

# Australia's ABC, Always Quick To Seize an Opportunity to Shill For Islam

*As we see from this piece by one Rachel Kohn, for Radio National's program "The Spirit of Things", that turns the presence in Australia of a touring exhibition of artworks from the Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg, into a hook on which to hang a long screed about Catherine the Great's relations with...Muslims, in which she is held up as a shining example of toleration, over against those wicked, wicked Islamophobes, that is, Voltaire, and the Russian Orthodox Christians.*

*Between the lines, of course, one can draw a conclusion somewhat different from the rosy picture that the author – and her cited source – try to present; one may conclude that the Muslims under Catherine's rule, having been pretty thoroughly defeated not long before, simply gritted their teeth, invoked "darura", and knuckled under... for fear of being squashed flat if they didn't.*

*Perhaps Hugh Fitzgerald may like to offer an opinion. Anyway, here is the article, so you may see just why the more intelligent Aussies are starting to get sick to the back teeth of being told about Muslims, Muslims, Muslims both in season and out of it.*

<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/spiritofthings/catherine-the-great-and-russias-muslims/6670460>

*"Catherine the Great and Russia's Muslims".*

*One could parody that headline. Is anyone up to do it? Pick a subject, any subject, and then add the second clause "...and Muslims", or "...and Islam". Because it's starting to get like that, every time one picks up a magazine or newspaper or turns*

*on the radio or TV. – CM*

"A major exhibition of art works from St Petersburg's Hermitage Museum is currently on show at the National Gallery of Victoria, a demonstration of the continuing legacy of Catherine the Great.

'Rachel Kohn takes a look at another aspect of the Tsarina's reign: her relationship with Russian Muslims.

'During her lifetime, the woman at the centre of the National Gallery of Victoria's "Masterpieces from the Hermitage" exhibition was known for her scandalous personal reputation; but Catherine the Great was a formidable politician. Nowhere was this more evident than in her handling of religious questions.

'The Tsarina, who deposed her husband Peter III and had him killed, occupied the throne from 1762 until her death in 1796, a period of rapid imperial expansion. As she expanded her empire eastward, incorporating many Jews, Protestants, Catholics, Chinese Buddhists, and animists, it was her millions of new Muslim subjects that created a special challenge.

*Yes, because Muslims are so very, very special, aren't they? Would you like to go into detail, Ms Kohn, on why exactly it is that a large Muslim minority within an otherwise non-Muslim state, and under non-Muslim rulers, represents such a "special" challenge? It wouldn't have anything to do with the jihad doctrine of Islam? With the suspicion, aggression and contempt it inculcates in Muslims, toward all Infidels qua Infidels? With a core principle of Islam, that it is the "religion of domination", that (as Hassan al-Banna, founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, once put it) "Islam is to dominate, and not be dominated", now, would it? – CM*

'Particularly after she conquered the Crimea and the Caucasus, there were many Muslims in the border regions.

*I observe that how this conquest came about, is glossed over. Would it not be because the Muslims in those regions had been constantly conducting raids – slave-taking raids – into Russia, for centuries? – CM*

*'These Muslim subjects' natural religious (sic: and political, for Islam is fundamentally political – CM) lay with the Ottoman Empire – Russia's imperial rival.*

*It wasn't simply about Great Power rivalry. This is about the obligation of the Caliph to incite and conduct war – jihad – against Infidels, in order to expand the area of "turf" controlled by Islam, by Muslims. That is why the Ottoman Empire, the pre-eminent Islamic entity, and seat of the Caliphate for centuries, ceaselessly attacked Christian Russia. – CM*

*'In order to prevent sedition and retain strong defences, Catherine was obliged to establish herself as a protector of religious freedom.*

*She presumably deemed it impossible or impracticable to turf out all the Muslims? – CM*

*'Under her policy of religious toleration, which forbade the demolition of mosques and the forced conversion of Muslims to Christianity, Muslims came to accept the empire as the "House of Islam (dar al Islam), allowing them to fulfil their religious obligations.*

*Or some of them; one must assume Catherine would have brought down a ten-tonne hammer upon any attempts to perform the obligation of Jihad. – CM*

*"By the early 20th century, the Muslim population of the Romanov Empire was larger than under the Ottoman sultan", notes Robert Crews, author of "The Prophet and the Tsar".*

