

## Australia Dossier by Allen Douglas

### The handwriting is on the wall

*A nation whose political leadership destroys its own citizens, is headed for certain doom, warns LaRouche.*

In his latest strategic masterwork, "Is Western Europe Doomed?" (last week's *Feature*), Lyndon LaRouche puts the provocative thesis that, given the insanity of the political elites of the Western "advanced sector" economies, "the most endangered part of the present world economy, is not, speaking generally, the nations of Asia, but, rather, those of western Europe, the U.S.A., Canada, Australia, and a New Zealand which has been already virtually self-destroyed over the course of the recent ten years."

Such an analysis will no doubt be greeted with outrage in Australia in particular, which prides itself on how well it has survived the so-called "Asian crisis," a performance which no less an exalted windbag than Massachusetts Institute of Technology economist Paul Krugman, now visiting Australia, has just pronounced "miraculous."

However, the very existence of the modern nation-state is based upon the ability and willingness of its leadership to provide for the well-being and progress of *all* of its citizens, as exemplified by the "general welfare" clause upon which the American Founding Fathers anchored the U.S. Constitution. Any political elite which repeatedly violates that basic premise, will either be overthrown, or that nation will soon disintegrate. Perhaps the best measure of such an elite's performance, is the way in which it treats its most vulnerable citizens — its poor, its young and old, and its disabled. By this standard, under the shock of a global financial collapse, Australia will soon cease to exist as a nation, precisely as

LaRouche forecasts.

The fact that a social and psychological holocaust is under way downunder, has been documented in report after official report, which both major parties, the ruling Liberal/National Party coalition, and the Labor Party, have ignored. A book could be written on that holocaust; here, we mention merely some crucial indicators.

First, take a most basic indicator: the general standard of living of the population, and whether it is improving or deteriorating.

According to the latest United Nations Human Development Report, one in eight Australians now lives below the poverty line, and 1.7 million Australians are likely to die before the age of 60 *because of poverty* — this in a nation which, until recently, called itself the "Lucky Country," because it had one of the world's highest standards of living. A recent report from Victoria University's Center for Strategic Economic Studies, "Australian Poverty, Then and Now," documented that poverty has skyrocketed since a 1973 study, during which time governments of both major parties embraced the savage free-trade nostrums of the British Crown's Mont Pelerin Society, known downunder as "economic rationalism." Whereas poverty affected some 20% of the population then, the report said, now it affects almost *one-third* of the population — some 5.5 million out of a total population of 18 million!

Another recent report on housing, by The Smith Family, a welfare group, found that low-income renters pay 40% of their total household income

on rent, and that 30% go without heat, while *almost one-half cannot afford to buy basic groceries*. This has produced an explosion of cases involving elderly people shoplifting food from supermarkets, simply in order to survive. As the Melbourne *Herald Sun* reported on July 5, "Special closed sessions are being held in Melbourne courts to cope with the dramatic increase in pensioners stealing to feed themselves, their children, and grandchildren."

In rural areas, with cartel-rigged prices for rural commodities collapsing, and with the government slashing education, health, and welfare funds, even the government's own Federal Human Rights Commissioner, Chris Sidoti, said in August that "basic human rights were being eroded." Furthermore, he told the Radio National AM show on Aug. 11, "The rural suicide rate is absolutely appalling." Indeed, Australia's suicide rate is just behind New Zealand's, the world leader.

Under these circumstances, the traditional family is disappearing. A recent Monash University study found that 19.4% of all families are now headed by a sole parent, up from 14.6% in 1986. Unemployment among youth ranges from 25%, to as high as 60% in rural areas, while slave labor among children as young as seven has exploded, with more than "1,600 child workers . . . being seriously injured or maimed each year," according to an investigation by the *Age* newspaper published in late October. That investigation found "an estimated 70,000 working up to 20 hours a week or more in the clothing industry" alone, where they are "exposed to hazards including skeletal deformities, asthma and byssinosis, a potentially fatal lung disease."

Indeed, one can see the finger inscribing, "Mene, Mene. . ."