Racism and population: myths for the growth lobby
Katharine Betts

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In their book *The Population Explosion*, the Ehrlichs ask "Why isn't everyone as scared as we are?" They suggest a number of answers, including the idea that evolution naturally predisposes us to take a short-term view and, in any case, to see growth in the numbers of our own kind as a good thing.[1] These particular answers may not be entirely satisfying but the Ehrlichs' question is real and, though they may feel isolated, the deep concern about population growth that they express is shared by a growing number of people. But anxiety and concern is only a beginning. We need to understand why growth occurs so that we can know how to act to reduce the size and the effects of the deepening crisis.

Political and religious opposition to birth control is in retreat in Australia, and Australian couples are using their new freedom in a responsible way. Reduced family size means that natural increase would only add another two million to the Australian population by 2031 and then the balance of fertility and mortality would be transformed into a moderate natural decrease. This pattern is true of most developed countries, though the process is gentler here. Australia would not fall below the current 17 million for a hundred years, time enough to think about more generous support for families to promote a slight rise in fertility to balance deaths so that we will not be looking at the distorted age structure facing countries that are closer to the one child norm than to two. A stable population somewhere between 17 and 19 million offers many possibilities for enhanced social welfare, ecologically sustainable development, and constructive foreign aid. But, because of immigration, this is not the future that we in fact are heading for. Immigration here may mean that the extra two million people in 2031 will become an extra nine million and many further millions in the decades to follow. Australia is one of the few countries in the developed world still actively recruiting migrants and immigration is now the key source of our future population growth.[2]

Mass immigration from high fertility to low fertility areas intensifies the population problem in at least two ways: it squanders the progress towards stability that the low fertility populations have made and it reduces pressure for demographic change in the high fertility population. Immigration usually provides opportunities to potential migrants with more, rather than fewer, personal resources. This means that, as "aid", it gives to those who already have advantages, helps depress the level of skills in the countries they come from, leaving the majority who remain behind worse off than they were before. But it also means that people with education and other assets are likely to devote their energies to the task of trying to engineer their personal escape from a poverty-stricken, politically unstable environment, rather than using their talents to try to improve circumstances at home. Of course, almost all Western nations are now facing strong immigration pressures from the Third World and from the fractured former Soviet empire, but very few are intensifying the problem by sending the signal that they want more people in the way that Australia does.

Continuing immigration here has owed its persistence to a combination of circumstances. There is a growth lobby with diverse interests and connections, which is focussed and organised, and thus able to persuade policy makers to follow its interests

rather than those of the majority of Australians who favour less immigration or none at all. Also, there is the favourable ideological context provided by the cosmopolitan culture endorsed by new class intellectuals from the mid 1960s, and finally a strategy of political bipartisanship which has enabled politicians to avoid the electoral consequences of their immigration policies.[3]

The combination of the vested interests of the growth lobby and new class ideology has thrown up some curious ethical and political ideas about the nature of the Australian people and the way in which they should respond to immigration pressures. This is most evident in the doctrines of multiculturalism and anti-racism as they are currently expressed. But ideas about the identity of the Australian people and the proper place of nationalism in their affairs also contribute to these doctrines. Together they help to fashion an élite culture that has supported immigration-fuelled population growth and minimised the chances of stability.

All four of sets of ideas (racism, nationalism, the Australian identity, and multiculturalism) are strongly affected by immigration but the connection is clearest with multiculturalism. Post-war immigration created the circumstances that produced multiculturalism and it is multiculturalism which has nurtured high migration the most. Multiculturalism has had this effect in two ways. It provides moral support for ethnic leaders lobbying for family reunion.[4] It has also contributed to an ideological climate in which criticism of high immigration became conflated with hostility to migrants and with antipathy to multiculturalism if not active racism. This connection is now well established, not only among ethnic activists but among many members of the new class. The association between criticism of immigration and the idea of racism forms a deep undercurrent in contemporary multiculturalism which discourages and distorts that criticism.

What does the word “multiculturalism” mean? The question is tricky because it has at least three meanings, and speakers - often unwittingly - slip back and forth between them. The first meaning is descriptive, referring to the fact that a proportion of Australians come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. This fact may upset some old Australians, distressed that they were not asked if this was what they wanted, and confused when they are reviled as racists if they express retrospective regrets, but its verity is not in dispute. In this sense Australia is a multicultural society, whether we like it or not. The other two meanings of “multiculturalism” are prescriptive, offering ideas about what we ought to do in the face of this ethnic diversity.

One of these prescriptive ideas refers to access and equity programs. According to this no Australians should be denied their civil, political or social rights because of barriers created by language or culture. This variant of the principle of the “fair go” enjoys widespread community support. Though there may be debate about the most effective means of overcoming linguistic and cultural barriers, the claim that they should be overcome is seldom contested.[5]

It is the third meaning that is contentious. Here “multiculturalism” stands for the idea that cultural diversity is a good thing in and of itself and that it should be actively preserved, if necessary through Government-funded programs promoting cultural maintenance and the celebration of diversity. As Stephen Castles and his co-authors put it, multiculturalism is an “ideology of state-sponsored cultural pluralism”.[6] This “state-

sponsored cultural pluralism" is popular with ethnic leaders and with others professionally involved in the multicultural industry, and it is approved by many members of the new class, cheered to find ways of demonstrating the new level of sophistication that they have attained and expressing their distance from the their commonplace suburban origins. But it is unpopular, not just with the old Australian majority, but with many immigrants as well.[7] (It is not surprising that the *National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia* concentrated on the first two, uncontroversial, meanings. In Andrew Theophanous' words, the version expressed in the *Agenda* was not "full-blooded multiculturalism".[8])

Much of the thinking behind the ideas embodied in multiculturalism is muddled. It is not always clear which of the three meanings a speaker intends and the third meaning is particularly vague. But this muddle is understandable. The supporters of multiculturalism are a heterogeneous group and the collection of policies and ideas that it embodies were not conceived as a unified plan. Governments and lobbyists have, to a certain degree, made multiculturalism up as they went along. This history is not unique. Public policy often evolves in this piecemeal way. We can see this in the fields of education, health, welfare, and immigration. Clear objectives and a defined strategy are the exception, not the rule. But the history of multiculturalism can help us understand the present situation.

