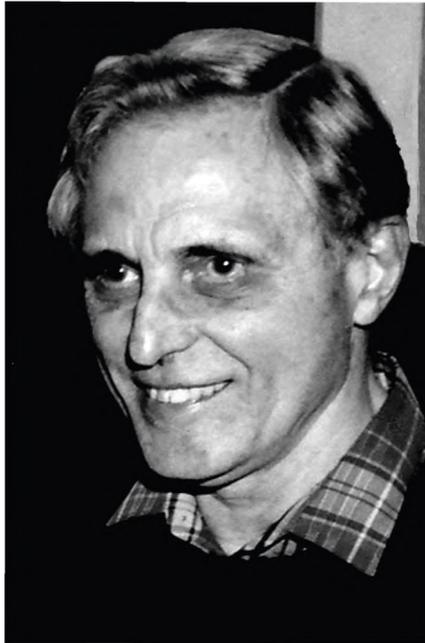

IN MEMORIAM: JAMIE MACKIE (1924–2011)



Emeritus Professor Jamie Mackie
Photo: Bill Mackie

Jamie Mackie, who died in April at his home at Somers, on Westernport Bay, southeast of Melbourne, was born in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) in 1924, a few years after Mahatma Gandhi's mass civil disobedience movement had begun to electrify the forces of anticolonial protest on the Indian subcontinent. Jamie was a warm, wise, and generous man who was to reencounter Asia—and become captivated by it—while serving aboard an Australian destroyer during World War II. He devoted his academic career to the study of those Southeast Asian nations, particularly Indonesia, that had gained their independence as the great tide of Western colonialism receded in the 1940s and 1950s.

Jamie sympathized with the aspirations of the independence movements of these emerging, and sometimes volatile, states, and was a pioneer in the study of their political systems and economies. During his tenure at three major Australian universities, he nurtured generations of students, worked to establish closer ties between Australia and the region—with Indonesia again at the forefront—and made an important contribution to an informed public debate.

He also played a central role in the push to dismantle the White Australia Policy that had restricted “non-white” immigration into the country since the turn of the century. In 1959, when he was at Melbourne University, Jamie and a colleague, the economist Ken Rivett, set up the Immigration Reform Group to campaign for the

abolition of the White Australia Policy. In an influential pamphlet, *Control or Colour Bar?*, they argued that Canberra's discriminatory immigration policy was not only morally repugnant but was inflicting great damage on the nation's reputation in Asia. Dr. Gwenda Tavan, lecturer in politics at La Trobe University, has noted that the campaign "helped popularize many of the values we have come to associate with modern Australia, including racial tolerance, internationalism, and a more pluralistic definition of national identity."

James Austin Copland Mackie—for decades he signed his academic articles "J. A. C. Mackie" until deciding that a less impersonal "Jamie" was more to his liking—spent his first three years on a tea plantation near the hill town of Kandy in central Ceylon. His father, William Copland Mackie, the son of a Melbourne tea merchant who had himself lived in Ceylon for ten years, was the manager of the Galaha tea estate and factory, one of the largest on the island. Bill Mackie—a tall, bluff, and practical man, somewhat taciturn but very welcoming to Jamie's friends—went to Ceylon as a planter in 1912, enlisted as a part-timer in the volunteer Ceylon Planters Rifle Corps, and enrolled for a time during World War I in the Royal Flying Corps. A keen sportsman, he broke Ceylon's high-jump record in 1915. He was also the golf champion of Ceylon.

Jamie's mother, the former Mary Eileen Bates, came from the wealthy Melbourne Reid and Bates families, which had a controlling interest in Buckley & Nunn, a large department store. She has been described as a rather reserved woman who was conscious of her family's standing in society. On a voyage back to Australia from England in 1919, Eileen Bates met Lieutenant Colonel Leslie Morshead, a hero of the Gallipoli campaign who would go on to become, at Tobruk and El Alamein, one of Australia's greatest generals. Morshead became Jamie's godfather. According to Jamie's brother, Bill Jr., the parents treated their younger son with great affection and admired his scholarly talent. But in the opinion of one of Jamie's undergraduate friends, "I think he rather mystified them."

