

Australia Dossier by Lydia Cherry

There's an uprising in the Bush

The elites are running scared, as political opposition mounts and farmers dump dead sheep at the U.S. consulate.

The rural-based activist Citizens Electoral Councils (CECs) released, nine months ago, a document titled "Sovereign Australia: An Economic Development Program to Save Our Nation," developed in conjunction with *EIR*. Since then, "The Program," as it is known, has gone through three printings and has traveled like wildfire across the country, during the same period that the rural economy has been collapsing at a faster rate than that of the other Anglo-American basket cases, the United States and Britain.

This explosive convergence was no doubt responsible for what seemed to many to be an "overreaction" by the country's second leading newspaper, *The Age*, on March 23. The Melbourne-based newspaper issued a full-page attack against "The Program," the LaRouche movement, the CECs, and several individuals. Titled "Seeds of Unrest," the article raves: "Far right groups in the Bush are following a new Messiah who believes in God, the family and that Henry Kissinger is a KGB spy."

Sources describe the slander as having "all the markings of a Mossad-Australian Security Intelligence Organization snow job." Indeed, the main source for the slander against LaRouche is Mira Lansky Boland, who heads the Washington office of the Anti-Defamation League and worked for the CIA before being given the ADL job. A second source is Dennis King, author of a book against LaRouche whose production was funded by a CIA conduit, the Smith Richardson Foundation.

But the slander against LaRouche pales by comparison to the author's outburst against the fact that the CEC program is calling for citizens' initiated referenda on crucial policy issues. The possibility that Australians will take responsibility to determine government policy clearly has the power structure up in arms.

Writes *The Age*: "At the heart of the Citizens' Electoral Councils' political program in Australia is citizens' initiated referendums. . . . It would be possible, through referendums, to sack politicians and even governments. . . . CIRs have attracted a big following in recession-wracked rural Australia, where people are increasingly disillusioned with mainstream politics."

This "disillusionment" was manifest, for example, on March 18; just as commuters began to head into the largest city in Western Australia, Perth, farmers began dumping dead sheep at targeted locations, including the U.S. consulate, the Australian taxation office, and the state parliament. Three days before, farmers abandoned 14 trucks at strategic points on approaches into Perth, to highlight the farm crisis, causing massive transport dislocation.

Koehler, a CEC leader from the state of Queensland and one of the authors of "The Program," filled out the picture further in an interview recently. He noted that "The Program" had been given out to all members of Parliament, whose response was generally negative. He described a recent meeting he had with one parliamentarian, however, that was a little differ-

ent: "I think he ended up hearing me. . . . He had read 'The Program' already, but had bought some of the line that we are just right-wing crazies. I told him straight—that the country was headed for *civil war*. I wasn't kidding him."

Koehler characterized the mood in the country by describing a meeting he recently attended. Asked to give party affiliation, the crowd of about 300 broke down thus: Twenty considered themselves part of Prime Minister Hawke's ruling Labour Party; 20 reported affinity to the opposition coalition National-Liberal Parties; 260 said they were independents.

The Australian press acknowledges that in "the Bush," most people don't think their fate is going to get better. The same newspaper that is so worried about LaRouche and the CECs reported April 2 that sheep farmers are facing the most serious slump since World War II. *The Age* quotes predictions by the federal Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics that rural cash incomes, likely to be down by 59% this financial year, will plummet by a further 30% in 1991-92.

Another daily, *The Australian*, reported on a survey conducted in the state of Victoria (in which Melbourne is the largest city). The survey, in which 100 small businesses across Victorian country towns and regional centers were polled, concluded that most small businesses are struggling to survive, and that few believed that it was possible. Only 4 of the 100 reported a growth in sales. A federal National Party parliamentarian, Peter McGauran, told *The Australian* that although the survey was conducted in Victoria, the situation was also extremely bad in rural Western Australia, Tasmania, South Australia, Western New South Wales, and Western Queensland.