Multiculturalism has its origins in the idea that actively preserving cultural diversity would nurture the self-esteem of migrant children and, in so doing, help them to succeed at school. In this way we might hope to prevent the formation of an ethnic underclass trapped in a culture of poverty. As Jean Martin demonstrates, multiculturalism had its origins in the difficulties experienced by Australian welfare workers and teachers in 1960s as they struggled to find a way of serving a growing non-English-speaking clientele. Multiculturalism was seen at that time as a means to an end, and the end was a less painful and more enduring assimilation than the forced march of older policies. As Martin shows, it grew out of the perspective that these diverse professionals (unselfish, serious, committed, new-class professionals) had adopted for understanding the migrant presence in Australia.[9] It was not a response to migrant pressures, and its objective was not cultural maintenance but the incorporation of migrants into the mainstream. As Kovacs and Cropley put it in 1975, "The great advantage of the socio-cultural conditions that prevail in a multi-cultural society is that they provide that route to assimilation which entails the fewest negative consequences of alienation".[10] Al Grassby and the new ethnic politics of the late 1970s changed this objective from assimilation to diversity in perpetuity, but they were not building on a strong grass-roots demand from migrants.

"Multiculturalism" was designed as an antidote to poverty, and the idea that migrants suffered from a range of serious disadvantages was necessary for it to succeed. Though there were certainly problems with migrant poverty,[11] it is not the case that migrants, even non-English-speaking-background migrants, were, or are, uniformly disadvantaged in economic terms.[12] Martin argues that some of the people who originally created the new image of migrants as people beset by problems used evidence selectively to make their point. She writes that "the emphases on migrants as 'factory fodder' and on migrant poverty are obvious examples". She also argues that the new definition of migrants as victims of exploitation "gained support from the situation in

other countries, particularly the intransigence of black poverty and the emergence of black militancy in the United States".[13]

Multiculturalism was built on the image of the "problem migrant", a partial and ill-researched image, and when it began as an educational policy its aim was to foster assimilation. It has long since out-grown this original aim and scope, but the focus on adversity and economic disadvantage still remains. The initial justification seems still to be necessary. For example, in 1984 Wilton and Bosworth wrote that "every census reveals that, after Aborigines, migrants, as a group, are worse off in terms of occupational mobility, working conditions and unemployment (and probably, knowledge and usage of social security)." Growing numbers of them "not only discover an Australia that is spiritually empty but also one that is materially barren". Wilton and Bosworth go on to ask, "Why are so many migrants so blatantly disadvantaged?"[14] They mention business greed, union neglect and the insensitivity of Australian workers as possible causes but, in the end, the question falls a little flat. Their more extensive treatment of the data leads them to conclude that it "is a myth that all migrants are exploited and in their work are no more than 'the wretched of the earth'."

An explanation for the migrant's "miserable" circumstances cannot be clearly formulated because, on closer inspection, the circumstances are not uniformly miserable. But the general image of the problem migrant defies the specific evidence. Because multiculturalism is based on the idea of disadvantage migrants must continue to be victims; their misfortunes must have been caused by the wider society which can then be shown to owe them the compensation of multiculturalism. Migrants' difficulties could originally be seen as an unfortunate by-product of poor English, low skills and the costs of re-establishing a household in a new location. But the problems of the problem migrant were soon transformed. They became a consequence of the racism peculiar to the "dominant group", Australians and, perhaps, Anglo-Australians.[15]

Who are these Australians? They share, it seems, a particularly racist culture[16] but, apart from this, they are a difficult group to locate in the jig-saw puzzle of networks, kin, and clan alliances that late multiculturalism offers us today. Should Australians now search their own genealogies and select their own hyphenated identities? Grassby urged Anglo-Australians to rediscover their English origins; he believes that this would put them "in a better frame of mind" to play their part "with the other groups that make up the Australian population today".[17] And if they can't or won't do this? Should they then acknowledge that they are without background or roots and hope that they may be allowed to make do with being polite onlookers at the multicultural folk festival? For Stephen Castles and his co-authors in *Mistaken Identity* the question "who are the Australians?" is answered. They don't exist. The Australian identity was always particularly weak and it has now evaporated in the face of multiculturalism.[18] Indeed they tell us that the word "Australian" is itself a racist term.[19] There are no Australians and, if you find someone claiming to be one, you should suspect their motives.

Yet, if we are talking of national and cultural identity, there are millions of people in this country who have no other word with which to describe themselves. The 1986 Census asked a question designed to explore the ethnic origins of the population. It read "What is each person's ancestry? For example, Greek, English, Armenian, Aboriginal, Chinese etc." This form of words was not designed to facilitate the response "Australian". Nevertheless, 18.6 per cent answered it this way.[20] And there is strong

evidence that there are many others who, while they could use other labels, would prefer this one. In 1988 the Office of Multicultural Affairs commissioned a large survey; 4502 people were questioned about various issues in "multicultural Australia". The project found that 83 per cent of the population as whole felt that the word "Australian" was either very important or quite important in describing who they were. This proportion rose to 85 per cent among second generation non-English-speaking-background migrants.[21] (The survey also found that just under seven and a half per cent of the population thought of themselves "as belonging to any ethnic or cultural group" that was not either Australian or British.[22])

There are plenty of Australians. They are people who have a legal right to live here and who, regardless of their ancestry, are attached to this country. Whatever their interests in other times and other places, they do not see themselves as having a dual identity. We can still talk of hyphenated Australians, and of foreigners resident in Australia, but a distinct Australian category continues to flourish. If opposition to it were to retreat, and the taboos and uncertainties recently attached to it were to lift, many hyphenates would drop their double-barrelled burden and the "Australian" category, mixed, diverse, but united in a common sense of national identity, could well embrace the greater majority of people living here.

