

likely her childhood experiences were similar to Trotty's. But whatever the source of her image of the Chinese, she certainly, in Professor Crawford's phrase, presented her 'Australian material with unerring authenticity'. That judgment has been endorsed by the acceptance that *Australia Felix* found in this country. Few Australians were offended by her implicit account of their racist attitudes. Indeed, so widely accepted were these prejudices that it is likely that they were not considered racist. They were just white Australian.

THREE Invaders

One of the first problems which faced the British when they decided to colonise Australia was whether Australia was to be considered a 'settled' or a 'conquered' colony. If it were a settled colony the law of the indigenes would apply only until superseded by new colonial laws. This possibility had obvious importance for the ownership and control of land. Needless to say, Australia was considered a settled colony, so that the Aborigines were not accorded even the rights of a conquered people. Perhaps it was the memory of the ease with which the British invasion of Australia had been accomplished which kept alive the fear of a further invasion in the minds of Australians. It is less likely that the alarms sprang from feelings of guilt.

In 1813 when Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth crossed the Blue Mountains, they stressed the military advantages of their discovery, arguing that 'the only pass to it, although of easy access, is through a country naturally so strong as to be easily defended by a few against the efforts of thousands'. The arrival of these 'thousands' was a perennial concern for Australia's settlers. First, there was fear of the French, which revealed itself as early as 1792 when the presence of François Peron's ship in Sydney Harbour aroused the prospect of a simultaneous French assault and a convict uprising. Next came the belief that Australia had been marked down by Bonapartist cartographers to become '*Terre Napoléon*'. In or-

der to prevent French intervention such as had occurred in Canada and India, military posts were established at Port Dalrymple in Tasmania, Port Phillip in Victoria and Port Essington in the Northern Territory.

The late 1820s saw a revival of this consternation. To forestall a French seizure of the western half of the continent, a naval settlement was placed at Albany in 1826. Threats from France, and from the United States, contributed to the decision to permit a British colony at Swan River three years later. Nothing could prevent the French maintaining a naval station at Akaroa on the South Island of New Zealand from 1829 to 1840 when Britain, after much colonial prompting, took formal possession. In this manner Australasia was spared the fate that jigsawed Africa.

Although the French aroused fresh alarms in 1853 when they annexed New Caledonia, the Russians soon occupied the position of principal marauder. The material prosperity that shaped radicalism also contributed to the local belief that other powers saw Australia as a valuable prize. When the Crimean war broke out in 1854 there were constant scares. So agitated had the colonists become that, on 7 September, when some ships in Port Phillip exchanged greetings with cannon and skyrockets 'the exclamation "The Russians!" passed from mouth to mouth... and a large body of infantry — many of whom were armed with sticks, umbrellas, pick-handles' moved toward the Bay. As the *Herald* observed on the next day, 'Byron's description of the excitement in Brussels, on the eve of Waterloo, can alone give any idea of the state of Melbourne last night'. To Richard Mahony's acquaintances, 'the vital question was: will the Russian Bear take its revenge by sending men-of-war to annihilate us, and plunder the gold in our banks, us months removed from English aid?' The supporters of the Eureka rebels placed as much emphasis on 'defence' as on 'liberty'. A typical resolution demanded that

all headlands, commanding the harbours of Melbourne and Geelong to be immediately fortified and floating batteries built for which purpose one of the public foundries to be hired to cast long-range cannon... for the defence of the Colony from any external attack... a military college to be forth with established.

Alarms recurred in January 1862 when a Russian screw-frigate visited Victoria in order 'to spy' on its fortifications. There was another Russian scare in 1863-64 when a Russian flagship visited Melbourne; a Polish resident 'exposed', with the assistance of the press, yet another plot. The success of the Confederate raider *Alabama* in cutting the Northern army's supplies during the Civil War served to underline the conviction that Australia was also vulnerable to flying assaults. So generally was this accepted that E. W. O'Sullivan had no difficulty in convincing the readers of his *St Arnaud Mercury* of the veracity of a short story about a Russian attack which he printed in 1877. He followed the fiction up with the caution that what was a joke today could well be a tragic reality tomorrow.

Panic sprang afresh with a Russian naval unit's visit in 1882. So credulous were colonists that the *Age* (23 March) published an article which claimed that Russia was planning an attack on Australia as part of a general war against the Empire. Melbourne and Sydney were to be held to ransom for £5 million each. 'Our obvious duty is to take time by the forelock and prepare for the worst', the *Age* concluded, before its informant, 'a former Russian agent', was exposed as an ex-convict and notorious confidence man who gave himself away by trying to touch the Governor for a loan.

Not to be outdone, the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 5 February 1885 warned that 'The citizens of Sydney might awake to see four or five swift armoured cruisers in position across the harbour, their guns ready to lay the town in ashes if the required ransom of £5m. were not paid in forty-eight hours'.

