

## Australia Dossier by Robert Barwick and Allen Douglas

### Hanson stuns political establishment

*The electoral success of Pauline Hanson's One Nation party is part of the economic nationalism sweeping Asia.*

**I**ndependent federal Member of Parliament Pauline Hanson's One Nation party made political history in Australia on June 13, when it won 25% of the vote in the Queensland state election. One Nation outpolled both the National and Liberal parties, which had formed the coalition government of Premier Rob Borbidge. In the best result since World War II by a new political party contesting its first election, One Nation won 10 of the 89 seats in the Queensland state parliament.

On election night, Hanson adviser David Oldfield exclaimed that One Nation has now emerged as "a true nationalist force." Unusual for a state election, One Nation campaigned mostly on national issues, including tariff protection for agriculture and industry, and for a national bank—which struck a chord in the rural and working class populations whose livelihoods have been decimated by the free trade policies of both major parties. Hanson also ruthlessly attacked Aboriginal "land rights," an "indigenist" scam invented by Prince Philip's World Wide Fund for Nature (and largely financed by mining giant Rio Tinto), to splinter the Australian nation-state.

Bob Dollin, one defeated state Labor MP, pointed to the background to the vote: "Unemployment is killing us," he told the June 14 *Sun Herald*. "It's 37% among young people here and 18% all up. You can't keep living with that." And, Premier Borbidge stated that Hanson's remarkable support indicated how "cheesed off the electorate is with the economic rationalists [the proponents of Mont Pelerin Society policies of deregulation, pri-

vativization, and free trade] in Sydney and Melbourne."

Hanson's victory has caused seismic rumblings in the free trade-pushing National Party. Queensland National MPs Bob Katter and De-Anne Kelly have begun a revolt against their party's policies, with Katter declaring after the election: "This result spells the end of competition reform [breaking up of state industries] . . . the end of economic rationalism." Hanson has said she will personally campaign to defeat Deputy Prime Minister and National Party leader Tim Fischer, in the next federal election.

Liberal Prime Minister John Howard is also worried. Howard saw the Queensland vote as a litmus test of his own impending electoral chances; notwithstanding that his National Party coalition partner got crushed, he has no choice but to go for an early federal election, before the global financial collapse further devastates Australia. The Australian dollar has fallen more than 20% in just two months, and the latest quarterly Gross Domestic Product figures, which put annual growth at more than 5%, were more bad news than good: The "growth" was based on stockpiling goods made unsalable by the collapse in Asia, which has accounted for 63% of Australian exports.

Another indication of the shock wave unleashed by One Nation's victory was the reaction of the banks. On June 14, Commonwealth Bank managing director David Murray warned that "it would be a mistake to establish a special bank based on a One-Nation policy to provide loans to farmers at 2 or 3%." Ironically, Commonwealth itself began as a national bank,

founded in 1911 by American immigrant and Labor Party leader King O'Malley.

And, the *Age* of June 13 reported that Citibank is circulating a document calling Hanson's economic platform "worrying." Citibank's chief economist in Australia, Stephen Koukoulas, said that "the rise in support for One Nation meant serious consideration must be given by financial markets to the influence the party could have after the next federal election," and that he was getting calls from investors worldwide asking about One Nation. Koukoulas threatened, "Offshore investors are saying, 'Do we want to be putting our money into an economy influenced like that?' The nervousness of the past week shows how fickle the market can be. We have no firm view on either of the major parties, but if One Nation were to have an influence . . . it will warrant bearishness for the Australian dollar, bonds, and stocks."

The success of One Nation's agenda is part of the resurgence of economic nationalism across Asia in the face of globalization, as seen in the recent speeches of Malaysian Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad, and the anti-International Monetary Fund "Free Thai" movement in Thailand. Despite Hanson's calls to limit Asian immigration to Australia, she ironically has a convergence of interests with her Asian neighbors, which she has at other times acknowledged, as in her July 1997 emergency call for Australia to donate grain to starving North Korea, and to "take the lead among the nations of the world community to ensure the entire food deficit is filled as soon as possible." Given the deepening global depression, the only way Hanson and Australia can survive, is to ally with Australia's Asian neighbors for the New Bretton Woods monetary system proposed by Lyndon LaRouche.