One of the problems that multiculturalism has brought to the fore is that there is a name for every "ethnic" group except those who think of themselves as Australians. They are not all derived from the British Isles, while many of those who are resent the label Anglo- or Anglo-Celtic Australian. Indeed Castles et al. suggest that the term "Anglo-Celtic" is illiterate,[23] and it was recently the subject of an appeal to the press council. This was on the grounds that it was offensive to Australians of Celtic background who did not want to be grouped with the descendants of their English oppressors. (Dinny O'Hearn says that it should only be used in the same sense as "Franco/Prussian".)[24]

Australians are not an ethnic group if this term means a history of common biological ancestry. (It is probable that most members of ethnic groups who believe that they do all share such a history are mistaken.) But Australians are an "ethnic group" if this means a collectivity with a similar sense of political identity and a sense of belonging to the same country. This is a sense which gives them an awareness of place and a feeling, however flawed, of involvement with each other and with the territory they share. They are a group based on citizenship, not on real or imagined descent, an "ethnic" group founded on a civic rather than a tribal sense of belonging.[25] This means that, unlike an ethnic group based on the idea of a common biological heritage, they are able to accept new members who are legally qualified to join and who wish to do so.

The authors of *Mistaken Identity* tell us that the time when nations shaped the economic, cultural and political institutions which structure the lives of their citizens is passed. Squeezed between the two forces of transnational capital and of parochial fragmentation into different cultural groups, the nation has lost most of its economic and cultural functions. Contemporary nationalism is no more that a hollow shell.[26] It is true that national governments have less economic power than before, especially those in the Anglo Saxon world that have raced to jettison their capacity to influence market forces. And, with the spread of American television and films, national cultures are indeed weakened. If they are not threatened with marginalisation, they have a new sense of self-consciousness and defensiveness. But political institutions do still matter. These

same authors argue strongly that Australia should protect people's rights. Racism and sexism must be eliminated. The needs of groups that have suffered discrimination and marginalisation must be met. The principle of cultural self-determination must be upheld. Labour-market segmentation must be overcome. Above all, "the history of white racism and genocide against the Aborigines must become a central theme of education and public debate".[27] What institution is to protect these rights and implement these policies? The answer is unclear. They simply tell us that strategies "must be based on an attempt to redefine the basis of social organisation, and to move away from a political emphasis on the nation-state."[28]

Some might prefer other arrangements but, at the moment, the most effective institution for protecting individuals and for managing competition for scarce resources is the nation state. It may not do these things particularly well but, in the final analysis, we have to turn to it, if only because, as Weber tells us, the state is the institution which has a monopoly on the legitimate use of force within a given territory. When words, example, and moral pressure cannot protect citizens' rights against thugs and bullies the state can. It may not always do this when we want it to, but it can. Until there is a better institution to play this role, or until there are no more thugs and bullies, and no more serious conflict between people and groups, we will need it, or an institution like it.

Peter Brimelow, of the *National Review,* has written an astringent paper on the assault on nationalism in North America. Canada's Pierre Trudeau, he says, described it as a "rustic and clumsy tool" and liberal reformers see it as a pre-modern relic that must disappear with the growth of education and enlightenment.[29] Brimelow believes these reformers are wrong. The nation state is not a living fossil but a product of modernisation, and a powerful focus of human sentiment. He may be right about the sentiment. But you do not have to love your country to appreciate the difference between the rule of law and the rule of gun and fist. If we jettison the nation state because we consider that multiculturalism and the multinationals have made it irrelevant, we surrender our future to a savage anarchy, both within nations and across borders. Without the state (or an equivalent institution) Garret Hardin's tragedy of the commons will extend its global reach, and the idea of human rights will join the Arthurian Legend and the Romance of the Rose in a few forgotten libraries, for the brief time that libraries remain.

If we give up the key institution supporting the rule of law, anarchy results. This is obvious. Wilton and Bosworth think "it would be nice" if a "rich and relatively safe Australia" could proudly declare that the nation was "little more than a mere geographic expression"[30] but, though intellectuals may talk about unilateral abrogation of national sovereignty, economic élites are not interested. Even the moguls of transnational capital need the nation state to provide the infrastructure for transport and communication, to maintain minimal social conditions for the reproduction of the work force, to facilitate the distribution and consumption of goods and services, and to protect their profits. (And the relationship between multiculturalism and the state, in Australia at least, is one of almost total dependence on Government funding and patronage.)

Brimelow argues that new class intellectuals dislike nationalism. Nationalist sentiment (like the free market) offers them no special role. He argues that internationalism is more attractive to them because it allows them to co-operate with the new classes of other countries above the heads of their populations. But only a few can lock into an

international round of conferences, councils, and global consultation. There may be an easier explanation for new class hostility to nationalism.

