



# ON TARGET

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*The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance —*

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**THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:** "Former Prime Minister Bob Hawke, in a speech to the National Press Club two years ago, had no difficulty in reminding his audience that we had acquired from Britain our 'fundamental principle of parliamentary democracy, freedom of the individual and the rule of law'. We also received from Britain the great heritage of her language, her laws, her customs, her literature and her philosophy - in short, her culture. Now, it would seem, we are to deny our past and denigrate the institutions that have helped to make us the free and democratic nation that we are .. It's interesting to note that, of the six oldest continuous democracies - Britain, the United States, Canada and Australia - are British in origin, and four, Britain, Canada, Sweden and Australia - are monarchies."

- Sir David Smith, in *"Australian Constitutional Monarchy"*

**PRINCE CHARLES CALLS FOR RAPPORT BETWEEN ISLAM AND WEST:** Once again, Prince Charles has confirmed the view of those who feel that he is attempting to provide leadership on basic issues. As we have pointed out on many occasions, the rising tide of the Islamic religion is one of the major factors in an increasingly turbulent world. The future of the West will be greatly influenced by the attitude it adopts towards Islam, whose numbers continue to grow as the influence of Christianity declines. It is not necessary to agree completely with everything said by Prince Charles in his recent Oxford address before 500 academics, diplomats, Muslim community leaders and Christian clerics, to grasp the wisdom of his theme that Islam and the West must seek to put aside the misunderstandings of the past. He pointed out that 14 centuries of history and mutual hostility had given rise to "an enduring fear and distrust" which masked the many similarities between Islam and the West.

Prince Charles said, "Our understanding of Islam has been grossly distorted by taking extremes to be the norm. This is a mistake. Most Moslems are moderate and tolerant but many genuinely see the material values of the West as an offensive and deadly threat to their culture and way of life. We must understand that reaction, just as the West's attitude to some of the more rigorous aspects of Islamic life need to be understood in the Islamic world."

If ever there was a time for what remains of Christian civilisation to re-assess its role and place in the world, it is now. It is not surprising that growing numbers of Westerners are turning to Islam because they feel that Western civilisation has sold its soul to gross materialism, with Money and the power associated with it, a type of God. While there are Islamic scholars speaking out against the rootless cosmopolitanism sweeping the world, it is difficult to find Christian spokesmen taking a similar stand. Just as Moslem fanatics and terrorists give Islam a bad image, so do fanatics and terrorists in Ireland give Christianity a false image. Christianity cannot be judged by the sickening double-standards of a Jimmy Swaggart in the U.S.A., or a Keith Wright in Australia. Wright was the self-righteous Federal Labor politician who attempted to use his position to destroy the Australian League of Rights.

Prince Charles could have said that a major cause of the modern distrust between the West and Islam has its roots in the West's betrayal of the Middle East Arabs during the First World War, and the consummation of that betrayal during and after the Second World War, when the Zionist State of Israel was established at the expense of the Palestinian people. Any genuine peace in the Middle East must start with justice for the Palestinians. Prince Charles infers that an encouraging start has been made. But the seeds of distrust remain.

In perhaps the most profound comment in his Oxford address, Prince Charles suggested that if man could come to see and understand the deeper meaning of the world around him, "We could begin to get away from the increasing tendency in the West to live on the surface of our surroundings, where we study our world in order to manipulate and dominate it, turning harmony and beauty into disequilibrium and chaos." Whatever one thinks of Prince Charles, unlike most party politicians, he does not "waffle" when he has something to say. It is to be hoped that he continues to speak as he obviously feels large numbers of people everywhere also feel as he does.

**BASIC FUND:** The need is desperate. Keep the donations rolling in. Full report next week. All donations to Box 1052J, G.P.O., Melbourne, 3001.

