



ON TARGET

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The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance—

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Thought for the Week: "Upon that difference - whether or not we place Divine Law in the last resort above the law of the State - ...depends the whole future of the world."

-- Professor R. W. Chambers

BURCHETT ON THE LABOR PARTY: One of the first acts by the Labor leaders after the December elections was to return the passport of the communist journalist Wilfred Burchett, at the same time withdrawing the passport of a distinguished Queenslander, Air Vice-Marshal Hawkins now in Rhodesia. So hastily was this done that even Burchett himself expressed surprise at the alacrity of the move. Since returning to Australia, Burchett, far from sinking into obscurity, has been speaking and travelling extensively, with a platform at a number of Australian Universities, apart from other functions. Mr. Whitlam may yet learn that "he who sups with the Devil needs a long spoon", to judge by an article in the Maoist paper *The Guardian* (New York) May 30th, 1973. Under the heading "What will Australia do now?" Wilfred Burchett anticipated that Dr. Cairns would be "developing new ties with the socialist and third world countries", and also forecast that a North Korean delegation would soon be in Australia. The article also suggested that Mr. Whitlam intended going ahead with a "zone of peace and neutrality in Southeast Asia" and that Australia would "declare itself a member of the third world". Burchett also anticipated "confrontations when new tax measures to pay for social services are announced." It seems strange that Mr. Burchett, writing at the end of May, was able to forecast so exactly the subsequent activities of Dr. Cairns, who has recently been wooing the Red Chinese and the North Koreans, and who has called for tax increases, so far resisted by Mr. Whitlam and Mr. Crean, who have instead forced the States into a position where they must themselves increase taxes to survive.

Mr. Burchett's article also carried a map of Australia, showing all those empty spaces (amplified by the rural exodus of recent years) and the admission by Mr. Whitlam that "Australia must help decrease the disparity with the countries of Southern Asia."

Among the many superficial arguments for increasing Asian Immigration the suggestion that Australia can relieve population density among Asian neighbours is about the silliest of all. As has been pointed out before, if Australia were to put every available ship onto bringing Asian migrants to Australia, it might be physically possible, by straining transport resources, to bring in one million people a year. With India striving to hold population growth to a figure of 9 million a year, and China to 14 million, the impression would be minimal, but Australia's capacity to provide real help - technology, education and foodstuffs - would be irreparably damaged. The real motive behind non-European immigration is not humanitarian, as Mr. Whitlam and Mr. Grassby would have us believe.

but political, and is aimed at the sabotage of accepted cultural, judicial and constitutional standards in the interests of the "socialist" revolution.

THE "KERENSKY" OF THE LABOR PARTY?: Burchett's article intimated a parallel between the provisional Kerensky government, which held power in Russia during the early part of 1917, until overthrown in turn by the Bolsheviks under Lenin and Trotsky, and the current situation in Australia: "Nobody has any illusions," Mr. Burchett said, "that the Labor Party leadership will carry out revolutionary changes... the question is whether unity and toughness within the Labor Party can be maintained when the U.S.-backed rightist backlash comes."

CROCODILE TEARS: "The Australian Government will not take the issue of China's nuclear testing programme to the International Court, the Federal Attorney-General, Senator Murphy, said yesterday."
-- The Australian, July 3rd.

Senator Murphy went on to say: "I wish we could take China to court, but there are certain legal technicalities which would prevent it." We can only commiserate with Senator Murphy, that his eager and relentless zeal for international justice should be thwarted in this manner. If one or two of us had a sneaking suspicion that he would find some technicality to forestall any action against China, we should suppress such unworthy thoughts. We can, however, suggest a few steps which might yet re-charge Senator Murphy's flagging spirits. To begin with, there is nothing to prevent Australia organising a trade boycott of Red China, as we are attempting to do against France. We could suggest to China that there will be no more wheat from Australia until she stops building inter-continental ballistic missiles, and conducting atmospheric tests. If this did not go far enough, we could close down the Red Chinese embassy, and even re-open diplomatic relations with Taiwan. We could then warn China that we could no longer be counted on to fulfil the commitments we made to China when diplomatic relations were established in December, or that we increase sanctions against Rhodesia and South Africa. If she was still belligerent, we could start an international campaign aimed at exposing the enormous State-organised programme exporting hard drugs, particularly opium-based narcotics, which China is pursuing as part of her psychopolitical campaign against the West. We are quite sure that an eminent Q.C., such as Senator Murphy, would be capable of conducting an adequate case along these lines before the world court. We are sure, too, that a growing number of Australians are sickened at the double standards - one for France, another for Red China; one for South Vietnam, another for the Viet-Cong; one for South Africa and Rhodesia, another for Uganda and Nigeria - which is the hallmark of Australia's foreign policy under the Whitlam government.