Asia in the nineteenth century did not present a military

challenge, although Sir Henry Parkes was fond of quoting Napoleon's saying that if only the Chinese had a navy they would conquer the world. The prospect of an unarmed invasion by what the *Australasian* in 1878 characterised as a 'swarming race of three hundred million, which lately had shown such an inconvenient disposition to mobility', was terrible enough without conjuring up a militarily potent Asia. When this spectre became a reality in the form of Japan after 1904, the resultant dread produced some truly wonderful contortions on the part of Australia's spokesmen. These verbal acrobatics were nothing compared with the pyrotechnics of our prose writers.

Around 1909 England enjoyed a surfeit of 'invasion' literature, the literary counterpart of the 'We want eight, We won't wait' mentality that sprang up in the wake of the *Dreadnought* scare. Le Queux peopled his novels with German spies. Major Guy Du Maurier's play, *An Englishman's Home*, in which 'the muddled oafs of the football field' confronted 'the disciplined hordes of clearly Teutonic invaders', drew multitudes to Wyndham's Theatre. This genre enjoyed a similar success in Australia but with one vital difference: the invaders were not German but Japanese.

Literary forms for these fantasies varied from novels and short stories to plays, one of these latter being F. R. C. Hopkins' *Reaping the Whirlwind*, in which the villain, a socialist agitator in the pay of Japan, initiates a general strike during which his oriental masters — with the connivance of Great Britain — take over. This plot is unusual inasmuch as it usually is the conservatives who ally with the Celestials in order to obtain cheap labour. The dastardly role of Britain was a constant feature and a reflection of hostility towards the Anglo-Japanese alliance.

Two novels, *The Australian Crisis* (1909) by C. H. Kirmess and *The Big Five* (1911) by Ambrose Pratt, revolve around the establishment of an extensive colony of Asians in the Northern Territory. The first of these works has been described as

'extremely realistic'. The British play their habitually treacherous role by withdrawing their warships from the Pacific. Despite the valiant efforts of 'the White Guard', the Northern Territory is swamped by the Japanese before the novel ends with its author reminding the world that 'AUSTRALIA IS THE PRECIOUS FRONT BUCKLE IN THE WHITE GIRDLE OF POWER AND PROGRESS ENCIRCLING THE GLOBE'.

The *Bulletin* (through its offshoot *Lone Hand*) was deeply involved in the dissemination of this kind of literature. Not only did it serialise the above-mentioned *Australian Crisis*, it also printed numerous short stories with similar themes and even more incredible plots. One of these, *The Deliverer* (1909) by Aldridge Evelyn, is little more than a rehash of the ideas that were the stuff of defence and foreign policy debates at the time. The central proposition is that once England is involved in a war with Germany, the Japanese fleet will be free to move in the Pacific. Stage two is the arrival of the Japanese off Sydney Heads despite the gallant resistance by the newly formed Royal Australian Navy. Stage three is a peace treaty which, in the author's words, 'will allow every Chink and Jap under the sun to land in Australia and become a citizen'. Salvation is at hand in the person of a providential squatter who had privately bought and secretly assembled a submarine for just such an occasion. The enemy is destroyed and the story ends with the vessel's captain happy in the knowledge that his daughter's Australia shall be white.

A white settler was less circumspect about the white man's burden:

Is it not an insult to this House, and to every white man in the country to have an old nigger like the King set up, as he is being set up? King indeed ... he would be more in his place digging or weeding a white man's garden when he would be turned to profitable account.

The *Brisbane Courier* of 30 January 1919 echoed these sentiments:

It must be our business to teach the native, who is too lazy to work unless he has to, that his physical and moral salvation lies in having an occupation which imposes on him a physical tax ... The island population is diminishing because of the enervating effects of idleness.

These attitudes penetrated the radical tradition in Australia. When the Victorian Labor Party issued its federal election manifesto in April 1910, it was sanguine in its hope that:

When a majority of the people of the principal nations, such as the United States of America, Germany, and Great Britain are converted to the Labor Gospel, war as we know it will cease. The only use for armies and navies then will be to police the world, and keep the small and less civilised nations in order.

It is significant that Japan and China were not mentioned as 'principal nations', although neither could be dismissed as small.

Similar attitudes had quickly developed towards the Australian Aborigines. From his survey of European chauvinism, *Lords of Human Kind*, Victor Kiernan shows that many pioneers had concluded that, since undeveloped races could not adapt themselves to 'civilisation', they were bound to die out. 'From believing this to expediting their departure to another world was no great step'. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, pseudo-Darwinian 'survival of the fittest' notions gave such exterminations a gloss of scientific rectitude.

FOUR Sub-Imperialists

They speak as Giants of the South Pacific
And treat the islands as their stepping-stones.

James McAuley, *True Discovery of Australia*

Just as Australians were anxious to prevent seizure of any part of the continent by a foreign power, so they were concerned to keep the Pacific as a British, indeed an Australasian, reserve. In the process, they developed their own Monroe doctrine. Having secured the continent by 1829, they demanded the annexation of New Zealand. Similar pressures persisted right up till the signing of the Versailles peace treaty in 1919. These demands found their dynamic in continual commercial hopes and in the fear of attack from an enemy strategically placed nearby.

