



ON TARGET

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Registered for posting as a Publication —
Category "B"

The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance—

Vol.18 No. 10

March 20th, 1981

Thought for the Week: "The crisis of today is then no development of modern times, but a mere continuation of the immense movement that began in the middle of the eighteenth century. In a word, it is all one and the same revolution - the revolution that found its first expression in France of 1789. Both in its nature and its aims it differs entirely from former revolutions which had for their origin some localised or temporary cause. The revolution through which we are now passing is not local but universal, it is not political but social, and its causes must be sought not in popular discontent, but in a deep-laid conspiracy that uses the people to their undoing."

- Mrs. Nesta Webster, in the Foreword to her World Revolution (1921).

VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT ON THE ROPES? "The Premier, Mr. Hamer, sacked the Minister for Economic Development, Mr. Smith, for breaching Cabinet solidarity on the casino issue."

- The Age (Melbourne), March 16th.

The Melbourne dailies were full of Victoria's political bombshell on this Monday morning: the political commentary "industry" was running at full bore as it expectantly awaited further political shocks from the Top of Bourke Street (Parliament House, to non-Melbournians).

It is not our intention to re-hash all the political gossip, as there is one basic cause for the Victorian Liberal Government's shakiness: it has been in power too long. Twenty-five years. It is stale, and its star has been setting, particularly since the State election of 1979, which it survived by the skin of its teeth.

The Hamer Government's quite incredible option to bail itself out of the VicRail mess by abandoning metropolitan rail services on week-nights and on Sundays is highly indicative of a government which is losing its grip on reality. It really thinks it can get away with it because the Government has been in power so long. One of the more astute political commentators remarked in the week-end press (most facetiously!) that this option of the Hamer Government to abandon week-night and Sunday trains is "a real little vote getter". We would expect that

such a move would surely spell the demise of the Victorian Liberal Government. What is quite incredible is that it should have even been considered!

The Herald (Melbourne) March 12th, editorialised thus: "One of the options being considered by the State Government and VicRail to ease the burden of the railways' financial losses is to scrap week-night and Sunday suburban services. What a marvellous idea! Why don't we also close down a few of the hospitals, schools, prisons, social welfare agencies and similar drains on the public purse. After all, it's balancing the books that counts - not the needs of the people! But surely it is not beyond our highly-paid decision-makers and administrators to come up with ideas for getting people back into the trains and trams (Melbourne insisted on retaining its tramways). The first step, surely, should be to improve the service, not reduce it."

This Alice-In-Wonderland option of scrapping essential services highlights the absurdity of the modern finance-economic system. Everything essential is present in abundance. The trains are there: the new silver electric trains are very good - we can build the trains! The railway lines are there; they have been laid for decades - not all are used. Many services, not only in the country, but in outer Melbourne, have been reduced. We have the railway lines!

The skilled personnel are there: the drivers, the guards, the various mechanics, the railway engineers. All necessary personnel are there! Perhaps not enough of them. A regular train commuter standing on one of the Flinders Street platforms for his train to or from work will often hear a voice over the public address system almost taking pleasure in an announcement that "the 5-19 p.m. train to Alamein will not run because of an industrial dispute", or "your 4.55 p.m. train to Ringwood will be delayed at least 12 minutes because of shortage of qualified running staff". Nothing a little more money wouldn't fix, even allowing for the firm grip of the Communists on the railway unions.

And this is the nub of the matter. Money. We have everything to run an efficient, modern public transport system - except money. If a war broke out tomorrow, we know that unlimited billions of dollars would become available overnight.

We could not help noticing the force of an opinion on politicians by, of all people, H. G. Wells - a Fabian Socialist. In a little work of his, A 1931 Prophecy, he made these remarks:

"And it is no good mincing matters when it comes to saying why we have not this universal well-being at the present time. Most of our rulers and directors are, to put it plainly, narrow-minded, self-centred, mentally indolent, pompous, and pretentious creatures of the

past; and we are fools enough to tolerate their mismanagement. These ruling and controlling people have got enough for themselves, they stick to the controls like barnacles, they live in relative comfort engaged in the defence of their own conceit, and the mass of us lacks the spirit, will and understanding to call them to account."

THE FOUR-YEAR ITCH: "The State Government (Victoria) is planning to introduce legislation within the next twelve months to give future State governments a longer term of office."

