



A WEEKLY COMMENTARY

ON TARGET

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The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance —

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THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: "If Man's nature and his relation to God are as Jesus taught them to be - then His prophecy of disaster is just as relevant now as it was then, for, after a period of at least partial Christianity, the world has reverted, only on a far larger scale, to the pre-Christian era.

"If the Christian European tradition had been carried forward into the industrial era so that Man, increasingly liberated from the burden of work, became ever more free to develop spiritually, who knows what achievements might have emerged."

- B.W. Monahan, in Mystery, Magic, Music & Metaphysics

THE HIGH FARCE OF AUSTRALIA DAY by David Thompson:

Any starry-eyed immigrants who were granted Australian citizenship on Australia Day this year are fully entitled to shake their heads in sheer disbelief at the extraordinary events surrounding Australia Day 1993. It is to be assumed that those who leave their own native lands to emigrate to Australia do so because they seek a country offering genuine freedom of speech, movement and opportunity as well as political stability and commitment to liberty. It is therefore an absolute insult to such people for disloyal Australians to be suggesting that the Australian Head of State - the Queen - should be dumped, and the symbol of a proud heritage - the Australian flag - be replaced.

The high farce of phoney nationalism was completed by the Prime Minister, Mr. Keating, announcing that the Australian of the Year was to be Aboriginal rock singer and teacher, Mr. Mandawuy Yunupingu. Mr. Yunupingu's selection by the Australia Day Council, in the United Nations Year of Indigenous Peoples, heavily reflects a commitment to political correctness. The top-rating Sydney radio presenter, Alan Jones, described the choice of Yunupingu as an "insult". Jones said: "Australians are entitled to feel - as I'm sure Mr. Yunupingu would feel - that he got the award because he's an Aborigine. And that is an absolute insult to all Australians - including Aborigines....."

CONTEMPT FOR AUSTRALIAN PATRIOTS: Mr. Yunupingu's achievements as a

rock singer and teacher are doubtless impressive. However, his choice as the Australian of the Year is dubious in the light of his entering a competition sponsored by Channel 9's A Current Affair programme to find a new flag. Yunupingu's entry had to be withdrawn because he has been asked to be one of the judges in the competition!

The selection of Yunupingu as Australian of the Year reflects more upon the Australia Day Council than it does on Yunupingu. How is it that the Australia Day Council could demonstrate such contempt for patriotic Australians by choosing someone who cannot honour the flag? Such a decision makes much more sense when it is revealed that the Chairman of the Council is Mr. Phillip Adams. In an address to the National Press Club on January 27th, Adams called for the replacement of the Queen and the flag with such national 'icons' as Mr. Barry Jones and a "damp Dickies towel" (whatever this may be).

A PARODY OF NATIONALISM: In their Australia Day addresses, both political leaders strove to outdo each other in a shallow parody of nationalism. The Prime Minister urged Australians to face their greatest peace-time challenge, and "find a place in Asia". This was necessary, according to Mr. Keating, to secure "the freedom, comforts and security our generation has enjoyed". He overlooks that our freedom, comforts and security were secured by sacrifices made by genuine Australians - many of them giving their lives in battle under the flag that he belittles.

Opposition Leader, Dr. Hewson, was content to promise that a Coalition Government would create a National Council of Citizenship to promote such qualities as idealism, hard work, giving people a fair go, and "larrikinism". In the face of the greatest challenge to Australian heritage, the Opposition Leader's proposal is pathetic. What is his position on the Oath of Allegiance? The flag? Loyalty to the Crown? It would seem that the politically correct thought-police have thoroughly intimidated the Opposition. "Nationalism" is old-fashioned; loyalty an embarrassment. Dr. Hewson's position is almost indistinguishable from Mr. Bob Carr, ALP Leader of the Opposition in NSW. Mr. Carr has announced that the oath of allegiance to the Queen would be replaced in NSW to one declaring allegiance "to Australia". Any reference to royalty in the titles of statutory authorities or public servants would also be abolished. Dr. Hewson is hardly proposing such a programme himself, but will he actively oppose it? The choices available to Australians in the forthcoming Federal Election are hardly inspiring.

THE KEATING ELECTION STRATEGY:

All political attention this weekend will be upon the WA election result. Keating & Co. hope that, if the Lawrence Government is to be defeated, that WA voters will vent their spleen on the WA ALP, not upon him a few months later. For Western Australians, the choices are limited to an apparently competent Premier leading a rabble tainted with the WA Inc odour, and a lacklustre Opposition. But as in Federal politics, electioneering becomes more 'presidential' with the proposal for televised debates between the Leaders, Lawrence and Court.

Mr. Keating's recall of Parliament on February 23rd has been described as a cynical strategy to corner Dr. Hewson in an environment where the Prime Minister already has a psychological advantage, and verbally trash the Opposition Leader on his personal taxation record. Keating, smarting over personal attacks about his investment in a piggery, wants a full debate.

