Howard plays the racist card

Moving over, Bruce Ruxton tips Howard to want to play in the cess-pit of racial politics.

John Howard's announcement that his immigration policy won't be "nearly non-discriminatory" has marked an ugly turn rightward in Australian public debate.

With Labor scaling his platform, Howard needs an issue to campaign on. Liberal polls say there is still a core of White Australia racism to be mined, and Howard is digging for it.

He is using the time-worn excuse that a "South-East Asian" invasion is under threat. Geoffrey Blainey first ran this line four and a half years ago. Yet despite his attempt at self-hypnotism (usually the salai-iodoid solids, we have seen no real race riots or serious anti-Asian mobili- sation. The only threat to social cohesion has been from Blainey's own men, as moronic as Ron Gair's and Nancy Wake. Luckily they have kick-started the race issue back into life.

That fact does not worry John Howard, he says that multiculturalism has been "mis-guided" and polls showing a slogan of "One Australia" Anti-Asian letter writers to the press, have taken this up with glee. With Howard in dead Asia it has rightly been dubbed "the White Australia" policy.

The slogan is of course chauv- nism of the "red tape" application, that multiculturalism and Asians have done nothing, in contrast, Australia is a far more integrated country than under the status, race and sexual norms that are being emulated under the 1960s.

Australia is divided, but by class, not race. The country belongs to a tiny minority, the Asian Bund Método of, and the rest, and Labor and Liberal get all at one another's throats over the gap between them with the role of "One Australia". Howard is doing all he can do to get us to update our flag, instead of confronting with the oppressed of Asia and other countries.

Howard's attempt to play the racist card highlights several points.

One is the spurious hypocrisy of the "white Australia" campaign, they claimed to be saving Indo-China from "Communism" by saving it for even sillier US puppets. Now that some Indo-

Chinese want to get away from that "Communism" and the legacy of poverty that the West has left them, the Liberals don't want to know them.

Another is the degree to which Labor has moved political debate

The Fitzgerald Inquiry suggests that withholding social security benefits from the one million non-citizens eligible to take out citizenship is now a matter of policy. John Howard has met with the idea, while White - perhaps sensitive to the fact that 60 percent of such people are people of Asian or Irish - is launching a citizenship drive instead.

But why should non-citizens have welfare, if we're so protected at all? They work, they pay taxes, they give it back in jobs, players in the real of us. Citizenship is far more than the right to vote for two near-identical parties, and to hold an Aussie Shepard. You earn it by no other skill than being born here, or living here for a few years. After all, it really denotes "loyalty to Australia" - that is the patch of citizenship owned similarly by other people. So Karl Marx so admirably put it.

"The working class has no coun- try". Citizenship is a worthless in- stitution, and we should break no discipline against those who can't be bothered with it.

A further side-step is the question of Japanese in- vestment.

This is mainly toying the middle class, according to some survey evidence. The Bulletin ran a nasty front page some time back showing a picture of chopsticks killing cut out a picture of suburbia, and 1500 chopsticks made on the Gold Coast to gesture about "diasporean" sym- phathy.

Even if such claims had substance, one is inclined to ask, "So what?" The right-wingers who are whinging are the same ones who tell us how wonderful competition is. They can hardly complain if Japan wins that competition or are they only for competition that they win?"