- The Sun, (Melbourne) March 11th.

Because of the present plight of the Victorian Hamer Government, it may back off on this issue if it feels that the move is not popular electorally. Right NOW is the very best time to get those messages off to the Government members of the Victorian Parliament to the effect that a three-year term of office is quite adequate for the life of a parliament. The Victorian Liberal Government has been in office for 25 years of three-year terms and is now moribund. Would 25 years of four-year terms have made any difference? What about the U.S.A.? It is in much the same difficulties as are we. America has four-year terms of parliament.

What about Britain? In the worst mess it has ever been in, with FIVE YEAR TERMS. So specious mouthings about "more time to get on with the job", and "too many elections" do not wash with us. As H.G. Wells says in the above quote: "they stick to the controls like barnacles". Naturally, all the politicians, of all parties, are so much in favour of the extended term of office. Another year of goodies before having to face those meddlesome electors whose existence must now be acknowledged each third year.

The Victorian National Party leader, Mr. Ross-Edwards, agrees a four-year term is "sensible". The Opposition leader, Mr. Frank Wilkes (A.L.P.) says parties should go to the public at the next State election with a policy for extending the term before any legislative action was considered. He couldn't be keener!

Unlike the federal sphere, a four-year term of office for the Victorian Parliament can be brought about by an Act of Parliament. The Australian Constitution bars such a move in the Commonwealth Parliament; an amendment to the Constitution, by referendum, would be necessary - and this has already been bandied about by federal politicians. No doubt, the passage of four-year term legislation in Victoria would be seized on by the Canberra politicians as "enlightened", and "a forward move to be emulated by others". You know what to expect! Our view is that State and Federal parliamentarians are doing very well out of the public purse now; their desire for a four-year term (and after that, no doubt, a five year term) is not for the benefit of Australians who pay their wages, but for themselves.

Nothing doing!

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TECHNOLOGY TWADDLE: "Mr. Sinclair conceded technological change did mean the loss of some jobs - particularly in unskilled areas - but also the creation of many new jobs, specifically in technical fields."

- The Australian, March 16th.

And this is right, too - as far as it goes. What Mr. Sinclair didn't spell out is that many times more jobs will be rendered redundant, by technology, than will be created in the technical spheres. This has been the pattern since the dawn of the first Industrial Revolution; and now with the Second Industrial Revolution (automation, computer-technology) the pattern remains the same.

Mr. Sinclair advised that "union amalgamations" provided a handy weapon for coping with technological change. But there are dangers here, as "union amalgamations" mean centralisation of power, and the Communists are ever delighted to see centralisation of power, which they make every effort to capture for themselves. As a society becomes more and more dependent upon sophisticated technology for its existence, it also becomes more and more vulnerable through the loss, by industrial action, of its technological base. No one understands this better than the Communists; hence Mr. Sinclair's idea of "union amalgamation" in the technological sphere is music to their ears.

FROM JONATHAN HUNTINGDON'S NOTE-BOOK: New developments in anti-ballistic missile technology have induced the new U.S. Secretary of Defence, Caspar Weinberger, to consider their deployment in the U.S.A. To do this he would have to break the A.B.M. Treaty which was signed 9 years ago. Australia and Western Europe also need A.B.M. protection but we must be prepared to share the R. & D. costs (Research and Development). The Soviet space programme has been progressing whilst President Carter was procrastinating. The U.S.A. has lost 5 good years; unless a collective Western effort is made to establish an armed, permanently manned space station, the West will be at an extreme, strategic disadvantage. At present, the Soviet killer-satellites cannot hit the high-flying advanced warning machines, but that could change soon when the Soviet Union sends up its first space shuttle (The U.S. space shuttle is behind schedule, but should be aloft by mid-1981).

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The next phase in the anti-South Africa sanctions is a ban on our civil air links. The Government has already pulled Qantas out of the South Africa-Australia route. The severing of diplomatic relations may not be far away; and this would be a warning signal that the One Worlders might decide on a military solution.

BASIC FUND: Since last week's advice, 22 supporters have pledged/donated \$1346.50. The Fund now stands at \$40,582.00.

ON TARGET is published and printed by the Australian League of Rights, 273 Little Collins St., Melbourne. Subscription rate \$12 p.a. posted.