There is no evidence that either Dr. Hewson or Mr. Keating have done anything illegal. Keating hopes to highlight Hewson's double standards - of having arranged his affairs so as to minimise his tax liability, but criticising tax minimisation schemes in Fightback. This may well be a case of selective morality, in that Keating was the Treasurer who administered the tax legislation.

The Keating strategy is simply to do as much damage to Hewson's integrity, and then call an election - probably for April 3rd. Hewson needs the electorate's trust to campaign successfully on the GST. "Only 15% GST ... Trust me!" Keating wants to destroy any basis for trust.

A DIRTY CAMPAIGN: Keating's strategy heralds the development of a 'dirty' campaign, characterised by bitter personal abuse. This was inevitable, since there are few policy differences (except the GST) upon which the two groups can campaign. The main issue is who should administer the policy of internationalism, Hewson or Keating. Keating proposes to ruthlessly destroy Hewson's integrity, and if Hewson responds in kind, as he seems determined to do, the only certainty is a deepening of the cynicism, disillusionment and sense of betrayal in an already disgusted electorate.

MORE TROUBLE BREWING IN THE MIDDLE EAST:

The continuing conflict between the Allied coalition forces and Iraq can best be explained in terms of President Bush becoming entrapped in his own misunderstanding of Arab political culture. Many in the West are mystified to observe that Saddam Hussein is still in a position to thumb his nose at President Bush, the Allied military coalition, and the United Nations. Did the West "win" the Desert Storm conflict, or not?

Western double standards, however, play right into the hands of the Iraqi dictator. David Pryce-Jones, an apparent expert on Arab culture and political subtleties, points out that Hussein can argue that he has as much right as Israelis or the Serbs to defy UN resolutions. At the very least, he can argue such a case convincingly in Arab or Moslem circles. Hussein appears to be taking all the points in the Moslem world; he has twisted the tail of the mighty West, aimed a psychological kick at the tail of the departing Bush, and exhibited both a capacity for survival against the odds, and strength to peoples whose culture values such attributes highly. As Pryce-Jones notes, the unrestrained use of force is perceived by Arabs as heroism, and to commit all manner of crimes, as Saddam does, serves to establish that he is not to be judged as other men.

ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM GROWING: Hussein provides a genuine dilemma for the Western powers. His regime was supported - militarily - by the US in the Iran-Iraq war, because Hussein was assessed as the lesser of two evils. As an apostate Moslem, Hussein was preferred to the fundamentalist Muslims who had captured Iran, and destroyed the Shah. An essentially apostate 'Christian' West is obviously much more comfortable with an apostate Islamic leadership. Yet Hussein's defiance of the West, and his daring contempt for a Western-dominated "new world order" gives increasing encouragement to rising Islamic fundamentalism.

George Joffe, who writes for The Economist Intelligence Unit, concludes that the coalition's military raids in southern Iraq in mid-January were deliberately stage-managed to enable President Bush to leave office on a high note. Joffe maintains that Iraq had UN agreement to retrieve equipment from the southern no-fly zone, and had merely failed to notify the UN of what it proposed to do. Joffe makes the following important observations:

"Arab support for muscular action against Iraq has ebbed noticeably in recent months. Even if most Arabs dislike and condemn the Hussein regime, they cannot avoid noting the strange discrepancy between Western readiness to strike at Iraq and its reluctance to act in the case of Muslims in Bosnia or, particularly, over the 415 Palestinian deportees.

"The result is that Arab support for the Middle East process is ebbing away, while support for Islamic fundamentalism is growing rapidly, for it is the only way most people in Arab and Muslim worlds can see to regain their sense of self-respect and authenticity. In fact, Western leaders, as they pursue their relentless crusade against the Iraqi dictator, are throwing away the only fruits of the elusive victory they won in 1991 - and that, far more than military action against Iraq, will eventually be the true epitaph of the Bush Presidency."

MUSLIMS IN EUROPE: Further fuel for Western discomfort is found in the form of disturbing reports that Iranian revolutionary guards are now fighting alongside Bosnian Muslims. These elite forces - 2,000 specially trained holy warriors - herald an attempt to establish a fundamentalist stronghold in Europe itself. Iran has also provided shipments of Soviet and Chinese-made arms for Bosnian Muslims. As the West blunders from one strategic mistake to the next, only the Israelis stand to benefit. And the Iranian arms build-up is such that a possible Iran-Iraq alliance may well again ignite the whole Middle East. Only this time, the West cannot count on the same Arab support enjoyed by Desert Storm.

BASIC FUND: There appears to be a pleasing spurt of financial support over the past few days. Details will be given next issue. We are comforted to see donations coming in from newer supporters; regrettably some of the traditional League supporters have been tardy this year. All donations to Box 1052J, GPO, Melbourne, Vic., 3001.

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