

Failing the Tests

The two-day seminar on pollution problems of Dhaka city concluded the other day with a much-needed emphasis on scientific investigations on a broad front into the new threats to life in the metropolis — threats originating in our first toddling tastes of the industrial civilisation. Nearly all feel it is high time right actions were taken to stall further degeneration of our environment. But to decide upon truly right actions one must know the working of the pollution process and the nature of its effect. Hence the importance of projects to study pollution with special reference to our capital city — already a nightmare city if only we cared to know.

The government has so far been totally ineffective in taking any measure curbing air pollution through vehicular emissions. Why? Even a small start in that direction is yet to be seen. Instead, government's thinking seems to be that everything about this is awaiting the commissioning of the expensive seven automobile checking plants, four of which are to be operational in Dhaka. The day these start working, Dhaka's air would be as clear as on the Kanchenjunga. This is a false hope. You cannot stop the two-stroke three-wheelers because of court action and your ban on import of these is leaking? Why don't you go after 5000 worst spewing chimneys called buses and trucks and personnel carriers? Whose effusions need no testing other than seeing the black jet coming out and darkening the milieu under a pall of cloud lapping up daylight.

And why isn't government healing its own vehicles? Why isn't it CNG-fying its pool of thousands of vehicles, gradually to be sure. Reason two for believing government isn't doing enough about air pollution is its non-promotion of the CNG escape chute. Let it heed our suggestion of allowing a 25 rebate on the road-tax of all CNG-fied vehicles. Do it and see what happens. Ask the vehicles registration and road-tax collecting authorities to insist on the owners to switch over to CNG.

Polythene bags were banned years ago. Manufacturers got the then Prime Minister Begum Zia to allow a two-year reprieve. That two-year is long past. What is holding the present dispensation to deal with this danger the only way it can be dealt with? No exhortations please to prefer jute bags for this is bound to be hollow. Ban polybag and see the improvement in the jute economy.

Boils Down to Economics

Every ingredient to make the recipe a success seems to be there. A willing government — not only in words but in work as well; a raised budgetary allocation, a steady rise in the population of school-ward children. Yet the news is country's primary education is not going anywhere. Officials of the Education Ministry itself are of the opinion that the government policy for expanding mass as well as primary education is not reaping the kind of dividend it should have.

A recent appraisal meeting of the national council for mass and primary education with the PM in the chair culled out 20 reasons for the poor state of primary education in the country. Major among them are: gradual slide in the quality of education, lack of enough schools within the 'reach', insufficient class rooms, paucity of female teachers and lack of gadgets. The focus, it appears, is on infrastructural inadequacy.

Is it the only problem? Perhaps not. The figures of 45% drop-out as revealed in the in-depth report of a leading Bengali daily should encourage the policy makers to dig little deeper on this issue. The real problem is the harsh economic reality which the families of the prospective school-goers grapple with. Why would the poor parents send their children to school? Pared down to the statistics of daily or monthly bill of expenses, school is a source of automatic disincentive for the uneducated, poverty-stricken, rural parents. To start with, it robs them of the labour of their children they would have otherwise been able to invest in family chores. Then this nonavailability is not recompensed by any waiver in the form say, one meal of the day. Schools have to offer economic incentive to remain populated. They have done it India where many government schools provide one meal of the day to the students. This subsidy would not amount to a huge cost as many might assume.

Of course, there are other problems, like the lack of coordination, to be addressed. What we have in the name of primary education is a very odd heterogeneous melange of eleven systems. This chaotic reality has to go.

Needs a Push

We are heartened to see considerable interest being evinced by an enterprising lot of people in the opportunity the government has offered to have EPZs or industrial parks set up in the private sector. We cannot, however, be equally effusive about the pace at which the plethora of applications for go-aheads are being entertained by the governing board for the EPZs. The enabling law was enacted a year ago and yet there could not be any short-listing of entrepreneurs to give them the EPZ authority a lead time for mutually reinforcing dynamics for and early establishment of the industrial estates.

The government has to do the zoning and provide utility services to the industries. The entrepreneurs can go about their construction work and installation agenda only after the land has been suitably developed for such purposes.

The sanction process has apparently hit a snag in several applicants inability to show that they possess 100 acres of land. Obviously it is no small job getting ownership of 300 bighas of land near such strategically important places as an airport or sea port. We suggest the government requisition land stretches after zoning and compensation on payment and then proceed sell these off to private sector entrepreneurs who may form into groups for their operational convenience.

