

Arthur Calwell and the origin of post-war immigration

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1. A watershed in Australia's history

The year 1995 marks the fiftieth anniversary of an event which laid the foundation for what Australia has become as a result of the migration and successful settlement of some 5.5 million people from over one hundred countries. The radical transformation of Australia's ethnic composition is something of a record on the global scale. Only Israel has achieved a higher proportion of the foreign-born in its population since the Second World War. Comparable shifts in the United States took six generations, three in Canada and Brazil, but only one-and-a-half generations in Australia and on a greater proportional scale.

The man who initiated this massive population movement and thereby created a watershed in Australia's history was Arthur Calwell, Minister for Immigration from July 1945 to December 1949.

On 2 August 1945, less than three weeks after his appointment as Minister for Immigration, he presented his first Ministerial Statement in the House of Representatives. This speech marks for the first time a clear-cut statement about Calwell's vision of Australia in the then barely unfolding post-war world. He began the speech with these historic words:

If Australians have learned one lesson from the

Pacific War it is surely that we cannot continue to hold our island continent for ourselves and our descendants unless we greatly increase our numbers. We are about 7 million people and we hold 3 million square miles of this earth surface ... much development and settlement have yet to be undertaken. Our need to undertake it is urgent and imperative if we are to survive ...

He went on to sketch out 'schemes of organised and assisted British migration', but added this most significant statement: 'The door to Australia will always be open within limits of our existing legislation to people from the various dominions, United States of America and from European continental countries, who are sound in health and who will not become a charge on the community to come here and make their homes'. These last few words indicated that his vision of Australian immigration extended well beyond the British Isles; it was to include people from the Dominions and from Continental Europe.

There are many puzzles which I have tried to solve while studying Calwell's speech. How did he come to write these words so early in the piece, having just become the Minister? Who drafted his speech? Before I answer these questions I want to comment on its wider significance. His vision of an immigration program largely funded by the tax-payer, and on the proportionate scale not surpassed by the United States, Canada or Brazil, has made us what we are today, 50 years later. Calwell's vision made no allowance, of course, for the size and proportion of the non-Anglo-Celtic element in Australia's population. Nor did it foreshadow the development of multicultural policies of the 1970s and the 1980s. But it was an extraordinary act of courage and an extraordinary act of statesmanship at the time when Australia was still at war, when the prospect of large-scale immigration from any

source, let alone from European continental countries, was an anathema to many of his political supporters and, it must be said, to a large proportion of the Australian public.

The statement included four notable departures from the previous approaches to immigration, until that time handled by the portfolio of Interior Affairs. First, it included a definite statement - a planned population growth target of 2 per cent per annum, of which half would be derived from net immigration. Second, the purpose of that target was to enhance the defence capacity of Australia and accelerate the nation's development. Consequently, Calwell's approach to immigration differed fundamentally from previous programs, in that economic balance and prosperity were not seen as the aims but as indispensable preconditions of the continuing planned immigration program. Third, the immigration program envisaged that immigrants would be mainly absorbed in settled areas. Hence immigration was to be connected with industrial development and not with a set of individual schemes of rural settlement as it was after the First World War. And fourth, and most important, the document repeatedly referred to potential immigrants not only from Britain but also the Continent of Europe. Calwell's statement concluded with a plea to all Australians 'to help newcomers to become assimilated' and not to 'ostracise those of alien birth and then to blame them for segregating themselves in forming foreign communities'. Reviewing Australia's experience in three 'segregated' foreign communities that he named, Shepparton in Victoria, the Leeton-Griffith Irrigation area in New South Wales and the cane-fields of Queensland he added, 'It is we, not they, who are generally responsible for this state of affairs'.

So Calwell's speech was a major landmark in this country's history. He unveiled a policy that was to change Australia in a far more fundamental way than anything else since the end of the Second World War.

2. How did Calwell arrive at his vision for Australia?

This speech and his subsequent activities as Minister for Immigration present three puzzles which I shall try to clarify: first, the origin of the 2 per cent target; second, the 1 to 10 ratio (10 Britons to one person of the then so-called alien origin); and third, the issue of White Australia, as enshrined in the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901.

