



ON TARGET

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The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance —

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THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: "By liberty I mean the assurance that every man shall be protected in doing what he believes his duty against the influence of authority and majorities, custom and opinion."

- Lord Acton

NEW ZEALAND ELECTORS IN GROWING REVOLT: Mr. Eric Butler returned to Australia from New Zealand last Sunday, having observed New Zealanders voting to let their politicians know at the referendum on Saturday, September 19th, that they want changes!

It is worth recording that the New Zealand referendum on electoral reform took place on the exact date, 99 years ago, when New Zealand became the first country in the world to give women the vote. In what was obviously an exercise in attempted confusion, the Bolger Government presented New Zealanders last Saturday with the opportunity to vote, first, on whether they wanted change to their present electoral system, and, secondly, on four alternative systems. There was widespread confusion and clearly large numbers had difficulty in understanding what was involved. It was not surprising, therefore, that some observers felt that there could be a low turn-out. (New Zealand does not have compulsory voting.) But, considering the widespread confusion, there was a relatively good turn-out of over 50 percent and one could not help feeling that New Zealanders generally are so disgusted with all their politicians that they seized the opportunity of going to the polls and casting what basically was a vote of protest.

Both the Government and Labour Opposition had indicated that they felt that the present first-past-the-post voting system should be sustained. 85 percent of those voting rejected this proposal. This vote was a massive rebuff to both the major parties. 70 percent of those who voted for change opted for an electoral system similar to that operating in Germany. Support for the Australian system of preferential

voting was minimal. My own observations lead me to believe that relatively few of those supporting the German option understood its implications. But the option received the powerful support of all the smaller political groups, who dominated the propaganda battle, skillfully suggesting that minority groups would have a better chance of being represented. I found it significant that prominent Marxist strategists were backing the German option. Relatively few voices were heard stressing that in the absence of some effective mechanism for controlling individual politicians, there is no guarantee that a change in electoral system automatically improves the position of the individual in relationship to the government. There is certainly no evidence which suggests that the German people have any more effective control of their governments than have New Zealanders.

The major political parties in New Zealand are united in their resistance to the growing concept of electors having the right, as in Switzerland, to veto the policies of their governments by demanding through petitions a binding referendum on their governments. This is the big issue now emerging from the grassroots in New Zealand. The big protest last Saturday indicates that the mood of the people is moving towards a more ready acceptance of the concept of the Electors' Veto. They are now faced with the opportunity at next year's general elections to insist that this concept be forced on to the ballot paper as a genuine electoral reform. I suggested before I left New Zealand that one of the most effective ways to do this would be by a massive write-in at the elections. They must also send to Wellington a number of representatives, firmly pledged in writing, to work and vote for the introduction of the Electors' Veto.

It can be predicted with absolute certainty that there are stirring times ahead in New Zealand as a growing electoral revolt gathers momentum.

BEHIND THE BOSNIA TRAGEDY: Brilliant South African-born news analyst Ivor Benson has provided the answer to a question confusing many people: Why has Saddam Hussein been allowed to stay in power in Iraq and why do the Western powers seem unable to exert any influence against Serbia in the tragedy engulfing Bosnia? The answer concerns the rising tide of fundamentalism throughout the Islamic world, which the internationalists fear. Saddam Hussein was originally backed to restrain the threat of Islamic fundamentalism from Iran and is still needed to restrain the fundamentalist She'ites inside Iraq. Serbia's Slobodan Milosevic's "ethnic cleansing" programme is tolerated because it ensures that a Muslim-dominated Bosnia does not emerge in the Balkans. The basic difference in the Balkans is not race or language - but religion. Islam is emerging as a major factor in the world drama.

BRITAIN AND THE "EUROPEAN" MADNESS: As we go to press the undecided vote for the Maastricht Treaty last Sunday merely increases European

LAST CALL FOR NATIONAL WEEKEND

The League is still holding seats for a number of supporters who traditionally attend the Annual New Times Dinner, but who have not as yet made a Dinner Booking. Unless we hear from them immediately, we will have to make their seats available to others who wish to attend the Dinner.

Last-minute applications for those wishing to attend the Dinner can be accepted up until Wednesday lunch-time of next week, September 30th. However, no bookings can be accepted without the \$30 fee.

