

Battle rages in Australia over phony 'republic' referendum

by Allen Douglas

On Nov. 6, Australians will go to the polls for a referendum on whether to change their federal constitution, so as to replace the British monarch with an Australian head of state. If the "yes" vote receives a majority nationwide, as well as in at least four of the nation's six states, the new form of government—universally referred to in Australia as a "republic"—will be inaugurated on Jan. 1, 2001, precisely 100 years to the day after the six British colonies on the Australian continent united to form a federal commonwealth.

However, the huge debate which has now ignited in the country on the issue of the "republic," is not, as one might expect, between republicans and monarchists, but among the republicans themselves. Although polls have repeatedly shown that some two-thirds of Australians favor a republic with a directly elected President, the "republican" model which emerged from the constitutional convention held on Feb. 2-13, 1998 in Canberra, proposed that the President—who would replace the Queen (and her Australian representative, the governor-general) as head of state—be *appointed by the Prime Minister*, subject to ratification by two-thirds of parliament; it is this proposal on which Australians will vote in November.

This attempt to cheat the Australian population of the ability to directly elect their head of state, to thus maintain a British-style parliamentary system (while calling it a "republic"), has caused a bitter split within the pro-republican camp, with those favoring direct election of a President now campaigning for a "no" vote in the referendum. As former independent member of parliament from Melbourne, Phil Cleary, now a leader of the "Real Republic" movement, put it in early January, "What they are offering is not a republic, it's an oligarchy. I want a real republic, they want a phony republic. Well, bugger 'em!"

Or, as Craig Isherwood, the national secretary of Lyndon LaRouche's co-thinkers in Australia, the Citizens Electoral Council (CEC), more precisely analyzed the present pell-mell push for a "republic," "If you look at the history of this referendum, it's 'all the Queen's horses, and all the Queen's men.' And, aside from this phony 'republic,' no one but ourselves has raised the other crucial issue—that, even under this new 'republic,' Australia will remain as a key member of the new form of the British Empire, the Commonwealth. Given the global financial crash now unfolding, Australia, now more

than at any time in its history, desperately requires a truly sovereign republic."

The history of a con job

The history of the present referendum began, at least in the public eye, with a speech by former Labor Prime Minister Paul Keating on June 7, 1995, in which he called for the establishment of a "republic" by Jan. 1, 2001, with the precise features (including the method of appointment of the President) which were later adopted by the Constitutional Convention in early 1998. However, the *éminence grise* behind what is still referred to as the "Keating model," as well as behind all subsequent developments in the "republic" campaign, was the Constitutional Centenary Foundation (CCF) established in 1991, a collection of "all the Queen's horses, and all the Queen's men." The CCF and its personnel dominated the Constitutional Convention, which the CCF, no doubt with a typically sadistic British chuckle, refers to in its printed literature as, the "Con Con."

That Keating would be chosen to initiate the drive for a "republic," is indicative of this "Con" job: Beginning 1983, first as federal treasurer and then as Prime Minister, Keating opened the country to takeover by foreign financial interests, by lifting Australia's exchange controls, floating the dollar, and dropping the country's tariffs. These, and additional globalization measures produced the worst foreign debt blowout in the nation's history, from AUS \$38 billion to AUS \$206 billion, according to even the Keating government's own, highly understated figures.

The CCF, the guiding hand behind Keating's push for a "republic," was established by the cream of Australia's Anglophile establishment. Its founding chairman, Sir Ninian Stephens, was Her Majesty's former Governor-General of Australia and a member of Her Majesty's Privy Council, while its four major private financial sponsors are Rio Tinto, the world's largest mining company, in which the Queen holds a dominant share; the nation's single-largest financial institution, the AMP Society insurance giant; the Commonwealth Bank of Australia, the now-privatized former national bank; and the Big Six accounting firm, Arthur Andersen and Co. Leading board members include John Ralph, the former longtime head of Rio Tinto in Australia, which dominates much of the country's politics, and Gary Sturgess, one of 12

members of the Mont Pelerin Society, the chief economic warfare unit of the British Crown. The CCF's vice chairman since 1991, who actually runs the organization day to day, is Cheryl Saunders, a professor of law at Melbourne University. Her own activities demonstrate why the CCF is organizing the "republic" drive: not to establish sovereignty, but to splinter what shards of sovereignty Australia presently maintains. The CCF, for instance, in its meetings and in statements by its personnel, has called for enshrining "indigenous law" and "Aboriginal land rights"—for which the Queen's Rio Tinto has been the chief funder—in a new, rewritten constitution, paving the way for the creation of "independent Aboriginal states."