Calwell's personal and Cabinet papers in the National Library, as well as the documents stored in the Australian Archives, give some answers, but not all of them conclusive. I have not been able to locate the actual draft of this 1945 speech with his handwritten amendments.

There is much in Calwell's personal background that can throw light on the question of immigration. His great-grandfather Daniel Calwell was born in Ulster, Ireland, and in 1800 emigrated to Pennsylvania at the age of 25. Daniel's son Davis migrated to Victoria during the Gold Rush and settled in Ballarat in 1852. He married Elizabeth Lewis who had migrated from Wales in 1854. They had eleven children, of whom seven survived. The youngest surviving child, Arthur Albert, married an Irish woman, Mary Murphy, whose family had migrated to Victoria in the wake of the disastrous potato famines of the late 1840s. Their first child, Arthur Augustus, was born in Melbourne on 26 August 1896.

As a school boy in Melbourne Calwell grew up in the shadow of his mixed Irish and Welsh ancestry. His wide reading in American history, into the lives of the English Chartists, Fabian Socialists and the nationalist struggles in Ireland and Continental Europe imbued him with a strong sense of history in which Australia was to be seen as an inheritor of the ideals enshrined in Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. In newspaper articles, speeches made as president of the Victorian Labor Party during the 1930s, and later after election as federal member for Melbourne in 1940, Calwell's deep concern for

social justice was invariably linked with the creation in Australia of an ethnically mixed society through large-scale immigration. For example, in a speech made in June 1943 he said, 'the way to have a sane and safe Australia is to give social justice to everybody ... We shall not be able to hold this country as a citadel of European civilisation in this part of the world unless we can obtain a population of 15 or 20 million within one generation'. And in a confidential note addressed to Chifley in 1944 he wrote of his 'determination to develop a heterogeneous society: a society where Irishness and Roman Catholicism would be as acceptable as Englishness and Protestantism; where an Italian background would be as acceptable as a Greek, a Dutch or any other'.

From 1942 to 1944 Calwell chaired the Aliens Classification Committee, giving him first-hand contact with some 6800 internees, mainly of German and Italian origin. The speed with which he conducted the processing of applications for release from internment and the compassion exercised in individual cases of hardship was to serve Calwell well in his future role as Minister for Immigration.

Calwell's appointment to the Curtin Ministry in charge of the Information portfolio gave him further opportunity to promote the cause of immigration within the Cabinet. He was influential in persuading Curtin to create the Inter-Departmental Committee (IDC) on Post-War Migration. The IDC membership included an economist from the University of Melbourne, W. D. Forsyth, then on secondment to the Department of External Affairs. Forsyth's book *The Myth of Open Spaces* (1942) made a profound impression on Calwell, who incorporated many of the author's arguments in the early draft of the first Ministerial Statement.

The most compelling argument advanced by Forsyth was that future immigration and settlement should be linked with the development of industry and consequently restricted to the habitable areas. This view represented a rejection of the concept operating after the First World War of rural settlement in

the 'open spaces'. Forsyth also argued that immigration from the British Isles in the post-war period would be highly restricted by the British Government. He foreshadowed work force shortages in Great Britain which would handicap Australia's chances of ever attracting large numbers of British migrants. He then went on to say that there were still reserves of labour in eastern Europe and southern Europe and pointed to these as a future target for Australia's immigration effort. All of these ideas emerged in the reports of the IDC and then in Calwell's 2 August 1945 speech.

Calwell argued in his autobiography *Be Just and Fear Not* 'that even in the darkest days of the awful conflict of the Pacific War, the Curtin Government gave much thought to population building. I remember Mr Curtin telling Cabinet in early 1944 that at the war's end there would have to be a Minister for Immigration. He said we must have more people to develop and defend Australia. When Curtin died and Chifley became Prime Minister, I wrote him a note suggesting that he should instantly create a portfolio for immigration and give the portfolio to me'.

This is exactly what happened on 13 July 1945, when Calwell was sworn in as Minister for Immigration. The Department, after some controversy with the Department of Interior, was given wide powers, including immigration, emigration, issue of passports and entry permits. Tas Heyes was selected head of the department in early 1946.