While it is, in Australia, partly a product of distaste for the brutal, racist, parochial and sexist image new class intellectuals have constructed of Australian history, this hostility is also the result of a simple mistake, the mistake of imagining that nationalism and internationalism are mutually exclusive. As Walzer puts it, "To tear down the walls of the state is not...to create a world without walls, but rather to create a thousand petty fortresses".[31] Nationalism is a necessary condition for internationalism. It provides the political base for treaties, alliances and aid and it can also provide the moral base; just as people who respect themselves are more able to engage with others in a useful and helpful way, so it may be with members of nations.

The state (or a political equivalent of the state) is a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for decent behaviour in social groups. Is a sense of national identity among the members of that state also necessary? It must be, if only because it can provide a basis for altruism between individuals who are otherwise strangers to each other. Collections of people organised into states who shared no feeling of communal identity would only have Weber's legitimate use of force and nothing more; their collaboration would be unpleasant and certainly unstable. The nation state, a state whose members share a feeling of community, can come in an egalitarian, inclusive, form based on citizenship, or in forms based on imagined blood lines and exclusion. Australia tends towards the first model, a tendency that I believe we should work to strengthen but, whatever its form, the nation state is necessary.

In most contexts "wouldn't-it-be-nice" talk about the end of nationalism is just talk. But it matters as far as population is concerned because internationalist, anti-nationalist themes are at the heart of rhetoric justifying immigration. Paul Kelly's recent book, *The End of Certainty*, marginalises immigration.[32] But his theme of the battle between the "international rationalists" and the "sentimental traditionalists" can be readily transposed to the mixed assortment of interest groups that constitute the modern growth lobby. Different branches of this lobby have drawn on themes dear to both camps in order to express their claims.[33] Some, using the phraseology of "international rationalism", have put immigration at the heart of debates about internationalising the economy and forging closer links with Asia. Others have drawn on arguments about social justice and compassion, themes closer to Kelly's sentimental traditionalists, though without the old-fashioned nationalism that he attributes to this, the losing side, in the battle of the eighties. Both camps within the growth lobby were, in fact, drawing on internationalist themes but the way in which they saw "internationalism" differed. Those riding with the economic rationalists were inspired by ideas of the global market place[34] rather than by international humanism, and contemplated a world where "money flows virtually without barriers in and around all markets",[35] and where citizenship for men like Rupert Murdoch is a "matter of business convenience".[36]

The internationalism of the "economic" camp within the growth lobby accepts prophecies about the material wealth waiting for those bold enough to tear down their borders. This group welcomes free movement of people along with free movement of goods and capital. The other camp, which couches its arguments in altruistic terms, sees their internationalism differently. For them it is a question of sharing, selflessness and honouring the rights of others. Though both groups see nationalism as irrelevant, if not

an obstacle, their conception of its antithesis, internationalism, differs. For one it is the chance to turn a greater profit; for the other it is, in principle if not in practice, the chance to give.

In reality, while the global marketeers may resent national governments because of the restraints that they can still try to impose on transnational capital, they need these governments. The international humanists need them too. They need them to help implement their policies and they need the support of a national electorate made up of people who believe that their country, however, flawed, is basically a valuable and honourable entity. Intellectuals do not encourage people to see their country in this way and, as their image of Australia as merely a brutal, culturally-barren space on the map grows, voters' support for international aid falls.

Australian nationalism has become almost coterminous with racism, not only irrelevant but illegitimate.[37] Immigration and multiculturalism have helped to produce this semantic shift, as the Australian community was seen to be defending itself from without, by wielding the White Australia policy, and protecting its integrity from within with the policy of assimilation.[38] Then as "problem migrants" were brought into focus, through the smog of industrial misery, racist exploitation was discovered at the heart of the modern national economy.[39]

A recent monograph by Bill Cope, Stephen Castles and Mary Kalantzis, *Immigration, Ethnic Conflicts and Social Cohesion,*[40] provides us with an example of this climate of opinion. The authors argue that (limited) evidence of disadvantages and labour market segmentation affecting some migrant groups reflect "deep divisions" in Australian society and demonstrate that "there is still a long way to go to bring about genuine social cohesion in Australia".[41] But though "social cohesion" is central to their theme the authors claim that the expression is so vague as to be virtually meaningless. They argue that if we are to understand the interaction between migrants and their hosts the concept of "racism" is more useful; it is the concept that we should use to understand contemporary Australia.[42]

This is a common theme but it is not usually made so explicit. And the quick dive into the idea of racism is a well-established move in discussions of immigration and multiculturalism. It is a powerful idea. Astounding. One pays attention. Maybe reality is not what it seemed and public figures, who were once great and good, are deeply flawed. During the 1980s Geoffrey Blainey, and later John Howard, were subjected to public trial against this terrible criterion of racism. The former was placed in "the vanguard of Australian racism"[43] while the latter was described as "grubby" and "opportunistic"[44] and accused of exploiting racism, "giving comfort, support and even respectability to a cause that every mainstream politician has eschewed for decades".[45] This is shocking. But is it true? Blainey and Howard expressed their ideas about immigration, briefly and moderately, but they did use ethnic categories. This is no more than Andrew Theophanous did in his submission to the FitzGerald inquiry, and no more than any ethnic activist seeking resources for their own group people does in everyday lobbying.

We have a double standard; one may use ethnic categories to advance the interests of "ethnics" but not if one wishes to argue for the interests of Australia and Australians. I have seen, at an immigration seminar, a concerned new-class advocate of ethnic rights

rail against Geoffrey Blainey's alleged use of the term "Asianization" to describe changes in the immigration program.[46] Within an hour, as the discussion shifted, the same man stated in a forthright way that he'd really like "to see Australia Asianized".[47]

But the double standard is compounded by a semantic problem; Geoffrey Blainey has pointed to the deep reluctance of most of those who speak of "racism" to say what they mean by it.[48] Once "racism" meant that biological differences determined cultural and behavioural differences and that these biological differences could be ranked in a hierarchy and used by dominant groups to justify the exploitation of others. No one accused Blainey or Howard of making claims about innate biological superiority or inferiority between phenotypically different groups of people. Their transgression was different. It was to use words connected with race and ethnicity to define groups of people.

