Boundaries of Exclusion: a Study of Italian and Croatian Immigrants in the Western Australian Timber Industry 1920-1940

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A nation’s understanding of itself is revealed by the categories of people it regards as foreign, as alien, as ‘other’.¹

A.M. Jordens, Redefining Australians

‘Otherness’ was an important boundary marker in the development of Australian identity and citizenship in the first half of this century. When Australia became a nation in 1901, immigration restriction was a cornerstone of the newly formed federation. This exclusionist legislation, often referred to as the ‘White Australia’ policy, was embodied in the first legislative Act by the first parliament of the Commonwealth, the Federal Immigration Restriction Act in 1901. Assumptions of race, ethnicity, gender and culture had their origins in the movement at the turn of the century to preserve Australia for its ‘white’ citizens. In the first decades of this century, the arrival of increasing numbers of southern Europeans fuelled the xenophobic sentiments of those concerned with retaining the predominantly British character of the Australian population and the boundaries of exclusion were then extended to the ‘less desirable’ southern and eastern European groups.²

This paper looks at the experiences of Italians and Croatians who came to Australia during the interwar period and worked in the timber industry of south-western Australia.³ Two exclusive categories of the Australian population, citizens and aliens, will be analysed to demonstrate how dual standards of citizenship applied, with white Australians and Anglo-Celtic migrants granted social and political rights that were denied to other immigrants. These dual standards carried through to naturalised citizens to form a stratification of citizenship status with naturalised aliens again at the bottom. Finally, this paper will explore how boundaries of difference were exploited in the context of the timber industry to legitimate discriminatory legislation and practices, and to fuel xenophobic sentiments.
The spiral of increasing restrictions aimed at Southern Europeans commenced from 1920, with the introduction of three Acts in the national parliament. The Immigration Act Amendment of 1920 sought to tighten controls at the point of entrance especially with regard to illegal immigrants. The Nationality Act (1920) and the Aliens Registration Act (1920) were aimed at tightening control of aliens already in Australia.

The Nationality Act defined a British subject as a person who was ‘a natural-born British subject or a person to whom a certificate of naturalization has been granted’. Naturalised Italians and Croatians were entitled to all political and other rights, powers and privileges, and ... subject to all obligations, duties and liabilities, to which a natural-born British subject is entitled ... and have to all intents and purposes the status of a natural-born British subject. More significantly, this Act extended the period of residence in Australia from two to five years before an application for naturalisation could be granted. It was not unusual, however, for naturalised subjects to be referred to as ‘naturalised aliens’. Under the Aliens Registration Act, aliens had to register their whereabouts and inform authorities if they changed their place of abode. This Act was repealed in 1926.

These new regulations reinforced the dichotomy of the exclusive categories of citizens and aliens in which a citizen was ‘a member of a state, an enfranchised inhabitant of a country as opposed to an alien’. Attainment of citizenship through naturalisation conveyed legal status but the set of cultural assumptions about what or who constituted a ‘British subject’ were not that easily set aside. Australians’ sense of self was premised upon particular understandings of the physical and cultural attributes that constituted the Australian ‘identity’, which was formed in opposition to the ‘other’ as represented by non-whites and non-British Europeans.

The low status of Italian and Croatian immigrants often led to discriminatory practices, which were reflected in their early experiences after arrival. These practices influenced not only their lives and work but also the way they saw - and still see - themselves and their status within the Australian community. Legislative and cultural changes over time did not really influence these perceptions. Furthermore, as the current debate on immigration and multiculturalism clearly shows, these immigrants are still not considered part of ‘mainstream’ Australia. These are the ‘ethnics’, a label which is a constant reminder of their ‘otherness’.

