Chapter VIII
A "WHITE" AUSTRALIA IN MID-FIFTIES

We inherited the White Australia Policy from our fathers and grand-fathers.... It is our responsibility to see that it is there to be handed down by the great-grandchildren of our great grand-children.

A nineteenth century writer on migration to the Australian Colonies described emigration as "a scheme for taking people from a country where food is scarce and population abundant, and locating them where food is abundant and population scarce." (1)

Ever since Capt. Arthur Phillip landed at Sydney Cove with a community of about 1,000 people, successive Australian administrations have looked up and around for more and more people to settle in this home of one of the world's youngest nations. (2) The areas from which immigrants were sought were not necessarily those where food was scarce and population abundant. A welcome to the world's most arid continent has not always enthused many intending migrants for the simple reason that people do not usually migrate in desperation — they migrate in hope. As such, the Australians are only 1/270th of the world's peoples and would remain so for the rest of the century. (3)

1 J.A. Jackson, National Emigration: Considered Chiefly with Reference to the Australian Colonies (London, 1848).

2 See C.H.F. Thwing, Human Australasia (New York, 1923), p. 16. The author quotes Lord Northcliffe, who said early this century that "our great Dominions in the South must have people, people and again, more people!"

Immigration policy pursued by successive Federal Governments in the southern continent explain the absence of a permanently resident non-White minority of substantial influence. (4) The phrase "White Australia policy", officially discarded now, connoted a policy that kept out non-White people from this distant outpost of the Western world. The geographical setting of Australia militated against a policy that excluded the coloured people from the neighbouring countries. But the facts of Australian and world history in the eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries determined the origin and course of this policy. The motto "AUSTRALIA FOR THE WHITE MAN" on the masthead of Sydney Bulletin from 1888 to 1949 was, in fact, the symbol of Australia in the Empire as well as in the Family of Nations. The conditions, which sustained the racial symbol for such a long time, however, became inoperative in the world that came out of the debris of the Second World War. Had this not happened, the subject would not have merited discussion in this study. The continuance of the policy in its old form became increasingly untenable, as Australia, with a

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4 The Australian aborigines are dark, but in 1947, they numbered only 51,058 out of a total population of 7,579,258. *Statesman's Year Book, 1948*, p.408. The number has increased to 80,000 according to the census of 1966. *Commonwealth Year Book, 1968*, p.150.
population of about seven and a half million people in 1945, could not afford to live in a social vacuum at the periphery of Southeast Asia and maintain its erstwhile racial posture. Individual Australians, known for their personal lack of discrimination within Australia and their ability to get along with indigenous people in Asian countries, were shocked when pre-war methods were applied, with all their rigour, in the implementation of a policy, which in itself was in question. Although the real breakthrough in the matter of non-European immigration into Australia came after 1954, there were clear signs, during the period under review, that the walls of Jericho were beginning to look more shaky.

From Policy to National Ideal

The "White Australia" policy was the product of Australian history. Its roots go back to the period when the ancestors of the present-day Australians were trying to pioneer a new social order in "the worst dried-up God-foresaken country". Originally, the prospect of being so near to the enormous reserves of cheap labour in Asia looked quite attractive and

Private estimates by anthropologists put it much higher. Maories and other Polynesians resident in Australia are negligible in number.
promoted suggestions and projects for bringing in coloured labour from India and China to develop the new world which was slowly coming up under the Southern Cross. (5) Some years before the deportation of convicts from England was stopped in 1840, Gibbon Wakefield had said of the Chinese:

A constant stream of these most industrious and skilful Asiatics /Chinese/ would not only supply the needed labour, but in the course of a century, would probably convert the enormous wilderness of Australia into a fruitful garden. (6)

It was in this period that Indian hill coolies and some Chinese were brought to help the development of Australia. But the picture was changed in 1851 when the Gold Rush attracted sizeable groups of the Chinese, and the country witnessed actual race riots. Australian Colonies then took steps to curb the entry of "Asiatic and African aliens". When the Government in London objected to it, the right to legislate on the subject was more vigorously asserted. The creation of the

5 Jack Shepherd, Austral-Asia: A Study of the Influence of Australia's Geographical Position on Its Discovery, First Settlement, and Early Economic Development (Unpublished M.A. (History) thesis, University of Sydney, May 1937), p.88. The author states that in 1799, a proposal came to Governor Hunter from Calcutta that certain settlers should be allowed to come from India with permission to import, as labourers, a number of Bengalee convicts. "The /Bengalee/ convicts", said Governor Hunter (in approval of the proposal), "no doubt might be usefully employed here, and would be far more manageable than most of those we now have."
Commonwealth of Australia in 1900 gave the Australians an opportunity to join together in enacting the first of a series of legislations on the subject.

An Australian study in political geography(?) has admirably analysed the historical backdrop of the policy of keeping Australia white. The development of Western societies into their present-day industrial-commercial maturity, the study points out, has been greatly facilitated by the availability of empty "frontier" territories, which functioned as outlets for surplus populations and producers of community surpluses of various kinds, which the West needed badly. Australia, like Canada and the United States, was one such "frontier" territory. In the areas where economic developments were inaugurated by the Europeans, Chinese, Indians and other Asians moved in as coolies, merchants and settlers. Asia, in its struggle for development, does not have the frontier opportunities that the Western society has been able to have, though Manchuria has been such a territory to Japan and then to China. Australia could not become an 'Asian' "frontier" territory, because the

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British immigrants were entering the country at the same time and for the same reasons as the Chinese. The policy of exclusion was a device in the hands of these immigrant White communities to preserve what, in their view, was their ethos in the face of the influx of the darker and different people from the neighbouring lands.

The reasons which influenced the Australian people and their leaders in the adopting of this policy in the beginning of this century were less racial than social. (8) Their basic reason was the preservation of a British-Australian nationality resting on "a people possessing the same general cast of character, tone of thought and the same constitutional training and traditions ... "(9) At least the founding fathers of the Australian Commonwealth were not actuated by any idea of the inferiority of the mentality or physique of the excluded people and respected the antiquity of the Chinese and Indian Civilizations. (10) They dreamt

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8 For a detailed analysis of the reasons for adopting this policy in 1900 and before, see Myra Willard, History of the White Australia Policy (Melbourne, 1923), pp.188-213.


10 Later, one of them (Reid) lauded the civilization of India and claimed India to be the mother of "our common Aryan race". Quoted in R.G. Neale, "Australia's Changing Relations With India". Paper
of a casteless society in the sixth continent freed of the inequalities and oppressions of the older countries they had known. The "coolie" had no place in their Utopia. His presence, they feared, would reduce the Utopia into "a helot-state of first and second class citizens". (11) As Myra Willard has summed up in her illustrious work on the history of the "White Australia" policy, the Founding Fathers feared that unrestricted immigration of non-Europeans would result either (a) in the establishment of a sharp racial division in the community, or (b) in a mixture of races which would radically alter the British characteristics of the Australian people. To these evils would be added others, such as, bitter industrial strife on racial lines, because of the different standards of living of Australian and non-European peoples. (12) The economic argument had a greater appeal to the Australian workers at that time. The Trade Unions strongly felt that non-European

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11 Their fears were not entirely unjustified as this actually happened in later decades in countries like South Africa and, to an extent, in the United States.