These sub-imperialist enterprises not only reacted on the prosperity of the colonies but were coupled with notions of racial superiority, such as those expressed editorially by the *Fiji Times* of 24 May 1873:

... true to the instincts of the Anglo-Saxon race we have come to this *ultima thule* of creation, to bring a savage race within the pale, and to partake of the benefits of our civilisation; let us hope to bring them beneath the sway of the British sceptre, and thus to open up more fully a new and profitable field for British enterprise.

The wealth to be gained from the Pacific had become apparent within the first decade of the first settlement at Botany Bay. If Blainey is right, it was with this wealth in mind that the settlement had been established. Sandalwood, pork, seal-skins, whale offal and trepang provided the infant colony with its earliest entrepreneurial impulses. Indeed, export income from the sea exceeded income from wool until around 1835. Yankee whalers began the century-long competition with Australians for the commercial profits of the South Pacific.

New Zealand was the most important prospective area for expansion, with William Charles Wentworth attempting to purchase twenty million acres for £200 a year there in the late 1830s. The gold rush there in the 1860s greatly assisted Australia's economy to recharge after its own post-rush depression. As Brian Fitzpatrick pointed out, as far as nineteenth-century economic development is concerned, New Zealand must be considered as an integral part of Australia. New Zealand's own ambitions centred on Fiji and were summed up by the speaker of the House of Representatives in 1903:

And now that we have visited
The islands, great and small,
We find, as a possession,
Fiji the best of all;
A land with room for thousands,
A country bound to rise;
Where rich reward assuredly
Awaits on enterprise.

Later in the century, the Pacific provided yet another profitable activity — blackbirding for the sugar plantations of Queensland. British reluctance to accede to colonial demands for annexations was influenced by a desire to suppress this traffic in indentured labourers. In 1885 the Governor of Victoria, Sir Henry Lock, confirmed that 'there are many men in the colonies who would not hesitate under certain eventualities, to dispatch them [Australian warships] to seize Samoa, the New

Hebrides, or any other place or island on which they had set their desire'. That point had been brought home when Queensland had attempted to annex eastern New Guinea two years previously.

Britain's opposition to these sorties placed Australian radicals in a quandary. On the one hand, they saw Britain's unwillingness to act in support of colonial demands as further proof of her untrustworthiness. Yet they opposed expansion into the Pacific because they rightly saw its connection with the islander trade and its threat to the White Australia policy. All Australians could oppose France's dumping convicts in New Caledonia, from where 247 of them are recorded as escaping to Australia between 1874 and 1883. Austria and Italy also planned to establish penal stations in the Pacific around this time.

Nor was the military aspect neglected. In their campaign to secure British approval for Queensland annexation of New Guinea, the colonial premiers notified London:

That further acquisition of dominions in the Pacific South of the Equator by any Foreign Power would be highly detrimental to the safety and well-being of the British possessions in Australasia and injurious to the interests of the Empire.

This claim was particularly relevant to the passage through Torres Strait, which cut some two thousand miles from the journey to Europe, via the Suez Canal.

Not long after, the Australian Natives Association, concerned lest the Antarctic be claimed by Germany, sought to finance polar exploration.

Significantly the inter-colonial military committee that met in Sydney in 1896 recommended that 'Instead of thinking in terms of the continent and Tasmania ... the defence region of Australia be extended to include New Zealand, New Caledonia, the New Hebrides, New Guinea, and portions of Borneo and Java'. By the turn of the century, the energetic imperialism

of Joseph Chamberlain was no less alert to Australia's interests than were the Australians themselves. Chamberlain saw the acquisition of Hawaii by the United States as detrimental to Empire trade, while from a defence point of view, the annexation of the Islands would bring the United States some two thousand miles nearer to New Zealand and Australia, and would give the United States good ground for increasing the strength of its fleet in the Pacific and thus threaten Canadian possessions on the West Coast, as well as Australasia.

Australians did not see the world that way. The United States had been a commercial competitor, a possible coloniser of Australia's west coast and, during the gold rushes, the major source of seditious republicanism. These concerns were in the past; some Australians were beginning to perceive the United States as a protector against Japan. For these men, American involvement in the Pacific was not to be deplored; rather, it was welcomed a source of infinite security.

Situated almost two thousand kilometres east of Cairns, the New Hebrides were to become to Anglo-Australian relations in the first decade of the twentieth century what New Guinea had been in the 1880s. In many ways the question of the New Hebrides even in the 1880s was as important as the annexation of New Guinea, although subsequently overshadowed. Australians had displayed commercial and military interests in the New Hebrides during the 1870s and were piqued by the dominance of French settlers. Following so quickly on the German 'invasion' of New Guinea, the arrival of French troops in the New Hebrides in June 1886, ostensibly to protect French citizens, alarmed and outraged the Australian governments. The matter came to a head at the 1887 Imperial Conference when Lord Salisbury, the British prime minister and Foreign Secretary, made a speech suggesting that the islands should go to France. Deakin, Berry and Service all replied with such vigour that Salisbury instructed the British Ambassador in Paris not to yield. A joint Anglo-French convention in 1888 left the

New Hebrides with an indeterminate status which at least warned off other powers.

