

Australia Dossier by Allen Douglas

Travel expenses scandal rocks government

London and the Australian "business community" are using scandals to try to ram through their globalization agenda.

In late September, the Liberal-National coalition government of Prime Minister John Howard suffered the worst crisis of any Australian government since 1975, the year when Her Majesty the Queen, acting through her pompous Governor-General Sir John Kerr, sacked Prime Minister Gough Whitlam. Three of Howard's cabinet ministers, in addition to his chief of staff and political adviser of 25 years, Grahame Morris, resigned or were sacked over inflated travel expenses totaling some \$20,000, most of which had been long since repaid. On Oct. 6, after a week of trying to contain the scandal, Howard announced a major cabinet reshuffle, and pronounced his government "back on course."

Howard's government commands a huge majority and will not fall, nor is it likely that Howard himself will be replaced—at least not immediately. But, his government has done some things (and not done others) which have displeased Her Majesty and much of the Anglophilic establishment in Australia, particularly its "business community" (anchored on the 130 British companies which use Australia as their base for Asia). Howard is not Whitlam, who was sacked because he had plans to "buy back the farm," i.e., to regain sovereignty over Australia's huge mineral riches from members of Her Majesty's minerals cartel such as Rio Tinto. But, Howard does have an eye on reelection next year, and therefore on an increasingly angry and impoverished electorate (the so-called "battlers"), who are fed up with globalization at their expense.

Therefore, he, too, has committed some "sins" of national sovereignty:

He has called for a "pause" in the rush to eliminate all tariffs, particularly in the auto, textiles, clothing, and footwear industries, even though Australia has been a leader worldwide in ramming through "free trade" provisions in international forums; he has rejected establishment of a mandatory cut in carbon dioxide emissions by the year 2005, as per the "global warming" fraud, for which British Prime Minister Tony Blair's government is leading the charge globally, because Howard estimates this would wipe out perhaps 10% of all Australian jobs; he withdrew Federal approval for a George Soros-designed plan to set up legalized heroin "shooting galleries" in Canberra; and, he announced that talks between the government of Papua New Guinea and the "Bougainville Revolutionary Army," which is trying to declare independence for the island-province of Bougainville, should not even consider the option of Bougainville independence—thus flying in the face of Prince Philip's program of indigenist separatism.

However, most important, perhaps except for the global warming issue, Howard has also "failed," thus far, to smash the nation's unions, in particular the Maritime Union of Australia, which controls the nation's docks. Nor has he yet rammed through "tax reform" (i.e., a highly regressive value added tax of 15% or so, like New Zealand's).

The way in which the travel scandal broke, belies its authorship. On Sept. 22, Channel 9 TV news released documents which showed that laws relating to reporting travel expenses had been broken, which kicked off a grow-

ing scandal. Channel 9 is owned by multimillionaire Kerry Packer, who, despite his having been investigated by a Royal Commission in the 1980s for a host of alleged crimes, including drug dealing and murder, is an intimate of Queen Elizabeth and her set, including the Rothschilds.

Immediately, much of the rest of the nation's Anglophilic press jumped on Howard, with headlines such as "Howard Has Failed Us: Business," or "Business Polls Vote Howard Down." World Bank head Sir James Wolfensohn, who visited Australia on his way back from the Sept. 20-25 International Monetary Fund meeting in Hongkong, added a slashing attack on Australia's "failure of leadership."

To make sure Howard got the message, Australia's media, out of the blue, anointed an heir-apparent, Treasurer Peter Costello. In a speech in Tasmania on Sept. 29, Costello ranted against his own government's "pause" in tariff reductions. "We must resist simplistic and populist solutions that seek to turn the clock back to the economic policies of the past," he said. The *Australian Financial Review* headlined the leadership question as: "Wolfensohn's Vote of No Confidence in Canberra. . . . As Costello Stakes His Claim."

Costello represents the most fanatical Mont Pelerinite wing of Australian politics. He co-founded the H.R. Nicholls Society in 1986, whose *raison d'être* is to smash the unions, and his close friend and adviser is the chairman of the Liberal Party's Finance Committee, Michael Kroger, who, during the hey-day of Thatcherism, was a guest of the British Foreign Office to "examine labor market and waterfront reform in England." Unfortunately, Costello will find some soulmates in Howard's new, expanded cabinet, in which other Mont Pelerinites have been added or promoted.