



# ON TARGET

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The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance —

Vol. 14 No. 29

August 18th, 1978.

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: "Speak boldly, man, the truth is on thy side!"  
- The Pilgrim's Progress

THE FRASER FACADE CRACKING: By Eric D. Butler

As regular readers and political associates are aware, I was never numbered amongst those who saw Mr. Malcolm Fraser as the conservative statesman who would lead Australia towards economic and political stability; who would stand foursquare for basic Australian traditions. The best that could be said for Mr. Fraser was that he offered a more determined approach to the defeat of the Whitlam Government than did Sir Billy Snedden. Snedden lacked the ruthless Fraser approach to politics. Irrespective of who had led the Liberal-National Country Party Opposition against the Whitlam Government, that Government would have been electorally crushed because of the widespread loathing and fear of its policies and style. Malcolm Fraser shrewdly exploited that loathing and fear. Most of the few firm promises made have subsequently been broken.

Mr. Fraser received his loudest cheers in 1975 when he hit such issues as Australian financial support for terrorism. He scored heavily with statements such as "There will be no international safaris by Members of Parliament. The purpose and nature of overseas trips will be subject to clear guidelines, Australia does not need a tourist as Prime Minister." If the Fraser Government had honoured its 1978 election promises to progressively reduce unemployment, to reduce interest rates by 2%, to reduce taxation, to establish a primary producers' bank which would provide long-term credits at reduced interest rates, and to "get the economy moving", few would have cared that Mr. Fraser's overseas trips were making those of Mr. Whitlam appear moderate in terms of expenditure. But with none of his major election promises being honoured, it is reports of Mr. Fraser's extravagance on his last overseas trip which are like throwing a match into a room full of petrol fumes. Australians

being urged to practise "restraint" are understandably caustic in their comments when they read of Mr. Fraser and his advisers spending \$80,000 in only a week in New York. Mr. Fraser did not even receive the hoped-for invitation to visit President Carter at the White House. Not that a meeting with the disastrous Carter would have served any of Australia's best interests.

Thousands of dollars were spent buying seats on a Concorde from New York to London, presumably to save a few hours, but with the jet breaking down, losing four or five hours, the total result was a waste of dollars by a Prime Minister who insists that his Government is watching the expenditure of every dollar. The lavish spending in Europe, particularly in Paris, followed the pattern of the New York spending. I repeat: all of this would concern few - Australia is a wealthy country - if the Fraser Government were honouring its major pre-election promises. But with those promises being broken, and with increasing recourse to the same excuse used by the Whitlam Government - "Australia is the victim of a global economic recession" - the facade of Malcolm Fraser the constructive statesman is cracking badly.

Needless to say, the media has had a "field day" with the Withers affair. The incident leading to the Withers affair was of no basic importance whatever. Withers deserves little sympathy, not because of what he allegedly did, or his sacking by Prime Minister Fraser, but because he demonstrated during the Referendum last year that he is a pragmatic power politician, prepared to sacrifice principles for what Mr. Fraser felt was essential to gain a political advantage. Like Mr. Fraser, Senator Withers saw nothing strange about campaigning with Mr. Whitlam and the Communists for the subordination of the Senate to the House of Representatives.

Amidst the froth and bubble of the Withers affair, it was the dramatic exit of Mr. Robert Dunstan as a Victorian Liberal Cabinet Minister, which highlighted the growing fear amongst even rank and file Liberal Party supporters that the Fraser Government is on a disaster course. The press reported Mr. Dunstan as accusing Mr. Fraser of ruining the economy and the building industry. He said that unemployment was rising and Mr. Fraser didn't care. "Fraser will cause a greater calamity in the next twelve months in the building industry than Gallagher has caused in the past five years", he said. "Over the next twelve months there'll be more Mainlines caused by Fraser's fiscal madness than in the whole period of the Whitlam Government."