12 Willard, n.8, p.201.
labourers would, by their competition and general attitude to economic questions, prevent any further advance towards the ideal of industrial democracy and would indeed cause Australians to lose the ground they had already won.(13)

Almost the first act of the Federal politicians after the creation of the Commonwealth of Australia was to put on the statute book the famous Immigration Restriction Act of 1901. However, with all its motives, some of which were quite admirable, the policy was likely to be misunderstood abroad as a racial policy and, indeed, even before the Second World War, it was treated as such in Europe(14) as well as in Asia. The British, in their concern for Commercial relations with the East and the feelings of Her Majesty's coloured subjects, suggested the adoption of Natal Dictation Test (15) for admitting immigrants, which

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13 Ibid., pp.197-98.
14 Ibid., pp.211-12. This was evidenced during the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, where a majority of the members of the Commission drafting the Covenant of the League were in favour of the Japanese amendment that sought to infringe the right of Australia to maintain this policy.
was soon accepted by the Government of Sir Edmond Barton (1849-1920), the first Prime Minister of the Commonwealth. The Government in London, of course, did not really believe what it preached to the Australians, and told them so in private. A Colonial Office memorandum in 1897 sympathized with the desire of the Australian Colonies to avoid "the permanent presence of a considerable element of an inferior race".(16) In imperial days, the British were adept in this type of running with the hare and hunting with the hound. As the reviewer of a recent work on the White Australia policy (17) has stated, "... it was another manifestation of perfidious Albion at work, successfully persuading the Australians that Australia perfide was a more desirable reputation than Australia racialiste." (18) Thus when the Act was passed, it did not single out any colour or race for exclusion, but ability to write up to fifty words(19) in any European

17 The review was of ibid.
19 Interestingly enough, when a passage containing fifty-three words was set for the purpose of this test, it was ruled invalid in the Court.
language (20) was made a criteria for admission to Australia. At the insistence of Japan, "any European language" was replaced by "any prescribed language". But Parliament never got down to prescribing this non-European language. Thus came into being the unique method of restricting the entry of the unwanted people through the Dictation Test. (21)

After this, the policy was not the same thing to all who looked at it. To the fathers of the Australian Constitution, it was a mechanism of national cohesion, which contributed to the evolution of a united race in a united nation. (22) There were some who saw in it the assertion of Australia's nationalism and her independence vis-a-vis British Empire in matters purely Australian. As the times rolled on, the talk of "Yellow Peril", of other perils from awakening Asia and of the impending war between the Whites and non-Whites in the world (23) made the

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20 The original idea was to have the test in the English language, but was later changed to "European language" during debates.

21 During the 30 years between 1927 and 1956, 232 persons were refused admission after arrival owing to failure at the Dictation Test. Approximately 1/6 of these were non-Europeans. Those disqualified on other grounds numbered 642. A.C.Palfreeman, Australia's Policy on Non-European Immigration (Thesis, M.A., the Australian National University, 1961), p. 249 (Table VIII).

22 For the remarks of Deakin on this subject, see (Sir) W.K. Hancock, Australia (Brisbane, 1961), p. 59.
policy look like a rampart for self-protection, though on its effectiveness for this purpose, there was usually some difference of opinion. Some predicted that this policy would be powerful enough to withstand the war and spread throughout the White world, (24) others asserted that it would be the "first casualty" of that war. (25)

The result was that the policy became something of a national ideal and "an indispensable condition of every other Australian policy". It was represented as "a slow-moving, ever-increasing political philosophy" that at last reached "to the very roots of Australian national soul". (26) Abroad, it was paraded as a distinctly Australian doctrine to be classed with other more famous ones, upheld by bigger Powers. Prime Minister W.G. Hughes (1864-1952) told an American writer:

Also see Willard, n.8, p.189.

23 Raymond Leslie Buell, International Relations (London, 1938), p.57. He stated in 1938: "While in the Middle Ages, wars were fought over religion, and while in the last century, they were fought over nationalism, there is a danger that in the coming century, they will be fought over race."


The White Australia Policy is ours; the Monroe Doctrine is America's; the freedom of the seas is Britain's. These are outside the province of any League or Association or any international conference. (27)

A legal framework was provided to the national ideal by a series of enactments between 1901 and 1958. (28)

The policy, however, did not exclude all Asians. Syrians and Lebanese have been welcomed in the country since the twenties. (29) Turkish Cypriots have also been able to come to live in Australia. So, there has been no statutory discrimination on racial grounds in Australia. It was found only in the implementation of the policy. Other Asians, who were living in the country at the time when the first Immigration Act came into force, could not be completely excluded.

27  Ibid. For representation of the policy as Australian Monroe Doctrine, see Willard, n.8, p.203.

28  These enactments were (i) The Immigration Restriction Act (1901-47); (ii) The Pacific Islands Labourers Acts (1901 and 1906); (iii) The Wartime Refugees Removal Act (1949); (iv) The Nationality and Citizenship Act (1948-58); and (v) The Migration Act (1958). Other Acts, such as, the Aliens Act (1947), Aliens' Deportation Act (1948) and National Security Act have been of incidental interest. Of the above, (ii) and (iii) did not cover all non-Europeans and affected only given categories of them.

29  The Naturalization Act of 1903 was repealed in 1920 because it denied naturalization to "an aboriginal native of Asia, Africa and the islands of the Pacific excepting New Zealand" and thus the doors of Australia were opened to several categories of "West Asians and the racial reference in the earlier Act was omitted."
though it was demanded by labour organizations and
parliamentarians alike. (30) They numbered 47,000
at that time. The alternative to throwing them out
of the country was to "compromise with the idea of
absolute White Australia". (31)

With all these limitations and exceptions,
which give an insight into the actual nature of the
policy of "White Australia", this national ideal has
been realized effectively. How effective has been
this protracted effort can be judged from this. The
Chinese have been the largest and the most conspicuous
group of non-Europeans in Australia. Though other races
of non-Europeans have been occasionally mentioned, (32)
it is the Chinese who have really determined the entry
policy for all non-Europeans in the country. In 1901,
there were 19,907 Chinese in the country, constituting

30 See Carlotta Ellis, Why Does the A.L.P. Support the
White Australia Policy? 1855-1940 (Unpublished M.A.
thesis, School of Political Science, University of
Melbourne, 1950), pp. 45, 70.

