

Australia Dossier by Allen Douglas

Royal Commission pushes drugs

A New South Wales commission has proposed legalized heroin "shooting galleries" to solve "police corruption."

Surveying the sad results of the frequent misleadership of the ancient Israelite nation, King Solomon observed, as recorded in the book of *Proverbs*, "Where there is no vision, the people perish."

By that standard, the kindest thing one could say about the state of New South Wales' Justice James Wood, who in mid-May released the long-awaited final report of his two-year-long, \$100 million Royal Commission investigation into police corruption, is that he is as blind as a bat. Because, Wood argued that, since drug money is the chief source of corruption among police, the way to avoid this problem, is to set up legalized heroin shooting galleries, à la the "Swiss model." Wood somehow neglected to notice that, in every country where drugs have been legalized, such as in Switzerland, Britain, or Holland, drug usage, and, concomitantly, the flow of drug money, has soared. But, perhaps Justice Wood had other fish to fry.

In 1996, Lyndon LaRouche's collaborators in the Citizens Electoral Council defeated a lavishly financed attempt by Victoria's Premier Jeff Kennett to decriminalize marijuana. The state of Victoria was to be the first of the falling dominoes, leading to drastic changes in Australia's federal drug laws. One might say (pardon the pun), that the Wood Commission call for legalized heroin has given a shot in the arm to a renewed drive to legalize drugs.

In its wake, prosecutors in five of Australia's eight states and territories have called for a legalized heroin trial-run to be set up in Canberra, the na-

tion's capital. More generally, Australia's ruling establishment is on a headlong drive to legalize dope. The chief vehicle for this drive is the Australian Drug Foundation, which is funded by Australia's major banks, including its Reserve Bank, and by many of the country's elite private family foundations, such as the Queen's Trust (whose patron is Prince Charles).

Another voice braying for legalization is that of billionaire Kerry Packer, whose *Bulletin* magazine recently ran a cover story entitled, "Drugs, Why Fight a War We Can't Win?" In the early 1980s, the Costigan Royal Commission had investigated Packer as an alleged drug kingpin, until that commission was suddenly shut down by the new Labor government of Bob Hawke.

Wood and other establishment figures have claimed that "the war on drugs is a failure and we have to look at other ways of dealing with the problem." This is a shameless lie—there has been no serious war on drugs in Australia since the Costigan Commission was shut down. Victoria's chief commissioner of police, Neil Comrie, for instance, in remarks to *The Age* of May 17, excoriated the lack of federal funding for drug interdiction efforts, which, he said, was causing the "explosion" of Melbourne's heroin trade in recent months, where children as young as nine have become heroin addicts.

A serious war on drugs would mean that one would "follow the money trail," as called for by Victorian state Member of Parliament Peter McLellan, in early June: "We need to

get the big boys. . . . To bring in 20 kilograms of heroin you need big money. Surely these laundering organizations can be tackled. There has to be a way they're moving black money and cleaning it through the system. How is it being legitimized through the normal banking system?"

Besides pushing drugs, Wood's "anti-corruption" efforts against the 13,000-man N.S.W. police force, the nation's largest, bear a curious resemblance to the drive by the FBI, the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, and private family foundations to break local police forces in the United States in the 1970s, to replace them with a national gestapo. Wood's investigation was responsible for the recent appointment of British cop Peter Ryan as N.S.W. Commissioner of Police. Ryan is not exactly your small-town cop: He was the national director of the Police Training College, and previously the chief constable of the Norfolk Constabulary, which, as the June 2, 1996 *Sun-Herald* noted, is "an area that includes Sandringham, the Queen's country retreat, and would have meant that Mr. Ryan would have been in contact with senior intelligence officers, the Royal Protection Squad, and the Home Office in London." As a result of Wood's report, Ryan has handed out dismissal notices to over 200 N.S.W. police, and is advertising in the U.K. for British police to fill many of the top leadership jobs; N.S.W. Opposition Leader Peter Collins charged in parliament that his state would once again become a "colonial outpost."

As the bestseller *Dope, Inc.* established, Britain has been the center of the world's drug trade since at least the time the Brits ran the Opium Wars against China in the 19th century. Coincidentally, perhaps, Commissioner Ryan also just happens to be an ardent advocate of the legalization of heroin.