"Jim," as his parents called the youngest Mackie until a housemaster at Geelong Grammar School came up with the name "Jamie," and Bill had a comfortable early childhood in Ceylon, under the care of a Sinhalese *ayah* (nursemaid). Later, a governess was sent up from Melbourne. During the Great Depression, Jamie's father scabbled a living by raising fat lambs, with citrus fruit as a sideline, on a small irrigation block near Rochester, on the flat and featureless plains of northwest Victoria. In 1936, after five years at a one-teacher state school, Jamie joined his brother at Geelong Grammar. His maternal grandmother helped with the fees.

A bastion of the establishment, packed with wealthy, well-connected boys from Melbourne and the sons of Western District graziers, Geelong Grammar was at that time undergoing a dramatic makeover at the hands of Mr. (later Sir) James Darling, a pioneering British headmaster who oversaw an expansion in both the school's enrollments and its cultural horizons, and who instilled in the students an abiding sense of *noblesse oblige*. In 1940, when Jamie was in Year 10, Darling employed twenty-five-year-old Manning Clark as Senior History Master. Clark was just back from abruptly abandoning his thesis studies and research at Oxford, and he would go on to become Australia's most famous—and controversial—historian. "He taught me for two-and-a-half years at school," Jamie once said of Clark. "In the last year, I was sort of

his number-one pupil, because I got a shining result in Matric and he basked in the glory of that, quite rightly."

At the age of nineteen, Jamie was carried back to Asia by way of the South Pacific, as an able seaman assigned to the after-gun turret on HMAS *Warramunga*, which was, as he once put it, "one of the three very fast and beautiful Tribal class destroyers" built in Australia during the war. *Warramunga* took part in all of US General Douglas MacArthur's island-hopping amphibious landings, from New Britain in December 1943 to the Philippines in 1944–45, as part of the joint Australian–American Task Force 74, performing shore-bombardment tasks and anti-submarine operations. On October 20, 1944, she unleashed repeated salvos against Japanese shore positions in the Philippines, as four US divisions prepared to storm ashore at Leyte Gulf. Blinded by cordite from the big guns and unable to see the red-hot shell casings spewing from the breech every ten seconds, Jamie and his fellow seamen carried ammunition across the deck from the hoist, fighting to keep their balance as the ship heeled with each new broadside. Three hours after the landing began, MacArthur waded ashore and proclaimed, "People of the Philippines, I have returned!"

In the ensuing three-day Battle of Leyte Gulf, widely considered to be the biggest naval encounter of World War II, if not in history, in terms of the number of ships engaged and the devastating consequences for the Japanese, 216 warships from the US Navy and two from the Royal Australian Navy, supported by 600 other vessels, confronted a depleted Japanese force of sixty-three warships and delivered a crippling blow to the Imperial Japanese Navy. As the battle raged, kamikaze planes made their first terrifying appearance, crash-bombing Allied ships. At the even more torrid Lingayan Gulf landings, Jamie had a ringside seat as kamikaze pilots picked out ships and attacked them. *Warramunga* was nearly hit by a Japanese plane, which, at the last moment, struck a nearby US destroyer instead; he and his fellow crewmembers considered themselves fortunate to have survived. Decades later, while dining at the home of a Japanese academic friend, he learned that his host had trained as a suicide pilot and had been due to fly during one of these engagements. It strengthened the bond between the two men.

On a visit to war-ravaged Manila, the twenty-year-old Mackie was impressed by the spirit and resilience of the Filipinos and struck by the fact that the Spanish (and even, briefly, the British, in 1762–64) had been in the city long before the European settlement of Australia, "a history that almost none of us in Australia then knew anything about." This led to Jamie's interest in the countries to Australia's north, which eventually took in Indonesia and most other parts of Southeast Asia.

Warramunga was in Tokyo Bay as part of the combined fleet for the formal Japanese surrender, which took place on USS *Missouri* on September 2, 1945. *Warramunga* remained in Japanese waters, on and off, for the next eight months. During that time, Jamie had an opportunity to explore parts of Japan, including Hiroshima. He and his shipmates were not above taking more than the one permitted packet of cigarettes ashore to sell on the black market, despite searches by US military police. "The Americans," he recalled, "didn't understand the design of the British uniform, and you could get two packets down the front of your trousers, and the Americans were always too polite to search there. You could get another two packets in your cap. Sometimes you could go ashore with five packets, a fortune in occupied Japan." On one occasion,

Jamie managed to trade his cigarettes for several albums of HMV 78s pressed in Japan, with each record holding a complete symphony by Beethoven or Mozart. Hitchhiking back to the ship, he was given a lift by two American MPs. He was so terrified they would inspect his knapsack that he found it difficult to maintain a normal conversation.

