

What's Up Down Under

by Hugh Fitzgerald

Pauline Hanson is a well-known political figure in Australia whose general anti-immigrant stance has recently become much more focused on Muslim immigration. After years in the political wilderness, on July 2 Hanson was elected, as a Senator, to the Australian Parliament. This has greatly alarmed Muslims and their apologists. The comments on her unexpected victory were hysterical in tone, deploring her “racism” and “bigotry” and her “spreading racist and Islamophobic vitriol and abuse which threatens and marginalizes” and so on and so predictably forth. Her party, One Nation, includes in its platform a ban on new mosques and on halal certification, and a policy of zero-net migration (where the numbers of migrants who are admitted to Australia match the number of permanent departures each year).

One Nation is not the only party making such proposals; three other smaller parties, for example, have included a ban on halal certification in their platforms. But what has been supported only by One Nation, and deserves respectful attention, is Hanson's proposal that a Royal Commission be appointed to study Islam. Royal commissions are ad hoc formal inquiries into matters of great significance, usually staffed by retired judges; Hanson wants one set up to determine whether Islam is a “religion or an ideology” or, in her forthright formulation, “Let's determine if it is a religion or a political ideology trying to undermine our culture.”

By this one assumes Hanson means to have asked, and answered, a series of questions that the political and media elites have not addressed. These would likely include: Is Islam akin to other faiths, in what it asks or demands of its adherents? In Islam is the “church” separate from or part of the “state”? What claim to worldly power does Islam make? Is the role of

Islam limited in its claims on individual believers, or does it attempt to supply them with a Complete Regulation of Life? What does it mean when Believers are to think of themselves as members of a collective Umma (the Community of Believers), all over the world, who have not merely the right but the duty to spread the faith through every possible means, including but not limited to force? Does Islam, as some have claimed, view the world as divided between Believers and Non-Believers, that is, between Dar al-Islam, the territory where Islam dominates and Muslims rule, and Dar al-Harb, where Islam does not yet dominate and Infidels, for now, still rule? Does Islam encourage free and skeptical inquiry or severely limit such inquiry by punishing any questioning of the faith? Does Islam permit Believers to leave the faith, or does it, rather, prescribe death as the proper punishment for apostasy? Does Islam allow for equal treatment of non-Muslims under Muslim rule? What, according to Islam, are the rights of women?

These are the sorts of questions that a Royal Commission might take as its remit, if Pauline Hanson were to get her way. And from everything we now read, many Australians, like the Germans and even Canadians, who have until now been among the most open and welcoming to migrants, are having second thoughts about the desirability of Muslim immigrants. There is a general unease in the West about the numbers of Muslim "refugees" arriving, about their behavior once in the West, especially toward Western women, about the increased threat of domestic terrorism, about the assertiveness of Muslims who reject integration but attempt, rather, to force changes in Western societies in order to accommodate *their* mores. This unease only grows with the continuing pollyannish claims of apologists that "diversity is wonderful," or the attempts to silence any criticism of Islam by wielding the billy-club of "Islamophobia." It has dawned on many people in the West that those who are in power have a responsibility to study both Islam, and how Muslims have treated non-Muslims over the past 1400 years, after they conquered so many lands and subjugated

so many non-Muslim peoples. Hanson and her One Nation party believe it makes sense to study the texts and teachings of Islam to determine if it looks more like what we think of as a religion – Christianity, say, or Judaism – or more like a totalitarian political movement, akin to Fascism or Communism, bent on conquest, power, and control.

Pauline Hanson's request for a Royal Commission apparently did not go down well with a figure on the Australian Left, one Anne Aly, who is described in [a puff piece in The West Australian](#) as "Dr Aly, a renowned counter-terrorism expert" who, elected at the same time as Pauline Hanson, has become the first female Muslim in Australia's Parliament. Her "renowned counter-terrorism" expertise had previously been on display in a letter she wrote to a court on behalf of a radical Islamic preacher, offering a character reference for Junaid Thorne, who, because of his comments, which included publicly supporting the *Charlie Hebdo* massacre, calling Jews and Christians "filthy rapists," and defending his own brother, who had tried to flee Australia to join the Islamic State, had been forbidden from flying. Thorne had defied the ban and taken a plane nonetheless, and it was for this that he was facing punishment. [Dr. Aly suggested](#) to the court that instead of being given prison time, Thorne could be moved to Perth, where he could enroll in one of her "de-radicalization" programs. This would be a way, she wrote, of keeping Junaid Thorne "on the right side of the law." The New South Wales District Court was not impressed; instead of Anne Aly's program in Perth, Thorne got the jail time he deserved.

Anne Aly – I'm not sure who decided she should be called a "renowned counter-terrorism expert," but I suspect Anne Aly herself – has been, in the real world, an adjunct professor and "Early Career Research Fellow" at Curtin University. She is greatly alarmed by Pauline Hanson's proposal for a Royal Commission that would look into Islam. This was, she sternly warned, a "divisive" proposal. But what does Anne Aly mean?

Why would such a proposal be “divisive” – or rather, how can she know in advance that it would be “divisive”? If there is nothing to be discovered about Islam that would alarm Infidels, then what is there for Muslims to worry about? Clearly Dr. Aly believes that more information about Islam, made public by a Royal Commission, would not be reassuring to Infidels but, rather, cause unspecified “divisions.” What Dr. Aly wants, what many other Muslims in the West want, is to be able to continue to suppress such study of Islam, where they cannot control the outcome, for as long as possible. If greater knowledge of Islam would raise the level of Infidel anxiety – i.e., be “divisive” – then such knowledge must not be sought in the first place.

But Pauline Hanson is once again a formidable political force in Australia, and Aly may not be able to stop that proposed Royal Commission. “I think Hanson will have a huge impact on how Islam is discussed in Australia,” political commentator Margo Kingston said. “Right now these matters are not discussed or only discussed by the far-right. But now it’ll go mainstream.”

So what else can the anne-als of this world do except what they’ve been doing all along, to keep issuing bromides about “diversity” (Always Good) and “Islamophobia” (Always Bad) in the hope that that will be enough to shut down thought, and then all shall be well, all manner of things shall be well, with a peace that – as per usual, I’m afraid, and not only in Australia – passeth understanding?