In a radio interview in 1988, Laksir Jayasuriya described this as "new racism", arguing that "new racists" see society in terms of inside groups and outside groups and that, in the interests of national unity, they aim to exclude outsiders.[49] Definitions of new racism in print are hard to find, and Bill Cope et al., the authors of *Immigration, Ethnic Conflicts and Social Cohesion* , are unusual in making an attempt to put such a definition down on paper in an Australian publication. They explain that "racism" is the belief that human groups differ physically, mentally or culturally, with the rider that mixing these different groups is thought to be dangerous and difficult. The dominant group may then use a racist belief in difference to justify exclusion of other people or, if they are admitted, their exploitation.[50] This is broad and the authors remark that, though racism is "centrally important", it is also "complex and subtle".[51] But their ideas are useful as a starting point for thinking about new racism, not just as a term of abuse, but as a concept that may or may not help us to understand the circumstances of our social life.

What it would mean to work for eliminating racism if we used this definition? Would it mean that we should try to get rid of the idea that there are differences, including cultural ones, between groups? This brings us into direct conflict with the ideology of multiculturalism; it looks like assimilation and elsewhere these authors have told us that assimilation is racist.[52] (And Wilton and Bosworth tell us that the "spectre of assimilationism still stalks the land";[53] obviously we should be careful.) But the idea of racism is "complex and subtle". So perhaps this contradiction can be shelved for the moment and we can look at boundary maintenance not from the point of view of the national society, where it seems to be wrong, but from within the ethnic group, where it seems to be right and laudable.

Can an ethnic group maintain itself over time without asserting its difference through some form of social closure? Cope et al. worry about the possibility that inter-marriage may erode cultural pluralism.[54] Opposition to inter-marriage is a well-established means of effecting social closure. It is also a point of conflict between groups trying to maintain their cultural boundaries and the host population, hurt and offended by the insiders' preference for keeping them at arms length. The ethnic view of the problem is clearly put by Miriam Faine:

> The organized Jewish community, if on nothing else, agrees on "strict rules regarding intermarriage". We need to remind ourselves that the apostles of a

> mono-cultural Australia still see this as a threat, as indeed do large sections of the dominant culture. Therefore we should make it our business to strike common cause with other non-Anglo ethnic groups to promote a multi-cultural Australia.[55]

A recent letter to the *Age* from a Greek Australian, angry about the paper's treatment of the Macedonian question, expressed ethnic pride and the desire for boundary maintenance in the strongest terms:

> For thousands of years Greeks have fought for their right to self-determination and nationalism. Their determination to maintain their language, religion, customs and ethnographic boundaries, their identity, is above all else...[56]

This letter passed unremarked as yet another valid expression of individual identity based on group belonging. If the author had begun "For two hundred years Australians have fought for their right to...etc." the reaction would have been different. Cope et al. argue that, in Australia, racism plays a "vital" part in creating the "imagined community" of the nation state and justifying its borders.[57] Any community containing more members than can know each other personally must be "imagined" in the sense that it requires a capacity for abstract thought to be a participant. The authors of *Mistaken Identity* tell us that, in 1990, Nick Greiner wrote of "aggressive pride in the culture and values of one's homeland". Though he knew very little of the language and history of his homeland (Hungary), he determined to make a virtue of his ethnicity.[58] This statement of "aggressive pride" in a culture he did not know is indeed a leap of the imagination, but one is not meant to doubt Greiner's virtue in making it.

Two conclusions can be drawn. First, if groups are to survive they need to maintain their boundaries. But the problem with Cope et al.'s definition of "racism" is that, if it simply involves ideas of difference and of boundary maintenance, then all groups showing any continuity over time are "racist", whether ethnic communities or old scholars' association or business corporations or tennis clubs (and the term has been defined in such a way as to render it almost meaningless). Second, attempts by Australians to define themselves are "racist" but attempts to maintain the boundaries of different groups within the nation are not.

"New racism" turns out not to be a useful term. It is not applied consistently and its semantic range is too broad. In most cases "groupism" or "organisationism" would be more accurate. If we wished to register our disapproval we could talk of cliques, exclusive or tribal groups, or smug, self-satisfied, hypocritical, thick-headed organisations, saving the epithet of "racist" for the cruel doctrines involving innate biological superiority and inferiority and the miseries that these have produced.

If nationalism is stigmatised as racist, debate about the country's demographic future will be distorted. This is clear from the paper written by Cope and his colleagues. The authors argue that Australians have never been happy with immigration; policy makers and politicians were "ahead of public opinion" in the 1940s, just as they are today. Just as it was necessary to educate or "condition" people to accept immigration then, so is it today.[59] But *debate* about immigration, as opposed to conditioning, is another matter. Debate in itself, they argue, may be a cause of conflict,[60] the conflict that proper education should erase and suppress. They do not go on to say that these worthy

thoughts and virtuous silences do not work for the good of the Australian people, or for world's poor, or for the idea of a sustainable future for us all. Rather, where they can be produced and enforced, they have the effect of serving the special interests of the growth lobby, short-term, narrow, sectional and selfish.

The authors of *Immigration, Ethnic Conflicts and Social Cohesion* make a good case when they argue that the term "social cohesion" has been used to cover a wide range of ideas; they even provide us with a list.[61] But there is one definition of social cohesion missing from their list. This is the idea that the phrase means a sense of national purpose, a sense that despite our differences and conflicts and despite the inequality and unfairness that divide us (inequalities of class and gender and age as well as ethnic background), we are all in the same boat. We should not accept inequality and unfairness. We should insist on, and work for, a future where citizens are equal in practice as well as principle. We should to do this because it is right and because fellow citizens need to feel part of the nation if we are to act together to help overcome the serious environmental, social and economic problems that we confront.