What was the origin of the 2 per cent population growth target?

In mid-1942, barely six months after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbour, there was already much speculation in the press and in Parliament about what would happen at the end of the Pacific War. In 1942 considerable publicity was given to press reports attributed to 'unknown sources in Parliament' arguing that immigration at 6 per cent of population per annum was desirable. This would add to the

population something of the order of 430 000 people per annum, clearly an unattainable target, as was quickly pointed out by a number of economists working in government, especially Professor L. F. Giblin, the adviser to Curtin and Chifley. Giblin rejected the target and argued that what was really required was something far more manageable.

As Chairman of the Commonwealth Financial and Economic Committee, he wrote to the Minister for Post-War Reconstruction: 'We should plan to increase immigration to the maximum reasonably possible: about 1 per cent of population, something between 50 - 100,000 a year'. This is the first definitive statement that I was able to find in the records of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Post-War Migration about the origin of that target. Giblin instantly received considerable support from Colin Clark, who wrote in the Ministry of Post-War Reconstruction submission to the Secondary Industries Commission in November 1943 that 'The recently suggested figure of 80,000 immigrants per year seems unduly large and optimistic. I would prefer 70,000 to be a more realistic estimate'. He was certainly very close to the target, exactly the target that Calwell released some three years later.

There were other points of view, of course. While the work of the IDC on migration was cloaked in secrecy, there were voices in Parliament arguing for much higher migration levels. An extraordinary statement was made by one Mr James, an MP for Hunter, who, in the debate and the Address-in-Reply to the Governor-General's speech in July 1944, argued, 'given proper developmental measures, we would carry a population in the country of 160 million people and I would welcome to our shores all people of European races'. A few days later, in the debate on the Governor-General's address, Mr James said, 'I believe that Germany will arise again, they are a highly cultivated people, their inventive genius is amazing. I think it would be a great thing if we adopted the suggestion, which has been made from time to time, that most of their children be taken from them and brought to this country'. These

are just a few instances of flights of fancy which clearly reflected a climate of opinion in favour of large-scale immigration, even among members of the Australian Labor Party (ALP). The government was supported by Menzies, the then Leader of the Opposition, and there was much support given in the press.

The 10 to 1 ratio - a smokescreen

While the source of the 2 per cent population growth target or 1 per cent immigration rate can be fairly accurately traced to the IDC reports, the second puzzle that remains to be clarified is the official and often stated 10 to 1 ratio: 10 Britons to every one person from other than British sources. Was it just a smokescreen, or did Calwell really believe in the feasibility of maintaining this particular ratio over time? I believe that it was a smokescreen created to allay public concern.

As we know, the ratio was never maintained and at one time, in 1949-50, it was even almost reversed. It was something which had already been much debated in the wartime secret meetings of the IDC. Documents make it clear beyond any doubt that as early as in 1943 official immigration planning was focused on non-British migration. This direction was the likely result of Forsyth's influence, both in his book and his personal involvement in the Committee.

I have traced successive reports of the IDC in 1943 and early 1944 and of the Ministerial Committee on Migration in the six months preceding Calwell's appointment, in which the focus was on non-British migration. One assumes that for political reasons very little of this was released for public consumption, although now and again there were the inevitable leaks to the press. There was one important confirmation by the Minister for Post-War Reconstruction in October 1943, who said, in response to a question in Parliament, that the terms of reference of the IDC on migration did not, contrary to press reports, confine it to the sphere of immigration from

Britain. It was the first official statement indicating that plans were afoot involving immigration from other than traditional sources.

Much the same statement can be found in other papers, at that time classified 'Confidential' or 'Secret', from the Department of the Interior and Department of Post-War Reconstruction, as well as some Cabinet papers.

A sub-committee of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Migration submitted a report on Alien White Migration to the committee on 21 September 1944.

The following extract is from the minutes of the IDC meeting of 5 October 1944, in which recommendations of the sub-committee's report were formally adopted. I quote from the report:

The recommendations as adopted are as follows:-

1. That in view of the necessity of greatly enlarging Australia's population and the fact that natural increase and British migration are not likely to provide sufficient increase, a vigorous policy of white alien immigration should be adopted and the alien migrant made to feel that he is regarded as an asset and not admitted on sufferance.