The entire process will have to be perfected and quickened to develop models with an eye to the emergence of the epoch-marking Jamuna bridge expected to be operationalised in the near future.

Twenty-five Years of Bangladesh Constitution: A Time to Look Back

by Ahmed Ziauddin

The governments, over these years, became synonymous to wastes of public money; either in the form of outright corruption, misuse of public funds or otherwise. The Constitution provides in Article 128 that all 'public accounts of the Republic and of all courts of law and all authorities and officers of the Government shall be audited and reported on by the Auditor-General ...'

THE Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh will be twenty five years old soon. The people of Bangladesh, on 4 November, 1972, through the Constituent Assembly, adopted, enacted and gave to themselves, the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. The Speaker authenticated the Constitution on 14 December. It repealed the transitional constitution; the Provisional Constitutional Order 1972. Article 153 set the date that the Constitution "shall come into force on the sixteenth day of December, 1972".

Over this period, Bangladesh Constitution has suffered, in human terms, considerable amount of pain and anguish. It, for a very long period, remained under suspended animation and underwent major transplantations and a number of surgeries. Still, twenty five years on, the working of the constitution has provided a certain amount of experience for all to reflect upon. It also has given sufficient space of time to look back, to examine its effect, to find some answers such as how far the objectives the Constitution set out to achieve had been realised and how relevant the Constitution had been in the life of the people and how appropriate it remained over this period in realising their aspirations.

Thus, twenty-five years provide opportunities to review the document in its entirety, to pause and think. It then offers the possibility to determine whether it is capable to meet the nation's challenges not only for the next twenty-five years but well beyond, into the new century.

The constitution is a mirror of the nation. It is, to quote the author of Bangladesh Constitution, Dr Kamal Hossain, "a document that a generation drafts in the light of its experience and the prevailing currents of thought and which seeks to anticipate the future and to provide a framework for orderly change" (Public Interest Litigation in South Asia, eds. Hossain, Malik & Musa, 1997).

A whole new generation has grown up since the adoption of the Constitution. The world too has undergone unimaginable and unheard of changes in socio-political, economic and in other aspects because of science and technology's influence. The need, therefore, to analyze the Constitution, its performance, thematically and in all other details, is paramount.

This article intends not embark on the process itself, but, to highlight its importance and to argue for such a study. The Constitution, back in 1972, offered two pledges and one affirmation. In it, we, the people of Bangladesh, pledged "that the high ideals of nationalism, socialism, democracy

and secularism, which inspired our heroic people to dedicate themselves to, and our brave martyrs to sacrifice their lives in, the national liberation struggle, shall be the fundamental principles of the Constitution". Here, the victims of the genocide perpetrated by the Pakistani army numbering three millions have been in a way ignored.

The second pledge was, "that it shall be a fundamental aim of the State to realise through the democratic process a socialistic society, free from exploitation—a society in which the rule of law, fundamental human rights and freedom, equality and justice, political, economic and social, will be secured for all citizens".

Then it affirmed "that it is our sacred duty to safeguard, protect and defend this Constitution and to maintain its supremacy as the embodiment of the will of the people of Bangladesh so that we may prosper in freedom and may make our full contribution towards international peace and cooperation in keeping with the progressive aspirations of mankind".

After twenty-five years, it is high time to take stock as to what extent, "We, the people of Bangladesh" have succeeded in achieving the above pledges. It is time to determine, how far in this society now, rule of law, human rights, freedom, equality, justice in socio-economic policies have been achieved. It is equally necessary to establish how far the Constitution worked for the people.

However, it must be kept in mind that this process to examine the Constitution is not to rewrite or produce a new one, nor to bring wholesale change. The most important objective is to analyze whether over the last twenty-five years things have worked for the people of Bangladesh or not and if not, whether changes, if brought to the Constitution, are likely to improve its performance.

Therefore, there must be more than one way to approach the issue. The traditional way, is just to observe the day, like the other days, with messages, speeches and seminars, which often are limited to ceremonies and in the end, generate no substantive understanding and consequently, no result. The process should begin with a look at the Constitution, right from the beginning and then go all through its body in a more substantial manner.

