

Australia Dossier by Allen Douglas

The lunatics take over

Just when you might have thought that nothing crazier could happen in New Zealand . . .

In 1984, a Labor government took power in New Zealand. Under the dictates of the British Crown's Mont Pelerin Society, it initiated what has been touted as "the most fundamental free-market revolution in the Western world."

However, the "New Zealand revolution" calls to mind nothing so much as the short story "The System of Doctor Tarr and Professor Fether," by American poet and patriotic intelligence operative Edgar Allan Poe. There, a young man travelling in southern France drops in to observe the private insane asylum of Monsieur Maillard, famous for its system of "soothing," in which the inmates are allowed to wear normal dress and to act out their particular lunacies, instead of being chained, as in public asylums. Maillard graciously greets his young visitor, but reports that he has regretfully had to resort to the method of physical restraint developed by the eminent specialists, Doctor Tarr and Professor Fether. Maillard and his "staff" begin acting more and more crazy, until, in a chaotic denouement, the original staff of the asylum—who had been tarred and feathered by the inmates and chained in a dungeon—break loose and reassert control. Maillard, it emerges, had himself gone crazy and led the inmates against the staff.

Poe's story, complete with an insurgent lunatic named LaPlace (after the radical empiricist who destroyed the Ecole Polytechnique of Monge, Carnot, et al.), is a metaphor for the French Revolution, in which British intelligence sponsored a lunatic rabble led by Danton and Marat, to overthrow

a government which had backed the American Revolution. But, the comparison fits New Zealand perfectly, particularly since it was "free trade" (which the French government had adopted at the Treaty of Paris in 1783) which drove both countries mad.

Though begun by Labor, lunatics of all parties have intensified the "reforms." Two years ago, Lyndon LaRouche's Australian collaborators in the Citizens Electoral Council published a devastating critique of the reforms, entitled "Nazi Reforms Rip New Zealand—Australia Next," in the *New Citizen* newspaper. The developments cited here are some brief updates on what the New Zealand inmates have done since then:

- Notwithstanding that New Zealand has the highest youth suicide rate in the world, spending on mental health has been slashed ruthlessly; seriously ill people walk the streets, or have to be tied up in their own homes for hours a day, to prevent them from injuring themselves or others. The rate of usage of Prozac (prescribed for depression) has tripled, just in the last year.

- Waiting lists for operations have grown to more than 100,000, with another 100,000 people who need them not even allowed on the lists—this, in a nation of 3.4 million. Despite its current \$2.9 billion budget surplus, the government plans to slash staff further, even though people are already dying unnecessarily in hospitals, and to eliminate elective surgery in all hospitals serving areas of fewer than 75,000—which means shutting those operating theaters, because they allegedly won't be economically via-

ble. Even where funds have been available, surgery has sometimes not been performed because of the lack of doctors.

- The government has announced a major police inquiry, aimed at cutting funding and privatizing many police functions. Already, police have to call the emergency 111 line for backup, because they have no money for radios. Even here, police have started advising citizens, if attacked or burglarized, to call their neighbor first, then 111, because no one may answer at the latter.

- The country's biggest city, Auckland, recently lost all electric power for *two and a half months*, but the government specified that its "inquiry" into the affair may not examine whether privatization (with its savage cuts in maintenance and staff) is what caused the problem.

- The government has just announced that all air traffic controllers at the country's busiest airport, Ardmore, will be sacked, and that pilots should negotiate with each other on landing rights. That deadly crashes will result, is a foregone conclusion.

- The government recently floated plans to privatize all roads. Only a fierce public outcry, and charges that this was "going back to the Middle Ages," has caused the policy to be put temporarily on hold.

- A vicious workfare plan is to be initiated, under which all those who receive sick leave or disability payments are to be "tested" for their ability to perform work.

It has often been argued, that Mont Pelerin free-market reforms wreak more havoc on a nation than a bombing campaign. No wonder then, that Iraqi refugees from "Desert Storm" recently told an Auckland newspaper that they want to leave the country, because, "New Zealand is a terrible place to live."