

From Whence Came Our People

A Reader's Views

Dear Sir,

I have been impressed with the steady improvement in *Dawn*, although the improvement is perhaps a bit slow in materialising, possibly due to the lack of controversy.

That is to say, that you are rarely challenged by your readers, and it is often the interest provoked by such challenges and the need to sustain a line of thought that stimulates interest and heightens convictions or enables one to replace error with truth ; that builds a place for a journal with its readers.

Your Xmas number for 1959 is quite the best you have done and includes in it an article on the origin and some basic ideas about the original inhabitants of Australia.

It will be widely read and I believe provide quite a lot of food for thought and is an excellent vehicle I believe, to stimulate interest amongst the people in their origin and in other ways.

I hope to make this more stimulating by introducing a highly controversial angle to it and challenge the widely accepted idea that the origin of the Australian Aboriginal was in South East Asia, suggesting that Australia is the cradle of all Caucasian stock, that instead of migrating to Australia, those people who are now regarded as Caucasian and inhabit most of Europe and North America as well as the South-west portion of Australia had their origin in Australia ; their ancestors being forced out of Australia during the recurring ice ages and travelling up the Malay Peninsula arrived in N.W. India from whence they subsequently grew and prospered, until today we find them dominating large regions of the earth.

I have to agree that as yet there is little direct scientific proof to support such a theory, but give it room to grow and it will be seen that there is much to recommend the idea, except perhaps prejudice ; of which in the past there has been far too much when discussing the origin and particularly the later attributes of Australian Aborigines.

Just briefly during the ice ages, the seas between Indonesia and Australia, except for a narrow deep cleft were on the Southern Ice cap. What could be more natural than when being pushed North by this ice cap, which in some places extended North of Derby in West Australia, the people previously living all over Australia would travel Northwards along the land bridge of Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula and spread out from there ?

In this way they would divide the two other clearly defined races, the Mongols and Negroid peoples and by some interbreeding, become modified into the varying peoples we know today who have developed different characteristics by living for long periods under varying conditions and have been forced to cope with differences in climatic conditions and ways in getting their living.

Were it that Australia were originally populated from the North, why were there not many such pulses of population and why is it that more recently the trend has been for such movement to be directed towards New Guinea and the Pacific ?

If that was the way they travel in more recent historical times, it would have been so in earlier times, but during succeeding ice ages there was no more logical route for people to use than up to these islands and on past Malaya and to Europe.

When the seas are as now, Australia is a very difficult place to find, as was disclosed by early voyagers, who were looking for long periods for this great Southland and when the land was covered in ice, there was absolutely no encouragement for them to come this way.

Those remaining as the ice melted however, returned to their old haunts and in isolation, continued with their rituals and the development of their law.

It will be seen that if this principle is accepted, many things that are now obscure, become a bit more feasible and it could well be on these lines, future thoughts could be based until they can be definitely disproved.

Were this postulate accepted, Australian Aborigines would become a very keen study for they would then be seen as at once the most ancient and uncontaminated of people, from whose customs much that is good could be learned instead of being treated with contempt and as unworthy people, fit only to be second class citizens in their own land which today we look on as White Australia.

Yours sincerely,

D. W. McLeod.

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George Smith, of Balranald