31 Palfreeman, n. 21, p. 5. "... There is a barrier in
every time and circumstance", he concedes, "beyond
which the Government of a liberal-democratic and
professedly Christian people may not proceed in
such matters as deportation and the prevention of
entry ...." 

32 For Prime Minister Barton's reference to these, see
The Argus (Melbourne), 13 August 1901, quoted in ibid.,
pp. 68-9. The Prime Minister bluntly told the shipping
interests, which were asking for the importation of
the Chinese: "Australia was given to the Australians-
.784 per cent of the total population of Australia at that time. (33) After more than four decades of the operation of the policy, the number of resident Chinese came down to 9,144 in 1947, being .132 per cent of the population. (34) The concrete result of the earlier determination to pursue the national ideal of "White Australia" is that in 1954, only .28 per cent in the population of Australia were non-Europeans, while the percentage of the same element in the population of Canada and New Zealand was .52 and .73 respectively about the same time. (35)

Until the end of the war, Australians were not fully aware of the results of their policy of

Not to the blacks; not to the Hindoos, even if British subjects; not to the Chinese but to free Australian people."

Palfreeman, n.21,p.243. For a different figure, see Ellis,n.50,p.67. She states that there were 29,627 Chinese at that time, being 1.25 per cent of the total population of Australia.

Palfreeman,n.21,p.243.

Asian elements expressed as a percentage of the total population at census (dates based on official census reports):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Australia</th>
<th>Canada</th>
<th>New Zealand</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>1951</td>
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<td>.52</td>
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<td>1954</td>
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<td>1956</td>
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<td>.95</td>
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(Adapted from Table X in ibid.)
racial discrimination among their Asian neighbours. When Lord Casey became Governor of the British Indian province of Bengal, there was a hostile demonstration against him. "How can we endure the humiliation", asked an Indian newspaper, "of a Governor from a country that prohibits Indians from entering [sic. It?" (36) This incident aroused "interest rather than resentment" in Australia. It was the other side of the coin, which had rarely been seen in Australia. As we shall see now, the post-war changes in the attitudes of the Government and the people and more violent expressions of Asian resentment in Malaya, the Philippines and other countries made the policy, and the national ideal it represented, a problem in Australia's external affairs (37) and internal politics. It was clear now that the policy could not be upheld as a protective germicidal unit of relegated social distance with neighbours. A Brisbane study on the subject has aptly pointed out that

36 Lord Casey, Personal Experience, 1939-46 (London, 1962), p.178. Also see A.T.Yarwood, n.16, p.135. According to the writer, the Rev.P.J.Bazely, General Secretary of Church Missionary Society reported on his return from a tour of India, during early twenties, that he had been hacked by students about the "White Australia" policy and had been warned of the likelihood of a boycott of Australian goods.

37 This has been discussed later in the Chapter under the heading of "Pressures from Outside".
"before the war, it may have been a threat to our
security to have allowed Asians in — now, it is a
greater threat if we persist in keeping them out." (38)
It was this challenge that resulted in some modification
in its implementation during the period under review,
and much more in the years that followed.

"White Australia" on the Anvil

In its tortuous progress from a popular demand
to a policy and from policy to national ideal, the
restriction on non-European immigration had grown
around it an elaborate warp and woof of ideas, which
were used to buttress it at home and abroad. If there
was a change in the attitude of the Australian
community on the question after the war, it was mainly
due to the fact that, in the fastly changing world, some
of these ideas began to look illogical, if not absurd.

The racial argument, which was common at one
time, was discarded by the authorities themselves. The
social argument that "the influx of people, alien in
custom and thought, would be difficult to assimilate",
(39) could not hold water when young Australians noticed
that some Asians, notably Indians, looked lighter-skinned

38 C. Dodd, Changing Attitude to the White Australia
Policy, 1945-1956 (History Honours Thesis, University
39 T.K. Critchley, Australia and New Zealand
than some Southern Europeans and might understand the
Anglo-Saxon precepts of democracy better than Greeks,
Italians and other "New Australians", so assiduously
brought to Australia by a diligent administration. (40)
The danger of three-fold demoralization, mentioned by
Sir Keith Hancock in the years immediately preceding
the war, (41) had been fully and finally averted after
a century of progress that made Australia into a
"labouristic country". Demoralization of the "coolie"
over-driven by White Capital, of the poor White
over-whelmed by Coolie competition and of the half-
breed children of the "coolie" and the poor White
could certainly be a reality during the infancy of
the Australian Commonwealth, when the "Capitalistic
boar of Europe's industrial woods", to use Sir Keith's
phrase, was out to root up the young and tender vine
of Australian democracy brought out of Europe and, as
such, it had to be "encompassed with a hedge". The
roots of this hedge of "white Australia" policy go
back to the period when the White labourer was paid
£ 1 to £ 4/10/- per week, the Chinese only 15/- per

40, "Changing Ideals in White Australia", The Times
41 Hancock, n. 22, p. 61.
week and the "Kanaka" (Polynesian) £ 6 to £ 18 per annum with meals. (42) As a result of the violent trade union protest against this, (43) the Australian States enforced the principle of "a living wage", which applies to aborigines as well. If there was the danger of economic competition in Australia in the post-war world, it was in fact to the Capital rather than to the workers. During the debate on Immigration Bill early in the century, Senator Deleryie had described how the Chinese "entered into every trade and calling in the State". (44) Howsoever disadvantageous the presence of the competing Chinese or Japanese enterprises may be to the Australian chain stores or Farmers, Coles or David Jones, the man in the omnibus felt that it would bring better goods and services to him at less cost. Better informed Australians felt that the existence of "a native-born trading class of great power and experience" in the country would offset the emergence of a non-indigenous trading class, as happened in Fiji or Singapore. (45)

42 Ellis, n.30, p.25.
43 Ibid., p.70. The writer states that the ill-feeling between "Capital" and "labour" became so intense that, at one time, the leaders of the latter asked their followers "to emulate the deeds of men like Robespierre, Danton and Marate to fill the streets with blood."
44 CPD, vol.6 (1901), p.7280. Cited in ibid., p.70.
The biological argument contained in the "demoralisation of the half-breed children of the coolie and the poor White" was also examined rather dispassionately. Sir A. Grenfell Price, a historian like Sir Keith Hancock, approvingly mentioned the views of C.B. Davenport that though the Eurasian mixture in India was far from satisfactory, the Chinese appeared to produce a better mixture, (46) an opinion which was supported by scientists later. (47) Australians have for long concerned themselves with the avoidance of "the insoluble problems which arise from the inability of Europeans and non-Europeans in any country to merge successfully into a single and harmonious community". South Africa and