INFLATION ACCELERATING: "The Victorian Premier, Mr. Hamer, wants an urgent Premiers' Conference before the Federal Budget is drawn up... He said that the States were ready to co-operate in anti-inflation measures but the Federal Government controlled the major weapons - taxing powers, interest rates, credit and money supplied."
-- The Australian, July 3rd.

In these words the Victorian Premier signified the almost complete capitulation of State sovereignty to the Commonwealth. The gesture of the State Premiers in their recent visit to London to retain the Privy Council as a voice to whom they can appeal is empty of any significance once the States concede that they have lost financial independence. The editorial in the Melbourne Age, July 2nd, logically summed up the present situation in these words: "... Successive Federal Governments have increasingly made the States their financial dependencies. The Whitlam Government intends to use this power of the purse to reduce the scope of their responsibilities, and increasingly

direct their priorities, guide their planning and supervise their spending. The national Government, as Mr. Whitlam prefers to call it, is determined to play a more dominant and dynamic role - an ambition which will limit the States in some of their traditional fields to be little more than the administrative agencies of Canberra. The Premiers gave no indication at last week's meeting that they are in a position to resist this process. Uninhibited by any ideological commitment to preserve "States Rights" Mr. Whitlam clearly pointed the direction in which he intends to head. He confirmed the complete financial takeover by the Federal Government of tertiary education - and deducted the money the States will save from their tax re-imburements. He offered the States more money for housing, but on the condition that a prescribed proportion be spent on homes for rent. He promised that in the Federal Budget in August, the Commonwealth would move into the traditional State responsibilities for public transport and sewerage. And that is likely to be followed by the Federal intervention in residential land acquisition, pre-school education and, perhaps, the takeover of State railways."

As the crisis for the Federal system is now on us, it is worth quoting the reasons for the retention of our three-tiered government system, as outlined by a distinguished Constitutional lawyer and former Federal Parliamentarian, Professor F. A. Bland, some years ago:

- (1) Australia is too big for one government to manage. Each State, and even each locality, have their own special problems to solve, and they will only be solved satisfactorily by people on the spot who are thoroughly familiar with them. A single centralised government at Canberra is too far away to be familiar with local problems, and it is too likely to make serious mistakes because it does not know all the facts.
- (2) A centralised government is necessarily a remote government, and everyone knows that the further away things are from us the less interest we have in them. Not only, then, is a remote centralised government likely to make bad mistakes, but it is equally likely that it will not do anything at all.
- (3) Remoteness also makes it hard to keep count of what distant officials are doing. It is a rule of our system of Parliamentary Government that a Minister is responsible for everything that his officials do. There are so many tens of thousands of Commonwealth officials, and there are so many things for them to do, that no Minister can know more than a trifle of what is going on.
- (4) Remoteness, therefore, tends to develop an attitude of irresponsibility on the part of officials far away from Canberra.
- (5) If officials tend to act without regard to the rights of citizens, then we have a system of bureaucracy, which simply means irresponsible or arbitrary government by officials. The further officials are away from Minister, and the more they have to do, the more inevitable is it that we shall be bureaucratically and not popularly governed.
- (6) For we must not forget that the object of popular government is to provide means to enable the people to govern themselves, or at least decide what they want. Anything that puts obstacles in the path of the people to decide what they want is a denial of the principles of democratic or popular government. And centralisation, or remote government always reduces the scope for popular government.
- (7) Popular government is not merely the right of the people to elect their chosen representatives. It must provide means to allow the people to influence what politicians are doing in the name of the people.

AUSTRALIAN ELECTORAL INSTINCT STILL SOUND: Writing in The National Times - June 25th-30th Dr. Don Aitkin, Professor Politics at Macquarie University, gave the results of a survey run at the ANU in 1969, on the Commonwealth States relationship. In his words: "...We did ask two questions squarely on the Commonwealth versus States matter, and the answer suggested that the Commonwealth was not exactly loved. The first question began like this: "Some people have been saying that in order to deal with Australia's problems the State Governments should hand over some of their powers to the Federal Government in Canberra. Others say that the Federal Government has enough power already. What is your own feeling?" Fifteen per cent - one in seven - had no feelings at all, or couldn't put them into words. Of the remainder, 20 per cent were centralists, wanting some powers transferred to Canberra; 6 per cent said it would depend on what powers were in issue; and the rest - a whopping 74 per cent - thought that the Commonwealth Government had enough powers already.

Our second question was...this: "On the same subject there are people who say that the problem is really one of money; the State Governments could do their jobs better if the Federal Government provided them with more finance. Others say that the State Governments have enough money as it is. What is your feeling about this?"

The distribution of replies was very similar to the previous question. Thirteen per cent had no opinion. Of the remainder, 74 per cent wanted to see more Federal money coming to the States... Only 17 per cent were against the movement of more Commonwealth money to the States."

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