Though most of our problems are primarily national ones, the source of some lies outside our borders, and others cannot be resolved without co-operation from other nations. But international links do not absolve us from our own central responsibility. Soil erosion, species loss, polluted water ways, urban decay, homelessness, and unemployment, to name but a few, are our problems and we will have to solve them as a nation or not at all.

We need a vision that helps us to see our difficulties and to work together to overcome them. We do not need a perspective that tells us that a national vision is wrong. We especially do not need to be told that the idea of a common purpose and a common identity in a civic culture is evil, which is the message conveyed by the word "racism". "Racism" describes some of the most hideous crimes that human beings have committed in this century. We should not insult the memory of the victims of these crimes by making the word trivial or silly.

[1] P. and A. Ehrlich, *The Population Explosion*, Simon and Schuster, Sydney, 1990, pp. 13-22-22.

[2] During the 1980s Australia currently had, in per capita terms, a larger migrant intake than either the United States or Canada, giving us the fastest rate of population growth in the developed world. C. Young "Population policies in developed countries: How do Australia's policies compare?", *Journal of the Australian Population Association*, vol. 6, no. 1, 1989, pp. 38-56. For current projections see C. Young, "Population projections for Australia. What can they tell us?", *People and Place*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1993 (forthcoming).

[3] See K. Betts, *Ideology and Immigration: Australia 1976 to 1987*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1988, especially chapters two, three and seven. For an extensive survey of the environmental, economic and social effects of growth see J. W. Smith (ed.), Immigration, Population and Sustainable Environments, The Flinders Press, The Flinders University of South Australia, Bedford Park, 1991. The recent report of the National Population Council found some economic support for immigration in econometric models but concluded that "Ecological integrity would be best served by no additional numbers", Population Issues Committee (Chair Glen Withers), National Population Council, *Population Issues and Australia's Future: Environment, Economy and Society*, Australian Government Publishing Service (AGPS), Canberra, 1992, pp. 109-110.

[4] This connection between multiculturalism and immigration is discussed in more detail in K. Betts, "Australia's distorted immigration policy" in D. Goodman, D. J. O'Hearn, C. Wallace Crabb (eds), *Multicultural Australia: The Challenge of Change,* Scribe, Newham (Vic.), 1991.

[5] These are the kinds of policies that the Prime Minister's agenda for multiculturalism describes as the "social justice" dimension of multiculturalism: indeed the agenda concentrates on the first two meanings of multiculturalism and has little to say about the third. See Office of Multicultural Affairs [OMA], *National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia....Sharing Our Future*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1989, pp. vii, 23-5. Support for this social justice dimension is documented in the survey conducted for OMA in 1988. See responses to questions inviting agreement or disagreement with statements like, "No one should be disadvantaged because of their race, religion or culture"; "Government services should be equally available to those who need them"; "All Australians should have a say in decisions that affect them"; "All Australians should have the chance to learn English and another language"; and "Governments and community organisations need to take more account of the diversity of the Australian population", in Office of Multicultural Affairs, *Issues in Multicultural Australia, 1988, Frequency Tables*, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Canberra, pp. 233 to 236. In all cases there was considerable support for these propositions.

[6] S. Castles, M. Kalantzis, B. Cope and M. Morrissey, *Mistaken Identity*, Pluto Press, Sydney, 1990, p. 57

[7] See the 1988 OMA survey discussed in Betts, 1991, op. cit.

[8] When Philip Ruddock told Theophanous that he had no quarrel with multiculturalism as it was defined in the *Agenda*, Theophanous said "Ah yes, but are you in favour of full-blooded multiculturalism?" Quoted in L. Chipman, "Semantic death of multiculturalism", *The Age*, 28 July 1989.

[9] See J. Martin, *The Migrant Presence*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1978, pp. 208-9, 33-6, 47, 54-5, and M. Kovacs and A. Cropley, *Immigrants and Society*, McGraw-Hill, Sydney, 1975, pp. 43-44, 54-57, 124-128.

[10] Ibid., p. 128.

[11] Difficulties of the Indochinese and Lebanese with housing in Sydney are documented in R. Birrell "Immigration and housing: the missing link?", *Urban Policy and Research*, vol 9 no 1, 1991, pp. 60-63. For recent reports on the problems facing skilled migrants, see the letter by Dr Gurdip Aurora, chairman, immigration sub-committee, Australia-India Society of Victoria, "Why bring in engineers to sit and collect dole?", *The Age*, 20 May 1991, p.10; "Clever migrants face a dim future" and "The judge who can't get a hearing", *The Age*, 24 July, 1991, p.18. The Department's 1989 annual report estimated that in recent years up to 10 000 migrants annually have found that their qualifications could not be recognised, DILGEA *Review '89* , p. 37.
Christabel Young's work shows that, among people of working age (16-64 for men and 16-60 for women) certain birthplace groups are more likely to be receiving invalid or related pensions than the Australian born. This pattern holds even when the data are corrected for the age distribution of the migrant population.