A further document classified 'Secret' on child migration presented to the Cabinet on 28 November 1944, signed jointly by the Ministers for Post-War Reconstruction (J. B. Chifley) and the Interior (J. S. Collings), recommended as follows:

1. The Need. In the past decade the Australian population, now over 7,000,000, has shown an average annual natural increase of 55 - 56,000 (actually lower for the peace years 1933-39). Even if natural increase could be maintained at that rate we would have a population of only 8,300,000 - 8,500,000 in twenty years time. To achieve a population of 10,000,000 in twenty years time would require in addition a net immigration of 60,000 - 70,000 persons every year, which is practically double the best figure of the interwar years. Clearly a vigorous migration effort is essential.

The same document referred to the need for concentrating on children as 'one of the best classes of migrant', noting at the same time that Britain as the source of child migration may offer 'a very limited' prospect. Approval was sought for a 'larger governmental scheme directed towards European as well as British sources of child migrants'.

It is evident that long before Calwell's appointment as Minister for Immigration planning was in place for settlement of people from other than the traditional source in the British Isles. An essential element of planning was that there should be a special publicity campaign to promote the novel idea of what in the minutes of the IDC was referred to as 'Alien European Migration'. This was spelt out by the then Chairman of the Committee, Dr H. C. Coombs, in his report classified 'Secret' to the Cabinet dated 28 November 1944: 'should it be decided at a subsequent stage to seek extensive migration from European countries, other than British, an educational campaign would be necessary'.

By the end of 1944 planning of post-war migration was concentrated in the Cabinet Committee on Migration, consisting of Calwell, Dr Evatt and Senator Collings who as Minister for the Interior had charge of immigration matters.

It seems that planning of post-war Alien European Migration reached a degree of finality as exemplified in the following extract from the recommendations included in the Minute classified 'Secret' dated 11 December 1944:

- A vigorous policy of white alien immigration, complete with an effort to make the individual alien feel he is regarded an asset;
- Assistance to immigrants to meet part of passage costs that maybe necessary to induce good flow;
- A central body of unofficial groups interested in migration to be formed in each State to assist with reception, placement and after-care of migrants, alien and British alike;

- It should be made clear that Commonwealth immigration policy is based on social, economic and cultural grounds and not on any assumption of racial superiority.

What was Calwell's involvement in the White Australia Policy?

Now to come to my third puzzle, Calwell's involvement in administering the White Australia policy, which had its demise at the hands of mainly Liberal ministers and finally of the Whitlam Labor Government in 1973. When Calwell became minister, the dictation test, a central instrument of the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901, still served the purpose of the gatekeepers to ensure that there would be no immigrants from non-European sources. But there were two domestic issues which tested Calwell's adherence to the principle of Australia's racial purity: the pressure for admission of Japanese wives of Australian soldiers serving in Japan in the army of occupation and the application for permanent residence by the refugees who came to Australia during the Second World War.

The issue of Japanese wives didn't really emerge until 1948. At the time there was widespread support in the community for Calwell's uncompromising stand in not allowing Japanese women to accompany their Australian husbands upon discharge from active duty in Japan in the occupation forces. Calwell was under considerable public pressure not to allow entry of Japanese war brides, as the following extracts attest. They are from letters written to Calwell in 1948, the first from Ballarat, the second from Perth.

As one of the women whose cherished son died so cruelly in Japanese hands I want to thank you for your stand re the banning of these wives in Australia. It should be an insult in the memory of those who died to allow Japanese women to come here and rear another generation of sadists.

As an ex-servicewoman and wife of a returned soldier I feel very strongly that the land for which we

fought would never be degraded by the admission and the acceptance of such people, taken as wives by foolish young members of BCOF (British and Commonwealth Occupation Forces).

One statement which is often quoted shows how he reacted with some vigour to demands that restrictions be relaxed. In the debate on 8 March 1948 he said, 'An Australian marrying a Japanese can live with her in Japan but it would be the grossest act of public indecency to permit any Japanese of either sex to pollute Australian shores while any relatives remain of Australian soldiers dead in the Pacific battlefields. No Australian is permitted to outrage the feelings of widows and mothers by flaunting Japanese women before their eyes'. A hard pronouncement, but it must be seen in the historical context, in which Australian war dead and the atrocities suffered by Australian prisoners of war were still strongly felt.