Luigi Bertelli came to Australia in the mid-1930s. Although he was very positive towards Australians and had participated in state cycling competitions representing Collie in the 1950s, he still stated ‘I feel I am Italian, no doubt about that’. Aged 97 in 1995, Pietro Baruffi wanted to forget about Italy and claimed that he was happy to be an Australian. Describing an incident at a pub during the depression, however, when an Australian returned soldier spat in his beer because he did not have the money to buy the Australian a drink, he stated: ‘I won’t trust any more
them people, that's all about it. Many immigrants like Mate Alac told me they took up naturalisation out of necessity, to gain employment and not because they felt they belonged. On the other hand, at his home in Harvey in 1995, Peter Ucich stated that he had always seen himself as a 'naturalised British subject', and not as an 'Australian'. In his eagerness to 'belong', Ucich had retained the identity of 'British subject' just as many postwar immigrants still identify themselves as 'New Australians'.

The attainment of citizenship through naturalisation involves a more complex process than for the 'natural-born' who often take citizenship for granted. Immigrants arrive as citizens of another country and, in the first years of residence, they often battle with old and new allegiances, with future prospects and hopes weighed against the tradition, culture, language and socialization of the old country. Thomas Marshall's seminal work on citizenship, which distinguishes three elements: civil, political and social rights, provides a breakdown for an analysis of the construction of citizenship. These elements are useful for analysing the reasons for immigrants taking up Australian citizenship. Marshall's analysis, however, is limited by its focus on the natural-born and omission of the question of immigrants. This framework does not address the rights of those who do not take up citizenship, or consider why so many immigrants fail to take this option, in spite of some political and economic disability.

Tomas Hammar's model proved more useful for this study in that it identifies three gates or stages for foreign arrivals: firstly regulation of immigration - who was eligible to migrate, and hence who was excluded; secondly, regulation of status as permanent resident or 'denizen', as Hammar has termed it (legislation constrained the rights, work and movement of aliens who had been allowed entry into Australia); and thirdly naturalisation, the attainment of full civil, political and social rights.

During the interwar period, aliens had to reside in Australia for five years before they could apply for naturalisation. An understanding of the construction of citizenship as it related to immigrants would not be complete without the incorporation of the second - the denizen - stage because immigrants' experiences in the early years of settlement provided the framework which underpinned their internalised status in the host country and their responses.

Hammar argues that citizenship has both a formal and a substantive meaning, the first referring to membership of a state and the latter, substantive meaning, to the possession of a number of rights and duties in that state, as outlined in Marshall's model. In the Australian context, in the first half of this century, although substantive citizenship bestowed full and equal rights and opportunities this was not the case in practice. Terms such as 'naturalised alien' reinforced the distinction in the acquisition of citizenship and left no doubt that inclusion was not complete. By the end of the interwar period, the boundary of 'otherness' reached its zenith when formal citizenship itself was called into question.

No work disabilities applied to aliens in the Western Australian Statutes except for entry into the public service. In practice, however, it was a different story. In the case of sandalwood cutting, for example, no legislative barriers existed to prohibit Italians and Croatians from working
in this occupation. Yet in 1924, the following condition was included in sandalwood licences: 'The licensee shall ... only employ in the obtaining of sandalwood registered cutters who are natural born or naturalised British cutters'. In a memo to the then Conservator of Forests, the Registration officer pointed out that there was no provision under the Forests Act and Regulations for refusing registration to aliens, but the response was to proceed with this provision nonetheless.

From the early to mid-1920s, substantial numbers of Southern European workers moved into the south-west timber industry. The Southern European presence in this industry offers an excellent opportunity for detailed study of the importance of those experiences in the first years of settlement which influenced the perceptions and status of immigrants. Discriminatory practice and the emphasis of otherness during the years at denizen status premised and subsequently legitimated the withholding of full citizenship rights and status after naturalisation. As their numbers increased, Italians and Croatians attracted attention to their presence. These immigrants were unwittingly drawn into the controversy over forest preservation which was seen as competing with the development of land for agricultural settlement. Their status as aliens constrained the choices over work and the conditions that were available to them. It was their misfortune that the activity which offered the best prospects for work was one to which the Forests Department was strongly opposed. The situation was further aggravated by the fact that, in the interwar period, efforts by the Forests Department to establish control over forestry matters were consistently thwarted by those in favour of clearing forest areas for land settlement. Arguments for forests conservation and preservation fell on deaf ears. A frustrated Forests Department exploited resentment of Italians and Croatians in the timber industry, fostering ethnic stereotypes, to achieve forestry control. The life and work experiences of Italian and Croatian timber workers not only reinforced their inferior status as 'white aliens' but also ensured that as 'naturalised aliens', legislated citizenship rights would not suffice against discriminatory practice. Their ethnicity ensured an inferior status.