**THE NEW ZEALAND ELECTIONS:** There is much wailing and beating of breasts in New Zealand this week over the "hung Parliament" that resulted from last weekend's general election. Such a result is clearly regarded as a disaster, as no clear winner with a "mandate" to govern has emerged. The National Party may have to form a minority government, constantly looking over its shoulder

at the attitudes of the minority parties like the Alliance and the New Zealand First Party. Perhaps this is not such a bad result. Perhaps the New Zealand people are tired of unrestrained government; New Zealand has no upper house of Parliament, and no written Constitution. Perhaps the New Zealanders are tired of the type of "economic reform" that has been delivered by the hard-line "rationalist" ideology of both the last National and Labour Governments, with no institutional restraints.

A significant feature of the election result was the two likely seats won by the New Zealand First Party, and the strong showing by the Alliance. Mr. Peters' New Zealand First Party polled 8% of the vote, and Mr. Anderton's Alliance 18%. Mr. Winston Peters, expelled from the National Party for his constant opposition to such policy as economic rationalism, managed this result although his party was denied any public election funding enjoyed by other parties. The New Zealand First Party was also forced to run its campaign without television advertising. This is ironic, since one spoof political party that ran a poodle as a candidate, received \$NZ74,000 in public campaign funding because it had received a certain level of votes at the last election. What kind of system provides public funding for a dog to campaign, but makes no provision at all for a man who was easily New Zealand's most popular politician when expelled from the National Party? It is clear that public funding for any political party is irresponsible, and a gross waste of taxpayers' money.

**THE REFERENDUM:** Held concurrently with the election, the referendum on the "first past the post" electoral system produced a narrow vote for a change to the system. The alternative option is the "M.M.P." (multi-member party) system, used in Germany and over a dozen other European countries. This is an abominable system, in which the grip of party politics is further tightened on parliaments. Approximately half the members of Parliament are elected to specific constituencies, while the other half are appointed from political party lists, according to the proportion of votes received by the party. As a result, constituency M.Ps. must answer to their electorate, in the traditions of representative government, but the "list" M.Ps. answer only to the party hierarchy, or whatever other influences can be brought to bear upon political parties. There is no doubt that the sovereignty of the electorate is undermined in this system, and we find ourselves in complete agreement with Psephologist Malcolm MacKerras about the M.M.P.

The historic election result, producing a hung parliament for the first time in 65 years, probably means an early election in New Zealand, but the new M.M.P. voting system is not expected to

be operative for 18 months. In the meantime, the four minor party M.Ps. directly elected last weekend hold the balance of power, and herald the introduction of a new, humbler, consensus-style politics. New Zealanders may decide that they rather like it.

**LIBERALS TEARING THEMSELVES APART:** The spectacle of the Liberal Party destroying itself in public is only to be expected of a party that has so thoroughly forgotten what it once stood for. So confused is the party that the deputy leader, Mr. Woolridge, has declared that to win the next election the Liberals must court minority groups like the feminists, homosexuals, Aborigines, etc.! Dr. Hewson is clearly living on borrowed time as leader, since he appears unable to make a decision on anything for fear of upsetting someone.

Hewson is unable to say what the Coalition policy on Mabo is, although the High Court decision took place in June 1992. It seems clear that, as Professor Geoffrey Walker has said, the decision seems just, inasmuch as it applies to the Murray Islands in the Torres Strait, but it is completely inapplicable to the mainland. What is so difficult about that?

On the monarchy/republic issue, the Liberal Party is even more lost, although their own platform clearly supports the Crown. As Victorian R.S.L. President Bruce Ruxton has pointed out, this is an example of inept leadership. The comparison between the coalition partners casts the National Party in a much superior condition. At least Mr. Fischer has made it clear where he stands on Mabo, the republic, and other central issues.

**BLACK DEATHS IN CUSTODY:** A study undertaken by a senior criminologist and a W.A. Health Department Survey Officer, with its report published in the *Medical Journal of Australia*, indicates that there is virtually no difference in the incidence of Aboriginal death rates in prisons to that of whites. This confirms a report that "On Target" carried last year. It also highlights the irrelevance of the Aboriginal Deaths in Custody Royal Commission. Did the result of this study receive wide coverage? No, because the nine-year study didn't produce politically correct results.