The wartime refugees presented an even greater test for Calwell's handling of the issue. Some 6000 refugees or so, from what at the time was the Territory of Dutch East Indies, China and Malaya, were admitted to Australia as a result of Japanese invasion. Of these, approximately 5000 returned to their homes when the war ended, but some 500 or so sought permission to stay in Australia as permanent residents. Many were married to Australian citizens and they had made their homes in the country. Several Chinese nationals were reluctant to return to China, fearing the worst from the Communist forces.

Calwell was adamant that these former refugees should be deported, but the controversy surrounding their court cases in the face of what the Melbourne Sun newspaper described as the Minister's 'harsh and gratuitously offensive manner', and criticisms of his administration as being heavy-handed, had considerable adverse repercussions in the countries of South-East Asia and, for the first time, in some circles within Australia. Calwell's personal files are full of reports from officers of the Department of External Affairs, as it was then known, reporting from Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Hong Kong,

posts in China and other places about the impact of Calwell's measures and his public statements.

Within Australia there was also opposition, from people such as Archbishop Duhig, the Catholic Archbishop of Brisbane; Professor Elkin, Professor of Anthropology, University of Sydney; Bishop Burgmann, the Anglican Bishop of Canberra and Goulburn; Professor Macmahon Ball, political scientist, Melbourne University, all of whom had raised their voices in arguing that White Australia had outlived its purpose and that what was being done by the Minister was contrary to the national interest. They all argued that these offensive actions within Australia would have an adverse impact on Australia's standing in Asian countries.

Calwell's reaction to these voices was instant. In early 1949, during the controversy surrounding his War-time Refugee Removal Bill, which he drafted in order to provide instant removal of wartime refugees despite warnings of the High Court, he published a pamphlet entitled 'Danger for Australia'. In it he blamed Menzies, and indeed the whole Liberal-Country Party Opposition, as those 'who would like to break down our selected immigration policy, people concerned only with money and power for themselves, people concerned with conservatism, the ultra-conservatives and land barons who would like vast pools of near-slave labor to make them richer'.

The cause celebre for the domestic critics of White Australia was the attempted deportation of Mrs Annie O'Keefe and her eight children. Mrs O'Keefe was an Ambonese who had escaped to Australia in 1942 with her children, as refugees from the Japanese. Her Ambonese husband died while serving against the Japanese in the Pacific and she later married an Australian, Mr J. W. O'Keefe, in Victoria. During the war the Government gave her a temporary Certificate of Exemption and on its expiry attempted to deport her. She appealed to the High Court, which held that she was not a prohibited immigrant. This led Calwell to draft special legislation, a Bill to Amend the

Immigration Act, which, together with the Wartime Refugees Removal Bill, was designed to remedy legal defects in the existing legislation revealed in the High Court judgment.

Both Bills received Parliamentary assent in July 1949, but, thanks to Tas Heyes' personal intervention, they were never taken to the Governor-General to be signed and made into Acts of Parliament. I pay a special tribute here to Tas Heyes as Secretary of the Department of Immigration, whose intervention I was able to trace in Calwell's papers. He wrote several times in his confidential memoranda as Head of the Department indicating that it would be contrary to Australia's interests if the Minister were to pursue the Bill already passed by Parliament and to incorporate it in the body of legislation and so to remove the power of the High Court in its first major decision on the O'Keefe case.

In his own stand in favour of White Australia, Calwell received considerable support from a number of sources. One of these was his friend Frank Clune, the author, whose sixty or so titles mainly on Australian themes include The Red Heart (1944), White Colonial Boys (1948), and Journey to Canberra (1960). Clune became Calwell's friend in the late 1930s and through the period of Calwell's ministry sent him personal letters, all of which remain on Calwell's correspondence files. In particular, Clune now and again argued what a mistake it would be if Australia did away with White Australia. 'It would be a tragedy', he wrote in February 1948, 'if White Australia gets whittled away by time-servers. The religious crowd are very powerful. They would have us all black, white and brindle if they could only fill their churches with souls awaiting salvation.' And Calwell replied a week later, 'My fight for White Australia is not a lone fight because you and many thousands of other good Australians are greatly determined that White Australia should remain white.'

