

Australia Dossier by Allen Douglas

Fascist Laws Up for Vote

And LaRouche's associates have sponsored an advertisement excoriating the proposed new "anti-terrorist" legislation.

On June 17, the Australian Parliament returns for two weeks, before a two-month break. The major item on its agenda is a package of proposed new "anti-terrorist" laws, which passed the House of Representatives on March 13, and now comes before the Senate. There are intense negotiations under way between the Liberal/National Party government of Prime Minister John Howard and the Australian Labor Party (ALP) opposition over the bills. But as originally drafted and passed by the House, the bills allow the Attorney General: to ban any organization he wishes, and jail its members or supporters for 25 years; to create an extremely broad new "terrorism" offense which would snare many union actions, civil disobedience, and even normal political activity in its net; and to turn the Australian Security Intelligence Organization (ASIO) into a Gestapo, with the power to arrest and detain people indefinitely, without a lawyer, or the right to remain silent, and facing a five-year jail sentence for non-cooperation. They also contain numerous other draconian provisions (see *EIR*, May 3, 2002).

The government's obscene haste to turn these bills into law, with virtually no public scrutiny, was dealt a sharp clip on the chin, if not yet a knockout blow, by an ad in the country's major national newspaper, *The Australian*, on June 12, sponsored by LaRouche's associates in the Citizens Electoral Council (CEC). Under the boldface title, "End Them, Don't Amend Them!," the ad documented the government's treachery in attempting to ram the bills through without due process, with the com-

placency of the ostensible opposition, the ALP. This was followed by citation of the key paragraph of Hitler's Feb. 28, 1933 emergency decree which made him dictator of Germany, using the excuse of the Nazi-rigged Reichstag fire. Then came the ad's main feature, a petition signed by 200 prominent Australians under the title "An Emergency Call to All Australians," which said, "A point-by-point comparison of the Howard government's proposed new 'anti-terror' legislation, with the Feb. 28, 1933 *Notverordnung* (Emergency Decree) by which Hitler consolidated his dictatorship, show the two to be virtually identical. Therefore, the ripping-up of civil liberties proposed by the Howard government is, in the most literal sense of the term, *fascist*, and must be thrown out. No democratic society should even *consider* the draconian, fascist measures which the Howard government is proposing."

The signers included former Deputy Prime Minister Dr. Jim Cairns, numerous national and state trade union leaders, many of the leaders of Australia's large Islamic community, civil liberties activists, Aborigines, dozens of local government councillors, artists and filmmakers, academics, and others.

The ad, accompanied by well-attended CEC press conferences in all of Australia's major cities the same day, unleashed an uproar. Australia's Attorney General Daryl Williams, the government official with the responsibility for ramming the bills through, whined that the ad was "incorrect, inflammatory, and irresponsible. . . . It's extremely disappointing that the Citi-

zens Electoral Council chose to peddle untruths and fear in the community rather than work constructively with the government," Williams complained.

The ad received wide coverage in most of the nation's major print media, and key regional press, and on Australian Broadcasting Corporation radio, the nation's main radio station; calls, faxes, and e-mails poured into the CEC's Melbourne headquarters in support. The ad was the culmination of an intense, two-month CEC-led fight to stop the bills, including the circulation of over one-half million CEC leaflets to Australia's 19 million population. They pointed to the global financial crash—not "terrorism"—as the real driver for police states and a global "Clash of Civilizations," precisely as LaRouche forecast in his Jan. 16, 2001 testimony to the U.S. Senate, almost nine months before Sept. 11.

An earlier phase of the CEC mobilization helped break up a cozy deal between the government and the ALP to pass these bills in mid-May. After that, two of the ALP's own state conferences, in New South Wales and Victoria—Australia's two most populous states—voted overwhelmingly to dump the laws entirely.

While the ALP has been forced, by the CEC's mobilization, to make a show of resisting the most overtly Nazi aspects of the legislation, it has also made clear that it is definitely in favor of this legislation in principle. But many of the nation's finest lawyers have said that the existing criminal code is fully sufficient to capture anything classified as "terrorism." The Liberal/National party governing coalition, and their nominal ALP opponents, are both widely despised for their fanatical support of globalization, and both know that they will need such laws in order to survive under conditions of deepening depression.