



ON TARGET

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The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance—

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Thought for the Week: "A mob, as has often been observed, has its own particular psychology, whose main feature is probably suggestibility - a near hypnotic condition of mind which will accept uncritically ideas normally repugnant to belief. But these ideas, once accepted, thereafter lead a life of their own, and generate in the individual activities which would otherwise hardly have been contemplated."

- Dr. Bryan Monahan in The Moving Storm.

BACK TO THE "JOH FACTOR": The influence of Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen's impact on national politics will depend upon how much the Queensland Premier can operate independently of Sir Robert Sparkes, Chairman of the Queensland branch of the National Party. Recent statements by Sparkes make it clear that he regards Sir Joh primarily as an instrument through which he can work. Sir Robert Sparkes is concerned about the possible influence of what are sometimes described as "fanatical Joh supporters". A story in the Sunday Telegraph of March 22nd, states that Sir Robert "hates the League of Rights, against which he has battled for more than 15 years, and other extreme right wing groups who influence sections of his party and claim Sir Joh as a spiritual leader."

Contrary to stories which sometimes appear in the media, and which even some of our supporters appear to uncritically accept, we certainly do not regard Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen as any type of a spiritual leader, but unusual in the sense that he does on occasions demonstrate that his instincts are basically sound. Unlike Sir Robert Sparkes, who was born with the proverbial silver spoon in his mouth, Sir Joh literally pulled himself up by his own bootstraps. He was a genuine self-made man. The son of a Lutheran Pastor, Sir Joh has made no secret of his belief in traditional Christian values. Not even the Premier's best friends would describe him as a profound thinker. Like many practical men, he has not read widely or deeply. He has tended to learn through experience.

We are far from being uncritical supporters of Sir Joh, having on occasions pointed out that he has a number of Achilles heels. But

from a politically pragmatic point of view, we have to agree that Sir Joh has acted as a catalyst of the most potent influence in the current Australian political climate. He has thrown both the Federal Liberal and National parties into a state of disarray, demonstrating the pathetic lack of real leadership qualities in both the Opposition parties. Sir Joh has the potential to place himself at the head of a new political force in Australian affairs. But to do this he must refuse to allow himself to be isolated from the grassroots conservative groups which want to support him. He must break free of the influence of Sir Robert Sparkes and the National Party organisational men, who see Sir Joh only as a figure to be exploited in the interests of power.

The highly orchestrated campaign being conducted against Sir Joh, was striking evidence that powerful forces see him as a great potential danger - a type of unpredictable unguided missile who may strike even the holy of holies. Much of the criticism levelled against Sir Joh is legitimate, and factual. But as the scholarly Professor Geoffrey Blainey points out, much of the constant sniping against Sir Joh is unfounded. Writing in The Australian of March 23rd, Professor Blainey points out that if Sir Joh's statements concerning foreign affairs are "inadequate", what about Prime Minister Hawke's call to the European Economic Community, which includes both Germany and Turkey, to remember with gratitude how Australian troops had gone to Europe in 1914 to save them.

Sir Joh is not noted for his command of the English language, and yet he has a remarkable flair as a communicator on television. He is always courteous. A.B.C. programmes invariably have tried to moralise on the fact that Sir Joh has never obtained a majority of primary votes at an election. But as Professor Blainey points out, "The Liberal Party under Sir Robert Menzies never attracted a majority of votes, and in some winning elections received less than Sir Joh's present 39%."

Answering the charge that Sir Joh is "too old", a type of senile geriatric, Professor Blainey suggests that the critics consult the history books, and learn that Australia's most famous politician of a century ago, Sir Henry Parkes, was Premier of N.S.W. at 76, and that the famous British Prime Minister, William Gladstone, was Prime Minister of Great Britain at 84. Sir Joh's personal history compares more than favourably with that of Prime Minister Hawke.

As objective political observers, we accept the "Joh factor" as a political reality. But we certainly do not accept Sir Joh as some type of Messiah who can lead Australia out of its present malaise.

What he can provide is that type of leadership mentioned in The New Testament, that those who would be the greatest must be the servant of all. Sir Joh's biggest test is yet to come; whether he can rise above narrow party loyalties or be dragged down by those who see him only as a potential vote winner.