Following the Forests Act 1918, a Forests Department was established, determined to preserve and conserve a 'national heritage' through sustainable harvesting of the south-west forests. Under the Act, the department had full control of forestry matters as they related to Crown land. No restrictions applied to timber on private property and, therefore, vast areas of forest land which had been alienated prior to the passing of the Act were exempt from forestry regulation.

The Forests Department was strongly opposed to hewing, which consisted of cutting railway sleepers from logs by hand, because it was the most wasteful use of logs with only 30% being utilised. The Department was consistently frustrated in its attempts to curtail this activity, however, and lamented that 'forests, instead of being regarded as assets, were looked upon as irritating excrescences to be sawn, ring-barked or otherwise destroyed to make room for the settler'.

Hewing on Crown land could only be carried out by registered hewers under the control and direction of the Forests Department. Registration was restricted to those who had followed this occupation before the passing of the 1918 Act, so this work was not available to Italians and Croats arriving
during the interwar period. As no restriction applied to private property, these immigrants found that hewing work was readily available to supply a buoyant sleeper export market and by the mid-1920s, there was ‘an army of hewers’ operating on private property to the consternation of the Forests Department.18 Ironically, however, the Department itself often encountered problems in recruiting registered hewers to clear land in new areas being opened up for settlement and, on occasion, waived its own regulation and allowed unregistered immigrant hewers to carry out the work, as was the case in the clearing of land for Group Settlement in the Noggerup area and in the Margaret River district in the mid-1920s.19

Hewing activity reached a peak in 1927 with most of the produce coming from private property as Figure 3 shows. At the same time, rising unemployment among Anglo-Australians drew more attention to the presence of Southern Europeans in the timber industry and this provided an opportunity which the Department peremptively exploited. Frustrated by its inability to control cutting and hewing on private property, the Forests Department changed tack. It recognised that an attempt to restrict this industry in the face of strong opposition from those who favoured the alienation of land for settlement and at a time of growing unemployment would not have been well-received. The depression that was sweeping the industry was largely due to the unregulated competition of those involved in the export of hewn sleepers, most of whom were exploiting the unrestricted access to timber on private property. It was more fruitful for the Department to focus on the changing ethnic composition of the hewing force, blaming the mainly Italian and Croatian hewers for ‘serious overcutting’, with the inevitable result of a fall in prices and increasing unemployment among Anglo-Australians.20

Calls to restrict the immigration of Southern Europeans grew as the local press reported that hundreds of men, including returned soldiers, were out of work. During the year to March 1927, 1,685 Southern Europeans arrived in Western Australia. Complaints were voiced that there was obviously some organisation behind the importation of these men because, according to E. Barker, ALP state secretary,

they were drafted to country districts almost as soon as they arrived. The foreigners, many of whom could not speak English, could often be seen waiting for country trains and for somebody in charge of them to supply them with tickets. It had been reported to him that an offer had been made to one farmer to supply him with foreign labour and the terms were to be one month’s work without wages, and then 10s. monthly, with keep (my emphasis).21

With restricted work opportunity for aliens and without anyone to speak up for them, the work conditions of these timber workers were highly exploitative. In his home in Tuart Hill in 1995, Mate Alac told me: ‘Many of the time they never pay you ... and you quite worried, what you gonna do. You don’t know language. You got no friend ... you got no money’.22
Fuelling criticism of Southern Europeans, the Forests Department raised concerns that this workforce was proving expensive to supervise. It claimed that increased inspection work by forestry officials had become necessary where large numbers of Southern European cutters were employed because illegal cutting of timber on Crown land was taking place. Yet a closer look at the district foresters’ reports shows that it was usually the contractor who was to blame. In the Worsley Working Area, for example, forester Moore pointed out that in all cases of illegal timber cutting in his area, ‘it was the employers rather than the cutters who were at fault, for not properly defining the boundary of the blocks on which their cutters were working.’ It is evident that the problem lay with the demarcation of property boundaries and not with the hewing workforce or its ethnic composition.

