



JUST AN AUSSIE BLOKE - JAAB

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Finally after many years I have come to the conclusion that if I apply Maslow's theory of hierarchy needs, man must live according to his environment once those basic needs have been satisfied. However to progress even further and to develop himself man must review or to societal needs if he has decided to live within a tribal scenario which we call a civilised world.

That is to say that should he or others decide for him to live in a tribe other than that of his own due to a variety of reasons it is he who must review his personal circumstances and adjust to his environment. It is not up to the established tribal society to change their way of life, although they will tolerate a new comer into the fold. On the other hand, what he does in his own home away from society is his own business as long as his practices and way of life does adversely affect the rest of the society.

If readers are wondering why the image of myself with the "Jacaru hat", and the comments "Just an Aussie Bloke" is inserted, they surely must see the symbolism that I am projecting. JAAB is also the title of the book that I am researching and compiling. Australia has been accused of being racist, bigots, fascists, nationalists and many other negative tags. But living for a short period overseas, I find that I miss those values, traditions and culture of my blend of Australian and Hellenic cultures. Yet although I am accepted in my place of birth, I am called or referred to as the "Astralo" (Australian) which I don't mind while at other times they call me a cowboy to which I take offence to.

Recently I reacted very much to the negative when a cousin called me a cowboy and I almost lost my cool because being called a cowboy in my time was synonymous with recklessness and lacking in emotional maturity. I checked myself momentarily and listened to my cousin explain himself. After his explanation, I gave him my point of view and somewhere in between we came to a common understanding. He would not call me a cowboy because I found it offensive and I had to come to the realisation that despite being born here, I did not truly understand the language, the customs, the jokes, the double speak, the insinuations and the difference between all of them when people make jokes. This is the lesson that I learnt and it was a harsh one to come to terms with because even though I was born here I expected something different. Therefore on reflection, my expectations were not met and therefore we had a gap in cultural differences. Luckily for me, my companions forgave my aggression mainly because they knew that I had no hidden agenda nor any malice towards them.

Having written the above, I turn the page to those who come to our shores in Australia expecting to live in a society much different to that of their own. Many are fleeing persecution from religious fanatics, war, pestilence, famine, political and many other negatives forces. These "new comers", I am sure have expectations of their own, some of which may clash with the established society that they move into. I would hazard a guess and state that 95% of those new comers of whom I shall refer to New Australians and drop the words "new comers" Australians blend in very well after a period of adjustment. The remainder for whatever reasons find it difficult to adjust and as such are often seen as not fitting in or even wanting to be part of their new environment and in the worst cases, attempt to change society according to their own beliefs.

I am not going identify the 5% that don't fit in because most if not all of my research is based on anecdotal evidence and it would be unfair of me to point the finger and say that that "mob of New Australians" should go back where they came from because they are not fitting in. However, what I can say is that even we as Australians must bear the responsibility for the 5% because we must ask ourselves whether we have accepted the New Australians. I know that it must sound biblical to say "love thy neighbour" or that "it's a virtue to accept an individual for whom they are not what we want them to be", but where do we comprise or must we comprise and who is it up to change or make those changes.

I am of the belief that we as Australians must accept the fact that we too must share the burden of responsibility, for it is we who elect our “political master so to speak” to make those decisions on or behalf. Politicians make decisions based on the information provided to them from a variety of sources and then use that information rightly or wrongly according to the political party policy and for the sake of political expediency.

Some 48 years ago, as a young nineteen year, I made it my business to become part of the Australian Defence Force. Two years prior the family became naturalised as I convinced my parents that if were to make Australia home then we needed to become Australian citizens. I did not want the Adamis family to repeat the errors of my grandfather who went to the USA in 1911 and failed to take out American citizenship which was to later cause him grief and worry when the Great Depression hit and he was not allowed to return on his third trip after visiting the old country. In 1969 the Vietnam Was still raging on and in 1970 I witnessed mass demonstrations outside the US Consulate in St Kilda Road as I was travelling on the tram going to work as a young apprentice electrician. I could not understand why all the fuss and why the ugly scenes by many of the demonstrators.