*Muslims generally do multiply and flourish under infidel rule,*

*more so than under their own crazed despots or ceaselessly feuding tribal warlords. Aside to Hugh Fitzgerald: what sort of reputation does this particular writer have, or not have? I had never heard of him until reading this article. – CM*

*'Catherine's policy of religious tolerance was not only a matter of expediency, but arose out of her genuine interest in the European Enlightenment.*

*"She was especially drawn to German thinkers," says Crews, "who counselled rulers throughout Europe to imagine religion as a mechanism of social control, of social discipline. And in this Enlightenment universe, they imagined that most religions had universal features that could be useful to states."*

*So...the Tsarina who admired the German thinkers who saw religion as a means for keeping people under control, was specially tolerant of Islam...funny, that. Since Islam has been described – by an astute ex-Muslim – as an Ur-Fascism. – CM*

*'While the monotheism of Islam, Christianity, and Judaism was seen as a potential basis for a shared moral culture (really? – ROFLMAO – which 'one God' are we talking about, Ms Kohn, Mr Crews? – there is **no** possibility of a "shared moral culture" between, on the one hand, adherents of the two faiths that hold that God teaches "you shall love your neighbour as yourself" and, on the other hand, adherents of the religion of blood and war, Islam, whose foundation text states flatly that Muslims are "harsh (or ruthless, or cruel) towards the unbelievers, and compassionate only among themselves" – CM) Catherine also believed that the price for religious toleration was the loyalty of her subjects, something she formalised by **convincing** (sic – I wonder what methods she used? – CM) Muslim elites to introduce prayers for the Tsar into Friday prayers.*

*Alongside the usual blood-curdling occult curses directed against Christians, Jews, and Infidels in general...did they scrub those? – CM*

“So the idea here”, says Crews, “Is that...that they owed her loyalty, as a religious obligation. Because she allowed mosque construction, and allowed clerics to function, she effectively gave Islam a legal standing for the first time in the Russian Empire (which, taking the long view, was a very, very stupid move indeed – as it is for any Infidel state or ruler – CM) and for that she expected loyalty”.

*No Muslim will give wholehearted loyalty to an Infidel ruler. The Muslims would have invoked the principle of darura (necessity; Catherine was too strong and tough to assail directly), pocketed their gains – not being driven out of the territory they already occupied, and able to build new mosques, and not being made to convert – and bided their time, building up their numbers, their political and social clout. Regroup and rearm, and wait for the – temporarily too strong to assail – Infidels to weaken. My guess is that what Catherine got from the Muslims was not loyalty in any real sense of the word, but a bare submission to superior force. – CM*

‘Despite being an enthusiastic reader of Enlightenment thinkers, Catherine was not always in agreement with their views. **French philosopher Voltaire, whose library Catherine purchased for the Winter Palace, expressed characteristic anti-religious sentiments in correspondence with her, saying he hoped she would rid the world of two scourges, the plague, and Islam.**

*Ooooooh the Islamophobia! Islam a “scourge”, on a par with the Black Death! Well, Voltaire wasn’t the only one to describe it that way. In the mid-20th century an astute Israeli Jewish writer, one A Carlebach, was in complete agreement with that French sceptic, Voltaire, when he said that the Arab Islamic*

*countries suffer from “the worst of all plagues...Islam”. And to be quite frank, though Crews and Kohn may talk sneeringly of “anti-religious sentiment” when describing Voltaire’s description of Islam as a “scourge”, anyone who has looked into the Islamic texts, and the bloodsoaked history of Islam on three continents over 1400 years, and uses their common-sense, can see that Voltaire, and Carlebach, and any number of others one could name, such as Conor Cruise O’Brien, were simply speaking the truth. – CM*

*‘Her greatest critic, however, was closer to home and harder to ignore: the Russian Orthodox Church.*

*‘After all, the Muscovite state had emerged victorious in the mid-16th century over its Muslim enemies, the so-called “Golden Horde”.*

*And thank goodness that Russia **was** victorious in that particular struggle. Do Kohn and Crews have any idea, any idea at all, of the hideous toll taken upon ordinary Christians, in southern Russia and in the Caucasus -Armenians, Georgians – by Muslim slave raiders? The thousands upon thousands of people taken away, the men and boys to be worked to death as slaves, the girls and women vanishing into the harems to be subjected to exactly the same sorts of mind-bending, soul-destroying, physically-torturous sexual abuse that is now being inflicted on Yazidi and Iraqi Christian slave-girls, by the jihadis of Islamic State? – CM*