47 See Sydney Morning Herald, 8 September 1948, p. 3 for Prof. Browne's attack on prejudices, such as, mixing of races leading to moral, mental and physical decline. Also see _, "Changing Ideals in White Australia", The Times, 3 March 1961 for similar views of Sir Macfarlane Burnet expressed in a later period. While ending his learned paper on the subject, entitled "Migration and Race Mixture from the Genetic Angle", Sir Burnet stated: "There is much to be said for allowing into the country as much non-European genetic material as the community can safely assimilate".
the United States have, from time to time, been cited as examples of it. On the contrary, Sir Keith Hancock feared "the internal decomposition and degradation of their own civilization" resulting from "a successful tyranny over Orientals". He candidly confessed that the Australians could not trust themselves to be just and merciful in their dealings with a weaker people on their soil and cited the example of their treatment of the aborigines.\(^{48}\) It was, however, felt that if the non-Europeans, "like strychnine", could be absorbed in small doses, those problems would not arise at all. It is significant that, during the period under review, there was not even one voice in Australia that demanded complete abolition of the traditional policy. Even the Communist Party, with all its equalitarian ideology, did not come out in favour of total abolition of the policy until after 1958.\(^{49}\) All that was asked for was some liberalization in the procedure of non-European immigration, without tempering with the inner frame of it. Unlike the ALP, the Liberals sensed this change in popular opinions and oriented their administration of the policy accordingly.

\(^{48}\) Hancock, n.22, pp. 61-2.

\(^{49}\) Palfreeman, n.21, p.223.
Though in the years following the Second World War, more and more shafts came out of the armory of those, who stood for a "snow-white" Australia, "pure and spotless", they landed themselves on a soil of patent doubt, if not skepticism. However, if one looks for a real breakthrough in the policies and attitudes in Australia during the period, he is bound to be disappointed. The net result of the controversy over the "White Australia" policy was that a process was started that led to "a continuous, hesitant and zig-zagging liberalization" of the policy.

Pressures from Outside

(a) Asia and White Australia. As the area of South and Southeast Asia was settling into a stable post-imperialist pattern under the leadership of men like Sukarno, Nehru and Phibul Songgram, many in Australia wondered if they could remain homogenized through the age-old mechanism of "White Australia" policy. New Asia's possible reaction to it was their

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50 For example, in its policy statement in 1954, the Australian Workers' Union considered the retention of the policy as vital, otherwise (a) the coloured labour would lower down the standards; (b) half-caste and piebald community would be created and (c) security of Australia would be endangered. Daily Mirror (Sydney), 1 July 1954, p.12. Cited in Dodd, n.38, p.28.
big question mark. Menzies, while Leader of Opposition, voiced the apprehensions of his own countrymen when he pointed out that the policy could bring about a threefold challenge from outside. (51) Firstly, it might be challenged in some international forum, such as, the United Nations and, as such, his country should try to win friends on this international jury by avoiding provocative acts in the name of the "White Australia" policy. The second challenge, he warned, would come by direct demand from the Asian countries, and the third would come through propaganda. One way of meeting this three-fold challenge, he suggested, was cultivating friendship with powerful countries like Britain and the United States to deter any possible challenge. This policy, it was feared, could become a stumbling block to stability as "the Australian people", wrote Forsyth in 1944, "would prefer to take their chance of survival in an unstable Pacific, rather than adopt a policy involving substantial alteration in their racial make up." (52)

51 The Sydney Morning Herald, 17 June 1949.

However, no Government or leader of stature in these countries considered the Australian policy important enough for diplomatic discussion, if not direct comment. The Asian Relations Conference, held in New Delhi in 1947, emphatically stated the right of every country to determine the composition of its people. "The Principle", claimed Evatt, "was also accepted by Australia's neighbours and friends in South-East Asia and the Pacific". (53) Perhaps he was right, as Nehru, Sjahrir (54) and, later, Tungku Abdul Rahman showed some understanding of this policy. Foreign Offices in Jakarta, Manila, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur and other places and their chanceries in Canberra did not voice public disapproval, even when their nationals were being deported under the rigours of the "White Australia" policy. Some diplomatic

National Myth", The Australian Quarterly, vol.25, no.2 (June 1953), p.7. "The fear of increasing the antagonism of East for West (surely one of the most obvious problems facing the Australian diplomat)", she wrote, "is not powerful enough to make our statesmen risk the loss of local political kudos involved in the repudiation of the policy".

53 The Sydney Morning Herald, 21 June 1948, p.3.
54 For Sjahrir's opinion, see Brisbane Courier Mail, 21 June 1948. Cited in Dodd, n.38, p.70. According to this report, Sjahrir indicated that, in principle, the policy was justified and the Indonesians fully understood it.
representations were occasionally made,(55) but only to seek some leniency for this or that victim (or victims) of the policy. Both the Indian High Commissioners, Paranjpe and Cariappa, were privately critical of it, but the sharp public comment of the latter in 1954, was considered a diplomatic impropriety in New Delhi, and, perhaps, in Canberra. Though Gen. Cariappa astonished and puzzled his listeners, he was the precursor of the envoys of Ceylon and Japan, who, in later years, criticised the policy, after sensing "a more receptive local sentiment". Many distinguished Asians, visiting Australia, criticised the policy, knowing that the Australian community was now ready to listen to them.(56)

55 For example of one such representation, see Sydney Morning Herald, 24 August 1949. According to this report, the Chinese Ambassador (Dr Kang Naikuang) made an appeal to Dr Evatt on behalf of the Chinese seamen under orders of deportation. Also see Palfreeman, n.21, p.207 for another instance, when the Chinese Consul General sent a letter to the Government on behalf of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in New South Wales.

56 They included the Speaker of the Indian Lok Sabha and the Vice-Chancellor of the Delhi University. Mr (now Sir) Learie Constantine appealed to the Australians to "remove from your statutes anything which implies that Australia is too good a place for coloured people." The Times, n.47. For more recent criticism of the policy by (the late) Tom Mboya, see Charles Meeking, "Australia - Defence Problems", The Eastern World, vol.18, no.10 (October 1964), p.20.
Though the leaders and Governments thought it prudent to ignore the policy altogether, the Press and the articulate groups of people in Asia did not, more particularly, when they heard of the excesses in the application of the policy. A random sample of Asian opinions (57) suggests that the position of Asia on the policy of immigration restrictions in Australia was more or less the same as that of Japan in 1924, when, protesting against the U.S. Immigration Act, she had declared:

International discriminations in any form and on any subject, even if based on purely economic reasons, are opposed to the principles of justice and fairness upon which the friendly intercourse between nations must, in the final analysis, depend.... Still more unwelcome are discriminations based on race.... It is not denied that, fundamentally speaking, it lies within the inherent sovereign power of each state to limit and control immigration to its domains; but when, in the exercise of such right, an evident injustice is done to a foreign nation in disregard to its proper self-respect, of international understandings or of ordinary rules of comity, the question necessarily assumes an aspect which justifies diplomatic discussion and adjustment. (58)

57 For an article favourable to the policy, see Mohammad Ashir, "Australia Visited", The Dawn (Karachi), 23 September 1955. A sympathetic but balanced comment is made in V. Subramaniam, "Asian Impressions of White Australia", The Hindu (Madras), 17 February 1960. For more opinions from India and other Asian countries, see Dodd, n.38, pp.68-9 and 71.

