



ON TARGET

- NEWS HIGHLIGHTS
- BACKGROUND INFORMATION
- COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance –

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THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: "Those who have observed the operation of the (power) system in practice, rather than in theory, will insist that the struggle waged against religion for instance is not for ideological reasons, but for power. This is because a religious man, deep down in his soul, tends to remain free of political parties or any other earthly power."

– Prince Charles, speaking on the subject of liberty at University of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, June 30th, 1983

WHAT ABOUT JOHN HOWARD? by Eric D. Butler:

There are a number of good reasons why the Keating Labor Government should be swept from office. The general behaviour of Paul Keating has been offensive to large numbers of Australians. Second World War heroine, Nancy Wake, is the latest to tell Keating how insulting she finds Keating's anti-British sentiments. She is scathing about the parlous state of Australia's defences, and has no time for multiculturalism. Nancy Wake might well have also pointed out that Keating's financial and economic policies have stripped Australia of economic independence. The astronomical foreign debt continues to grow. But will the replacement of Paul Keating with John Howard save the nation from its downward slide?

John Howard regained leadership of the Liberal Party because the desperate Liberals had no one else as a credible leader. After the Hewson disaster they turned to what they hoped would produce a new image – the Downer-Costello team. It was hoped that Alexander Downer could successfully straddle the deep ideological cleavages inside the Federal Liberal Party. It is easy to try to excuse Downer's pathetic failure by claiming that the media did not give him "a fair go". Predominantly pro-Keating, the hatchet media types had no difficulty in destroying any prospects Downer might have had of bringing the Opposition Parties together as a coherent and credible alternative to the Keating Government. A demoralised Liberal Party was left with no real alternative to John Howard, who played his political cards well, regaining the leadership without a vote in the Party room. This does not mean that there is enthusiastic support for John Howard inside the Liberal Party, but the stark reality was faced, that unless the deep factional and other cleavages inside the Liberal Party could at least appear to have been overcome, another Keating victory was inevitable with a complete disintegration of the Liberal Party.

While the Howard leadership has created an outward appearance of unity, every realist knows that many in the Liberal Party are only tolerating John Howard because they believe he is the only hope of defeating Keating. The deep philosophical and other cleavages which showed during the short Downer leadership are still there, with John Howard attempting to present a much more "moderate image" on immigration, republicanism and other issues. The statement by Democrat leader Kernot that Howard should never have backed away from his 1988 statement concerning immigration, indicates that the Democrats have grasped that immigration is becoming the major "sleeper" in the Australian political scene.

As an individual John Howard is clearly much more preferable than Paul Keating. But the truth must be faced that John Howard's long record does not indicate that he is capable of breaking with conventional finance-economic orthodoxy. Apart from his record as Treasurer in the disastrous Fraser Government, John Howard was one of the first to recommend the de-regulation of the Australian banking system and he supports the "level playing field" concept for an Australian economy geared to internationalism. Dogmatic predictions about the future are always dangerous – as the late Sir Raphael Cilento said, "If your predictions are right, no one ever remembers them; but if wrong, no one ever forgets." However, assuming that John Howard does become Prime Minister, heading a Liberal National Party Coalition, all the evidence indicates that he will preside over a further period of convulsions and decline. If he attempts to follow the Kennett Government's policy of "selling off the farm" in an attempt to reduce foreign debt, he will add to the present growing social disintegration.

For several good reasons, Paul Keating will almost certainly delay holding the next Federal election as long as possible, relying upon John Howard making electoral damaging mistakes. It is difficult to see, in the absence of the type of programme outlined by Labor Member Graeme Campbell, how the nation can be moved off the present disaster course. Such a programme is not going to be adopted by John Howard. The writer's view is that a Howard Government would be doomed before it started. For the nation's long term best interests, it would be preferable for the Liberals to suffer yet another electoral defeat, completely disintegrate and clear the way for the emergence of a new conservative political grouping. Sooner or later such a development is imperative if an independent Australia is to survive. The election of a Howard Government would only delay what eventually must be done.

HIGH COURT KNOCKS OUT KANGAROO COURTS by David Thompson:

The ruling by the full bench of the High Court that the enforcement provisions of the Racial Discrimination Act are unconstitutional, has dealt a devastating blow to the plethora of tribunals set up to give effect to the myriad of United Nations "rights" conventions and covenants. It also vindicates warnings of groups like the League, who have insisted that the "rights" legislation is basically in conflict with the traditional common law.