Britain was willing enough to act on Australia's behalf but genuinely failed to see that the possession of the islands by France could pose any threat to Australia's security, seeing that France already had New Caledonia which was a good three hundred kilometres closer. From a strictly military point of view, the British were doubtless correct, but they ignored the vision splendid that Australia had of itself in the Pacific. They ignored the hope expressed by John Dunmore Lang in 1871:

that such principles will be recognised and established, with the concurrence of the Imperial Government, as will make this city of Sydney, like the ancient city of Miletus in the flourishing period of Grecian colonisation, another mother city of a whole series of flourishing colonies in New Guinea and in the numerous and beautiful islands of the Western Pacific.

In his biography of Deakin, Professor La Nauze paid special attention to the New Hebrides as the earliest piece of 'foreign policy' undertaken by the Commonwealth. So important did the Barton Cabinet consider the matter that one of its first decisions was 'to approve the journey ... [thence] ... with expenses paid secretly, of an agent to secure information about the state of affairs there'. The spy reported at the end of November 1901. 'Further instances of cloak and dagger work' persisted until 1906 when France and Britain agreed to a new convention asserting their joint 'paramount rights'.

Commercial considerations were an essential component of the Australian government's activities, which were urged on by Burns Philp & Co. (Robert Philp was Premier of Queensland from 1899 to 1903.) The Commonwealth provided and extended subsidies to this company for the maintenance of shipping and mails to the islands.

Negotiations between Britain and France over the islands followed their *rapprochement* of May 1903 but, much to Australia's annoyance, were conducted without her involvement.

Deakin urged outright annexation or purchase but accepted the 'joint rights' formula after he learnt that German firms were buying properties in the New Hebrides. He was by no means pleased with the way matters had been conducted or how they had turned out. Professor La Nauze concluded:

The Australians saw only a failure to appreciate the true interests of 'the Empire', which appeared to require that Britain should act to secure whatever might seem wise to united Australia; in this case the 'long-cherished hope' of seeing the New Hebrides made part of the Empire.

In Deakin's second reading speech on the 1901 Restrictive Immigration Bill, he suggested that 'We may have in the future some development which may call for the application of the Monroe Doctrine in the Pacific'; for the present the declaration of a White Australia 'is the Monroe Doctrine of the Commonwealth'.

During a visit to New York in June 1918, Hughes would take up this theme:

So we come to you, our great ally, seeking your steadfast and wholehearted co-operation and aid. Hands off the Australian Pacific is the Doctrine to which by inexorable circumstances we are committed.

Back in Australia in 1919, Hughes 'defended' the League of Nations by saying that it did not apply to Australia's sphere in the Pacific; that was covered by our Monroe doctrine, which was directed against Japan.

FIVE 'Japs'

The marvellous uprush of the Japanese Power has created no small uneasiness in these colonies. It is tolerably certain that were Japan to turn her naval arm against what lies in Australian waters, we should go down against her.

Courier (Brisbane), 30 November 1895

No issue produced more concern or tension for Australasians than the rise of Japan as a naval power. Despite abortive attempts in 1876 by a conservative South Australian government to colonise the Northern Territory with indentured Japanese labourers, most Australians were probably unaware of the presence of Japanese in Australia until a group of divers drew the winning horse in Tattersalls Melbourne Cup sweep in 1891. Ten years later, the Japanese occupied the major place in Commonwealth debates surrounding the White Australia policy.

A number of factors occasioned this change. The most important was Queensland's experience with Japanese after it, alone among the colonies, had adhered to the Anglo-Japanese commercial treaty of 1894. Japan did not object to restrictive immigration policies, providing they were not directed specifically against Japanese, or did not treat Japanese as if they were Chinese. Tokyo illustrated this finesse in its response to Acts passed by the Queensland parliament in 1898, 1899 and

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1900. The 1898 Pearl Shell and Beche-de-Mer Fishery Act excluded all non-British subjects from taking out new pearling licences. Because this Act was non-discriminatory against Asians, it was accepted by Japan even though it involved severe financial losses for some of its citizens. The 1899 Aborigines Protection Amendment Act denied Asiatics the right to employ Aborigines, and the 1900 Sugar Works Guarantee Amendment Act limited the grant of governmental financial aid to sugar mills that employed only European labour. Both were opposed by Japan, which perceived them as racial slurs, although no financial loss was involved. As a result of these disputes, the first session of the Commonwealth parliament, in 1901, had to devise a restrictive immigration mechanism which would not offend the Japanese. The result was a dictation test.

It was not out of any peculiar love for Japan as such that Australian legislators professed this concern for Japanese sensibilities, but rather sternly strategic considerations. Japan's victory over China in 1894 made Japan a useful ally for Britain against Russia. With the exception of the *Bulletin*, this policy was largely welcomed in Australia. Japan's victory did not provoke much anxiety because Australians were so confident of their racial superiority that the victory of monkeys (Japanese) over baboons (Chinese) was of no concern to human beings except that it was now possible to employ these monkeys instead of rebellious Indians to fight the Empire's battles.

