



ON TARGET

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The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance —

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THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: ".....It seems, therefore, that we shall have to fight the old battles all over again, and force our rulers to sign a new Magna Charta. Unless the private individual can secure for himself some protection for his wife and family against the confiscation of their home, and can obtain an opportunity to acquire some culture and leisure, then I cannot see what advantage we are getting from our much proclaimed 'advances' in science, invention and education. It appears, too, that the vast amount of mechanical skill and encyclopaedic knowledge we are acquiring has no connection with what was once known as wisdom."

- James Guthrie, in Our Sham Democracy (1946)

MORE UNITED NATIONS INTRUSION (from Jeremy Lee): Relegated to the back pages by the Hawke/Keating debacle, another manifestation of international treaties intruding into Australia's domestic affairs is being played out - this time over voting arrangements. The Australian, June 7, 1991, reported:

"An extraordinary row has broken out between Queensland's Electoral and Administrative Review Commission and the Commonwealth's Human Rights Commissioner over the electoral weighting of the State's most distant electorates. The E.A.R.C. has described an intervention by the Commissioner, Mr. Brian Burdekin, as "an impermissible intrusion into Queensland affairs" and says his particular criticisms "are either unfounded or misconceived".

Mr. Burdekin had described the E.A.R.C.'s. scheme as "inconsistent with Australia's obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights..."

The dispute concerns recommendations by the E.A.R.C. that five electorates, each larger than 100,000 sq.km., may have fewer electors than required in the remainder of the State. The E.A.R.C. has pointed out that its recommendations comply with provisions of the Australian Constitution.

That, apparently, is not good enough for Mr. Burdekin, an unelected

official who believes he has the power to call State Governments to account if they don't meet the requirements of the U.N.

Queensland's Premier, Wayne Goss, appears to be neither fish nor fowl on this issue. He appointed the E.A.R.C. in the first place. The article concluded:

"... A spokesman for Mr. Goss said that while the Premier believed the Government should abide by the E.A.R.C.'s recommendation, 'the Government will revise its commitment in the context of future elections'."

Once again, the Constitution and the Australian people are being betrayed by servile politicians and petty, unelected officials.

GORBACHEV PLAYING FOR HIGH STAKES: President Gorbachev has now been invited to attend, for the first time, the mid-July meeting of the G.7 - the annual economic summit of the industrialised nations. He is after an aid-package which makes the post-World War II Marshall Plan look like peanuts.

The Financial Review (June 7th, 1991) said: "... Estimates being produced by the I.M.F. and World Bank specify the Soviets need in a five-year reform programme as much as \$US250 billion. After inflation, that would be four times the size of the Marshall Plan the U.S. initiated to reconstruct Western Europe after World War II ..."

There is, apparently, only one requirement for the granting of such an aid package - the Kremlin's strict obedience to the dictates of the world's financial masters.

BANKRUPTCIES SNOWBALLING IN THE U.S.: In the Great Depression period, 1930-39, there were 614,938 bankruptcies in the United States. In the period 1980-89 there were 4,583,391 bankruptcies. In 1990 alone there were 725,484 - more in 12 months than in the ten years of the Great Depression!

SWISS CITIZENS INSTRUCT GOVERNMENT: There will probably be much head-shaking and dismay in Europe over the latest decision by the Swiss people - and probably over the fact that they have a mechanism to say what they want. The Financial Review (June 4th, 1991) reported: "Voters in Switzerland, the only country whose people decide on taxes, on Sunday rejected a government-proposed financial reform package that would have brought the fiscal system in line with the rest of Western Europe. Early returns from a national referendum showed that majorities in more than half the 26 cantons, or states, voted against the proposed constitutional amendment. The vote had been widely considered the first important popular test of Switzerland's stance on European integration. The Federal Government says that membership in the European Community is the leading long-term option for neutral Switzerland if present talks on a looser relationship collapse. Under the Swiss system of direct democracy, the people would also have the

final say on whether the strictly federal country should join the E.C. The main feature of the rejected financial reform had been a new attempt - after two previous failures at the polls - to introduce the value-added tax which is applied throughout the 12-nation E.C. All four government parties, the trade unions and the Swiss Bankers Association had backed the proposal"

If Switzerland were to join the European Community it would lose its sovereignty just as surely as Britain will, if the people in the U.K. are not given a direct say before December 31st, 1992.