In Japan, he found an extraordinarily ordered society, very tightly knit, as well as "incredible stoicism in the face of defeat and great hardships." He once described walking across tiny rice paddies on the outskirts of Kure:

I was suddenly struck by the similarities of this utterly unfenced landscape of innumerable pocket-handkerchief plots with the image I had of the European medieval open-field system and its tangle of property rights ... Clearly, these were complex and richly textured societies; my curiosity was aroused precisely because I felt so ignorant of what made them tick ... I suppose that what all this did to me above all was to heighten my awareness of the flatness and complacency of Australian life.¹

Did he ever think of studying Japan? "No," he replied, when asked this question twenty years ago. "It all seemed so alien."

Back in Australia in 1946, he entered the History Department at Melbourne University, which was then enjoying what many have perceived as a "golden age." He took philosophy in his first year as a single subject (and scored a first) and graduated with first-class honors in History. But he was also strongly influenced, as was Herbert Feith, another Melbourne University undergraduate, by a series of lectures on Asian nationalism given by Professor W. Macmahon Ball. In late 1945, the Department of External Affairs had sent Ball to Jakarta to report on the tumultuous events playing themselves out in Java so it would not be dependent, as Jamie once put it, "on what they were getting from the Poms and the Dutch, both of whom they distrusted intensely." Ball spoke of Indonesia's struggle for independence in a sympathetic way and sparked the interest of Feith and Mackie.

The two young men were very different in background and temperament. Herb, whose Austrian-Jewish parents had come to Australia as refugees in 1939 when he was nine, was an exuberant, compassionate man, a gifted linguist who conducted extensive field research in Indonesia and who went on to gain a PhD in political science at Cornell University, producing one of the classic studies of Indonesian politics, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia*. He had qualities that Jamie referred to fondly as "idealism, saintliness, or otherworldliness." Jamie, though quite idealistic himself in some ways, was more restrained, more worldly, than Feith. While sharing Herb's interest in Indonesian politics, he came to focus more on the sorts of policies that would best contribute to Indonesia's economic growth, and devoted more time to rural development (especially in East Java), the overseas Chinese, and international relations. Although the two men pointed, as Jamie once put it, in "different ideological directions," they were to become lifelong friends.

In 1951, Herb went to Indonesia under a Volunteer Graduate Scheme he had helped pioneer, to work for two years on a local salary in the Ministry of Information.

¹ Jamie Mackie, "The Impacts of Asia," Asian Studies Association of Australia, *Review* 7,2 (1983): 30–31.

Jamie set out that year for University College, Oxford, where he took “Modern Greats”—Philosophy, Politics, and Economics, or PPE. He gained an Oxford BA with first-class honors. In 1956, he made his first visit to Indonesia, where Herb helped him find a position as an economist in the State Planning Bureau, in Jakarta, under the Colombo Plan. Over the next two years, Jamie came to know and admire a number of young intellectuals associated with former Prime Minister Sutan Sjahrir’s Indonesian Socialist Party. One of them was Soedjatmoko, Sjahrir’s gifted and personable brother-in-law. Another was Mohammad Sadli. Still another was Widjojo Nitisastro, an East Javanese demographer and professor of economics. As head of the so-called “Berkeley Mafia,” a group of US-trained technocrats who advised President Suharto after 1965, Widjojo was to do more than anyone to transform Indonesia from basket case into one of the fastest-growing East Asian tiger economies.