Early in 1902, Britain signed an alliance with Japan. Although limited in scope to China and Korea, its import did not escape Bertrand Russell, who was 'glad England should be ready to recognise the yellow man as a civilised being, and not wholly sorry at the quarrel with Australia which this recognition entails'.

Australian complacency was shattered by Japan's destruction of the Russian fleet in 1905. When the war began, the Australian press supported the Japanese as Britain's ally, but

when the full implications of Russia's defeat sank home, the editors quickly swung round to the position that papers such as *Tocsin* and the *Bulletin* had occupied for some time. The extent of the panic that ensued can be seen in a speech by a Victorian Member of Parliament opposing the extension of municipal suffrage to married women which, he alleged, introduced 'a very important problem, whether the extending of the suffrage to women involves the same responsibilities and duties as attach to men in the maintenance and defence of the State'. He continued:

That problem must be considered. As the conditions in Australia are very rapidly changing ... prior to the war between Japan and Russia the question may arise in Australia very shortly whether it will be necessary for every man who is able to shoulder a rifle to undergo a course of military training. We know that women cannot be expected, and are not physically able, to perform this duty in defence of their state, so that it could not be expected that they should be asked to do so. With half the voters in this country women, who are naturally predisposed to peace, how are we going to maintain a defence against the hordes of Asia?

George Pearce, later Minister of Defence, gave up his anti-militarist convictions as a direct consequence of Japan's victory. The 1905 Interstate Political Labor Conference supported citizen military training and only narrowly defeated making it compulsory. A year later, the Labor Party fought the election partly on the 'yellow peril' theme.

Japanese 'spies' began to appear. Our early military intelligence service was concerned solely with the operation of Japanese pearling luggers in northern waters. A visit by a Japanese training squadron late in 1906 provided the *Bulletin* with an opportunity to engage in its wildest racist fantasies: Japanese sailors were accused of distributing pornographic postcards, while visitors to the ships were reportedly shocked by the presence of naked prostitutes.

In the decade between Japan's victory and the outbreak of

the Great War, numerous Australians made it their business to travel to Japan. One of these was Dr Maloney, Federal Labor member for Melbourne. Maloney had been 'pro-Boer' and 'anti-Empire'. The Japanese menace ended all that. With the help of a journalist, Maloney gave an account of his journey in a 1905 booklet entitled *Flashlights on Japan and the Far East*. The journey commenced at Thursday Island which was entirely in the hands of the Japanese, replete with prostitutes and assassins, and their 'absolutely unscrupulous cohesiveness' (not to be confused with mateship). Maloney drew conclusions from what he saw:

In this decade or in the next... the East will most assuredly insist on what she may regard as her rights, and those rights may include the domination, if not the occupation, of the Eastern Hemisphere. How stand we then? ... Little will all that [home defence] avail us if once the whole volume of the East is permitted to break on our shores. The dividing line must be drawn on the ocean, and far to the north of Cape York.

He attacked Britain for not building up Russia against Japan, which he believed would claim leadership of China and India.

The nature of Australian anti-imperialism became clearer when Maloney advocated granting India her independence in order to prevent her falling into the clutches of Japan. But this concession can be no more than a delaying tactic, since 'The awakened East, which, obedient to the natural laws of expansion, or in retaliation, or in the undying and unchangeable desire of conquest, must seek to advance'. Consequently,

it is the business of the Commonwealth to begin forthwith to arm every man, to fence with the latest and most terrible scientific devices, every port, to establish armouries, and arsenals, to put its people in a position both to make and wield arms, so that the whole may stand as one strong man, well-armed whenever the foe may seek to intrude.

Anticipating Curtin by thirty-six years, Maloney ended with a call for an alliance with the United States:

The road thither may be very distasteful to much that is aggressively, rather than self-sacrificingly, British. But even if, with cap in hand, it were better thither, and with that purpose, than ultimately, with sackcloth on our loins and ashes on our heads, to put our neck beneath the heel of the Eastern conqueror.

Maloney was far from being alone in his advocacy of a U.S. alliance, often in preference to ties with Britain.

On 1 July 1911, *Lone Hand* pointed out that 'Against the two white peoples with important establishments in the Pacific, the United States and Australia, are arrayed the millions of brown men, ambitious, arrogant and poor'. On 17 March 1914, Winston Churchill told the House of Commons: 'If the power of Great Britain were shattered on the sea, the only course of the five millions of white men in the Pacific would be to seek the protection of the United States'. Hughes reasoned that 'Nothing but the fact that America possesses a population of eighty million, and that any attempt to crush such a country would demand the forces of a nation at least similarly numerous... causes Japan to hesitate to declare war'. Although Australia had a population of five million, 'we are isolated from the rest of the world, and we have a second rate, or third rate, naval detachment, which under the terms of the Naval Agreement, may, at any moment, be withdrawn'.