Similar correspondence between Calwell and the president of the Australia First Movement in New South Wales, Ken Beth, also contains references to White Australia. Calwell thanked

Beth for 'congratulatory references to my endeavours to bring the right types of people to this country'. All of these references are important because they do appear again in his speeches and particularly in his pamphlets, of which three were published during the controversy. Another group which played a prominent part in promoting the issue and strengthening Calwell's hand was the Australian Natives Association, whose stand on White Australia dates back to the early 1920s. For example, in June 1948 Robert Joseph, the Victorian Vice-President of the Australian Natives Association, replying to Calwell's telegram about White Australia, spoke of the recent utterances about White Australia of Professor Macmahon Ball and others, arguing that these statements should be rejected. Calwell's response of 10 June 1948 reads:

It is obvious that the small minorities in this country and elsewhere are endeavouring to embarrass the Government in its enforcement of a policy which is supported by the great majority of Australians and which has always been in the forefront of the Labor Party platform. The existence of the Australian Natives Association and other such groups in combating this propaganda is much appreciated.

Apart from these pressure groups outside the political spectrum, there was also very strong support for White Australia from within Calwell's own party. At one time in 1948, after a much publicised statement by Bishop Burgmann and Professor Macmahon Ball appeared in the press, Calwell received almost identically worded resolutions (most of them handwritten) from ALP branches throughout Australia strongly arguing in favour of maintaining the White Australia policy. This again indicates that it was clearly organised within the party and that Calwell paid heed to what his own party had to say.

I could give you other instances of how it happened and how the issue was argued, but what concerns me is that Calwell's stand on White Australia seemed to be contrary to his own personal beliefs in the dignity of man, his own Catholicism, and his own basic decency.

He certainly never denied the discriminatory reality of the law, but he did not consider himself to be superior to any Asians, and he maintained close contact with the Asian community of Sydney and, to a lesser extent, of Melbourne. It is said that he knew one of the Chinese languages; whether it was Mandarin or Cantonese, I am unable to say.

The aim of the law as administered by Calwell was to ensure a racially homogeneous Australia. He believed it would be political suicide for him to try to relax the White Australia policy, which had been on the statute books since 1901. But more fundamentally, he did not wish to jeopardise the immigration policy by raising the issue of colour. By trying to make the existing social structure more varied he did not want to change it to the extent of raising racial antagonisms that would (in his judgment) destroy his achievement.

Much controversy surrounds to this day Calwell's handling of the White Australia policy. The 'Two Wongs don't make a White' statement has been used in textbooks and in the media to suggest racist attitudes on the part of Arthur Calwell. The Hansard of 2 December 1947 indicates that a question was asked concerning deportation generally and, in particular, deportation of a Chinese national Mr Wong, who had been in the country for many years. The Department of Immigration apparently had issued an order for deportation on the wrong person. In explaining this, Calwell was subjected to persistent interjections by a Liberal member for Balaclava, a Mr White. In concluding his remarks, Calwell said in a teasing way: 'There are many Wongs in the Chinese community, but I have to say - and I am sure that the honourable member for Balaclava will not mind me doing so - that "two Wongs do not make a White" '. One can only speculate why the press reporting Calwell's statement chose to exclude the capital 'W'. That statement then became 'Two Wongs do not make a white', a continual repetition of which, in the words of one of Calwell's successors as Minister for Immigration, Clyde Holding, 'made it a segment of both the attitude of Arthur Calwell

and a gross assertion purporting it to be the base of our immigration policy' (Hansard, 27 May 1993).

3. Conclusion

I have tried to show in this paper that an examination of the hitherto unavailable documents, such as Calwell's personal papers, Cabinet papers, ALP Caucus papers, as well as documents relating to the Department of Post-War Reconstruction, as Chair of the then IDC Committee on Post-War Migration, shed new light on the origin of Australia's post-war population policy. The documents show that the growth target and its composition, with the bias towards non-British sources, were well established before Calwell's historic speech on 2 August 1945.