The Value-added Tax rejected by the Swiss is almost the same proposal as the General Services Tax proposed by the Federal Opposition under John Hewson in Australia. Little wonder there is a great deal of duck-shoving amongst Liberals and Nationals on the question of Citizens' Initiated Referendum. What power-seeker wants his ability to tax circumscribed in any way?

IT PAYS TO OBEY: Egypt's compliance with George Bush's New World Order designs in the Middle East has paid off handsomely. The Guardian Weekly (June 2nd, 1991) reported:

"The Paris Club of Western creditors has agreed to write off \$US10 billion of the \$20.2 billion owed to club members in what is seen as an American-backed plan to compensate Cairo for its contribution to the allied war effort against Iraq. The Paris Club write-off, added to the \$7 billion military debt dropped by the U.S. and the \$7 billion forgiven by Gulf States earlier this year, has reduced by 50 percent Egypt's debt which stood at an estimated \$50 billion before the conflict."

Included in the 'largesse' to Egypt is a considerable sum owing for Australian wheat. In moments of respite from squabbling with his erstwhile Treasurer Paul Keating, Prime Minister Bob Hawke has agreed to make Australia's taxpayers foot the bill, instead of the Egyptians. It is doubtful if this will deter Australia from extending Egypt further credit for wheat.

The same 'largesse' - with suitable strings attached - is being dangled before Gorbachev. The Financial Review (June 4th, 1991) reported:

"The Bush Administration plans to announce over the next few weeks a package of economic measures to help the Soviet Union if the latest Soviet economic reform plan is revised along lines the U.S. has suggested...."

The carrots, according to the report are: "... status as one of the U.S.'s. most favoured trading partners, and formal ties to the U.S.-dominated International Monetary Fund and the World Bank ..."

The United States would bump up technical assistance to Moscow for converting its defence plants to civilian use, for vastly improving Soviet oil drilling and for straightening out the tangled Soviet food distribution. (End of Jeremy Lee comment)

END OF COMPULSORY VOTING? Senator Warwich Parer, the Federal Opposition spokesman on Administrative Services, has announced that the Liberal Party, on its return to Government, will abolish compulsory voting in Federal elections, first introduced in 1924.

The South Australian Liberal Party has stated that it is in favour of the abolition of compulsory voting in S.A. State elections. So it looks as though, once the "reform" starts, there will be difficulty in stopping it. There could be some difficulty in N.S.W. and Victoria; Mr. Hawke has remarked that all State Governments, excepting N.S.W. and Victoria, have the power to make voting voluntary. Mr. Hawke thinks that it is "the Australian tradition" to have compulsory voting. It wasn't the Australian tradition before 1924, and there have been criticisms ever since concerning the way it was snuck through the Parliament. The argumentation can go on till the cows come home.

The Democrats are sticking with compulsory voting, so there could be trouble having the appropriate "reform" legislation pass through the Senate, in due course. What is the attitude of the Nationals?

The League of Rights favours voluntary voting. We don't at all like compulsion over the individual as a principle. We also favour the argument that compulsory voting forces a more irresponsible vote. Mr. Peter Smark, in his column in The Age (Melbourne), May 24th, had some penetrating things to say on this issue.

Yes, we are well aware, as are most voters themselves, that one is not actually forced to vote, at the polling booth at election time. One is forced to attend and have one's name ruled out, on pain of the risk of a fine. One can write anything one likes on the ballot papers, and some people do! But the majority do "vote".

Many political party chieftains claim that some voters are angered by being forced to the polling booths, and vent their anger on the major political parties by voting for the independents. There is some evidence for this: not that we are against the election of good independents who help to lessen the influence of the big Party machines. Competition in the Senate, we believe, has helped to make that House a real force to derail much contentious legislation. In the present volatile electorate in Australia, we agree that many Labor political gurus will favour the abolition of compulsory voting, in spite of Mr. Hawke's remark about some "Australian tradition"...