The practical impetus came from the prime minister, Alfred Deakin, who in 1909 made 'a proposition of the highest international importance' when he suggested to the British government that the protective guarantees of the U.S. Monroe doctrine be extended to cover the South Pacific. The year before, Deakin had caused a sensation when he bypassed the Foreign Office to invite the U.S. fleet to Australia. His request was a twofold snub to Britain. First, it indicated Deakin's lack of faith in the Royal Navy; secondly, it broke protocol for a Dominion to engage in its own diplomacy. Deakin was not

worried about Britain's sensibilities, as he confided to Richard Jebb:

The visit of the United States Fleet is universally popular here not so much because of our blood affection for the Americans though that is sincere but because of distrust of the Yellow race in the North Pacific and our recognition of the 'entente cordiale' spreading among all white races who realise the Yellow Peril to Caucasian civilisation, creeds and politics.

Not that the US visit was without its racial problems. The Age, very much in favour of the visitation, none the less played up the fiendish appearance of Black crewmen, as in its report of the robbery of a woman in Auckland, or their lack of civilised manners and childlike 'coonery' as seen in a Sydney bar.

New Zealanders were, as usual, somewhat more reluctant to break with Britain, as was underlined when one member told the House of Representatives that he was

not going to Auckland to welcome the American Fleet as the future saviours of this Dominion from the yellow fiend ... to go there and grovel before our visitors and say 'John Bull is too old and feeble now to protect us; we come to you, Uncle Sam, to save us from the Chinese and Japanese' ... but if the time does come when the white race has to fight the yellow one ... it will not be only the Stars and Stripes that will float in the Pacific Ocean — the Union Jack will be there also to the front as usual, and I dare say the fleets of other nations as well.

Although the speaker may not have been in sympathy with the proposal to ally Australasia with the United States, he left no doubt that such an alliance was the issue.

The reasons for such an alliance were clearly stated by the Wellington *Evening Post* for 10 August 1908:

Instead of inspiring us with the enthusiasm it aroused in the Mother Country, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, more particularly in its later and more intimate phase, has been received here with not a little suspicion and uneasiness. If she had no white colonies in the Pacific, Britain's alliance with Japan might be an admirable thing from every point of view; but she cannot expect it to be so

regarded by free colonists who see their country exposed to the risk of being turned from white to yellow by her entanglement with an Oriental power. As the champion of white ascendancy in the Pacific, America, therefore, represents the ideals of Australia and New Zealand far better than Britain has hitherto been able to do in this respect.

Imagine, if possible, the effect that the following item would have upon the Australian population were it to appear in tomorrow's newspapers:

It was announced today in Washington that the Senate has ratified a Treaty between the People's Republic of China and the United States of America. Complete details of the Treaty will not be made public but it is reliably understood that the United States will withdraw most of her forces from the Pacific in order to concentrate on her Atlantic responsibilities. American obligations under ANZUS will henceforth be fulfilled by Communist China.

Although no comparable announcement was ever made by Britain in relation to Japan, it eventually became clear to Australasia that the practical consequence of the Anglo-Japanese alliance was of this character.

Before the Anglo-Japanese alliance was signed in 1902, the dominions were neither consulted nor unduly alarmed. Only after Japan's martial, or rather naval, prowess revealed itself in 1904 did the alliance become a source of concern. Britain had initiated the Treaty in order to contain Russia; with the destruction of the Russian fleet, Britain felt free to remove five battleships from the China station. Australasia did not share this summation. Rather, it felt that the emergence of Japan should have led to an increase in the size of British forces in the Pacific. For, as Billy Hughes observed, 'save for our alliance with Japan, never were people in as parlous a position as we'.

No simple solution arose to the problems presented by the alliance. Unlovely as Japan appeared as an ally, the prospect of Japan as an enemy, moreover as an enemy tied to Germany,

was far more horrific. This ambivalence persisted until 1921 when Hughes, who had been very rude to the Japanese at the Versailles peace settlement in 1919, fought hard to preserve the Anglo-Japanese alliance.

British reluctance to spell out the full import of the alliance was matched only by Australia's unwillingness to find it out. The moment of truth came when the new Labor prime minister, Andrew Fisher, went to London for the 1911 Imperial Conference. Before leaving Australia, Fisher told a meeting at Ballarat that he would not hesitate to haul down the Union Jack if Australia's interests demanded it. In other words, he would ally Australia with the United States if that were the only way he could save Australia from the Japanese. Once in England, Fisher began to see the wisdom of Sir Edward Grey's argument that

if we denounce the Japanese Alliance we can no longer rely on the assistance of the Japanese Fleet and we must prepare for the possibility that Japan may enter into arrangements which may bring her into hostility with us.

Fisher ended up by advocating a policy of 'All the Way with Edward Grey'.

By promising Britain total loyalty, the Australasians, particularly the New Zealanders, hoped to secure Britain's unequivocal support in return. Matters did not remain at this pass. More and more, Britain concentrated her navy in the Atlantic and delegated the task of defending the Pacific to Japan.