Back in Australia, Jamie established and ran a succession of academic institutions focused on Asia, staying in each post for a decade and leaving a deep impression on many of those whom he taught. He was the founding head of the Department of Indonesian and Malayan Studies at Melbourne University (1958–67), one of the first such programs in the country. In 1968, he moved to Monash University, also in Melbourne, to take up the position of research director in the university’s interdisciplinary Centre of Southeast Asian Studies (CSEAS), which had been established in 1964 by John Legge. Modeled in part on Cornell University’s Southeast Asia Program, the center drew particular inspiration from the Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, which had been founded by Professor George Kahin. By the early 1970s, Monash had established itself as a world-renowned center on Southeast Asian studies, due mainly to the efforts of John Legge, Herb Feith, and Jamie Mackie.

If Herb and Jamie had become committed Indonesianists during their stay in Java, John had begun moving in that direction at about the same time, albeit by a different route. Abandoning his work on the Southwestern Pacific, partly because, in Perth, he was too far from his sources, but partly, too, because he felt Indonesia was more important, he went in 1956 as a Carnegie Fellow to Cornell, where he began working in the library on Indonesian regionalism and local government. Although the core commitment to Indonesia shared by Mackie, Legge, and Feith—the “Big Three” institution builders at Monash—owed much to that nation’s proximity to Australia, Jamie was also interested in comparing various other Southeast Asian countries to one another.

In the 1980s, the center of gravity for Indonesian studies in Australia began to move north, to the Australian National University, in Canberra, due, in no small part, to Jamie’s own move to the ANU as foundation professor in the Department of Political and Social Change at the Research School of Pacific Studies (1978–89). In each of these centers of learning, one of Jamie’s strengths was that his professional interests ranged across such a wide field—politics, economics, history, international relations, rural development, entrepreneurship, and the role of Southeast Asia’s ethnic Chinese. (In contrast to some other Indonesian specialists, he did not have much expertise on Javanese culture, language, literature, or Islam.) His greatest strength, however, was his ability to teach—and inspire—his graduate students. He was exceedingly generous with his time and never tired of helping. He listened carefully, thought carefully, and came up with sage advice, forwarding pages of foolscap notes with comments on draft

chapters and research proposals. "He was," Bob Elson has noted, "astonishingly inspirational and supportive ... He made me, and everyone else at Monash's CSEAS, feel as though they were part of an important and highly worthwhile enterprise."

Jamie had a major role in supervising the MAs and PhDs of many students. One of them was Harold Crouch, a PhD student of Herb Feith's who came under Jamie's supervision for a year while Herb was on leave. Another was Charles Coppel; again, Jamie also took over supervising his work when Herb was on leave and, in this case, he stayed on as Coppel's principal supervisor until Charles completed his PhD three years later. Yet another student was Bob Elson, who, as an undergraduate, studied under both John Legge and Jamie; both of them, at different times, supervised his PhD, as did David Chandler. Jamie was one of two supervisors when Boediono, now the Indonesian vice president, was at Monash working on his masters degree in economics. Although Herb was the main supervisor of Nazaruddin Sjamsuddin's PhD, Jamie had a lot of input into that dissertation, as he did with the doctoral dissertation of Rex Mortimer.

Jamie's major publications included *Problems of the Indonesian Inflation*, which was written during a semester he spent in Ithaca, NY, associated with the Cornell Modern Indonesia Project in 1963–64, and published in 1967.² Seven years later he published *Konfrontasi: The Indonesia-Malaysia Dispute, 1963–1966*, which deals with Indonesia's unsuccessful effort to oppose the formation of Malaysia.³ In 1976, he was editor and part-author of *The Chinese in Indonesia: Five Essays*.⁴ In 2005, when he was eighty, he published *Bandung 1955: Non-Alignment and Afro-Asian Solidarity*, a book commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the Bandung conference.⁵ He produced scores of academic papers as well and wrote regularly for newspapers, both in Australia and Asia, often about Australian–Indonesian relations. He was not able to deliver as much as he had hoped on a dauntingly large collective project on rural change in Java, which was to have been the centerpiece of the research focus of his department at the ANU. But he and Djumilah Zain wrote an admired East Java chapter in a 1989 book on regional development, and he inspired others to do excellent work as part of the project.

Although Jamie had studied economics at Oxford, he had no extended formal training in that field and always insisted that he wasn't an economist. But, in the opinion of Professor Hal Hill of the ANU, Jamie had an unerring instinct for always getting it "right." "He didn't have the advanced theory and technique," Hill has said, "but I'd back him as much as many of the highly qualified technical commentariat on major economic issues. And this was fortified by his interest in the business world."

