

Citizens Electoral Council of Australia conference
“The World Land-Bridge: Peace on Earth, Good Will towards All Men”,
28-29 March 2015, Melbourne, Australia

From Panel 1 The World Land-Bridge: It's Being Built!

Farewell Malcolm Fraser (1930-2015): Champion of sovereignty and peace

Robert Barwick, CEC Executive Member

Today we pause to pay tribute to Malcolm Fraser, a true statesman lost to Australia and the world on 20 March .

When Gabrielle Peut and I briefed him last November [2014], on our plans for this conference, to discuss how the BRICS nations' commitment to economic development offers a new financial architecture that finally gives the world a chance for lasting peace, he immediately wanted to participate.

Malcolm Fraser was passionately committed to peace and economic development. For a generation of Australians, this seems contradictory to his role as the Minister for the Army during the Vietnam War. Mr. Fraser never tried to justify himself, but he also never sought to hide behind the wisdom of hindsight. He explained that Australia's involvement in Vietnam was a product of the Cold War, when he and the rest of the government viewed the Soviet Union as expansionary, and a threat to world peace which had to be opposed. It was only later that he came to understand the situation differently, and thus regard Vietnam as a folly.

However, he saw the position he took then, based on his understanding of the situation at the time, as consistent with the position he held up to the day he died: that following the end of the Cold War, the expansion of NATO became the greatest threat to world peace, and therefore had to be opposed. Unlike Vietnam, Mr. Fraser never changed his mind on this; the events in Ukraine in the last year only confirmed his view, prompting him to speak out.

The CEC forged a relationship with Malcolm Fraser based on our shared opposition to the dangerous US Ballistic Missile Defense program, targeting Russia and China for pre-emptive nuclear attack. Even before we first met, we published his warnings in our Oct.-Dec. 2012 *New Citizen* newspaper headlined “Act Now! Stop Nuclear War! Join Lyndon LaRouche, Malcolm Fraser to promote peace; expose High White, Michael Danby and the push for war!” Mr Fraser saw with absolute clarity that Australia was complicit in the Anglo-American strategy that is pushing the world towards a thermonuclear war in which Australia would be a target.

CEC National Secretary Craig Isherwood and I first met Mr. Fraser in January 2013, to discuss our fight against this war strategy. It was a productive discussion, but that meeting was remarkable for the other profound issues on which we found we shared a deep agreement.

It's interesting that the CEC enjoyed similar collaborative relationships with other former political leaders of Malcolm Fraser's generation, before they passed away. These included the former Deputy Prime Minister of Australia Jim Cairns, and the former Minister for Labour Clyde Cameron, both in the Whitlam government that Mr. Fraser was involved in dismissing. That the CEC found common ground with such political leaders from opposing ends of the political spectrum, reflects, I'm sure, many things, but among them is the cultural paradigm shift that has taken place among the generations that have followed. These men shared a cultural optimism about humanity, Australia, and the potential for development, that has been almost completely eradicated from political life in Australia, where the political elite now shamelessly dance to a foreign-dictated tune of right-wing economic and strategic policies, and anti-human, pessimistic environmentalism, which portend disaster for our nation. The CEC is unique among Australian political parties in seeking to revive the cultural optimism that these statesmen shared.

In that first meeting, Mr. Fraser declared, emphatically, that Australia's greatest problem was that it was not a sovereign nation. This, of course, has been the CEC's theme for more than 20 years; indeed the titles of our first two major policy programs, published in the early 1990s, which named the CEC's primary political objective, were *Sovereign Australia*, and *Sovereign Australia II*. Craig was able to recount to Mr. Fraser his conversation with Lyndon LaRouche in prison, in 1993, when Mr. LaRouche observed that Australians did not understand the difference between autonomy, and sovereignty, and that Australia's problem was that it had autonomy, but not sovereignty.

Mr. Fraser also voiced his views on the financial crisis, declaring, "Repealing Glass-Steagall was the stupidest thing they ever did." He offered to participate in the international campaign to restore Glass-Steagall, on which we briefed him. Later that year he wrote to a U.S. Senator to express his support for the Glass-Steagall legislation then in the Senate, and of course last year he made his own submission to the Australian Financial System Inquiry, calling for a full Glass-Steagall separation of the Australian banking system. When *The Australian* newspaper reported his submission incorrectly, as a call for ring-fencing, Mr. Fraser wrote a letter to the editor clarifying that he wasn't calling for ring-fencing, but the full Glass-Steagall separation in place in the U.S. from 1933 to 1999.

