

## Australia Dossier by Robert Barwick and Allen Douglas

### Politics of Fear

*The draconian sentence handed out to populist political leader Pauline Hanson is aimed at the LaRouche movement.*

Populist icon Pauline Hanson was sentenced to three years imprisonment on Aug. 20, following her conviction for fraudulently registering her political party, Pauline Hanson's One Nation, in 1997. For an essentially technical violation of electoral law, the sentence was draconian. One government politician, Bronwyn Bishop, called Hanson a "political prisoner," and independent MP Bob Katter from Hanson's home state of Queensland, expressed the sentiments of most, when he told the Aug. 21 *Australian Financial Review*, "As far as the public is concerned there will be a belief that anyone who stands up for what they believe in will be cut down."

One way or another, the Hanson sentence was aimed at Lyndon LaRouche's associates in the Citizens Electoral Council (CEC), the nation's fourth largest political party, and its fastest growing one. Either, as Katter indicated, those thinking of supporting an option outside the "major party" structure of the Liberal Party and the Labor Party (i.e., the CEC), may be terrorized into not doing so, or, Hanson will be used by the establishment as she always has been—as a demagogue to draw votes from the CEC. Before her outrageous sentence, Hanson's political influence had all but collapsed. Now, she is seen by many as a martyr and has announced that she will re-enter politics should her sentence be overturned. A Federal election looms in the next year or so, and LaRouche's friends in the CEC are already running candidates in half the electoral districts in the country, on top of recent years' state elections in

Western Australia, Victoria and New South Wales, where CEC candidates polled around 8%—a very high total for "minor party" candidates. Thus, a desperate establishment could easily arrange Hanson's release to stop the CEC.

From its inception, Pauline Hanson's One Nation was deployed as a counter to the CEC, particularly in the volatile rural areas.

In October 1992, the CEC opened an office in Melbourne, which terrified some of the nastiest elements of the establishment, such as booze baron Edgar Bronfman's right-hand man in Australia, Isi Leibler, who proclaimed that LaRouche and the CEC have "a disruptive capacity never before seen in this country." For once, Isi was right.

After circulating millions of CEC newspapers throughout rural Australia ("the bush"), by June 1996 LaRouche's influence had reached such a point, that then-Deputy Prime Minister Tim Fischer falsely accused LaRouche of having organized a 150,000-person anti-gun-control rally in Melbourne, and Rupert Murdoch's *Weekend Australian* ran LaRouche's picture and the caption: "The Gun Debate: The LaRouche Link to the Bush Rebellion."

Almost immediately thereafter, Hanson began her meteoric rise, courtesy of hundreds of millions of dollars of free coverage by the media empires of Kerry Packer and Murdoch. The coincidence of Hanson's early ideas with those of the CEC—for national banking and reindustrialization and against privatization and the fraud of "Aborig-

inal land rights"—did not go unnoticed. commentator Philip Adams wrote in the *Weekend Australian* of May 3-4, 1997, "It's been noted that Pauline Hanson's memorable maiden speech [in Parliament] was chocker with policies that bore an eerie resemblance to those of Lyndon LaRouche," while the *Brisbane Courier Mail*, a Murdoch rag, wrote that "she does have ideas, alas, and her ideas are essentially those of the CEC."

The Packer-Murdoch "attacks" on Hanson, together with her CEC-borrowed policies, had a predictable effect in a country known for its sympathy for the rural "battler." In the 1997 Queensland state election, Hanson drew almost 25% of the vote, and elected a stunning 11 members to state parliament.

As long as she advocated the CEC's policies, Hanson was a kind of Frankenstein's monster for the very establishment which had created her, and the Liberal and Labor parties set up a \$100,000 slush fund orchestrated by Liberal government minister Tony Abbott—a close crony of Prime Minister John Howard—to attack her in court, a process which ultimately led to her three-year sentence.

In the meantime, under fire, Hanson had jettisoned all of her CEC-derived policies, becoming a mere populist demagogue. By late 2000 her movement had all but collapsed. The Packer/Murdoch media miraculously revived it just in time to stop CEC Western Australian state Secretary Jean Robinson from winning a seat in state parliament in the February 2001 election. As even Hanson's own candidate there admitted, without Hanson, Robinson would have won.

Hanson should be freed. But, in that case, to paraphrase a pro-Hanson August 2000 cover story in Kerry Packer's *Bulletin* magazine, "Will this soufflé rise three times?"