58 Quoted in Buell, n.23, pp.63-64.
The views expressed in the editorial of the *Eastern Economist* (New Delhi) in August 1950 (59) had some impact in Australia, as they were frequently quoted as representative of the opinion held by informed people in the vast landmass stretching from Pakistan to the Philippines. "That policy i.e., the policy of "White Australia" — and almost nothing else — " is what separates Australia from South-East Asia to which both geographically and historically it now belongs." It was conceded that the policy did not awaken any resentment in Asia for many years because of two reasons. One was that Australia's immigration policy, like Australia itself, was viewed as "a thing apart", because the ties of the country then were with the West only and exclusively. The other reason was that Southeast Asia was far too concerned with throwing off metropolitan imperialism to worry unduly about Australian immigration. But those two factors were going out of the picture. Australia had herself "contracted into the Asian continent." The essence of this "contract", asserted the Journal, "is that there should be no racial wall between its members". The *Eastern Economist* then referred to the increasing strength of communism in 59

the East and observed that the "White Australia" policy prevented Australia from coming to terms with democratic Asia and was thus casting its weight on the Communist side. After suggesting "a wise system of quotas", the periodical reminded that in strictly moral terms, Australia's approach was no superior to South Africa's. The article concluded with the hope that "it will be the path of Australia's statesmen to ensure that obstacles to the country's coming to terms with Southeast Asia were removed at the request of friends, and not demolished by the blows of her enemies".

(b) Reactions in Indonesia and Malaya. The memory of the demonstration in Calcutta against Casey's appointment as Governor of Bengal in 1943 was now faint in the Australian minds. But fresh demonstrations of popular resentment of the policy of "White Australia" received wide coverage in the Australian Press. When Calwell, the Minister for Immigration, insisted on the deportation of one Mrs. O'Keefe, the Ambonese (Indonesian) wife of an Australian national, the Indonesians were busy fighting for their freedom and, as such, hardly a ripple was caused to Canberra-Jogjakarta relations. "While hoping Australia will not interpret her exclusive policy too harshly", 
said the Foreign Minister of the Republic, "we view that policy with detachment". (60) The Sultan of West Borneo, however, threatened to deport all Australians within his territory, if Mrs. O'Keefe was deported. (61)

Malaya, being a polyethnic society itself, appreciated the Australian desire to maintain a homogenous society through a policy of restricted immigration. But Malayans were touched to the quick, when the Minister for Immigration aimed his broomstick at a number of Malayan seamen residing in Australia. Among those who vehemently protested were the Chairman of the Singapore Malay Nationalist Party as well as the Malay Union. A meeting of twenty-five Malay associations in Singapore appointed a five-man committee to investigate and to take necessary steps to counter the Australian action. (62) Malay Sultans also asked for an explanation of the decision. (63)

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60 Brisbane Courier Mail, 5 September 1949.
61 Dodd, n.38, p.70.
62 Brisbane Courier Mail, 17, 20 and 24 November 1947.
63 Dodd, n.38, p.65.
Soon after the deportation of the Malayan seamen, an Australian Mission was sent to Southeast Asia in June 1948, with Prof. MacMahon Ball as leader. The purpose was to offer supplies and aid worth £500,000 to the region and to institute certain scholarships for the youths. On the eve of its departure, a controversy developed in the Australian Press, which was echoed in Malaya. The Progressive Party felt that until Australia changed its policy towards the Malayans and other Asians, any mention of goodwill would be a mockery and any gifts "the traditional thirty pieces of silver." The Party reminded the Australians that "any nation which sows the seeds of ill-feeling will reap the harvest."(64) At the dinner in honour of the Australian Mission held in Johore Bahru, speaker after speaker rose to attack the recent brutal application of the policy. These happenings shocked many in Australia. A member of the Opposition told Parliament:

The action of the Minister for Immigration, Mr Calwell, aroused a storm of protest in Malaya, and the ill feeling has spread to other Eastern countries. The criticism has come not from irresponsible people, but from leading Malayan citizens and leading newspapers in the Straits Settlement....(65)

64 Brisbane Courier Mail, 3 June 1948.
The Minister for External Affairs also referred to this incident in his speech on 17 June 1948. (66) When Calwell introduced his Wartime Refugees Removal Bill, the Leader of the Singapore Progressive Party, Mr C. Tan, declared that his Party had drafted a Bill which would prohibit the residence in Singapore of nationals of countries, where Malayans were barred. (67) The "White Australia" policy was quite an embarrassment to the British authorities in Malaya and Malcolm McDonald, Commissioner-General for the United Kingdom in Southeast Asia, spoke of the "irreparable harm" done not only to Australia but to all European nations with interests in the area by Australia's recent actions. (68)

(c) The Philippines - House Bill No. 2613. Some of the worst comments on Australia and its leaders came from the Philippines. They were caused by the case of Sargeant Gamboa of the U.S. Army, who was an American citizen of Filipino birth. He met and married his wife, Joyce, while he was in Australia recovering from the injuries received in the battle of Bataan in

67 Brisbane Courier Mail, 10 September 1949.
68 Ibid., 11 June 1948.
1942. He then went back with the U.S. Army to Tokyo. When the war was over, he applied for permission to enter Australia to join his family. Calwell refused permission to him and there was a domestic debate that hit the headlines in 1946. Then, it became an international incident. Several appeals, including perhaps one from Gen. MacArthur, were directed to the Chifley Labour Government to allow Gamboa to join his wife and children, but the Government made the "final refusal" in April 1949. (69) Then followed a series of retaliatory actions in the Philippines, which looked like a real anti-thesis of the age-old "White Australia" policy. First of all, the Australian passports were frozen. (70) Then Congressman Domingo Paguiregan moved a resolution on 29 March 1949 in the House of Representatives requesting his country's President to close the Consulate General in Sydney. (71) On the same day, Congressman Herminegildo Atienza

69  The Sydney Morning Herald, 2 April 1949.
70  Dodd, n.38, p.71.
introduced a Bill entitled "An Act prohibiting the admission of an alien unless the laws of his country allows \(\text{sic}\) the admission of Filipinos in his country ...", (72) which was referred to as "House Bill No. 2613" in the Philippines Hansard. In his speech, the Congressman spoke of his Bill as "a Bill of simple justice" and "a reciprocity immigration bill". (73)

Then followed a debate, which showed how Australia could transform its wartime allies into critics and satirists through an unwise immigration decision. (74) Calling the Australian action as a violation of the UN Declaration of Human Rights, Congressman Cipriano P. Primicias called Australians as "the biggest hypocrites in the world". (75) Somehow

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72 Ibid., p.1065. This Bill was approved by the Committee on 1 April and passed on second reading on 27 April. It was then sent to the Senate for concurrence on 28 April. Ibid., p.2591.