MYTHS ABOUT THE VICTORIAN BY-ELECTION: Last Saturday's Victorian by-election for the Upper House was of great national significance. Victoria is the heartland of Fabian Socialism in Australia, and control of the Legislative Council would have cleared the way for the unfettered advance of the Fabian programme.

One Sunday newspaper carried the front-page headline, POLL BLOW FOR JOH, the story following claiming that the Central Highlands by-election had "dealt a massive blow to Queensland Premier, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, with the National Party polling badly." As Sir Joh was not involved directly in the by-election, he could not have suffered a "massive blow." The National Party vote of approximately 10% obtained with a little-known candidate who was selected after an embarrassed National Party had to drop its first candidate, who described himself as a "democratic socialist", was predictable.

But as the Central Highlands covers what might be reasonably described as a cross-section of Victorian electors, it is clear that there is not a basic National Party vote across Victoria upon which an active pro-Joh campaign could be built to win any more electorates than those currently held by the National Party in Victoria. At best a strong pro-Joh campaign might result in one or two electorates being won. Much will depend upon the type of policies advanced by the Queensland Premier.

Victorian Premier John Cain correctly predicted before the by-election that electors generally use by-elections to record a vote of protest against the government in office. A number of minor issues, some primarily of strict local concern only, were raised during the by-election, but the major issue was whether the Cain government should have a complete monopoly of political power through the control of both the House of Assembly and the Legislative Council. The most effective literature distributed during the by-election was that of the independent group which stressed the importance of placing the Labor party candidate last in order to prevent the threat of the Monopoly State. The "feed back" demonstrated that this approach had a major impact on the voting. Liberal leader Jeff Kennett is fooling himself and his supporters with the claim that there was a strong pro-Liberal vote. The "swinging" electors decided by voting anti-monopoly.

Brief Comments: The Age, Melbourne, of March 18th, quotes Minister for Agriculture, Kerin, as saying at the Victorian Farmers' Federation grains group conference, that reducing interest rates "would only make things worse, by either pushing inflation through the roof, grinding the domestic economy into the ground or shattering confidence and resulting in even higher interest rates. "All those in debt know that crippling interest rates are a major financial burden helping to drive them into bankruptcy. Every businessman knows that high interest rates must be charged into "ON TARGET"

prices, thus helping to keep them up. Both the Hawke government and its opponents are in the grip of a black magic which treats money like as a commodity, while in reality it is a "ticket" system.

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The South Australian Labor Premier, Mr. Bannon, has called for the creation of a nationally-funded cultural strategy to provide a clear direction for the Arts Industry: this, at the First National Conference of the Performing Arts Centre in Canberra.

Professor L.J.M. Corray, well known to many League supporters, takes this apart in a published letter to the Editor of The Herald (Melbourne), March 23rd.

Professor Cooray's thrust is that Mr. Bannon, the Premier of South Australia, is either ignorant of art and culture, or wants to "Big Brother" the nation's cultural life. The Professor observes that State-engineered art and culture is a development spawned in the Communist world. Professor Cooray draws our attention to the many great Russian artists who have fled the Communist world in order to seek the cultural freedom in which only true art can flourish."

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Katharine West, that sounder-than-most political academic/journalist, will attract plenty of "flak" because of her columns in The Weekend Australian, March 21-22.

She deals with the plight of the rural community, and sees some hope in the expansion of "Joh-power" - that justice may be done to it. It is only a hint, really, but enough to set the alarm bells jangling in Finance H.Q.

"C.H. Douglas once said, in 1936, that for at least one hundred years prior that time, that there had only ever been one party, and that was the Financial Party. ALL political parties serve the interests of International Finance. Katherine West wrote:

"It surely is time our federal politicians at least acknowledged there is something badly wrong with our financial system, which fails to provide the kind of flexibility that relates the level of rural loan repayments to the peaks and troughs of rural income."

Dangerous ground, Mrs. West, If you continue on this track you'll earn the League of Rights "treatment". Be careful.

BASIC FUND: The minimum \$55,000 has been reached! We are keeping the Fund open, still, for late donations, as our commitments this year will be massive. A notice from the National Director will appear soon.

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