

## Australia Dossier by Allen Douglas

### Labor trounced in national elections

*Prime Minister Paul Keating was dumped, but the Liberals will continue his Churchillian free trade policies.*

On March 2, Australian voters delivered a crushing defeat to Prime Minister Paul Keating and his Labor Party, which had been in power since 1983. Though votes are still being tallied, the Liberal Party-National Party coalition looks like it will have an astounding 49-seat majority in the 148-person House of Representatives. An unprecedented five independent candidates were elected, showing the disgust of the electorate with both parties.

As in the recent U.S. Presidential primaries, the issue was the economy. But the sad irony is, that the man who helped design most of the policies, including financial deregulation, free trade, and privatization of State assets, through which Keating and his Labor mates have savaged the economy over the last 13 years, is now the new prime minister. He is John Winston Howard, 56, who was the Liberal treasurer in the years before Labor took over in 1983.

The Keating years were an unqualified disaster for the average Australian: Australia's foreign debt ballooned from AUS \$36 billion to over AUS \$206 billion (over \$150 billion), tens of thousands of farmers were driven from the land, infrastructure collapsed nationwide, unemployment reached the highest level since the Great Depression, and Labor began the sell-off of State assets on a large scale, including 49% of the Commonwealth bank, founded before World War I on the model of Alexander Hamilton's first National Bank of the United States.

Everything that the "old Labor Party" of such anti-City of London

legends as Commonwealth Bank founder King O'Malley; anti-"Money Power" campaigner Frank Anstey, and his protégé, wartime Prime Minister John Curtin; and New South Wales Labor leader Jack Lang, who declared a debt moratorium against London in the 1930s in order to protect jobs and social payments, was spit upon by Keating and his cronies. Keating et al. were beholden to the "Big End of Town," the corporations and speculators who forked over millions of dollars in contributions in return for which Keating et al. opened Australia up to quick-buck looting.

Howard has pledged to move even faster on these Thatcherite "reforms," spearheaded by a drive to "deregulate the labor market," i.e., bust the unions, which even Keating had dared not attempt.

Keating and Howard are personally, as well as because of their pursuit of free trade and imperial looting policies, great admirers of Sir Winston Churchill. Howard was named after Churchill, and was caricatured in the press as a new Sir Winston, striped suit, cigar, and all; Keating proclaimed that it was his great admiration for Churchill, which caused him to enter politics in the first place.

During World War II, Churchill did all he could to strip Australia of its defenses, and lay bare the country to Japanese conquest, to create a bloody, decades-long U.S.-Japanese war in the Pacific, to the benefit of the British Empire. He was defeated by the alliance of Prime Minister Curtin with Gen. Douglas MacArthur and President Franklin Roosevelt.

Today, as Australia is fast losing

any shred of sovereignty, that Australian-American alliance has reemerged as a potent factor in Australian politics, through the Citizens Electoral Councils (CEC), the Australian co-thinkers of U.S. Presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche.

The CEC is the fastest-growing political movement in the country, and, in December 1995, it announced its intent to field a nationwide slate of candidates who would run on a platform of reestablishing Australian national sovereignty through a national bank, revived tariffs, the establishment of a true republic, and, finally, the exonerated of U.S. economist Lyndon LaRouche.

In late January, almost coincidental with Keating's announcement of the federal election, one of the most intense negative media barrages in recent Australian history was unleashed against the CEC, beginning with a series in British intelligence veteran Conrad Black's Melbourne *Age* newspaper. The attacks continued in prime-time television propaganda broadcasts, and culminated in a Feb. 6 press conference by Labor MPs Clyde Holding and Peter Clelland, in which they called for a federal investigation of the CEC (see *EIR*, Feb. 23, p. 36).

The attacks were ostensibly based upon the (fictitious) accounts of two disgruntled former CEC members. In reality, as CEC National Secretary Craig Isherwood emphasized repeatedly, the entire uproar was due solely to the Establishment's hysteria about "the political personality of Lyndon LaRouche."

In part because of the intense negative publicity, vote totals for the eight-person CEC slate were modest. But the uproar, and the debate over national sovereignty, which LaRouche's co-thinkers have introduced downunder, will continue.