

which includes a reprint of the small centenary parish history. This publishing choice may have merit given the 1967 booklet is out of print, but it is hoped that such a trend is not automatically replicated in future historiography.

Ecumenical vignettes, rare to be found in a parish history, are applauded. Despite the length, there are only a few typographical errors (mainly in the index) which reflects the writer's diligence. Indeed, it is most pleasing to see an index, something rare in Catholic parish histories. The author, to his credit, has made the additional effort of including a person's occupation in entries. However, the index is slightly weakened by not including events and institutions.

Dr Fowler's work sets a high mark in Catholic historiography. This book will appeal to a wide cross section, including tertiary and seminary students, clergy, laity, inner city communities, and descendants of pioneer families. The St Bede's Catholic community can be justly proud that they are the recipients of such tremendous scholarship.

BOOK REVIEW

Santamaria: A most unusual man

Author: Gerard Henderson
Publisher: Miegunyah Press, 2015
ISBN: 9780522868586
Hardback, 505 pages, \$59.99

Book review by James Franklin*

Controversy about B A Santamaria may die down when everyone passionately involved with his life and ideas is dead. That will be some time yet. In the meantime, all sides will welcome Henderson's well-informed, accurate, and generally fair account.

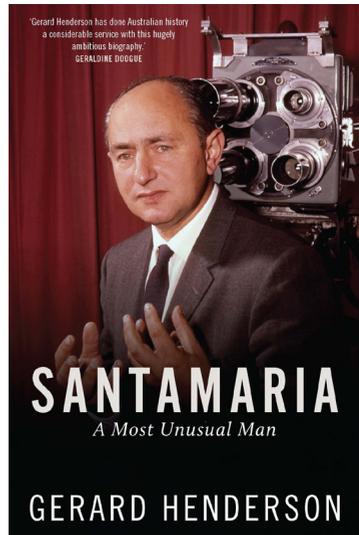
Santamaria was on the right side of the main international political issue of his time, the threat of Communism. He devoted his immense intellectual and organizational skills to combatting it, in an atmosphere where many were either stupidly blind to the threat or criminally covering it up. If he

*James Franklin is editor of the *Journal of the Australian Catholic Historical Society*.

had lived in Czechoslovakia or Vietnam – or if he had died in 1950 – his alarmist views would have been vindicated in full and his actions proven to be justified. The question is whether the rising prosperity and political stability of 1950s Australia rendered his apocalyptic vision out of date and his infiltration of the Labor Party morally improper. It is easy to see why Stalin with an H-bomb and Evatt's office with communist moles were still cause for worry. It is equally easy to see the point of view of traditional anti-communist Labor men like Calwell who thought no good could come of single-issue conspiratorial tactics. Henderson's careful account lays out the facts as clearly and comprehensively as can be done at this stage. He is particularly strong on the ins and outs of political issues and strategies and on clearing away myths that have arisen. Readers can make their own judgements.

Santamaria as man of ideas is not quite so clear in the book. That is not for lack of basic raw material – perhaps no Australian expounded such a huge and varied stream of closely-argued positions over so many decades. But Santamaria himself gave the impression that he did all his serious thinking when young, and adopted a position that then required only tactical changes and decoration with current references for the rest of his life. All his effort could then go into organization and propaganda. Since everything he wrote was with an eye for its political effect, it is not easy for a biographer to work out what he really believed.

That is particularly so with Santamaria's relation to his Catholic faith. He was seen and saw himself as staunchly and militantly Catholic. But the vision of Catholicism he absorbed from his mentor Archbishop Mannix involved certain departures from the mainstream. Indeed, it was Santamaria's own book about Mannix that revealed the extraordinary extent of Mannix's defiance of Vatican directives with which he disagreed. Santamaria persistently evaded Vatican orders in the late 1950s concerning the separation of Church and state. But come 1968, no-one was more enthusiastic than him in defending *Humanae Vitae* and demanding loyalty to the Pope's teaching. In his pamphlet *Contraception* (Henderson calls it



“Santa’s very own encyclical”), he wrote “If [anyone] proposes to remain a member, he accepts the decisions of its governing body. If he finds those decisions shocking to his conscience, he has the courage of his convictions and leaves the organisation.” When Santamaria became deeply unhappy with the directions the Church took after the Second Vatican Council, he set up the magazine *AD2000* to turn back the tide. Santamaria’s attitude resembles that of Pope Francis’s recent conservative critics: loyalty to the Pope is for when the Pope agrees with me.

One regrettable lacuna in the book is the story of why Santamaria and Henderson fell out, after working closely for some years around 1970. In general terms, the answer is obvious – they were both “I did it my way” personalities and no organization was going to be big enough for both of them. But the exact first-hand story of what happened would have been entertaining.

In researching the biography, Henderson did not have the cooperation of Santamaria’s family. His book is the last word on Santamaria on the evidence now available. It may not be the last word if the family releases more documents to a sympathetic biographer.

BOOK REVIEW

Australian Religious Thought

Author: Wayne Hudson

Publisher: Monash University Publishing, 2016

ISBN: 9781922235763

Paperback, 248 pages, \$22.95

Book review by James Franklin*

This is an excellent and hugely informative book on its topic. But its topic is not exactly Australian religious thought. It is mainly about Australian semi-religious thought, or unorthodox religious thought, or original religious thought, or sometimes, hardly-at-all-religious thought. Most readers will be astonished at the inventiveness of the vast range of Australian religious thinkers that Hudson has dug up, and grateful for his mostly thumbnail

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