*‘The state celebrated the victory (which it believed was enabled by miraculous Christian icons) with the construction of St Basil’s Cathedral on Red Square and by the demolition of mosques along the Volga River.*

*The mosques from which the jihadi slave-raiders, rapists, pillagers and oppressors had triumphantly issued in devouring swarms. Military bases of the cult of blood and war, the religion of rape, mass murder and mass enslavement. Ordinary*

*Russian non-Muslims had every right to view those mosques in the same light as a tormented Syrian or Iraqi Christian or Yazidi would view an Islamic State mosque, today. – CM*

**'To the Muscovites, Catherine's policy of tolerating islam seemed like an act of betrayal.**

*Yes. It was. – CM*

'Nonetheless, the Romanov dynasty, of which Catherine was a part, did draw on Church support and Christian symbols to reinforce her authority.

'The Tsarina's own Lutheran German background was quickly effaced, and replaced with a new officially-sanctioned Russian Orthodox identity sealed with a conversion and outward acts of piety.

"Part of the success of the religious toleration policy was that it also functioned as a form of control and policing.

"The unorganised and ethnically diverse Muslim population, which owed loyalties to various imams and religious traditions, was brought under a hierarchical system that attempted to emulate Christian ecclesial practice.

*So what matters to Ms Kohn, and Mr Crews, about Catherine the Great's reign, is that they think it was good for Muslims? But whatever is good for Muslims is, generally, as a rule, not terribly good, in the long run, for the circumambient infidels. – CM*

'In contrast to today, when religion is often seen as a divisive social issue, during the 300 years' reign of the Romanovs religion was considered a vehicle of respect for order – which ultimately led up to the Tsar.

'Therefore, all subjects were required to belong to a confessional group and submit to its authority, even if their religion was held in suspicion, as Judaism (*wrongly* – CM) and

Islam (*rightly* – CM) sometimes were.

'Catherine's policy of religious toleration was just one of the ways she engaged in social reform.

'She also brought the world of learning and the arts to the elites of Russia.

*Many of whom embraced it wholeheartedly. But I doubt there were any Muslims amongst those who rushed to steep themselves in music, literature, representational art, and the sciences.*

– CM

'She amassed huge collections of paintings from the Renaissance, as well as the Flemish and British schools of art. She also purchased the libraries of both Voltaire and Denis Diderot. Overall, it was an undertaking that might normally have taken hundreds of years, but Catherine accomplished it in 30.

'With extravagant purchases that Voltaire deemed 'wasteful' but Diderot helped to facilitate, Catherine was personally responsible for the creation of one of the greatest cultural icons in the world, the Hermitage Museum.

'Ironically, the woman who wanted to bring the world's riches to the Hermitage "retreat" she built next to the 1000-room Winter Palace, as a way of introducing her country's elites to high culture, now plays host in spirit to masses of western visitors for whom these marvellous pieces of art are fading reminders of a lost grand age.

*Or quite possibly, in the case of young visitors with empathy, curiosity, imagination and the gift of artistic talent, an inspiration for the creation of new works of art? Why is our author so anxious to encourage her readers to dismiss the treasures of the Hermitage – which include, if I recall correctly, at least one Rembrandt – as mere 'fading reminders of a lost grand age'?* – CM



'Rather than the artefacts, however, perhaps it is the lessons to be learned from her policy of religious toleration, which grounded state authority in a mutual respect for religion, that is the most valuable inheritance for our age, a policy that allowed a regime to govern a potentially explosive situation with less violence and more cooperation than might otherwise have been the case.'

*Ah yes, "respect for religion", that is, "respect for Islam". This, I assume, is what we are supposed to 'take home' as our lesson for the day. "Respect Islam!" "Be nice to Muslims!" "Let them build mosques!" Because Catherine the Great did...Perish the thought, however, that crosses the mind of the more cynical reader...that the defeated Muslims of Russia submitted to Catherine the Great, and insincerely rattled off their prescribed prayers for the tsar (whilst all the while bearing in mind one of the classic hadiths on necessary deception of the temporarily-too-strong infidels, "We grin at some people, whilst our hearts hate them") because they knew that if they didn't, the Tsarina's 'toleration' would evaporate like spit on a hot pan, and the wrath of the Tsarina would descend on their heads like the hammers of God. – CM*