The Constitution has, over these years, undergone enormous changes. Justice Naimuddin Ahmed observed, "the process of mutilating the Constitution" began very early and "the original complexion of the Constitution was changed almost beyond recognition". The Constitution was amended 13 times and over 60 Articles had been touched upon. Virtually all Parts and all Chapters had been transformed. The Constitution has 11 Parts and 153 Articles.

In the midst of these numerous changes, still, provisions like Article 77, which provides for establishment of the office of the Ombudsman to investigate any action taken by a Ministry, a public officer or a statutory public authority has remained unfulfilled after long twenty-five years. The first thing that one notices, taking into account the turbulent history of Bangladesh, that the constitution has no built-in safety mechanism. As events have proved, the Constitution was suspended on more than one occasion, but the Constitution neither contains any provision to defend against intrusion nor provides any sanction. The ravages of the Constitution did not have to answer to their crimes against the Constitution, since, no such crime exist.

Article 7 declares, "(1) All powers in the Republic belong to the people, and their exercise on behalf of the people shall be effected only under, and by the authority of, this Constitution. (2) This Constitution is, as the solemn expression of the will of the people, the supreme law of the Republic, and if any other law is inconsistent with this Constitution that other law shall, to the extent of inconsistency, be void." After this declaration on the supremacy of the Constitution, the authors perhaps believed the Constitution adequately been protected, but events within three years proved, how insecure the Constitution was.

The Martial Law imposed by Khandker Moshatque Ahmed in 1975 which Justice Sayem and Ziaur Rahman followed and in 1982 by Ershad, exposed the fragility of the Constitution. After the first Martial Law was withdrawn, Ziaur Rahman continued to rule in the country in "civilian dress" until his assassination in 1981. But when Ershad was removed after prolonged "democracy movement", the government that was elected initiated a number of criminal proceedings and filed criminal cases against Ershad involving

arms, money, corruption, influence peddling etc. But his principal crimes were, suspension of the Constitution, imposition of Martial Law and violation of "will of the people".

A General Diary (GD) entered into by Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) General Secretary Hasul Haq Inu at Ramna thana accused Ershad of waging the war against the State, threatening the President etc, but Ershad was not implicated in crimes against the Constitution.

The Constitution, however, did not receive the first blow in 1975. The assault began in 1973 with the insertion of "emergency provisions", which paved the way for subsequent turbulence. This was followed by a mortal strike in the form of fourth amendment to the Constitution, which changed the composition, character and equilibrium of the Constitution. So, another shield the Constitution of Bangladesh should wear to resist attacks not only from the military, but from the government and a decile majority in a Parliament so that the Constitution could not be altered "fundamentally" merely because a government has numerical majority in Parliament. The Supreme Court has, however, reinforced this argument in a 1988 judgement by declaring Ershad's eighth amendment partially void.

Under the headlines "Fundamental Principles of State Policies" and "Fundamental Rights", the Constitution enumerated a number of rights. Rights like democracy, human rights, education, public health etc., were declared fundamental to the governance of Bangladesh but not to be judicially enforceable. The enforceable rights, the "fundamental rights", were heavily qualified. The authors of the Constitution relied too much on the good-will of the government that the "principles" which are a bunch of essentially indispensable socio-economic rights, "shall be applied by the State in the making of the laws, shall be interpreted in the interpretation of the Constitution and of the other laws of Bangladesh, and shall form the basis of the work of the State and of its citizens".

The Constitution, thus, in large part remained meaningless in many aspects of people's life. Dr Kamal Hossain admits this fact and maintains that "simplistic distinction between constitutional provisions relating to the governments, over these years, became synonymous to wastes of public money; either in the form of outright corruption, misuse of public funds or otherwise. The Constitution provides in Article 128 that all 'public accounts of the Republic and of all courts of law and all authorities and officers of the Government shall be audited and reported on by the Auditor-General and for that purpose he or any person authorised by him in that behalf shall have

ing to judicially enforceable fundamental rights and those relating to directive or fundamental principles of state policy which are not judicially enforceable tends to obscure the vital relationship between these two sets of provisions". Instead of introducing hierarchy in rights, as the authors did, it was perhaps preferable to leave the enforcement aspect in the hands of the Court, who, taken into consideration the prevalent situation, would set the parameters.