In 1969 I had already made my mind up and had enlisted in the Citizens Military Forces (CMF) to gain some experience as I had made my mind up that as soon as my apprenticeship was over, I would enlist. True to form, on the 25 August 1971, after discharging from the CMF, I went and saw Mum in hospital who was recovering from an operation and gave her the news. Well I don't think that my news helped with her recovery but many years alter she saw the wisdom of my decision. Whilst at Kapooka the local Police came around the home to arrest me for evading National Service. I did not know at the time that my number had come up and only later did I find out that apprentices were deferred until their time was completed. I guess the local copper thought he was on a good wicket and was ready to arrest me, only to go away disappointed when my folks told him that I had enlisted as a Regular in the Australian Army.

I may appear long winded and write much about the past, but there is a lesson in all of this. Why would a young lad, born in another country decide to enlist into the Australian Army? My enlistment papers may give a clue where I stated to “Serve the country, adventure and see the world”. I had hoped that by enlisting I would be accepted in my own right as an Aussie despite being born in Greece. Mind you, life as a teenager was not good and in previous articles I have alluded to the difficulties of growing in a country one was not born in. All in all including the Citizens Military Forces, Regular Army, Army reserves, Stand By Reserves amongst others, I was able to clock up in excess of thirty years' service.

Today, I call myself an Aussie with a Greek background and don't give a “shit” what others think. I feel that I have done my bit, served the nation, raised four sons, abided by the country we all call home (Australia); expectations, traditions, institutions, culture without losing my identity, where I was born, who my ancestors were and who I was as an individual. I realise that it has not been easy, but I don't go on about it and bitch about the challenges I have had to face. No I would rather be remembered for being “Just an ordinary Aussie Bloke” who accepted the challenges of life, the environment and got on with life. I have written this before and will continue to do so if need be, but my greatest achievement has been in raising four wonderful sons. I want to leave them a legacy that they will emulate and surpass, achieving greatness in whatever life endeavours they so choose.

In conclusion, I have written this article mainly for those who fall into the 5% of New Australians. I am writing to them so that they can understand that the “AUSTRALIAN MULTICULTURALISM POLICY” is not to be abused to meet their own secret agendas. The “AUSTRALIAN MULTICULTURALISM POLICY” is merely a vehicle to assist in the transition from being a New Australian to becoming a citizen of Australia that is all. But there are those jerks, fools and political donkeys and has-beens that hijack, twist a great Australian political policy to meet their own secret agendas and foist their brand of malicious and innocuous way of life on a very tolerant Australian society.

I don't want hear or read bullshit like, "you don't what it's like being a newcomer, you have never been called a wog, you are not dark skinned, you have never had it hard, you were not bullied, abused, belted, beaten, death threats" or words to that effect. Its water of a ducks back to me as I have seen it all. My advice is to work hard, learn the language, get to understand the people, be tolerant and attempt to mix in with your new environment. If my old man and mother could do it so can the 5% of the New Australians.

If readers wish to call me a racist, bigot, two faced, chauvinist, misogynist, war monger, bullshit artist and any other compliment, go ahead as I welcome "constructive criticism". All that I can say is that I have done my bit, now let us see you do yours. Don't bitch about the challenges you face, just get on with living and making the best of your environment. Life will always be full of surprises, enjoy them all and smile at adversity and the world will smile with you. As always I welcome positive and constructive criticism. Don't be shy as I can only retaliate in a manner worthy of an Aussie bloke. If I have upset anyone, please accept my apologies, but I write from the heart and what I believe in. As always, apologies for the savagery of the English language and errors of grammar, blame it on my English teacher.

I love my "Jacaru hat", wrinkles and all.



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