In 1928, in a newspaper article entitled ‘Ban on Foreign Labour’, settlers were urged to employ British labour in preference to ‘foreigners’ in clearing operations and suggestions were made that loans would not be granted unless British labour was employed. This directive was acted upon by many settlers, as Mate Alac found out to his dismay:

I had lost hope of ever getting work. I no longer knew the value of money as I had been without it for so long ... A man without work in a foreign country is like a stray dog. No one wants you or wants to know you.

Antagonism towards foreign timber workers peaked in 1929. With the crash in the timber export trade, a huge stockpile of sleepers was building up and driving sleeper prices down. In December 1929, Yugoslav cutters working near Darkin mill disobeyed a union directive and kept on cutting in the hope of selling the sleepers. Stipe Viskovich recalled that he and his workmates had gone to Perth for Christmas and there they received a phone call from the farmer to inform them that their sleepers were burning at the railway siding. Union men had gone out and totally destroyed about £300-£400 worth of sleepers because many Yugoslavs were still cutting sleepers and they wanted to put a stop to this. A distressed Pietro Barutti told me that the Yugoslavs were poor, desperate people trying to earn ‘a few bob ... to carry on’, cutting sleepers in the hope that the sleeper export business would pick up once again.

There is much evidence of strong support for Italian and Croatian labour from individual settlers who had employed these workers and found them to be honest and hard-working men who always paid their debts for provisions at the local stores. Evidence of this support exists in petitions by settlers to the Premier and in letters to Western Australian local and regional newspapers. Unfortunately, the Forests Department files show no such representation on behalf of these foreign workers. In fact, whilst Italians and Croatians were tolerated and made use of when British subjects were not available to do the work, in times of recession and rising unemployment they were blamed for all the ills besetting the industry. They were held responsible for the collapse of the sleeper export industry, for producing
an inferior product, for being more expensive for the Forests Department to supervise, and for undercutting wages and piecework prices. Yet, Australian immigration policies had allowed them entry and reinforced their 'inferior' status, and forestry regulations and naturalisation laws had influenced the type and area of work and the conditions which they had to accept.

The harsh conditions that Italians and Croats endured and their inability to earn a reasonable wage or even to find work sometimes drove these immigrant workers to take drastic action. Self-mutilation, usually in the form of chopping off fingers and toes, to obtain a workers' compensation payout, increased during the depression years. Although aliens, naturalised workers and Anglo-Australians participated in this practice, the main culprits were identified as being 'foreigners'. One story repeated by several people was of the hewer who chopped off the toes of his left foot and, lying in bed in hospital, was asked by suspicious insurance authorities to produce the boot. When a friend produced it, the wrong boot had been cut and the scam was confirmed.³⁰

All the Italians and Croats interviewed condemned this course of action but most sympathised with the hardship that drove men to mutilate themselves in order to claim workers' compensation. In many cases, immigrants had left families in Italy and Yugoslavia who were struggling to survive. To such people, a landing fee of £40 for entry into Australia on top of the passage fee of around £50 simply made life more difficult as they shouldered more debts to meet costs.³¹ Ivan Kurusin, for example, had to borrow £80 at 50% interest:

I had signed for £120 as the twelve months interest was included. I have to return the money within a period of two years with interest. If I don't pay within the two years, he will take all my holdings. When that happens, my wife and children will be thrown out, without house or home.³²

Rather than eliciting compassion for their plight, Italians and Croats found themselves increasingly under attack from all quarters with xenophobic sentiments being used to reinforce negative stereotypes of Southern Europeans and to fire increased opposition to their presence in the hewing industry.