This follows the questions relating Judiciary, the Court and the Judges, the guardians of the people's right and administrators of justice. On both the counts, people's expectations have remained unfulfilled. Over the last twenty-five years, the Judges have failed to protect the rights of the people and justice remained undone, where it mattered most. When in 1974 the Constitution received overwhelming assault in the form of the fourth amendment, which placed the Judiciary virtually at the mercy of all powerful President's whims, the Judges remained silent. Later on, in 1975 and 1982, when military imposed Martial Law in the country, the Judges, who took oath to "preserve, protect and defend the Constitution and the laws of Bangladesh" all but welcomed the Martial law. The review should include all these episodes to find effective remedy.

The other major institution in the Constitution that has performed quite poorly has been the legislature; the Parliament. The Parliament for Bangladesh, according to Article 65 of the Constitution, shall be vested the legislative powers of the Republic. Nevertheless, a large portion of the laws over the last twenty-five years have not been the Parliament's product. The Parliament and the Parliamentarians have failed to reflect the expectation of the people.

The governments, over these years, became synonymous to wastes of public money; either in the form of outright corruption, misuse of public funds or otherwise. The Constitution provides in Article 128 that all 'public accounts of the Republic and of all courts of law and all authorities and officers of the Government shall be audited and reported on by the Auditor-General and for that purpose he or any person authorised by him in that behalf shall have

per cent. A dramatic increase followed the Whitlam Labour government's coming to power in 1972, and the proportion doubled in 1974-75 when the 'White Australia' policy was formally abolished, and the first wave of Indo-Chinese, mostly Vietnamese, refugees poured in. In 1989, Asian-born people comprised about 9 per cent of the Australian population. If current trends continue, the proportion will rise to between 10 and 15 per cent by the year 2030. According to Nancy Viviani, this will not only mean "a substantial change in the racial composition of Australia", but also "a significant shift in cultural and social values".

Reliance on the United Kingdom — the problem of identity, our fourth — results in 'cultural cringe'. In 'The Lucky Country' (1964), Donald Home suggested focus on Asia as an alternative to the "sometimes humiliating attempts to keep up the family relationship with Europeans... It is in dealings with Asia countries that Australians might regain a sense of confidence and importance". But revisionists have repeatedly encountered the barrier of the 'White Australia' policy. Historian F K Crowley affirmed in 1968 that Australia: "... is not, and has not for 60 million years, been part of Asia geographically. Australia is not, culturally, ethnically, part of Asia. Australia does not share common social institutions, religious attitudes, or styles of political behaviour with most Asian countries... It is still an outpost of Europe..."

A schism had appeared. In 1980, Australian Frontier brought together 120 people to ponder Australia's options. Austrasia emerged as one desirable possibility. "An Austrasian future will not be comfortable, and our choices are limited. The size of population in Asia, combined with resource scarcity, is an impressive economic growth, promise an expanding market. Yet the trends are towards increased political and military strength in Asia. Australia must become a multicultural Asianised society or face conflict, isolation and a stagnating economy."

Yet, multiculturalism, too, results in cultural cringe. Paul Keating appeared ingratiating when, in Singapore, he observed that 'mateship was an Asian value! More seriously, the non-Asian value of democracy causes more angst and soul-searching. A section of the Labour Party and wished for an independent East Timor, for instance. And the relationship with China took a beating during the Tiananmen incident, but has held steady.

To the Editor

Political activities

Sir, Even with a new government, now past its first year, our political parties continue to rally on the streets. The workers may not be able to comprehend that public goodwill is being lost. It is the leaders who should find a remedy for the situation and implement it immediately, without sitting down at their usual round of innumerable meetings in air-cooled rooms enjoying tea and samochas. Mayor Hanif has offered seven wonderful venues. Our special request is, please leave the Jatiya Press Club road free. And will the police arrest any violators without discrimination? The public should help to oust such road blockers.

AL BNP, Islamic Jote and others close down a road with meetings and processions. Let them have their processions keep pace with the traffic, not disrupt it or delay it. They can march one or two persons abreast, no more than that. I am sure no previous permission from the police is taken even by the AL. And dear Mr Mayor, please do not just offer venues, make sure meetings are held nowhere else. If we can beat up suspected child-lifters, we can also manhandle bamboo-rod-in-hand party workers. Only kindly back us, dear Mayor, with the police. We will ensure no meeting ever takes place on our crowded roads including the Jonaki Road.