Moreover, a new First Lord of the Admiralty, Winston Churchill, had spelt out to the Pacific dominions what his predecessors had been so solicitous in concealing from them. Even then, the Prime Minister of New Zealand, Massey, had difficulty in grasping the situation. 'I do not want to do Mr Churchill an injustice', he said, 'but if he means that the people of Australia and New Zealand are to be satisfied with the protection afforded by Japanese ships and Japanese sailors, then Mr Churchill is very much mistaken'. The Australian Prime

Minister, Joseph Cook, was no less astute and declared that 'when Australia was asked to rely on the Japanese Treaty alone for peace in the Pacific a very serious situation was created'. It was all very well to have a scrap of paper with the Japanese signatures upon it, but surely no one could trust slit-eyed devils who, as Hughes had said, possessed vices so terrible that they could only be hinted at.

Australia's worst fears were realised with the outbreak of war in August 1914. In the preceding May, George Pearce, in response to a request from the Governor-General, had outlined Labor's attitudes on defence. He laid particular stress on the role of naval defence, insisting that 'there ought to be a British Fleet for the Pacific, [as] without it... we are compelled to allow our policy to be dictated by our ally'. The truth of this comment became all too clear when Australia failed to occupy all of Germany's Pacific possessions because it was fully involved in tracking down German battleships.

At the outbreak of hostilities, Britain advised Japan that its assistance would not be required and that Australia and New Zealand would take possession of the German colonies. This plan was upset by the escape of von Spee's squadron into the Pacific. The Japanese navy was called in and visited German possessions north of the equator; pressure built up in Japan to annex these islands. The Colonial Office tried to outmanoeuvre Japan, but by November, when the Australian expedition was ready to leave, Japan had occupied all important islands north of the equator. When it looked as if Japan might relinquish her newly won control of the island of Yap to the Australians, riots in Japan provoked fears that, if concessions were made, the pro-British party would be replaced by pro-Germans. Australia was surprised and hostile, yet as always had to walk the tightrope between restricting Japan and retaining her goodwill. By the end of 1914, Australia and Japan were direct neighbours; each had advanced towards the other in an atmosphere of mistrust.

When the European war did not end by Christmas, Britain

was reluctantly forced to call upon Japan for more assistance. This reliance posed a serious problem for Australia. The more Britain leant on Japan, the greater would be Japan's say in any postwar settlement. In particular, Japan would most certainly annex the Pacific islands it was holding and might even make demands for immigration rights to Australia.

CONSCRIPTION

The conscription disputes of 1916-17 tell a different story in the light of this most uneasy of alliances. All the old reasons, ranging from outraged Irish feelings to Hughes' vanity, retain their relevance. Accounts that ignore the government's perception of a Japanese menace are inadequate to the point of being wrong.

The traditional version of Hughes' decision to introduce conscription gives central importance to his visit to London in April 1916 where it is alleged he was duchessed and deceived concerning recruitment figures. Both of these might well have happened, though Hughes was the least likely Australian to fall for either. He heard more grievous matters, as he explained to his deputy, Pearce, in a letter dated 21 April 1916:

The position is aggravated — I will not say it is critical — by the fact that Britain has approached Japan with a view to obtaining naval (and, or, military assistance) — say in the Mediterranean — and that the Japanese Government, while ready to grant this, asks for some evidence of Britain's friendliness to her in order possibly to justify her action or placate the opposition. And, as Grey says, if we say: Well we are very friendly towards you and we want your aid to win this war — *but* — (1) you must not get any concessions in China; (2) your people cannot come to Australia; (3) you are not to be allowed most favoured nation treatment with Australia (or other parts of the Empire), Japan can hardly be expected to treat our protestations of friendship very seriously.

That Grey had sounded Hughes out as to what concessions

could be made to Japan is evident from another passage in the letter to Pearce: 'I told Grey that Australia would fight to the last ditch rather than allow Japanese to enter Australia. Upon that point we were adamant'. Before the end of the year, Hughes had come to believe that the best way to keep the Japanese out of Australia was to lessen Britain's dependence on Japan. Australia's last-ditch fight would take place in France with conscripts.

On Hughes' return from England he spoke in Adelaide of the danger from Asia. *His speech was censored* under the War Precautions Act which forbade criticism of allied nations. This rule applied particularly to criticism of Japan. Any insult might provoke a crisis in Japan and result in a pro-German Cabinet there. The censorship was effective and it is consequently impossible to determine from newspaper reports how much importance Hughes and his colleagues attached to their fear of Japan in their pro-conscriptionist campaign. We are not reduced to Hughes' April letter to Pearce, since the government's increasing concern with Japan is evident in its actions, if not in its published statements.

In May 1916, the Australian government cabled Britain requesting a reallocation of Allied warships so as to remove Japanese vessels from Australian waters. In June, the Defence Department brought a lecturer from overseas to teach Japanese to selected army staff cadets. This move was all the more remarkable when the shortage of officers for the Western Front is remembered. No less significant was the secret session of federal parliament held on 31 August 1916, where Hughes 'referred to the danger to which Australia was exposed, owing to her close proximity to hordes of the coloured races, with particular reference to Japan, who although our ally in the then World War, might at some future time be our enemy'.