As the ranks of the unemployed increased from 13.8% in 1929/30 to 24.1% in 1930/31,³³ concerns were raised in the State parliament that, whilst foreign labour supplied the sleeper industry, the government had to find sustenance for 'genuine British timber workers' (my emphasis).³⁴ The result was an amendment of the Forestry regulations so that only natural-born and naturalised British subjects could register for employment in the industry. Aliens were excluded from work in sleeper production for state or commonwealth railways unless British subjects were not available.³⁵

Public demands to restrict employment to British subjects facilitated the Forests Department's efforts to curtail hewing activity on private property. The Department achieved their goal in 1932 by increasing the fee
for inspecting sleepers from this source in the face of strong opposition from settlers.\textsuperscript{36} Arguing that this step was necessary to protect the interests of British workers and the sleeper-hewing industry, the Minister for Forests warned that experienced British cutters had been ousted from the industry by newly arrived foreigners who worked for low pay: ‘Many of the foreigners were indifferent cutters ... These men are ruining our own men and our industry’.\textsuperscript{37} The Minister’s view of the cause of the problem was contested by May Holman, Labor MLA for Forrest:

\begin{quote}
Sleeper cutters - particularly foreigners - in Western Australia are easily beguiled to sign away all their rights without knowing what they are doing ... and in many cases this must be done before they can get work at all ... documents are signed by men in entire ignorance and by which they cease to be workers and are deprived of the wage for their labour.\textsuperscript{38}
\end{quote}

Although the Forests Department acknowledged that exploitation of Italians and Croatians had taken place, it was not concerned with penalising those who exploited foreign labour, nor with these workers receiving equitable pay. An increased inspection fee had two likely outcomes: the first served to discourage private property owners from hewing sleepers for export as this was no longer profitable, and the second put more pressure on the prices that these owners were likely to pay to immigrant labour already precariously situated at the periphery of the labour market. It certainly would not have encouraged private property owners to employ Anglo-Australians demanding award wages in their stead. This move pushed Italians and Croatians further afield in search of work, with many travelling the south-west, the goldfields and the pastoral areas. The depression years and shrinking work opportunities resulted in many Italians and Croatians opting to return to their native lands. Many of those who stayed behind chose to become naturalised.

Naturalisation often meant the difference in the ability to survive. Naturalisation figures for 1930 show a 100\% increase as many Italians and Croatians took this option as soon as they had completed five years’ residence in Australia in order to overcome the disadvantage in work opportunities as the depression deepened. Naturalisation also meant access to sustenance work, which usually consisted of one or two days work per week. The option for some non-naturalised unemployed aliens was to apply for a meal ticket which entitled them to one meal a day but, according to some of the interviewees, many missed out.\textsuperscript{39}

With restrictive legislation in place, Italians and Croatians knew that they were only tolerated where they were not seen to pose a direct threat to employment of Anglo-Australians. The responses of those who decided to stay and make a home in Australia suggest that most were resigned to this situation and manoeuvred their way around it. A hierarchy of preferential employment listed returned soldiers and sailors first, followed by financial members of trade unions.\textsuperscript{40} Although in theory natural-born or naturalised
British subjects fell into the same category, naturalised Italians and Croatians had fully internalised their inferior status to natural-born citizens. In fact, several interviewees expressed the view that, although they were naturalised, it was understandable that 'the native population had priority'.

Unemployment in Australia fell from a record 30.3% in mid 1932 to 5.6% in 1936 and Western Australia mirrored this trend. As a result, the federal government felt that immigration restrictions on Southern Europeans could be relaxed. Work opportunities for aliens, however, did not improve.

The imminent outbreak of war in Europe increased the disquiet about the presence of Southern Europeans and heralded a flurry of activity on all fronts. In June 1939, an Act for the registration of aliens was passed, aimed at establishing better control on their movement and activities. In addition, photographs and certificates of health and character were required of every 'white alien' seeking entry to Australia and evidence of qualifications had to be produced by all except dependent relatives.