Although Premier Hamer was left with no alternative but to accept Mr. Dunstan's resignation after he refused to retract his highly personal attacks on the Prime Minister, it is no secret that Vic-

torian Liberals agree with the Dunstan view that it is the Fraser Government's financial policies which are ruining their chances of surviving the next Victorian State Elections. Barring some unforeseen event, the Wran NSW Government must increase substantially its majority at the NSW elections. If permitted to stay on his present course, Mr. Fraser will produce Labor Governments in every State. Not even the Queensland Coalition would be safe.

Just as it was the Whitlam Government which resulted in the first Fraser victory, in 1975, so again it was the fear of a return of Whitlam which was primarily responsible for the Fraser Government's victory last December. But with Whitlam no longer available for exploitation, and Mr. Fraser's personal popularity now rated seven per cent lower than that of Mr. Hayden by the polls, increasing numbers of back-bench Federal Members are beginning to realise that continuation with Fraser policies means certain electoral disaster at the next elections. Not even Mr. Fraser's decision to create a special public relations unit, another example of doing what the Whitlam Government was condemned for, can improve the Fraser Government's image while it continues to impose policies which ultimately must result in a revolutionary situation. It can be predicted that the cracks in the Fraser facade will widen as crisis conditions intensify. If Mr. Fraser's philosophy and personality prevent him from making the changes necessary to defuse the crisis, then it is essential that sufficient electoral pressure be applied to his colleagues to force him out in favour of someone prepared to form a Government which will adopt policies to save the Australian Federation.

BRIEF COMMENTS: When the Communists achieved their victory in Vietnam Alexander Solzhensityn observed that the Third World War was over and that the West had lost. The West had in fact surrendered. One of those responsible for the American no-win policy was Secretary of Defence, Robert MacNamara. MacNamara moved from Secretary of Defence to Chairman of The World Bank. The World Bank has now approved a \$US 90 million package loan to Vietnam virtually interest free. Under terms of the loan the Hanoi Communists will have 50 years to repay the borrowed money and will not have to make its first repayment until 11 years after receiving the initial funds. The World Bank's financing of Communist Vietnam provides further evidence of the link between Big Finance and revolution. It would be instructive to learn what the Fraser Government thinks of the World Bank's generous aid to Communist Vietnam. During the war in Vietnam Mr. Malcolm Fraser was one of those who insisted that a Communist-dominated Vietnam would be a major threat to Australia.

As we anticipated, after a little initial wrist-tapping by some hypocritical Western political leaders, no effective action is to be taken against the Soviet Union because of the imprisonment of leading critics of the Soviet regime. It is business as usual. An American report states that before the "trials" of the dissident leaders, President Carter had offered the Soviet greater economic co-operation if no action was taken against the dissidents. The Soviet leaders treated the Carter proposal with contempt. One Soviet report says that the Soviet refuses to be intimidated by any American threats of economic sanctions, pointing out that Western economies would suffer if sanctions were applied. As pointed out by Alexander Solzhenitsyn, the West has over years been providing economic blood transfusions to the Soviet even though millions suffered in the concentration camps. And what about persecution of critics of the Chinese Communists? The Fraser Government does not propose economic sanctions against Communist China. On the contrary, it is falling over itself to send more Australian exports to help the Communist criminals oppressing the Chinese people.

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In a submission to the Arbitration Commission's wage-fixation review on August 4th, Federal Government counsel, Mr. Keith Marks, QC, suggested that the quickest way to solve the nations economic problems is a complete freeze on wages for 12 months. This submission reveals the thinking of the Fraser Government and its economic "experts". Assuming that such a complete freeze could be imposed, this would not prevent prices from continuing to rise because, as every businessman knows, he has costs other than wages. The result would be a further reduction in consumer purchasing power and less demand on the production system. There would be more business bankruptcies, and a further increase in unemployment. The Americans have tried wage, price and profit controls in the past without any success whatever. Cannot Mr. Fraser and his colleagues learn from past mistakes?

What is required urgently at the present time is an increase in consumer purchasing power without stimulating inflation. Even a reduction in Sales Tax would have this effect.

STOP S.A. readers— Dr. S.M. Draskovich and Eric Butler speak in the R.S.L. PRESS Hall, Adelaide, Thursday, August 24th., at 8 pm.

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