Sultan Wares 5 Free School Street, Dhaka Discrimination against women

Sir, The news item published on 7th September, '97 in a Bangla daily is a major example of how women are treated in our country.

According to the report, in Gazipur, sixteen-year-old Ayesha and fifty-year-old Nasu Mia were allowed to marry after Ayesha had to suffer one hundred lashes for her sin. Ayesha and Nasu Mia allegedly had been having an illicit relationship for the last four years. The former chairman of Mirzapur Union called for a shalish, in which one Samad Munshi gave fatwah that after receiving one hundred lashes, Ayesha will be eligible to marry Nasu Mia.

We are stunned and protest vehemently against this verdict. Why the fifteen-year-old girl had to be punished while the sixty-year-old man was spared if anyone should have been punished, it should have been the mature man not the tender-aged girl.

Women are subjected to injustice in so many fields that we are appalled and disheartened. In intelligence women are not inferior to men, their only

handicap is that they are physically weaker than men and males are taking full advantage of it.

I grieve to think that a great number of women, who could have attained a shining career must have sacrificed it for household duties and rearing children.

Nur Jahan East Nasirabad, Chittagong

A friend of the poor

Sir, Amidst a mild opposition by the Hindu militant group VHP, the Indian government and their people, especially the Calcutta-dwellers have finally paid an unprecedented honour by giving a state funeral to an ex-Yugoslavia (Macedonia) born mother Teresa, who had migrated to India in the year of 1949 from her motherland. From the tender age of 19 till the last day of her life of more than a seven decades, she had dedicated her every interest for every cause of the poorest and dispossessed irrespective of any caste and creed.

Her sacrifices have eventually awarded her the world's most coveted Nobel Peace prize. In recognition to her every efforts and deeds, world leaders including our prime minister and different religious leaders belonging to different religions have commendably paid their richest tribute to this revered friend of world's poorest of the poor. Like the late Princess of Wales, she had shared an all-time concern for the poor and the distressed and courage. In a complete different lifestyle than that of recently-expired Diana.

The Indians can pride themselves for having their close connection with this personality to whom they have given their all assistance, honour and citizenship. However, on the death of Diana and Teresa, a pertinent question has been raised in my mind whether there are any other living outstanding personalities in the Muslim, western and the Third World who care for the poor and the distressed. May be, there is somebody somewhere in the world who have love and compassion for the have-nots but doesn't enjoy press coverage and publicity. We want to know about her or him!

Ms Muhtibul Abrar Choudhury Chittagong

Not here, but there

Sir, The Prime Minister was criticised for setting up a small secretariat when abroad. But all our past PMs had gone abroad with a sizeable entourage. In the contact they maintained with the homeland was expensive. No one raised a hue and cry at that time about the drainage to the public exchequer. Why the

fuss now? Is it because our PM has not been able to keep our people happy on the home front as they had hoped? In the '75s, law and order was deliberately undermined by a group. It has begun again and is continuing even now. Who's fault is it? If a government cannot run a country, it is no longer a government.

So the PM and her Cabinet better go on with the job. Incidentally, the cost our PM's daily telecommunications with Dhaka could not have cost much. These days e-mail, etc., have brought prices plunging down. Even on our home front, it will all further if the firms want customers or to stay in business. And if anyone is to complain about the heavy expenditure of public money (or if the donor countries aid is included), one may kindly and conveniently recollect that our PMs voted unanimously to have a life-long pension. If we are rich enough as a country to afford a long line of PM pension collectors, why should we be upset by a PM's secretarial holiday account?

Natasha Kamal Wari, Dhaka

Digital experience

Sir, I was ecstatic, reading the news in your renowned daily that a delegation from Hollywood expressed high hopes about Bangladesh as their new potential market for English movies. And for obvious reasons Modhumita Movies spearheaded the campaign and took up the job of upgrading the prevailing scenario of big-screen entertainment, which is worthy of much appreciation. But to make this effort worth its while Modhumita has to contemplate on certain issues.

The other day, I had the opportunity to visit the theatre but could not properly comprehend the need for ostentation of provocative banners. The authority was in total fiasco to contend the despicable act of tickets' black marketing. The theatre ambience, I would say, was upgraded not by the struggling air-cooling system or the lousy seats, rather by the decent and understanding crowd which is quite rare to see in other contemporary cinema halls. To ensure the steady flow of this young generation, only the ultra-stereo sound system might prove to be lacking.

