapsed into unconsciousness. The snow is white, the day is bright. So bright! White, white, so bright!

Helena was well rugged up against the cold, but this was ridiculous. Ben was half an hour late! Oh, where is he? She couldn’t wait any longer, otherwise her parents would come looking for her. She couldn’t have that, so she slowly walked away, carrying her violin in it’s new case. Her father, Leopold, just didn’t have the time to make a new case so he had gone out and bought one. She understood that. He was a busy man these days with his work on the Relief and Rescue Committee. She wondered why all these refugees he was helping were pouring into Hungary, only for many of them to be sent off to Ukraine? We are living in very strange times, she thought, very strange indeed. And why were the Weisemann’s leaving? The professor didn’t really explain his reasons. She doubted she would see him again, but he had left her with a vision. She would go on and on, climbing the heights, and yes, if fate was kind to her, she would one day, perform in Carnegie Hall. But the sight of all those uniformed Arrow-Cross fascists coming around the corner in front of her made her freeze. •

To be continued

Con Clusion



the week that was



What a tangled mess politics is in at the present time! It seems that there are problems insurmountable, but then as history tells us, that’s nothing new. The State of Victoria appears to be the one with the most corruption re. the CFMEU union money rackets within the Bog Build . . . er . . . sorry, Big Build. Premier Jacinta Allan makes a face of it and denies she is in any way to blame. Many think otherwise. Then there are the multiple fire-bombings which first began with cigarette/tobacco shops which now has spread to pubs and restaurants, having received protection racket notices: pay up or else, have refused with a fire resulting to their premises. Burnt out. And the errant boys (thugs) running around with knives and machetes in shopping malls and other. Wow! All of that occurring with the premier making new laws that don’t come into force until months later. How do you tell that to a mother who has just lost her son through teenage stabbings? Lets all ship out to Tasmania, which since convict days has the lowest crime rates of all the other states.

Some good news for parents. The Australian government has announced paid parental leave is extended to 26 weeks. This includes adopted children. And late news is that the premier of Victoria, Jacinta Allan, might . . . just might call for a royal commission into the CFMEU and the Big Build. Cross your fingers, toes, and eyes on this one. 🙏