The deteriorating situation encouraged many to sponsor their families to come to Australia and, if possible, to obtain naturalisation. Giulio Carzoli and Marco Radomiljac were among those who became naturalised at this time, Carzoli doing so on the advice of his father-in-law, who told him that 'they were interning people who weren't naturalised'. Josie Carzoli discovered that although she was 'an Australian', born in Australia, marriage to an Italian had resulted in the loss of her British citizenship. She was not made aware of this until her husband showed her his naturalisation papers which stated that 'Elsie Josephine Carzoli also becomes a naturalised ... British subject'. Likewise, Elsie Radomiljac lost her British nationality when she married a Croatian in 1935 and it wasn't till after he got his papers back that they wrote and said that I wasn't naturalised. Well I had to get naturalised back. It cost me 10 shillings to get my British nationality back again.

This was not a surprising state of affairs, given that the Nationality Act of 1920 defined 'Disability' as 'the status of being a married woman, or a minor, lunatic or idiot'. According to the Act, 'the wife of a British subject shall be deemed to be a British subject, and the wife of an alien shall be deemed to be an alien'.

Settlement legislation and Forests Department manoeuvrings had led to the marginalisation and occupational segmentation of Italians and Croatians. In spite of work restrictions, their numbers within the timber industry had gradually increased. Their concentration in the hewing industry was a consequence of legislation, regulations and the availability of work for these workers - and had resulted in their greater visibility, paralleled with increased hostility to their presence. Relations with Anglo-Australians were often strained, more often than not with a fist fight as a postscript. As aliens, their rights to work had been severely curtailed.
who could sought refuge by taking up citizenship. As naturalised subjects, however, they were relegated to the bottom of the preferred list for employment in spite of the fact that, under the 1920 Nationality Act, they were entitled to full rights and equal status with Anglo-Australians. As Hegel once said, 'the eyes of others are the mirrors in which we learn our identities'. It was this disregard for the legislated rights of Italians and Croatians, so well embedded in the structural framework of regulations and practice, which cemented the internalisation of a dual standard involving their 'otherness', by both Anglo-Australians and these immigrants. In practice, they were second class citizens and this stratification of citizenship was the accepted norm. As World War II broke out, xenophobic sentiments far outweighed citizenship status. Naturalisation proved worthless, and even naturalised British subjects were interned.

This case study clearly demonstrates the importance of extending citizenship rights to future citizens as soon as possible after arrival, as it is during the early years of settlement that the seeds of distinctiveness are sown and the boundaries of exclusion are internalised. Yet in 1996, the newly elected federal Liberal government led by John Howard promised to remove unemployment payment to immigrants for two years after arrival. The Howard government even considered directing new arrivals into country areas under a bond system, calling to mind the utilisation of immigrants as a rural workforce during the war years and the postwar two-year Displaced Persons contract. These policies seem to ignore the fact that new arrivals are future members of our society and that policies of inclusion are more likely to lead to an equitable, just, cohesive and inclusive society.

In a pluralist society like Australia, the construction of citizenship has to take into consideration both the attainment of citizenship through naturalisation, and the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion of those permanent residents who do not take this step.