And, Saunders's own scholarship is typical of the frauds perpetrated by the nation's white-run "Aboriginal lobby," which was founded by Britain's Prince Philip, through the Australian Conservation Foundation, a branch of his World Wildlife Fund which he set up in 1963, and which has led the charge for "land rights." On the basis of Saunders's report that Hindmarsh Island in South Australia was a "sacred site" for Aboriginal women, the government banned the construction of a bridge to the island. An uproar ensued, during which it emerged that the "secret Aboriginal women's business," as it was called, had in fact been cooked up wholesale by white anthropologists. In related attacks against other shards of Australian sovereignty, other CCF spokesmen emphasize that the constitution must be rewritten, to "update it economically," to enshrine a "balanced budget" and "globalization."

Kerry Packer's republic?

The chief public front for the CCF's "republic" drive, is the Australian Republican Movement (ARM), which officially organized the Feb. 2-13, 1998 "Con Con," which was chaired by longtime MP Ian Sinclair—Her Majesty's ranking Privy Councillor in Australia. Virtually all of the ARM's key personnel, including Malcolm Turnbull, whom Keating appointed as founding chairman, are present or former employees of multi-billionaire press magnate Kerry Packer, a key figure in the British American Canadian (BAC) cabal originally established around press baron Lord Beaverbrook during World War II. This cabal included Kerry's father, Sir Frank Packer, a notorious toady of the British Crown, and Sir Keith Murdoch, the father of Packer's fellow BAC press baron Rupert Murdoch. And, the old royal ties have continued: Kerry Packer is seen from time to time in Her Majesty's box at the Ascot races in England, and is business partners with several of the Queen's favorite financiers, including Lord Jacob Rothschild and the late Sir Jimmy Goldsmith, while World Bank head Sir James Wolfensohn and United Nations Undersecretary General Maurice Strong sat on the board of Packer companies for many years. Her Majesty keeps some strange company: In the early 1980s, the Costigan royal commission investigated Packer for possible involvement in pornography, tax evasion, drugs, corporate fraud,

money laundering, and murder, before that commission was abruptly wound up by the incoming Labor government of self-professed Packer-admirer, Prime Minister Bob Hawke, and Treasurer Paul Keating in 1983.

Note the Packer pedigree of the following high-profile ARM personnel: ARM's founder and present chairman is international merchant banker Malcolm Turnbull, who defended Packer before the Costigan royal commission, and who was his in-house lawyer for years, in addition to establishing *Playboy* magazine's Australian subsidiary; Turnbull's deputy at ARM is former New South Wales premier Neville Wran, also a Packer intimate; and, ARM head in the state of Victoria is Eddie Maguire, a highly paid sports commentator for Packer's Channel 9 TV.

Then, when the "Real Republic" movement led by former independent MP Phil Cleary and others, emerged strongly in early January to lead a republican "vote no" movement, and opinion polls showed that the November referendum might fail, a new group suddenly popped up to attack Cleary et al.: "Conservatives for an Australian Head of State." This silver-spoon outfit includes a number of the country's top business executives, including Charles Goode, chairman of ANZ Bank, the "veddy British bank," which was headquartered in London until 1977. And who is leading this grass roots movement of bankers and bigshots for a republic? None other than former Liberal party federal director Andrew Robb, now a senior figure in the Packer organization!

A member of this new group, academic Greg Craven, expressed the panic in establishment circles, of what a failure in the November referendum might lead to. "If this fails, then the logic of Australian constitutionality is that we will end up with a direct election for a President, which would be an unmitigated disaster," he said. Meanwhile, ARM head Turnbull claimed, in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of Dec. 30, 1998, that "there is virtually no support for a U.S.-style system"—a blatant lie, according to virtually every poll ever taken during the past several years, which repeatedly show a majority in favor of direct election.