73 Ibid., p.1284.

74 For Filipino outbursts against Australia, see ibid., pp. 1284-9.

75 Ibid., P.1287. "When it comes to propagandizing their country", he said, "they want the colored \(\text{sic}\) people to do it, but when it comes to living on the principle of equality of races, they do not accept the colored \(\text{sic}\) men because they think they are inferior; and I think we would be doing the greatest injustice to the Philippines if we consent to make Melbourne the seat of the next World Olympics".
not aware of the protests within Australia itself, the Congressman lashed out at the Australian people, saying:

... ever since the incident of Gamboa, I have been scanning the news everyday for a fighting protest from the Australians, against their Dictator, by the name of Cadwell \textit{sic}, but there was no protest on the part of the Australian people. That shows that they indorse \textit{sic} his action ... . (76)

Congressman Primicias then angrily reminded the Australians of the possible consequences of their policy, saying:

... we will let the Australians feel that Filipino people know how to act properly when their race is insulted, and it is time for the Australians to review history, so that in future if ever war again will break in the Pacific, we will know what to do, whether to sacrifice or not the flower of our manhood to save that land from the clutch \textit{sic} of invaders. As a matter of fact, if I had my way, we should invade Australia - if I had my way only.

The Bill was approved in the House in third reading with no vote against it. The Senate added an amendment exemptiong the Australian wives of Filipino citizens from the operation of the proposed legislation. The Senate was going to pass the Bill

76 
Ibid., p. 1287.
without debate and concur into the closing of the
Philippines Consulate General in Sydney, but a surprise
adjournment of the Senate on some other issue prevented
the passage of the Bill. Despite all this, Calwell
stoutly defended his action in Parliament. (77) Of
course, there was no official representation to
Canberra either from Manila or from Washington. Among
the first acts of the new LCP Government and its
Minister for Immigration, Harold Holt, was the declara-
tion that Gamboa was welcome to come to Australia and
join his family. (78) Thus ended an episode that read
to the Australian people a lesson in international
good manners.

(d) United Nations and the "White Australia"
Policy. Sometimes, the rigidity of the policy
adversely affected Australia's UNOmanship. Appeal was
frequently made to the United Nations by the victims
of the policy, or their supporters. After the
deportation of the Malayan seamen, President of the

77 Calwell's speech in reply to Lang, CPD, vol. 202
78 For the reaction of the Philippines to this
announcement, see Brisbane Courier Mail, 18 February
1950. The Filipino Under-Secretary for Foreign
Affairs called this announcement as "a high point in
Philippine Australian relations, and indicative of
the strengthening of the friendly ties and associa-
tion now existing between the two countries".
Malay Union, one Inche Sardon bin Haji Sabu, warned that if discrimination was found to be the ground for deportation, his organization would appeal to the United Nations. (79) Three months later, he actually took this step, protesting against "this uncivilized act of the so-called civilized nation". Two years later, a similar appeal again went to the world body from Malaya. (80) When the Chinese seamen were being deported, their wives sent protest cable to the UN Human Rights Committee in 1949. (81) During the debate on anti-Australia legislation in Manila, Congressman O. Rañola pointedly asked for resolution to bring the Gamboa case before the world body "as a protest against the discriminatory act of Australia, the Premier of Australia being now President of the United Nations... "(82) Rev. Alan Walker, one of the advisors to the Australian delegation to the United Nations, stated that "Australia's immigration policy has

79
Ibid., 20 November 1947.

80
Ibid., 4 February 1949. The report in this paper stated that, in 1949, the President of the Left-Wing Malayan Nationalist Party (Inche Tahu bin Kalu) sought permission to hold demonstration to carry appeal to the UN Human Rights Commission. Though the permission was refused, he drafted an appeal to the United Nations.

81
Ibid., 24 August 1949.

82
Philippines Congressional Record, vol.4, no.46 (7 April 1949), p.1287.
gravely embarrassed her in the eyes of the United Nations" and that she had been attacked nine times because of her treatment of individual immigration cases. (83) Once, angered by Australian views on the trial of Cardinal Mindszenty, Jacob Malik told Australia's Makin to turn his thoughts to the internal affairs of his own country, where the most elementary rights were down-trodden, where discrimination against Asiatic people was practiced and where a policy of "White Australia" was being carried out. (84)

Indians, though very rarely victims of the policy of "White Australia" themselves, were the most sensitive to the racial implications of it. (85) Afraid lest the denial of equal status and dignity to them as a nation and as individuals would make their own hardly won independence a sham and a mockery through second-class membership of the Family of Nations, they sometimes used the world forum in putting Australia in the dock, particularly during the period under

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83 Cited in Dodd, n.38, p.34.
85 Peter John Boyce, Australia and Malaya: A Preliminary Study in Commonwealth Regional Relations, 1941-1961 (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Duke University, 1962), pp. 33-4 and 346. According to this writer, the Australians and others have noted that in Malaya and elsewhere, it is the Indian, and not the Malay or the Chinese, who is most vocal on the issue of racial discrimination, whether in the United States or in Australia.
review. The Indian attitude to Australian trusteeship in New Guinea was based on her feeling that racial discrimination was the basis of Australia's immigration policy. Krishna Menon moved a long amendment to the draft of trusteeship for New Guinea in the Trusteeship Committee of the United Nations General Assembly giving details of safeguards against racial discrimination. He pointed out that if his amendments were not included, Australia's discriminating racial laws, which caused irritation among the Asians, would be extended to New Guinea. (86)

This was the period when Australia appeared as one of the most conservative and negative voters in the General Assembly due to her attitude on various issues before the world body. At Lake Success, the Asian delegates almost invariably found Australia on the other side, particularly, on racial and colonial issues. And, indeed, these were the questions on which the Asians had strong views. It was, therefore, natural, as an Australian writer has pointed out, that

... The rest of the world, in scrutinizing Australia's attitude to South Africa and the Portuguese colonies, or its policies in New Guinea and its motives in South-east Asia, does not conveniently pigeon-hole away Australia's immigration policy as an untouchable domestic issue. On the contrary, it is used to complete the picture. (87)

86 Brisbane Courier Mail, 12 December 1946.
Compulsions From Within

As the war ended, some Australians began to voice their impatience with their country's policies on non-European immigration. In 1945, the *Sydney Morning Herald*, despite its conservative inclinations, urged a more tolerant immigration outlook. (88) In the same year, Prof. A.P. Elkin suggested a quota system that would permit the entry of 40 Indians, 40 Chinese and 40 from other Asian countries and laid down a number of qualitative criteria to regulate this entry. (89) After a couple of years, T.K. Critchley, who served in Asia during the war and was destined to play an important role in Australia's diplomacy in Southeast Asia, suggested "regulated entry of Asiatics into Australia on a scale which will permit newcomers to be assimilated into the Australian environment." (90) In 1948, the country's veteran diplomat, Sir Frederick Eggleston, expressed his belief that the ban on Asian naturalization should be withdrawn, though the number of those thus naturalized should be controlled by something like a quota system. (91)

