



ON TARGET

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The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance—

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Thought for the Week: "We believe that the existing system of debt-finance, whereby practically all money comes into circulation as interest-bearing debt, is prejudicial to human well-being, a drag on the development and distribution of wealth, finds no justification in the nature of things, and perpetuates a wrong conception of the function of money in human society."

- From "Wealth - A Christian View", a report of the Christian Doctrine of Wealth Committee of the Congregational Union of Scotland (1962)

AUSTRALIA AFTER HAWKE: One of the most important questions now facing the Australian people is what happens after the Hawke Government disintegrates. Prime Minister Hawke is now as firmly set on a disaster course as was his predecessor, Mr. Malcolm Fraser, from the moment he took office. Mr. Hawke's only major asset is an inept Opposition, led by a man who mouths tired old clichés, with a Deputy, Mr. John Howard, who agrees with the Government's proposed attempt to "reform" the taxation system by imposing higher indirect taxes, and who completely endorses Prime Minister Hawke's decision to have yet a further increase in fuel prices.

Like Mr. Fraser before him, Mr. Hawke is now starting to complain that he is being forced to make unpopular financial decisions because of the economic situation inherited from their predecessors. He mentions, for example, the deficit run up by the Fraser Government, but is quiet about the massive increase in debt, international as well as domestic, since he came to office. We warned that eventually the day of reckoning would have to come. Australians are now hearing the old cracked record about having lived beyond their means. Addressing the Asia Society in New York, Federal Treasurer, Paul Keating, said Australians would have to accept wage cuts because of the weakened Australian dollar. This, he said, was necessary to avoid a new inflationary spiral.

Mr. Hawke now promises to reduce Federal spending by \$1000 million in order to reduce the domestic deficit. Under present

financial rules, this must help further to lower the standard of living in Australia.

In an attempt to stem the growing tide of concern about his Government, Mr. Hawke attempted in a television interview in April 10th to restore confidence by asserting that he was still firmly in control over political and economic developments. He confirmed that the Reserve Bank had acted to push up interest rates in an attempt to hold the value of the Australian dollar on the international money markets.

Mr. Hawke now promises a major economic statement this month. This will be a further attempt to convince Australians that he is acting "responsibly" and to condition them for a harsh budget in August. Governments have become notorious for imposing a harsh budget following an election. Hopefully the following budgets can be adjusted to ease the financial pressure a little as a preliminary to the next election.

The increased price of fuel will further reduce living standards, costing the average motorist from between an extra \$150 - \$200 dollars a year. Increased fuel costs must have an inflationary effect on the whole economy. The recent announcement that the Federal Government is cutting back on grants for road building has upset all State transport Ministers. Premier Cain's outcry against the Hawke decision to further increase fuel prices, was a reaction against what he knows is going to have serious implications for his Government.

Struggling primary producers are further dismayed by an increase in fuel costs at the very moment they need relief from rising costs. Sectors of the rural industries are facing conditions as serious as those of the Great Depression. Unemployment must remain high and increase under the Hawke programme. The social costs will continue to increase as young Australians despair of the future.

The defeat of the Burke Government's State Aboriginal Land Rights legislation openly challenges the Federal Government to move in to impose its long-awaited National Land Rights programme. Any attempt to impose this will almost certainly result in a challenge in the High Court at a time when Mr. Justice Murphy is not sitting. With the absence of Mr. Justice Murphy, the Court would almost certainly decide against the Federal Government.

Mr. Bob Hawke has never recovered from the major psychological blow he suffered at the last Federal elections. His over-sized ego was so seriously dented that he can forget the dizzy make-believe days of his first term. We have also insisted that Mr. Hawke is a fair-weather performer only, and that as the national situation deteriorates he will lose control of national direction. It is certain that he will

not be celebrating the bi-centennial of Australia in 1988 with the establishment of a Socialist Republic under a new flag.