Venue: Banquet Room, Y.W.C.A., Elizabeth Street (near Victoria Market). Pre-dinner drinks from 6.00 p.m. onwards. Please note: guests must be ready to take their dinner seats at 7.00 p.m. sharp. There is a big programme with some exciting speakers.

An Historic National Seminar

The nature of the 1992 National Seminar, the defence of the National Heritage, demands that all League supporters be present on Saturday, October 3rd. They are also urged to make use of the brochure advertising the Seminar, bringing it to the attention of selected people. Ring up friends and acquaintances. Ensure that the panel of outstanding speakers receives a warm welcome.

Jeremy Lee as Final Speaker: It is appropriate that Australia's most popular speaker, Mr. Jeremy Lee, is the final speaker, putting forward a constructive programme for the regeneration of the nation's true national heritage.

Venue: Banquet Hall, Y.W.C.A., Elizabeth Street. Hall opens at 1.00 p.m. to enable you to "browse" through the wide range of books on display.

First Paper 2.15 p.m. Entrance: \$6 per person. Single Session: \$4.

uncertainty about future economic and political union. The record of the 'trend' toward European union has been one of high-level decision making on complex issues, while the individual has not been consulted. In the only cases where the individual has been consulted, nations have proved to be deeply split on the issue. The Danes actually voted against union, and the French vote was originally supposed to be an opportunity to firmly emphasise heavy support for "Europe". The French did not have to call their referendum; it was designed to make a strong point, which it failed to do.

WHAT IS "MAASTRICHT"? It is an international European treaty signed in the Dutch town of Maastricht last year, which provides the "constitution" for an economically, financially and politically unified State in Europe by the turn of the century. It will mean a single European

currency, managed by a European central bank, which will have enormous influence on regional finance and economic policies. It provides for a federal structure in Europe, in which individual nations all but disappear. The "E.R.M." is the present Exchange Rate Mechanism, designed to "manage" the European currencies by locking them into a narrow range of values as a forerunner to a single European currency, monetary union of all nations, and eventually political union. The next step, if Europe can sustain it, is the establishment of a European monetary institute as a forerunner to a European central bank.

THE EUROPEAN CURRENCY CRISIS: Last week's crisis, in which interest rates fluctuated wildly (up to 500 percent) and currency values plunged, was sparked by the perception that French voters might reject the Treaty, especially after the French National Front held a huge rally denouncing it. The German economy has suffered dramatically as a result of Mr. Kohl's re-unification programme. This has meant shackling the strong West Germany with a weak post-communist East Germany, which has required massive funds from West Germans to support a collapsing industry and unemployment rate of up to 40%. Kohl promised not to raise taxes to support East Germany, but it now appears that the German value-added tax (that is, the G.S.T.) will have to be jacked up. The German central bank, the Bundesbank, has locked itself into orthodox financial answers to increases in the German money supply (presumed to be inflationary) and has kept interest rates artificially high. This has made the German mark an attractive investment for currency speculators, but since other currencies are tied to the mark, through the E.R.M., other countries have been forced to raise interest rates to protect their own currencies. Thus, the British were forced to raise interest rates last week, and then capitulated by suspending membership of the E.R.M., and permitting the pound to devalue. It slumped by 10 percent, amid what financial reporters refer to as "heavy profit taking". It is not clear who is making "heavy" profits from all this.

BRITAIN IS THE KEY: As other countries move towards ratification of the Maastricht Treaty, it remains to be seen what the British will do. It would appear that Mr. Major, who championed British membership of the E.R.M., will have the greatest difficulty having legislation passed to accept Maastricht. He faces a backbench revolt. Baroness Thatcher emerges as the British politician with the surest instincts. She was sacked from No.10 for resisting the single currency, but has now been vindicated. Lady Thatcher urged the French to read the fine print of Maastricht, warning that Britain and France will be reduced to "regions", having lost their national sovereignty.

The lessons from Europe are becoming clearer. International integration of financial, or economic controls erode national sovereignty. The British now face a drop in their standard of living because of what occurs in Germany. Europe, the home of the nation-state, is set to become heavily centralised - doomed to follow the "experiment" of the Soviet Union, unless the British "jack up".

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