

Australia Dossier by Don Veitch

Parliamentarians fight to save Bosnia

A new parliamentary caucus is bucking the pro-genocide line of the government and both major parties.

The "Save Sarajevo Parliamentary Group" was formed in the Australian Federal Parliament on Aug. 13 to stop the genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Co-convenors of the cross-party caucus are Members of Parliament Ken Aldred, Laurie Ferguson, Paul Filing, and Ted Grace, and Sens. Robert Bell and Brian Harradine.

In a press release, the group said: "The Save Sarajevo Parliamentary Group was today formed to urge immediate action to save the besieged city of Sarajevo from falling to the Serb forces now surrounding it. The group, comprising members and senators from the Liberal Party, Labor Party, Democrats, and independents, has been established to focus national attention on the plight of the residents of Sarajevo."

The group scored the inaction of the United Nations, as well as, implicitly, that of the Australian government, noting that "it decried the lack of will by the United Nations to properly protect the lives of citizens of one of its own member-nations which now faces partition and dismemberment."

A floor debate is planned for Aug. 19 in both houses of the Federal Parliament, on a motion which includes the following points: that the House and Senate 1) deplore the continuing loss of life caused by Serbian aggression against the sovereign Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina; 2) express their dismay at United Nations inaction in protecting the people of Sarajevo; 3) call upon the Australian government to demand decisive action by the U.N.

to end the continuing bloodshed in Sarajevo and elsewhere in Bosnia-Herzegovina; and 4) ask that the federal government also request the U.N., United States, and Britain to take whatever military action is necessary to prevent further slaughter in the Sarajevo area.

Paul Filing, a spokesman for the group who visited Sarajevo in 1992, and who along with MP Ken Aldred was one of the leaders of a similar parliamentary caucus last year, compared the events in Bosnia to pre-war Europe in the late 1930s. "Then the civilized world sat by and watched as murder, torture, and destruction went on under their noses. The United Nations, having failed miserably to prevent the carnage in Bosnia, is now being seen in the same light as the League of Nations."

Said Filing, "In the end there has to be resolute action, not just talk, to stop those who perpetrate barbarous behavior upon innocent civilians. The killing must stop, the aggression must stop, and if necessary, force must be used immediately to bring it to an end."

The group's formation was immediately welcomed by Australia's largest aid agency, CARE Australia. In a letter to the co-convenors, a CARE spokesman noted that "CARE Australia has recently criticized the Australian government for its inaction on funding assistance programs in the former Yugoslavia," and that "despite the pitiful contribution from the Australian government, more than 30 staff are risking their lives daily to help oth-

ers less fortunate than themselves."

In fact, the Australian government's contribution is less than pitiful, as is that of the United Nations. Said one parliamentary source, "The U.N. is actually stopping CARE from delivering aid into Bosnia. And to be blunt, [Australian Prime Minister] Hewson, [Liberal Party parliamentary leader] Peacock, and [Australian Foreign Minister] Evans would have been quite happy if the Serbian counter-attack had succeeded and the Croats and Slovenes just slaughtered. The Foreign Affairs Department liked the old Yugoslavia and thought that its collapse was just terrible."

Both of Australia's major parties, Labor and Liberal, share the same pro-Serbia foreign policy adviser, who claims that while "we in the West have late-20th-century morality," the Balkans has been wracked by wars for 800 years, that the Bosnians are merely the "least ugliest" this time around, and Bosnia itself is merely a "line in the sand." Meanwhile, Lord David "Dr. Death" Owen's senior military adviser on Bosnia is Australian Brig. Gen. John Wilson.

Outside the parliament, the Australian co-thinkers of Lyndon LaRouche, the Citizens Electoral Councils, launched an intensive mobilization to save Bosnia beginning on Aug. 7. The CEC sent faxes to each of Australia's 240 federal parliamentarians, followed by phone calls urging them to act, while thousands of Australians were organized to contact their parliamentarians as well as the U.S. and British embassies, urging action to end the genocide. A special "Bosnia hot line" phone number was set up with updates every 48 hours. In addition, the CEC published 10,000 copies of its monthly newspaper, the *New Citizen*, with the headline, "Stop British-Backed Genocide in Bosnia, Dump Owen."