The great preamble scam

Besides the nominal change of substituting an Australian oligarch for the British Crown, as head of state, Packer's Feb. 2-13, 1998 "Con Con" also recommended that a new preamble be written for Australia's constitution, nominally because the 1901 act of the British Parliament which contained that constitution, and which established the Commonwealth of Australia, does have a preamble, but the constitution itself does not. Among the things which a new preamble should include, said the Con Con, are: "gender equality"; homosexual rights; "acknowledgment of the original occupancy and custodianship of Australia by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander" (i.e., land rights); and "affirmation of respect for our unique land and the environment" (as specified by Prince Philip's Australian Conservation Foundation).

Since constitutional preambles are used to help determine the meaning of the body of the constitution itself, inserting a seemingly minor preamble such as that above, has extremely far-reaching implications. Even the largely hand-picked delegates to the “Con Con” recognized this, and apparently revolted, demanding that Section III of Australia’s constitution be changed, so as to specifically state that the new preamble would *not* be so used.

The CCF, meanwhile, through the “working draft” on the constitution which it issued in January 1999, has launched a nationwide “Preamble Quest,” to brainwash the population to both include such a preamble in the November election — and to accept that it be used to interpret the document as a whole. Compare the grab-bag of indigenist, homosexual, “culturally diverse” clauses which the CCF champions — which are clearly designed to splinter the Australian nation-state — with the natural law-derived eloquence of the Preamble to the Constitution of the United States. This latter reads: “We the people of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”

As statesman Lyndon LaRouche has emphasized, this “general welfare” clause, rooted in concern for the physical and spiritual well-being of all Americans, both today and of generations yet unborn, is the bedrock upon which the Constitution is anchored in “Temporal Eternity.” Such a natural-law concept of sovereign nationhood, is fundamentally opposed to the passing whims of “special interests,” such as “land rights,” which are usually whipped up by the oligarchy.

The battle for a true republic

Indeed, the example of the U.S. Preamble is extraordinarily relevant to the republic debate raging in Australia today. As the CEC’s Isherwood emphasized in a discussion with this news service on Jan. 28, “It is totally lawful that almost two-thirds of Australians favor a directly elected President, on the U.S. model, because we have a proud and deep tradition of republicanism which goes back to at least the mid-19th century. Our organization has documented this history — which has been covered up, and which is therefore unknown to most of my fellow countrymen — in our groundbreaking work, ‘The Rise and Fall of Australia: The British Crown’s Assault Against the Commonwealth,’ which we wrote a few years ago, and just recently re-issued in our pamphlet, ‘Stop the British Crown Plot to Crush Australia’s Unions.’ The fight of our forefathers, many of whom were fierce republicans from Ireland and Scotland who were shipped here as political prisoners, and who organized the labor movement in this country, continues today against the exact same enemy whom they fought then — the British Crown.”

As that CEC pamphlet documents, in the 1890s the Crown

sent out its personal representative, Lord Charles Robert Carrington, Marquis of Lincolnshire, one of the closest friends of the degenerate Prince of Wales (later Edward VII), and great-uncle of today’s Lord Peter Carrington (a former High Commissioner to Australia, and former chairman of ANZ Bank), precisely to head off attempts to establish an American-modeled republic. Carrington worked through a frontman, the slavishly Anglophile Premier of New South Wales, Sir Henry Parkes — the so-called “Father of Federation” — to establish a British parliamentary system with the Crown as head of state. As Parkes put it, “There are disruptive organizations here in favor of pure republicanism. . . . To those who think most loosely, the lodestar is the United States.”

Trade unionists, meanwhile, regularly denounced the Parkes-Carrington version of a “commonwealth” as a “British imperial plot.” Written by fanatical Australian Anglophiles such as Sir Samuel Griffiths, a favorite of the Colonial Office, the Australian constitution was secretly sent back to London to be rewritten to, as one Colonial Office official put it, “remove any residual American tendencies.”

Almost 100 years later, the issue of a republic has again taken center stage in Australia. But, will Her Majesty’s servants, once again, dominate the outcome? Given the global financial crash, in which Western civilization faces its greatest peril in centuries, LaRouche associate Craig Isherwood concluded, “This time, we better do it right.”

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