Notes

3 Numbers of immigrants from the western part of Yugoslavia, which included Slovenia, Croatia and the Dalmatian coastal region (referred to as Croatians in this paper) had been arriving in Western Australia since before the turn of the century. Italian historian Joseph Gentilli suggests that Dalmatians were among the first Southern Europeans to reach Western Australia. However, these had been part of the Austro-Hungarian empire until its collapse at the end of the First World War and statisticians in Australia did not recognise Dalmatians or Croatians as a distinct ethnic entity until into the second decade of this century. Of the approximately 800 names registered in Western Australia as 'Austrians' under the War Precaution (Alien Registration) Regulation 1916, 760 were Dalmatians, most of whom found work in the Goldfields and in the timber industry in the south-west of Western Australia.
4 Jumping ship on arrival was common practice before the introduction of this Act and the fathers of many of those interviewed had entered Australia in this manner.
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5 Nationality Act 1920, no. 48 of 1920.
7 Ibid.
8 Interview with Luigi Bertelli.
9 Interview with Pietro Baruffi.
10 Interview with Peter Ucich. Australian citizenship was introduced under the Australian Citizenship Act in 1948. Before then all those born in Australia and all aliens who became naturalised became British subjects.
11 Marshall’s three levels of citizenship rights can be broken down into (1) political rights, which comprise franchise and legal status; (2) social rights, which incorporate economic, welfare & security rights; and (3) civil rights, which include liberty, freedom of speech, thought and faith, right to justice and to own property. These rights have been important in advancing policies of social justice and equality and, in the Australian context, have led to a number of egalitarian policies such as the Equal Opportunity Bill and the Racial Discrimination Bill. Marshall’s work followed the development and growth of principles of social justice and focused on the recognition that ‘equal capacity for rights was not enough’ to reduce social inequality. For more details see T.H. Marshall, Class, Citizenship and Social Development, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1977.
12 In the interwar period, Italians and Croatians generally took up naturalisation as a survival strategy to overcome economic disability but many more returned to their country of origin, especially in the early 1930s.
14 Ibid., p.3.
15 Discriminatory practices were not unique to the timber industry. Mate Alac’s autobiography, Into the World, Fremantle, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1992, showed that similar practices were widespread in the goldfields. Nor were they restricted to the inter-war period. Jan Ryan’s work on Asian (and Afghan) workers in the Western Australian sandalwood industry at the turn of the century reveals similar discriminatory trends which were mirrored in Christina Gillgren’s work on the agricultural industry in Carnarvon in the 1950s and 1960s.
16 Forests Department Files, 'Forestry Regulations', 1921.
17 Forests Department Annual Reports 1919-1923.
19 Memo from Clerk-in-Charge of Registration to Conservator of Forests in Forest Department file, 'Noggerup Working Circle - General Correspondence', 24 September 1924.
20 Report of the Forests Department for the Year ended 30th June, 1927, p.11.
21 West Australian, 6 July 1927, p.10. In 1927, the basic wage for a labourer in the timber industry was £2.6s per week.
22 Interview with Mate Alac.
25 Western Mail, 22 March 1928, p.44.
26 M. Alac, Into the World, p.55.
27 Interviews with Stipe Viskovich and Basileo Dell'Agostino.
28 Interview with P. Baruffi. See also Western Australian Parliamentary Debates (WAPD), vol. 93, 1934, pp.784-5.
29 Premier’s Department file, 'Complaints re Influx of Southern Europeans', 1928. Letters to various newspapers show that most of the opposition to their presence in the industry came from returned servicemen. During the depression, ethnicity was also a factor and these immigrants were accused of lowering living and work standards and taking jobs from Australians. This subsequently led to legislation ensuring that the native-born had priority in work allocation.
30 Story related by Giuseppe Palandri, Stipe Viskovich, Mate Alac, Basileo Dell’Agostino, Luigi Bertelli and Cesare Coli. However, the ethnicity of the culprits often changed according to who was telling the story.
31 A landing money requirement was increased to 60 in 1924. See C. Price, Southern Europeans in Australia, Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1963, p.88.
33 G.D. Snooks, *Depression and Recovery in Western Australia 1928/29-1938/39*, University of Western Australia Press, 1974, p.8 (figures represent trade union unemployment).
34 *West Australian*, 30 September 1931, p.6. This article suggests that naturalised Italians and Croatians were considered 'genuine' British subjects.
37 WAPD, vol.87, 3 December 1931, p.5688.
39 Interviews with Albert Piacentini and Peter Ucich. See also WAPD, vol. 84, 3 September 1930, p.216.
40 WAPD, vol.88, 28 September 1932, p.889. This hierarchy of preferential employment formed part of sleeper contracts for Australian government railways.
41 Interview with Albert Piacentini.
42 Snooks, p.8.
43 The *Aliens Registration Act*, no. 12 of 1939. This Act was similar to the 1920 *Aliens Registration Act* which was repealed in 1926.
44 Interview with Josie Carzoli.
46 Interview with E. Radomuljac. Under the *United Kingdom Act* of 1870, a woman who was a British subject lost her citizenship status when she married an alien. From 1934-35, the Australian government legislated that a British woman marrying an alien could, through a declaration, retain her rights as a British subject but was not entitled to a British passport. Women had to wait until the *Australian Nationality Act, 1920* was amended in 1946 to retain their British citizenship status irrespective of their husband's nationality.