88 The *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 March 1945.
89 A.P. Elkin, "Rethinking the White Australia Policy", *The Australian Quarterly*, vol. 17, no. 3 (September 1945).
90 Critchley, n. 39, p. 11. He pointed out that the United States had agreed to admit an yearly quota
The Australians, on the whole, remained unimpressed by these and similar opinions of their better informed compatriots. (92) The majority remained committed to the ideal of "White Australia", though almost 30 to 40 per cent were prepared to allow for some modification in it. This is clear from the results of the Gallup Polls on the subject, as given below:

**GALLUP POLL VERDICTS ON "WHITE AUSTRALIA" POLICY** (93)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No non-European entry</th>
<th>Limited or &quot;token&quot; entry</th>
<th>Un-restricted entry</th>
<th>No opinion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

of 100 Indians. If Australia were to admit 20 Indians a year, she would be behaving, on a comparative population basis, three times more generously than the United States.


92 For opinions other than those cited above, see Dodd, n. 38, pp. 55-9.

93 Australian Gallup Polls, Nos. 180-5 (1944); 537-46 (1948); 690-9 (1950); and 988-98 (1954).
The policy of keeping Australia White had its supporters in old and established groups in the country, which wielded some influence in national life. One of them was the Australian Natives' Association, which under the guidance of men like Barton and Leakein, had successfully championed the cause of Federation in the last decade of the nineteenth century. This patriotic society remained uncompromising in its opposition to relaxation in the policy and the Truth, which was its organ, continued to make periodic discoveries of breaches in the policy. "Our Australians", said one of its Branch Secretaries, "fought and died ... to keep their country free from dictators, coolie labour, cheap goods and low standards".(94) To its Secretary, even a meagre quota of Asians "would be a step towards national suicide".(95)

The other important group known for its opposition to the relaxation in the policy was the Returned Servicemen's League, with a membership of 240,000 in 1957. The League remained uncompromising on the question until as late as in 1959. Its

94 Brisbane Courier Mail, 13 April 1953.
95 Quoted in Dodd, n.38, p.41.
national executive opposed "appeasement" in 1949. (96) The Trade Unions also did not take kindly to the idea of diluting the cherished "White Australia" policy, which came into being through their historical struggle for minimum basic wage.

Among the opponents of the policy, Church groups were in the van. In 1948, the Australian Council of Churches supported some form of a quota system. (97) The organ of the Methodist Church quoted an old saying in warning the Chifley Government against some of its harsh measures, stating: "He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed and that without remedy." (98) University groups were steadfast in their opposition to discriminatory practices in the name of "White Australia" policy. Students everywhere are prone to question what, to the older generations, is the very foundation of their society and students in Australia were no exception.

96 The Sydney Morning Herald, 28 March 1949.
97 Ibid., 9 February 1948. They took the same position ten years later, that is, in 1958.
98 The Methodist (Sydney), 6 December 1947, p.3. Quoted in Dodd, n.38, p.33. Earlier, in his address to the Christian Peace Congress in February 1946, Rev. Alan Walker of the Methodist Church had asserted: "The White Australia policy is one of the most provocative and mischievous pieces of legislation in the world." For the full text of his speech, see Alan Walker, "Planning Peace in the Pacific," Australian Quarterly,
to this. (99) Their special experience in living with Asian students in their campuses also contributed to their non-conformist attitude. The Communist Party has been a traditional opponent of the policy. On the eve of the war, a Leftist writer had stated:

Militant unionism rejects as viciously anti-working class the "White Australia" policy, the British preference policy, etc., which divided the working class and aid imperialist oppression and war plans. (100)

In 1945, the Secretary of the Party called the policy "an outrageous insult" and suggested a national quota system. In 1948, Sharky, the leading Australian Communist, described the policy as reactionary, imperialistic and an attempt to prevent working class unity, while he was in Calcutta. (101) In the period under review, the Party had support among some working class groups and its opinions did count in those

vol.18, no.2 (June 1946), p.87. When interviewed in 1965, Rev. Walker told this author that he stood by what he said in 1946, but this should not imply that he was for opening "the floodgates" to the vast masses of Asia.

99 The twentieth meeting of the National Union of Australian University Students was of the opinion that the quota system would overcome "our" racial prejudices. Motions were also passed by University students in Adelaide and Sydney (with majorities 150/12 and 232/51) deprecating the exclusion policy based on race, colour, nationality or religion and advocating quota system. See Dodd, n.38, pp.53-4.

100 Quoted in Ellis, n.30, p.61.

101 The Sydney Morning Herald, 2 March 1948.
quarters. But upto 1954, the party never came out openly for the total abolition of the policy. Significantly enough, no group in Australia has, until this day, acted as an agent or catalyst through which organized opposition to the policy itself has come.

The Administrative "Nibbling Away" of the Policy

In 1945, immigration ceased to be the responsibility of the Department of the Interior. It was entrusted to the newly created Department of Immigration, headed by Arthur Calwell. The Department had a "Restricted Immigration" Section, which handled cases of deportations of those not qualifying for further stay in the country in the opinion of the Government. When war came, several Malays, Indonesians and other Asians escaped the conquering armies of Nippon and sought sanctuary in the southern White continent. A number of them stayed on after 1945 and actually married Australian citizens and had children from them. Calwell was determined to see them go and this led to a domestic controversy, which kept simmering throughout the last two years of the ALP Government. It had reactions in Southeast Asia also. For example, the Singapore Free Press wrote:
When he forcibly separates husbands from wives, when he deported the husbands and kept the wives, he dishonoured Australia and thousands of Australian soldiers who lie in Asian graves. (102)

The Press (103) and Opposition (104) criticised the Government for its inhumanity. The Australian community in those years stood in the midst of cross-currents of ideas. On one side, appeal was made to national ethos represented by the "White Australia" policy and symbolized in the person and precepts of Arthur Calwell. On the other, ideals expressed in the Charter of the United Nations and the Declaration of Human Rights were invoked and Herbert Evatt stood for them. Then, there were pragmatists like Benedict Chifley (and Harold Holt of the Opposition), who agreed with the policy, but sought its more liberal implementation in view of the likely reactions in Asia.


103 For example, see the Sydney Morning Herald, 11 July, 1945, p.2. "The real friends of White Australia", commented this paper, "are not those fanatics who would push a valid national policy to extremes and make it a needless cause of affront to good neighbours in the East, and fellow subjects of the British Empire."

