

Notes from a Cold War Island

Tadeusz Andrzejaczek and *Quadrant*
Magazine

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Australia in the postwar period can readily be characterised as a “Cold War island.” The psychology of the times, shaped by Australia’s regional circumstances and cultural dispositions, figured Anglo-European Australia as isolated, small, and vulnerable.¹ Prior to the signing of the Australia, New Zealand and United States Security Treaty in 1951 under the Menzies government, the Chifley Labor government’s cry of “populate or perish” testified to the shaping of a particular cultural mentality in which racial, economic, and political anxieties played their part.² Arriving in Australia, how then did émigré architects engage with these national currents; how did they see their adopted home?

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, at the height of the Cold War in Australia, the conservative literary magazine *Quadrant* published a series of articles by the Polish émigré architect Tadeusz Andrzejczek (1915–1987). Polished, articulate, and urbane, Andrzejczek’s contributions, including “Suburbia – A Cultural Defeat” (1957)³ and “Living in Glass Boxes” (1964),⁴ read as cultural critiques of suburban lifestyles and popular taste that would have represented a European worldview to a growing Australian

readership.⁵ However, this paper will argue that Andrzejczek’s participation in *Quadrant* must also be read in the context of that magazine’s role in initiating and driving the highly politicised debates about national culture, democracy, and freedom that defined Australia as a Cold War island during the postwar period.⁶ Above all, Andrzejczek’s writing demonstrates that architectural involvement in and promotion of the Cold War was multi-stranded, encompassing interventions and tactics that could even be described as – using the strategic language of the time – Special Political Action.⁷

There is increasing interest from historians⁸ in defining architects’ roles in designing and constructing large-scale military, scientific and civilian buildings and critical infrastructure allied with the air space and defence industries in Australia. Andrzejczek was active here too: in Perth in the late 1960s, he worked on the design of the telescope housing⁹ for the Perth-Lowell facility at the Perth Observatory at Bickley.¹⁰ Despite that project’s contribution to NASA’s Viking Project, it would be misleading to see Andrzejczek merely as a tool of American scientific imperialism. In examining his professional contributions to the Cold

1. David Lowe, Menzies and the “Great World Struggle”: *Australia’s Cold War 1948–1954* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 1999), 317, 320–321.
2. Lowe, *Menzies*, 317.
3. Tadeusz Andrzejczek, “Suburbia – A Cultural Defeat,” *Quadrant* 2, no. 1 (1957): 25–30.
4. Tadeusz Andrzejczek, “Living in Glass Boxes,” *Quadrant* 8, no. 3 (1964): 67–69.
5. *Quadrant*, advertisement, *The Bulletin*, 86, no. 4416 (1964), 51.
6. Cassandra Pybus, “Quadrant magazine and CIA largesse,” *Overland* 155 (1999): 9–15; John Chiddick, “Quadrant: The Evolution of an Australian Conservative Journal,” in *Campaigning Culture and the Global Cold War: The Journals of the Congress for Cultural Freedom*, ed. G. Scott-Smith and C. Lerg (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 303–320.
7. Brian Toohey and William Pinwill, *Oyster: The Story of the Australian Secret Intelligence Service* (Port Melbourne: William Heinemann Australia, 1989), 60.

War project, a deeper examination of his personal motivations and political affiliations is needed.

Andrzejczek's involvement with *Quadrant* and his choice to publish his work with that outlet instead of with the émigré press suggests that, despite their experiences of wartime conflict and exile, Eastern European architects of his generation did not necessarily see their arrival in Australia in terms of a retreat from the public sphere. It also points to a need to re-evaluate the openly anti-communist, anti-totalitarian bent that has historically characterised *Quadrant* in light of the common experiences of some of its founders and early correspondents. This includes Richard Krygier, who was a Polish-Jewish refugee and founding secretary of the Australian Association for Cultural Freedom (AACF), and the magazine's publisher.¹¹ The search for "a new urban humanism" in Andrzejczek's writings for *Quadrant* was not apolitical, but deeply informed by his Polish identity, his anti-totalitarian commitment, and his wartime experience of combat, injury, imprisonment and survival.

8.

Philip Goad, "Inconvenient Truths: Framing an Architectural History for Cold War Australia," *Fabrications* 31, no. 2 (2021): 260–278; Christine Garnaut, Robert Freestone and Iris Iwanicki, "Cold War heritage and the planned community: Woomera Village in outback Australia," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 18, 6 (2011): 541–563; Stuart W. Leslie, "Under the Radome: The Architecture of American Cold War Surveillance," *Fabrications* 31, no. 2 (2021): 153–179.

9.

K. (Charles) Sierakowski, "Andrzejczek, Tadeusz (1915–1987)," *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 17 (Canberra: National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, 2007), accessed April 3, 2024, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/andrzejczek-tadeusz-12141/text21753>.

10.

Government of Western Australia, "Perth Observatory," State Register of Heritage Places, no. 10551, last updated January 1, 2017.

11.

Chiddick, "Quadrant," 316–18.