Malcolm Fraser's views on the financial system were consistent with his personal opposition to the radical deregulation agenda that banks, financial markets and Mont Pelerin Society think tanks started pushing when he was prime minister. As a liberal, Mr. Fraser ardently supported the principle of free enterprise, but, again reflecting his generation's outlook, he believed in the institution of the nation-state, and the important role of national governments in giving direction to the nation, including economically. It was later revealed that the economic neo-liberals among his party used to meet in secret to plot how they would infiltrate their ideas into the party, so fearful were they that if then Prime Minister Fraser got wind of their intention, he would stop them in their tracks. It is notable that the era of radical

deregulation that followed the Fraser years has been called the “post-1983 consensus on economic reform”, i.e. post-Fraser, who never held to the consensus.

Finally in that first meeting, Malcolm Fraser shared his personal vision for Australia to grow its population to 50 million people. He told us he didn’t understand the mentality of Australians who hold the view that Australia is overpopulated. In fact, he shared the CEC’s optimism, that Australia has the resources and skills to develop the continent with water projects and other infrastructure, to support a large population.

From this first meeting, the CEC entered into a productive collaboration with Malcolm Fraser on these issues of global importance. A good example of that collaboration was the way he sprang into action a year ago when I briefed him on the neo-Nazi uprising in Ukraine. He penned an op-ed for *The Guardian* newspaper in which he placed the blame for the crisis squarely on the aggressive eastward expansion of NATO against the spirit of the undertaking given to Gorbachev following the end of the Soviet Union. A few days later he gave an interview to *Russia Today*, elaborating his view; all of which, coming from a well-known western statesman and Cold War warrior, constituted an effective intervention.

Mr. Fraser often spoke of his friend, former West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, with whom he stayed in touch and who shared his views on the Anglo-American aggression towards Russia. A few weeks ago, Helmut Schmidt made a similar intervention into the present crisis as his great Australian mate, an important addition to the chorus of voices speaking out for peace.

In conclusion I would like to read a statement Mr. Fraser wrote in October last year, as a greeting to the Schiller Institute conference that Helga Zepp-LaRouche hosted in Germany, on a similar theme to our conference this weekend. I’m sure if Mr. Fraser had have made it to the conference this weekend, to be able to greet Mrs LaRouche and all of you in person, he would have conveyed a similar message. Malcolm Fraser wrote:

“I wish you well in your deliberations. We desperately need a more cooperative and more inclusive world. The West needs to be prepared to recognise, and also to accept, the consequences of past grievous errors. The move of NATO eastwards was giving notice that the West did not want Russia as a collaborative partner, but rather as a defeated foe still to be marginalised. It is not surprising that NATO’s move has led to a cool or even to a sour relationship between the United States, NATO and the former Soviet Union. They virtually made a cooperative relationship impossible.

“Other Western initiatives have generally ended in failure. The Gulf War to free Kuwait was an overwhelming success, but the possibilities that could have flowed from that war, where 31 nations participated with troops on the ground, were thrown aside by policies of the neo-conservatives and their ideas of American exceptionalism and manifest destiny. In that vision, whatever America did was right, because America did it. The 2nd War in Iraq was an unmitigated disaster, predicably unleashing sectarian violence which has engulfed, and still plagues, the whole region.

“The West has begun a new war against Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, without the means to complete that war or to achieve peace. We need a new and more open inclusive society, where others can participate in making the rules that affect everyone. We have a Monetary Fund and a World Bank, dominated by American and Western interests, it is not surprising that there are now moves to sidestep these institutions and create alternatives.

“There is an option and that is for the most powerful Western nations to realise that there have been great changes in the world, that the strategic context has altered, that other powers such as the BRICS are emerging and that the West should collaborate with them as partners to establish a more equal and a more just world.”

I now ask that every one pause for a moment's silence, in honour of a true statesman who fought to his last for his vision of a just world, in which sovereign nations, collaborating on economic development, can enjoy peace and prosperity.

[Pause]

Thank you.