So, I would hope, Modhumita will take these matters under serious consideration and change their lackadaisical efforts to more prolific ones. The fans, I suppose, don't want to see their enthusiasm, at the advent of new technology, go in vain.

Ashiqur Rahman Khan 118 Segunbagicha, Dhaka

OPINION

Where's Down Under?

Iftekhar Sayeed

Australia's relationship with Asia has turned on the four is: immigration, invasion, international trade/investment, and identity.

The last has lately been quite a problem, for not a few Australians voted for Pauline Hanson, who conjures up visions of being Asianised. In 'The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order', Samuel Huntington has censured the erstwhile Keating government for attempting to "defect from the West and redefine itself as an Asian society", prophesying a "permanently torn" Australia. Geography and history are at loggerheads.

Invasion — our second I — engendered Australia's Asia- and self-awareness. Culturally, diplomatically and economically, she was appended to the British Empire before the Pacific war. Ex-diplomat Francis Stuart observed: "To Australians of my generation the country in which we happened to have been born... Between federation in 1901 and Pearl Harbour, the sole attempt at foreign policy was to contain Japan."

Before 1941, the naval base of Singapore was her fortress. Singapore fell. Britain was mired in Europe. Francis Stuart recalls that "... at the beginning of 1942 Australia found itself a wholly new situation... It was no longer a remote base which could contribute forces to a European war; it was a likely theatre of operations itself, facing a local enemy."

Though defeated, Japan proved Europe vulnerable, pointing the way towards nationalist anti-colonialism. In March 1946, the Minister for External Affairs, Dr H V Evatt, noted that Australia's "stake in the Pacific is paramount". In March 1947, he announced Australia's goal: "a harmonious association of democratic states in the Southeast Asia area". Diplomatically, Australia was famous with Asian leaders.

Immigration — our first I — was another story. Ben Chifley's labour government (1945-49), wished to augment Australian numbers, but only with Europeans; even as the Minister for Immigration, Arthur Calwell, evicted Asian war-time refugees.

The post-war 'threat-from-the-north' was Communism. The new Liberal-Country Party coalition of 1949 wore a net of alliances around the country, spreading it wide to preserve non-Communist Asian governments. The year 1952 saw the pact with the United States and New Zealand (ANZUS). 1954 the Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) troops

and arms went to Korea (1950-53), Malaya (1955-60), Malaysia (1963-66) and Vietnam (1965-72).

The protective net proved a self-made trap, as successive allied volte-face disoriented and discredited the Liberal-Country Party. President Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon began the arduous pull-out from Vietnam; in 1971, the latter, without consulting Australia, cosied up to China. The Australian Labour Party swept into power in 1972 led by Gough Whitlam.

Whitlam envisioned "a more independent Australian stance" reflecting international realities, and a cure for the "alliance syndrome". He abandoned the anti-Communist Koumintang government of Taiwan; swapped diplomatic recognition with China and (North) Vietnam; withdrew from South Vietnam, and supported the formation of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean and a stable Southeast Asia under the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), formed in 1967. Simultaneously, the ALP's Minister for Immigration, Al Grassby, removed all barriers to Asian immigration. As Whitlam said: "In our region, in our dealings with all the countries of that region we think it's time for an ideological holiday."

International trade and investment — our third I — pushed Australia towards pragmatism. Massive trade diversification, especially towards China and Japan, occurred during the '50s and '60s. By 1967, Japan had replaced Britain as Australia's largest export market. By 1991, bilateral trade stood at A\$23 billion per year, and Japanese investment at over A\$36 billion. About 350,000 Japanese tourists visit Australia every year. Today, Japan and East Asia purchase over 60 per cent of Australian exports, more than the US and the EU combined.

Immigration — our first I — from Asia took place over two periods: 1830-1900, and 1973-present. The 'White Australia' policy was articulated in the earlier phase. The diminished supply of British convict labour led farmers and graziers to import indentured Chinese and Indian coolies, for Australia had become a major international supplier of wool. This roused fierce opposition from the nascent trade union movement. The next hundred years witnessed the vociferous demands by the trade unions to end Asian immigration.

The second period of immigration was 1973-present. At the beginning of the '60s, around one per cent of immigrants were Asia, over 5 per cent by the end of the decade, and by 1972-73 the figure exceeded 7