Second, the documents reveal that Calwell was well aware of the likely impact of immigration on the accepted and culturally defined image of an Australian citizen and that his thinking, together with his personal impact on the culture of his department, foreshadowed what later emerged as one of the key issues in Australia's multicultural policies.

Third, the documents reveal that Calwell's rigid interpretation of the White Australia policy was merely reflecting the prevailing attitude of his day, an attitude then shared by the majority of Australians. So it is unfair to criticise him for persevering with the deportation of Mrs O'Keefe and being tough on the Japanese war brides. The legislation under which Mrs O'Keefe would have been deported was never enacted because Calwell was prepared to follow advice of the head of his department, but he remained uncompromising on the issue of Japanese wives. He knew well that the barbarity of the Japanese was still uppermost in the mind of Australians three years after VJ (Victory over Japan) Day. Only time would assuage those feelings.

Finally, it is important to record that within Calwell's own party the opponents of the White Australia policy were hardly vocal. The

Australian Labor Party was not yet ready to embrace non-discriminatory immigration policy. It was left to the later generation of Labor leaders - Whitlam, Dunstan and Grassby - to move the ALP to the concept and practice of cultural pluralism later embraced by Malcolm Fraser and the Hawke Government. Therefore, there is a sense in which Calwell's policies, unwittingly perhaps, foreshadowed Australia's multiracial and multicultural policy of the last two decades of the twentieth century.

There was a profoundly moral purpose in Calwell's vision of a new social order in Australia for which immigration was to have been a major instrument. As his biographer Colm Kiernan put it: '(Calwell) recognised that a massive immigration program would provide a short cut to the new order ... Calwell's aim was moral and he believed that this could be achieved by the Labor Party'. He knew, of course, that his desire to innovate in promoting an immigration program of an unprecedented size and complexity was fraught with risks. However, in accepting inevitable risks Calwell was encouraged and at all times supported by the then Opposition.

In his reply to Calwell's statement of 2 August 1945 the Leader of the Opposition, Robert Menzies, pledged his Party's support, choosing to underscore Calwell's statement, 'We may have only those next 25 years in which to make the best possible use of our chance to survive. Our first requirement is additional population'. Menzies added, 'These are grave words which I believe to be entirely true ... My plea to the Minister is that, if a choice has to be made between a policy of extreme caution and an adventurous policy which accepts risks because great results are involved, then let us have a more adventurous policy'. In saying this Menzies laid down the firm foundation for Australia's bipartisan policy on immigration.

So in my judgment there can be no doubt whatsoever that in 1945 Calwell alone had the vision, determination, purpose and compassion to set in motion an immigration program of considerable dimension. That program replaced

the fragmented and spasmodic policies of the past. It envisaged a generation of planned effort and the quantitative and qualitative transformation of the whole nation, while maintaining the White Australia concept widely subscribed to by Australians of that period. Although the Prime Ministership in the end was denied him, he succeeded in refashioning the destiny of Australia. He did this with the able and continuing loyal support of his staff.

Note on sources

Arthur Calwell's personal and Cabinet papers (1931-73) are held in the Manuscript Room of the National Library of Australia, catalogue number MS 4738. The collection includes personal correspondence, minutes of the ALP Caucus meetings, copies of speeches, submissions to Cabinet, press cuttings and pamphlets stored in some 280 boxes occupying 110 metres of shelf space. Records of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Post-War Migration Policy (1943-45) are kept in Australian Archives Series No. A1838/T116 and CP 43/1. Calwell's autobiography *Be Just and Fear Not* (1972), pamphlets *How Many Australians Tomorrow?* (1945), *20,000,000 Australians in Our Time* (1949) and *Immigration Policy and Progress* (1949) provide useful insight into the origin of his thinking about immigration and the new 'social order' for Australia. Colm Kiernan's *Calwell: A Personal and Political Biography* (1978) traces Calwell's career as a politician. The history of the first major wave of post-war immigration is recorded in Egon F. Kunz's *Displaced Persons: Calwell's New Australians* (1988).