Age-standardised rates, by birthplace, for people receiving invalid or related pensions. Ages 16-64 years for men and 16-60 years for women. Australia: 1989

	percentage
Australia *	3.4
Yugoslavia	6.4
Greece	6.4
Italy	4.9
Poland	3.6
Germany	3.2
Netherlands	3.0
UK and Ireland	2.4
New Zealand	1.8

* The Australian figure provides the base rate. All the others are standardised by age distribution against it. "Related" pensions covers invalids and wives/spouses carers and sheltered employment allowance, rehabilitation allowance and wives' pensions.
C. Young, "Pitfalls in Comparing Immigrants with the Australian-Born Population with Particular Reference to Socioeconomic Status", *Journal of the Australian Population Association* , Vol. 9, No. 1, May 1992, p. 50.

[12] See R. Birrell and T. Birrell, *An Issue of People*, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1987, pp. 108, 122, 119, and R. Birrell and A. Seitz, "The myth of ethnic inequality", *Journal of the Australian Population Association*, vol. 3, 1986. In 1984, Ross King argued that the upward mobility of southern European migrants had been exceptional and the consistently underprivileged were far more likely to be found among the working class Australian- and British-born and the Aborigines. R. King, "Immigration and urban inequality", in R. Birrell, D. Hill and J. Nevill (eds) *Populate and Perish? The Stresses of Population growth in Australia*, Fontana, Sydney, 1984, pp. 236-7.

[13] See Martin, op. cit., pp. 209, 35.

[14] J. Wilton and R. Bosworth, *Old Worlds and New Australia:: The Post-War Migrant Experience*, Penguin, Melbourne, 1984 pp. 92-3, 183, 94, 103-4. The "problem migrants" paradigm is also well-set out in D. L. Jayasuriya, "Ethnic minorities and social justice in Australian society", *Australian Journal of Social Issues,* vol. 22, 1987.

[15] Alan Mayne writes of the harmful effects of "our settler psyche", our "neglect of social justice" and the "mean and slanted ways" in which immigration policy has been presented to us. "Racialism" and cultural maintenance became the two central principles of "immigration common sense". A. Mayne, "An historical perspective", paper circulated at the Australian Institute of International Affairs forum, "What immigration policy for Australia?", 23 October, 1988, Melbourne, p. 14. Wilton and Bosworth's argument is built on the assumption of Australian racism and consistently defines resistance to immigration in racist terms. See Wilton and Bosworth, op. cit., pp. 9, 11, 13, 21-22, 57, 58-9, 78, 91, 187.

[16] See H. McQueen, *A New Brittania*, Penguin Harmondsworth, 1970, p. 42; D. Altman, "Internal political pressures on Australian policy", in *Foreign Policy for Australians: Choices for the Seventies* (Australian Institute of Political Science: Proceedings of the 39th Summer School), Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1971, p. 105; S. Castles, M. Kalantzis, B. Cope and M. Morrissey, *Mistaken Identity*, Pluto Press, Sydney, 1990, pp. 1, 5.

[17] A. Grassby, *The Tyranny of Prejudice*, AE Press, Melbourne, 1984, p. 81.

[18] See Castles et al. op. cit., pp. 102, 106, 128, 135.

[19] This is because it subsumes under one category a mixed group of people, a distinction is shares with "European" and "Asian". See ibid., p. 171.

[20] The question had been the subject of some controversy before the Census and the book of notes accompanying the census form did suggest that "Australian" could be a valid answer. Census *of Population and Housing, 30 June 1986: Cross-classified Characteristics of Persons and Dwellings, Australia*, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra, Catalogue no. 2498.0, p. 16.

[21] Office of Multicultural Affairs, *Issues in Multicultural Australia, 1988, Frequency Tables*, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Canberra, p. 42.

[22] The question was "Do you think of yourself as belonging to any ethnic or cultural group?" [If yes] "With which ethnic or cultural group do you most strongly identify?" The figure of 7.41% answering "yes" and nominating a group not Australian or British is derived from ibid., pp. 38-39. It seems small. Perhaps the question was not fully understood? But the answer to a more factual question about formal membership in ethnic groups is similar. People were first asked whether they were a member of "social clubs, sports clubs or any other groups, clubs or associations" and then, if they were, whether these clubs were "identified with any particular ethnic or cultural group". Overall, around 52 per cent of the population was involved with at least one club or association but very few people (3 per cent) belonged to clubs and associations that were identified with a particular ethnic group. Figure derived from ibid., p. 46.

[23] They say that it is used by "otherwise literate people". Castles et al., op. cit., p. 45.

[24] (The press council argued that the term was "useful, if not entirely accurate" and did not uphold the complaint.) See *The Age*, 4 July 1991, p. 16. The case highlights the absurdity of trying to define "Australian" in terms of country origin. See also the FitzGerald Report, *Immigration: A Commitment to Australia*, AGPS, Canberra, p. 10. O'Hearn's remark was made

at the "Cultural Diversity in Australia" conference held by the Australian Centre at the University of Melbourne in August 1989.

[25] See R. J. Birrell, *Australian Nationalism: the Formative Years*, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne (forthcoming).

[26] S. Castles, M. Kalantzis, B. Cope and M. Morrissey, *Mistaken Identity*, Pluto Press, Sydney, 1990, pp. 139-141.

[27] Ibid., p. 147.

[28] Ibid., p. 148.

[29] P. Brimelow, "Does the nation-state exist? Immigration and regionalism", NRI Conference, Florence, 25 October 1992.

[30] Wilton and Bosworth op. cit., p. 188.

[31] M. Walzer "The distribution of membership" in P. Brown and H. Shue (eds) *Boundaries: National Autonomy and Its Limits*, Rowman and Littlefield, Totowa, N.J., 1983, p. 9.

