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## Australia and Immigration: Asian Migration to Australia

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## **Australia and Immigration: Asian Migration to Australia**

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guide for any serious student who wishes to acquaint himself with the thought of Merleau-Ponty.

JOSE A. CRUZ

## AUSTRALIA AND IMMIGRATION

ASIAN MIGRATION TO AUSTRALIA. By A. T. Yarwood. Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 1964. 210 pp.

In 1901, the Australian Federal Parliament passed the Immigration Restriction Act. Though determining the large issue of Asian immigration and settlement, the Act itself and its administration remained subject to pressures which brought about important modifications. *Asian Migration to Australia* concerns itself with these pressures and their effect on government policy.

Basically, the book consists of two parts. The first part depicts parliamentary opinion which led to a settled immigration policy against the background of British imperial and Japanese diplomatic pressures and of community attitudes and representations by various economic groups. The second part examines the different treatment of the immigrant Japanese, Chinese, Indian, and Syrian groups, with the aim of bringing out the domestic and overseas influences that determined public attitudes and administrative policy in each case. If the author's main concern in this book is to focus on the policy of protectionism favored by the Commonwealth during the early part of her history, he succeeds admirably.

The reader will appreciate the author's desire to portray the fear amongst Australians of creating a racial situation similar to that of the American southern states, South Africa, Kenya, and Fiji. This race consciousness underlay what has become the much maligned "White Australia" policy. The exclusion of immigrant labor involved a measure of national self-denial and implied acceptance of limited national development—no small price to pay for racial homogeneity at a critical period of nation-building! Critics of the policy decried its self-destructive and morally reprehensible elements and pointed to the danger of invasion by overpopulated Asia. Exponents of the policy challenged these criticisms on the grounds of national security and dignity of labor.

Over the years however, a change occurred in the administrative emphasis of the Immigration Act. By 1923, Australian politicians disclaimed any suggestion that the exclusion policy assumed racial superiority and instead referred to the differences between Eastern

and Western cultures which prevented their fusion into one harmonious society. Conditions for entry were subsequently eased and there was a lessening of the prejudice exhibited toward the Asian minorities in Australia.

Much of the content of this book is the result of thorough research and judicious reasoning. Taken as a whole, it provides useful insights into the administrative history of the period, 1896-1923.

MERCEDES CONCEPCION