If the Federal Labor Government, either under Mr. Hawke or another Labor leader, manages to struggle through to 1988, the question is what will follow. The election of an Opposition which has learned nothing and forgotten nothing, would ensure further disasters for Australia. Can Australians meet the critical situation by producing a grass-roots movement which will ensure that they celebrate their bi-centennial with the election of sufficient patriotic Australians pledged to fulfil the great promise which inspired so many of the country's pioneers. We believe that to be possible.

BRIEF COMMENTS: Remember how before the last Federal elections, Federal Treasurer, Paul Keating, projected as a type of financial genius, was predicting that interest rates would fall towards the end of the financial year. The same Mr. Keating has for weeks been forcing interest rates up. Home buyers are among those far from happy with Mr. Keating's policy.

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The recent criticism of the Taxation Office by a Federal Court Judge, Mr. Justice Wilcox, because of its delays in dealing with objections to tax assessments, is welcome. The Taxation Department has grown into a monster which sees taxpayers as "fair game". It possesses powers which no government department should have. Under a just system of taxation, the role of taxation officials would be merely to collect monies from taxpayers who readily pay taxation in the same way that members of a club pay their dues - satisfied that these are reasonable and necessary for the effective functioning of the club.

Present taxation is legalised robbery and requires an army of officials to attempt to police it. Perhaps some brave judge will one day criticise the whole basis of present taxation policies.

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The media reached another low in their treatment of Princess Michael of Kent, attempting to smear the whole Royal Family because the late father of the Princess was allegedly a member of the SS and perhaps responsible for rounding up Jews. Irrespective of what the Princess's father, Baron Von Reibnitz, did or did not do, what has this to do with his daughter? When Stalin's daughter defected to the West, we recall how she was treated as some type of heroine.

It is conveniently forgotten that a majority of the German people supported Hitler while he appeared to be solving their economic problems. But as the War proceeded with increasing German set-backs, it was the German Generals and others who attempted to get rid of Hitler. A sane Western policy would have been to have encouraged the anti-Hitler forces and offer to deal with them.

Stalin was always afraid that the West would make peace with an anti-Hitler German Government; and thus prevent the Soviet invasion of Eastern Europe.

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The ugly, naked face of party power politics was shown at the Victorian ALP State Labor Conference. Prime Minister Hawke has won a victory by having four Trade Unions re-admitted to the Labor Party. But basic problems within the Labor Party remain. There is something pathological about hatreds being sustained for thirty years.

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The Morgan Gallup Poll shows that, in spite of the heavy campaigning against the Australian flag, a massive 66 per cent say they do not want it changed. Only 29 per cent favour a change. And only 30 per cent favour Australia becoming a Republic. In spite of the evidence against change, the ABC continues to promote the possibility of a changed flag.

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Federal Social Welfare Minister Howe has made an attempted diversionary move on the Assets Test issue by proudly announcing that seven millionaires had been deprived of pensions because of the Government's policy. But the Government is reluctant to discuss how the Assets Test is having a cruel effect on elderly people who are living on property they cannot earn a living from. In Victoria, for example, the 89-year-old widow of one of Australia's Gallipoli survivors has lost her pensions and concessions because she owns a small property in West Gippsland. This frail old lady cannot possibly farm the property, which has been valued at \$102,000 by the Department. Retirement areas on the NSW North Coast have been blitzed by the Assets Test, some 500 aged pensioners losing all or part of their pensions. As the full impact of the Assets Test is felt, the growing anti-Hawke mood in the nation will grow.

A timely letter appeared in The Australian (April 24th) over the name of a Rev. Fr. Terence J. Purcell, of Broadway, N.S.W. Father Purcell admonishes some seminarians for their attack on the Queensland Government, in letters. Many churchmen are upholding the right to strike as almost a sacred duty. Father Purcell reminds them that the right to strike, in Catholic social teaching, is subject to strict conditions... it must be in defence of workers' just rights, and not abused for some political purpose... it must be used as a last resort. Father Purcell said that the Queensland Government had been forced into its extreme stance by militant unions trying to exercise a lawless tyranny.

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