

Australia Dossier by Robert Barwick and Allen Douglas

Queen rewrites Australian Constitution

Her Majesty's royal retainers are leaving the Queen out, but will put a lot of other evil things in.

Only a satirist with the powers of François Rabelais or Jonathan Swift could possibly capture the absurdity of the debate on "constitutional reform" now gripping Australia. The greatest passion expended in this debate, is whether to replace Queen Elizabeth II as head of state, with a popularly elected President. In one corner, cheering for "God, Queen, and Country," is Prime Minister John Howard, who reluctantly pronounces himself willing to accept "community sentiment" on a Presidential system. In the other corner are the fire-breathing "republicans," virtually knocking each other over in their haste to dump the Old Bag.

But, there is an anomaly here: The fire-breathers are precisely those who are closest to the Crown! They include: Sir Ninian Stephen, a longtime member of Her Majesty's Privy Council, Her Majesty's former governor general of Australia, and chairman of the Constitutional Centenary Foundation (CCF), the main body pushing for constitutional reform; Gov. Gen. Sir William Deane, Her Majesty's current official representative in Australia; and Malcolm Turnbull, a merchant banker who heads the Australian Republican Movement, and who for a long time was the in-house lawyer for billionaire gambling and media magnate Kerry Packer. The latter is seen from time to time in Her Majesty's box at Ascot, and is bosom buddies with several of Her Majesty's favorite financiers, including Lord Jacob Rothschild and Sir Jimmy Goldsmith.

That said, it must be admitted that the present constitution is nothing to

write home about. First drafted in Australia in the lead-up to the 1901 federation of the British colonies on the Australian continent into a single commonwealth, it was taken back to London and secretly rewritten to remove any residual "American tendencies" (as the British Home Office called them), and to give final power on crucial issues to the Queen, through the governor general. But, what is being planned now, is much worse. And, like the first one, this one is being written in London.

One of the tip-offs that this one is worse, is that those who are most fanatical about rewriting the constitution, are the fiercest partisans of "aboriginal land rights." The overlap is not surprising: As *EIR* has documented, "aboriginal land rights" is part of a Crown plot to splinter the Australian nation-state; in 1963, Prince Philip founded the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF), the "god-mother" of all environmentalist and aboriginal land rights operations in Australia.

Her Majesty's loyal retainers want the constitution rewritten by 2001, the centenary of Federation. Toward this end, the CCF and the South Australian government sponsored a convention in Adelaide on April 20-23. The delegates voted for an Australian head of state, and to enshrine "indigenous customary law" as part of the constitution.

Such "indigenous law" is, in fact, customarily written by Prince Philip's buddies. One notorious case involved CCF Vice Chairman Cheryl Saunders, a professor of law at Melbourne University. On the basis of her report that

Hindmarsh Island in South Australia was a sacred site for aboriginal women, former Aboriginal Affairs Minister Robert Tickner 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.

Another reason proffered for why the constitution must be rewritten, is to "update it economically," to enshrine "globalization" and a "balanced budget." Lawfully, another key board member of the CCF is Gary Sturgess, one of only 12 Australian members of the Mont Pelerin Society, the Crown's foremost economic warfare body.

The CCF is jointly funded by the federal and state governments, and by some of the largest establishment banks and insurance and mining companies, all of which are closely tied to British finance. Such companies have also poured in funds to the Melbourne University Law School Foundation, which sponsors Saunders's "school of law." These include BHP, RTZ (which provided the funds for Prince Philip's ACF), Western Mining Corp., AMCOR, Coles Myer, Pacific Dunlop, NAB, and the Smorgon Charitable Trust.

With this backing, the project is galloping ahead. Prime Minister Howard has called an historic "people's convention" for November or December, for which half the delegates will be elected in a nationwide poll in August, and the other half appointed by the federal government. Speaking at the opening of the just-concluded Adelaide convention, the Queen's governor general, the pro-land rights Sir William Deane, gave a foretaste of what is to come. Deane declared that at least 25% of the Australian constitution was "superfluous," and that much of the rest should be "altered" as well.