For Jamie Mackie, immigration reform was a moral issue to the extent, as he told one interviewer, "that many of us had Asian friends, and they couldn't come into Australia ... one of our arguments in the Immigration Reform Group was that we had

² J. A. C. Mackie, *Problems of the Indonesian Inflation* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1967).

³ J. A. C. Mackie, *Konfrontasi: The Indonesia–Malaysia Dispute, 1963–1966* (Kuala Lumpur, London, and Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1974).

⁴ J. A. C. Mackie, ed., *The Chinese in Indonesia: Five Essays* (Melbourne: Thomas Nelson [Australia] in association with the Australian Institute of International Affairs, 1976).

⁵ Jamie Mackie, *Bandung 1955: Non-Alignment and Afro-Asian Solidarity* (Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, and Paris: Editions Didier Millet, 2005).

to make a very clear break and some sort of symbolic act to indicate that the White Australia Policy is dead." Early in the campaign against that policy, he and his colleagues cautiously estimated that Australia, for an experimental period of three to five years, should allow 1,500 non-Europeans to settle annually under bilateral agreements with their governments. Within twenty-five years, due to changing social attitudes and a surge in refugee numbers after the fall of South Vietnam, Australia was accepting around 50,000 Asians a year, more than thirty times the number the Immigration Reform Group had proposed. The numbers have continued to grow.

A sociable and outgoing man, Jamie had contact not only with fellow academics and students, but also with politicians, bureaucrats, diplomats, and journalists. Always an innovator, he was, in 1983, the co-founder, with Peter McCawley, of the ANU Indonesia Update, a discussion group that has grown into an annual two-day conference drawing up to four-hundred academics, policy-makers, politicians, journalists, and students.

With his crumpled white seersucker suits and tweedy jackets, his way of folding his arms across his chest, tilting his head back, and gazing thoughtfully into the middle distance, his long pauses as he weighed and measured each word, his habit of peering over a pair of bifocals (until these gave way to something more modern), Jamie seemed every bit the distracted don. Once, when he was dining with two friends in a Chinese restaurant in Sydney, a young Cantonese waitress stared at him for a bit and then demanded, "Are you a professor?" To people who did not know him well, or who did not share his passion for Indonesia, he could come across as unduly serious, sober, and grave, a little dour perhaps, a man with no small talk. But to those who knew him better and who shared his interests, he was charming, good-tempered, informal, irreverent, informative, and unfailingly polite.

Some academics were more outspoken than Jamie Mackie in their condemnation of the army-directed mass slaughter that accompanied the emergence of the Suharto regime in 1965, and of the army's subsequent brutality in East Timor. Jamie, who had witnessed the terrible price that ordinary Indonesians had paid as a result of what he termed President Sukarno's "sublime unconcern with economic issues," was more willing to give the reform-minded Suharto regime a chance, as were almost all the neo-classical economists in Australian universities. He welcomed the economic achievements of the New Order government, which improved the lives of tens of millions of Indonesians. But he had few illusions about the nature of the regime or about the enigmatic figure at its center.

At the end of a journal article in 1983, Jamie recalled a train journey he had made across Java in 1965 during a time of drought and disastrous inflation, but before the dreadful killing that followed the failed coup on October 1 that year.⁶

We were passing the superb Mount Lawu as the sun was setting, the mountain rising up magical and magnificent from the plain near Madiun ... And despite all that was frustrating, disturbing, and depressing about Indonesia at that time, the combination of sheer beauty in the landscape and age-old dignity in the people won out in my mind. "Why is it that Indonesia tugs so intensely at one's

⁶ Jamie Mackie, "The Impacts of Asia," p. 31.

emotions?" I wrote in my notebook that evening. I am still trying to find the answer.

— David Jenkins⁷

⁷I would like to thank the following people for their valuable contributions to this article: Ben Anderson, Charles Coppel, Harold Crouch, Mick Dexter, Bob Elson, George Hicks, Hal Hill, Ken Inglis, John Legge, Ian Macintosh, Alwynne (Onnie) Mackie, Bill Mackie, David Mackie, Ann Moyal, and Ken Ward. The article also draws on conversations with Jamie Mackie over many years.