In the ALP Government, it was Calwell, who would brook no exception to the policy, (105) come what may. "No matter how fierce and unrelenting the attacks upon me personally may be", he declared, "I am determined that the flag of White Australia will not be lowered". (106) Evatt, a typical Australian, believed in the policy and felt that it was in accordance with International Law and practice and the requirements of his country's security. But he reportedly felt that as fast as he built up bridges in Asia, Calwell pulled them down. (107) Chifley did not figure much in the controversy, but once a decision was taken, he was firm in supporting it. During the case of the Malayan seamen, it is alleged, he supported Calwell, instead of Evatt, (108) as he felt that "it was easier for the Labour movement as a whole to appreciate Calwell's single-mindedness than Evatt's concern for a good neighbourly policy". (109)

105 For example, see the statement of Calwell on 20 May 1949. Quoted in Dodd, n.38, p.23. In this, he said: "Either you stand by the law or you do not. Either you believe in the maintenance of the White Australia Policy or you water that policy down".

106 The Sydney Morning Herald, 24 March 1949.

107 Reported by the Canberra correspondent of the Sydney Morning Herald, Ibid., 4 September 1949, p.7.

108 Ibid.

109 Ibid.
three men in the ALP Government - Evatt, Chifley and Calwell - remind one of the trinity of the Hindu Pantheon, represented in the ubiquitous three-faced god in the ancient temples of Java, Cambodia and India — his one face, serene and thoughtful, represents the Creator, the other, soft and compassionate, stands for the Preserver and the Guardian and the third, angry and fearsome, symbolises the Destroyer.

Calwell could have continued with his deportations, but in March 1949, the High Court decided against him in the O'Keefe Case. He then introduced new legislation, namely, the Nationality and Citizenship Act (110) to shore up his policy. He was also sore with the "recalcitrant minority" of 900 Asian refugees and therefore introduced a Bill in June 1949, which was passed next month as Wartime Refugees Removal Act. The deportation of about 50 Chinese under the above Act attracted more attention than the case of the Malayan seamen who were deported earlier in 1948. It brought the country's Press against him. But he justified his action by saying that he was trying to

110 Palfreeman, n. 21, p. 189. The author quotes Mr Justice Dixon saying on this Act that it "was not well drafted and has grown up in bits and pieces. It has become extremely difficult to reconcile of the provisions".
eliminate a potential Fifth Column from the country. (111)

The new Liberal-Country Party Government came to power in 1950 and Harold Holt succeeded Arthur Calwell as Minister for Immigration. His first act was to cancel Jang's deportation, which was cited as Calwell's "inhumanity". (112) The new Government also did not make use of the Wartime Refugees Removal Act except in the case of Wong Man On v. the Commonwealth of Australia. This was in accordance with the declaration that wartime refugees with "good records" would be allowed to remain in the country. Thus we find that, within the traditional framework, there was more flexibility now. In September 1953, Holt was attacked in the House of Representatives by Ward of ALP Opposition during investigations in Ung Chann Bunn Case. It showed that despite liberalization, the Government was on the defensive. That is why the Government leaders repeatedly declared their firm

112 Frank Jang came to Australia in 1930 with the immigration permit to conduct a business. After 19 years, Calwell ordered him to leave because he had given up his original business and had engaged in selling potatoes instead.
support of the policy. (113) It was not until 1958 that the Liberal-Country Government was able to enact a more imaginative statute, namely, the Migration Act of 1958, which, in the words of Downer, the Minister for Immigration, "gives Australia the finest immigration charter that the world has yet seen". It repealed 19 existing enactments and made naturalization a possibility for non-Europeans as well.

The liberalization in the application of the policy benefitted several categories of non-European immigrants. Until 1949, the Minister for Immigration in the ALP Government was talking of the threat posed by non-Europeans marrying Australians and was specific that he would not permit marriage to be made a means of entering the country, whatever be the hardship of the people concerned. (114) The Government now adopted a different attitude towards the husbands and wives of Australian nationals. In 1950, Percy Spender, a leading member of the new Government, declared:

113 For example, see CFD (1955), p.195.
114 The result of it was that Sgt. Gamboa, Tony Ang and some Malayan seamen were separated from their Australian wives. In 1949, the Australian wife of Tito Macabanti had to return to Manila because her husband could not stay in her country. In 1948, the Chinese wife and step-daughter of N. Carwille and
All that I have to say is that if the administration of any law results in the law of God being destroyed, that is bad administration. If the administration breaks up families then such administrative acts cannot be supported. (115)

Wartime refugees were another category affected by the "White Australia" policy. Menzies, while in Opposition, had criticised the Government for trying to deport 700 Indonesians in 1946. When he came to power, deportation of these refugees was stopped and 900 of them were permitted to remain in the country. One reason was that it was now unsafe for them to return to China, where the Communists had seized power. The *Refugees Removal Act* was, however, kept on the statute book in the forlorn hope that these people could be persuaded to leave later.

Australia welcomed Eurasians, but only after ascertaining the percentage of non-white blood in the prospective migrant of this category. In December 1948, 69 Anglo-Indians from Ceylon and India arrived in Fremantle on *The Stratheden*. They had been accepted for permanent residence, but the officers in Perth

Tongan wife of S. Carrick were required to leave. Next year, Clarence Reeves, a Negro boxer with Australian wife and two children was deported. Calwell was also taking steps to deport Mrs. O'Keefe and her eight children, but then the ALP Government was out of power.

*CPD*, vol.206 (23 February 1950), p.82.
decided that at least three of them did not meet the racial requirements. They were then sent back. Under the stewardship of Harold Holt, the Department avoided such happenings and the tact and secrecy in dealing with such cases did not permit the Press to disclose any untoward incident.

Assured of a more receptive social climate in Australia, privately sponsored Asian students began to increase in the University campuses in the country. This increase was more rapid after 1950, as the following table denotes (116):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of privately sponsored Asian students in Australia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>1126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>1750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>2378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>2930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>2986</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was estimated that 70 per cent of the rapid increase of these students was made up of the Chinese students

from Southeast Asia, especially, Malaya and Singapore. (117)

The above analysis amply demonstrates that "the administrative nibbling away of the policy", as Lord Casey once called it, had started after the departure of Calwell from the captainship of the Department of Immigration in 1949. If Calwell satisfied himself that he had the support of the people of his country in his severe measures, his successors could also claim a favourable local climate, in which, they felt, they could boldly liberalize the implementation of the age-old policy of exclusion of non-Europeans from the soil of Australia. In fact, Calwell negatively contributed to this. His harsh measures led to some soul-searching in Australian society and paved the way for the naturalization of non-Europeans and, ultimately, of the removal of any trace of theoretical discrimination against them. Throughout, the people, the Press and the Government remained aware that, in all their gropings, they were, so to say, on the mat and Asia was watching them and drawing its own conclusions about them. This, in addition to

117 Palfreeman, n.21, p.91.
Christian charity and the native generosity of the Australian, was the dominant motive for whatever little change was effected in the application of the policy.