In the course of the plebiscite campaigns, pro-conscriptionists such as Deakin and Senator Bakhap advocated a 'Yes' vote 'to keep Australia white'. This attitude is

inexplicable except in terms of the Japanese menace. Pro-conscriptionists argued that the only way to keep Australia safe from Japan was to support Britain to the hilt in the hope that, while Britain remained undefeated in Europe, Japan would not dare to advance in the Pacific.

Even if Britain were defeated, all was not automatically well. A weakened Britain might call upon Japan for more aid in return for postwar concessions that could only be disagreeable to Australia. Alternatively, a wounded British empire would lead the Japanese to question the worth of their alliance, possibly to the extent that the pro-German faction would come to power in Tokyo. All three possibilities pointed to the same conclusion: Australia must give total support to Britain. In Henry Lawson's phrase: 'Conscription had to be!'

From this evidence, it is clear that Pearce, Hughes and Deakin had not forsaken their nationalist loyalties for imperial ones. Rather they differed from their erstwhile colleagues and supporters only in the tactics they would use to best defend Australia's interests.

Anti-conscriptionists were equally concerned with the threat from Japan. The most notable of these was J. H. Catts, MHR, who left his office as director of voluntary recruiting in New South Wales in June 1916 to become secretary of the 'vote no conscription' campaign three months later. Catts was in favour of Britain winning, but not in favour of leaving Australia defenceless. He was arrested seven times under the War Precautions Act because 'he dared to tell the truth concerning the War aims of Japan'. A typical statement from him proclaimed:

Instead of sending every available man left in Australia out of this country, the remaining manhood should be prepared for the great struggle of the future ... He could not sufficiently emphasise Australia's decidedly perilous position from the Japanese menace.

The ALP's paper in Victoria, *Labor Call* (6 April 1916), braved

the censorship to argue in an article entitled 'Back to Barbarism' that:

While the Whites are butchering each other, Asia is waiting and grinning. Behind the fatalistic Buddha stands a new nation with knowledge of War and Cunning, to lead the Asiatic hundreds of millions ... None of the Allies can reproach Germany for her alliance with bloodthirsty, barbarous Asiatics. Germany did not begin the thing. The other warring nations brought their savages, Africans of the lower type, Mohammedans of a better type and hordes from Asia to help kill the Europeans. The immediate result of this war ... will be a vast Asiatic conquest, a period of darkness and misery over Europe.

The attack on Pearl Harbor came as no surprise to Australia, but fulfilled the anxieties of a century.

RACE WAR

Before the outbreak of the Great War, Labor had succeeded in appropriating the defence preparedness of the Commonwealth. Deakin's efforts had been hamstrung by the Constitutional limits on spending, which ended in 1910, the year Labor gained absolute control of both Houses of the Commonwealth Parliament. This fiscal change enabled Fisher to spend far more lavishly, and Commonwealth defence expenditure rose 300 per cent between 1910 and 1913. To some extent, Labor paid for and reaped the benefits of policies initiated by Deakin but, in the minds of a large majority of the electorate, Labor had emerged as the 'Defend Australia' party. When war broke out a month before the 1914 elections, it was natural for Labor to receive the highest percentage vote it has ever obtained in a Commonwealth election.

Labor could not escape the duality of its achievement. The more successful it was at denying its augmented and recently self-aware working-class component, the greater danger it ran of splitting if this contingent found itself being neglected. This

danger deepened during the Great War when unemployment rose and real wages fell. The first victim of the Labor dilemma was George Pearce, the Minister of Defence, who was unofficially expelled by important sections of the Victorian Party early in 1915. Wider disillusionment followed the abandonment in December 1915 of the Powers referendum, which would have given the government control over prices. Almost a year before Hughes walked out of the caucus meeting after the defeat of conscription, *Labor Call* asked, 'Is the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth a Labor Member or the representative of the Chamber of Commerce and the Employers' Federation?'

Moreover, Hughes and Pearce seemed prepared to sacrifice the 'White Australia' policy. Nothing was further from the truth, yet, to a sizeable portion of Labor supporters, conscription presented that danger. Either coloureds would be needed to replace whites at the workplace, as in France, or Australia would be so depleted of defenders that Japan would find her an easy prey. *Labor Call* put its claim in August 1915:

The White Australia question is going to be Australia's *bête noire* in the near future. How is Australia going to prohibit Indians or Japs, our allies, entering her gates? We don't hear much about the monkey and the turbaned man, nowadays. The caricatures in the *Bulletin* and the other comics are missing.

Hughes might have been able to ride out the storm around his economic policy; without the appeal to racism he was unable to hold to him all the Party's centre and right. Hughes lost control of the Labor Party when he was deprived of racism as a weapon, just as Labor lost its electoral supremacy because it could not sustain its militarist appeals in the face of sectional economic demands. Conscriptors of the last man marched one way, while collectors of the last shilling departed in the other.

Labor's resurgence in 1940 returned to this point. As the custodian of 'White Australia', the Labor Party had the advan-

tage once the military threat came from Japan. The electorate could trust Labor to be implacable in its opposition to a 'Yellow Peril'. A pro-war government advertisement in April 1942 confirmed this venom: 'We've always despised them', it said, 'now we must smash them'.

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