[32] P. Kelly, *The End of Certainty: the Story of the 1980s*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1992. Kelly offers fascinating accounts of the 1984 and 1988 immigration debates but, shows almost no interest in the contribution of population growth to the dilemmas of the 1980s. He tells us that one of the reasons for floating the dollar was to create a framework "which allowed Australia to grow faster than the rest of the world. This was necessary for two reasons - to reduce unemployment, and to absorb Australia's fast growing population, the result of immigration" p. 93. He also tells us that the "boom and bust" of the end of the decade provides "an insight into the primitive nature of the Australian business culture, nourished in an environment of fast population growth, relatively high inflation, a frontier mentality and weak internal competition in my sectors" p. 503. But that is the extent of his interest. Michael Pusey also saw no need to includes members of the Immigration Department in his study of the "economic rationalists" in Canberra. The only group of officials likely to be knowledgeable about demography did not belong to the group that really counts. M. Pusey, *Economic Rationalism in Canberra,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991, pp. 24-25.

[33] For a discussion of the "economic" and "altruistic" ways of defining immigration see K. Betts, "John Howard, Immigration and the New Class" in J. Jupp and M. Kabala (eds) *The Politics of Australian Immigration*, Bureau of Immigration Research (forth coming)

[34] This is the kind of internationalism that attracts Rupert Murdoch. See W. Shawcross, *Rupert Murdoch*, Random House, Sydney, 1992, pp. 550, 557.

[35] Max Newton, described by Shawcross as "an inspiration to Murdoch", quoted in ibid. pp. 398-399.

[36] A. J. Schwartzman quoted in ibid. p. 405.

[37] Wilton and Bosworth, op. cit., interpret Australian attempts to preserve their sense of being a people as racist throughout their work. See for example pp. 2-6, 17.

[38] This image of Australia makes discussion of the national interest in the context of immigration strained and difficult. Alan Mayne writes that an immigration policy framed in

terms of the national interest reduces "migrants to categories in which human dignity is obscured and the way opened for discrimination and exploitation". A. Mayne, "An historical perspective", paper circulated at the Australian Institute of International Affairs forum, "What immigration policy for Australia?", 23 October, 1988, Melbourne, p. 15

[39] Other interpretations can be put on these events. "White Australia", however offensive its rhetoric, can be seen as an attempt to avoid creating an exploited under-class in a new country where liberals were trying to create a society of potentially equal citizens and working people wanted to protect the dignity of labour. See Birrell op. cit. Assimilation can be seen as a practice of inclusion rather than exclusion, and not all migrants have been "problem" people and, at least in the 1950s and 1960s, those that worked in manufacturing received a financial return that allowed them to launch their children on the path of upward mobility.

[40] B. Cope, S. Castles and M. Kalantzis, *Immigration, Ethnic Conflicts and Social Cohesion,* Bureau of Immigration Research, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1991

[41] Ibid., p. 39

[42] Cope et al. op. cit., pp. 20, 26-29, 43. This judgement is made in Chapter three, "Social cohesion and ethnic conflicts - theories", a chapter which summarises a range of theories about ethnic conflict. The authors might wish to argue that as far as the idea about "racism" is concerned they are simply quoting one more set of theories, albeit the one most central for "many contemporary sociologists" (p. 26). But they go on to say that , "It is important to understand the strength of racist ideology, and how it has influenced popular culture..." (p. 28) and that it is "only by understanding how racist attitudes arise and why they persist, that we can devise appropriate educational and other measures to counter them" (p. 29). It is therefore clear that an analytical approach founded on the concept of racism is the one that they themselves prefer.

[43] V. Burgman, "Writing racism out of history", *Arena*, vol. 67, 1984, pp. 91-2

[44] L. Oakes, *The Bulletin*, 16/8/88

[45] M. Walsh, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 August 1988. Walsh adds that Howard should have thought of the Holocaust before he took the path he had chosen.

[46] Blainey did not himself use the term; it was provided by *The Age* in a headline for an article that he had written for them. See *The Age*, 20/3/84.

[47] Seminar presented by Stephen Castles at the Victorian Ethnic Affairs Commission in 1985. (The speaker quoted is not Castles.)

[48] See G. Blainey, *Blainey: Eye on Australia ,* Schwartz Books, Melbourne, 1991, pp. 133-4.

[49] Radio interview with Richard Palfreeman broadcast on the 15 September 1988.

[50] See ibid. pp. 26-29. MISTAKE THIS MUST BE COPE ET AL

[51] Cope et al., op. cit. p. 38. The same group of authors, with the addition of M. Morrissey, made a less successful attempt at finding a single definition in *Mistaken Identity*. Racism involves an ideology of kinship and ascribes "causal significance and moral superiority to visible manifestations of tradition and physical or phenotypical peculiarity" (pp. 106-7). Later they argue that the term has changed and can refer to cultural as well biological superiority. This

means that the inferior could over-come their handicap if they could but adopt the superior culture. It is this reasoning that leads them to claim that the policy of assimilation is racist. (See pp. 110-11, 133.)

[52] Ibid.

[53] Wilton and Bosworth, op. cit., p. 37.

[54] ."On normative grounds the social project of multiculturalism is to create a society in which ethnic difference is accepted within a democratic and plural society. The disappearance of ethnic differences through intermarriage can therefore hardly be seen as a desirable goal". Cope et. al. op. cit, p. 41.

[55] M. Faine, "The Jewish community and the immigration debate", *Australian Jewish Democrat*, Winter 1992, p. 10.

[56] Konstantinos Kyrifidis, *The Age*, 29/7/92

[57] Ibid. 27.

[58] N. Greiner, "A personal note", *The Independent Monthly*, February, 1990, p. 3, quoted in Castles et al., op. cit. p. 184.

[59] Ibid., 6-7, 35, 45 (point 9), 49.

[60] For example, it has already led, they claim, to a resurgence of assimilationist ideas. Ibid. p. 19

[61] Ibid. pp. 20, 26-29, 43.