The **unanimous decision** of the High Court has widespread ramifications, and must extend to the Sex Discrimination Act, Disability Discrimination Act, the Native Title Act, and also the Racial Hatred Bill, presently languishing in a Senate Committee, which is holding public hearings into the impact of the Bill on free speech, thought, etc. The effect of this decision on the Racial Hatred Bill cannot be foreseen, but must certainly delay it, and perhaps even result in the Bill being

shelved until the next election is out of the way. It is even conceivable that the Racial Hatred Bill may sink out of sight, never to re-appear.

The impact of this decision on the Native Title Act is also unknown. Although the Native Title Tribunal has produced no revolutionary rulings as yet, even those decisions which have ruled out native title claims could now be challenged, and result in changing property values and security of tenure. And the Western Australian challenge to the Native Title Act in the High Court is yet to be decided. Does this case point to a possible victory for W.A.?

The High Court's decision is most devastating in that it strikes at the very integrity of anti-discrimination law itself. This may have been best expressed by Mr. Isi Leibler, chairman of the Institute of Jewish Affairs, when he lamented that the decision left the community with the impression that the Human Rights Commission had no teeth, and "*Is in no position to make moral judgements...*".

As the League has stressed, the plethora of quasi-judicial tribunals operate on inferior standards of evidence to genuine courts, often operate in complete secrecy, reverse the onus of proof, and depend upon loosely-drafted legislation. They are better described as "kangaroo courts" than tribunals.

POLITICALLY CORRECT, NOT LEGALLY CORRECT: Even if the High Court-created loophole is plugged by further legislation, the integrity of anti-discrimination legislation is now forever in doubt. The new "rights" legislation is seen to be the result of an attempt to impose ideological commitment and political activism upon mainstream Australia. As such, it is more politically correct than legally correct: a determined thrust to impose new "rights" without any legitimate expression of support – or even interest – from Australians. It serves to support the multicultural, aboriginal, homosexual and feminist "industries" to undermine the values and standards of traditional Australia.

The Fairfax columnist Padraic McGuinness made the following point: "*The professional advocates of rights tend to become authoritarian in their cast of mind, and they want to impose rather than persuade, punish rather than correct. Their argument might be summarised thus: 'If you don't observe our criteria of behaviour and speech, we'll fine you and penalise you until you do.'*"

"Thus the upholding of rights easily slides over into a new kind of politically correct oppression and censorship. And the more widely rights are defined, instead of being confined to basic political and civil liberties, the easier this is. Thus there has been invented what is tantamount to a right not to have one's feelings hurt, or a right to be given privileges of great expense because of one's misfortune..."

Enormous amounts of taxpayers' money has been allocated to those who have been able to find a tribunal to champion their grievances – real or imagined. For example, a group of women were awarded an enormous sum because they claim to have been discriminated against by BHP when deprived of the "right" to work beside men in the steelworks. Will the High Court ruling permit BHP to recover some of their money (and honour)? Probably not. No doubt the Government will scurry about, and rely upon retrospective legislation to salvage a potentially devastating situation.

There is now a suggestion that a new Human Rights Court, properly constituted, could enforce the new "rights" legislation. But upon what jurisdiction would this depend? How can there be a separate "rights" jurisdiction to that already existing under common law, where any such dispute can be handled anyway? What would the Senate make of a Human Rights Court, with separate jurisdiction from common-law courts? Even if this could be shoved through the Senate by a disintegrating Labor Government, would the High Court tolerate this? Ultimately the High Court would determine the legitimacy of such legislation, as it is now doing concerning the Native Title Act.

It is clear that the political ramifications of the High Court decision will be profound. This is to be welcomed. C.H. Douglas once wrote that it is the unexpected event that can change the course of history, and it is clear that the Fabian strategists have found one of the links in their totalitarian chain to be weakened – perhaps even completely shattered.

ATSIC TAKES A CANING ON RADIO: The spectacle of an enraged Mr. Charles Perkins, ATSIC Commissioner, picketing Radio 2UE in Sydney because of "racist" comments made by two radio talkback hosts, Mr. John Laws and Mr. Alan Jones, emphasises the tensions generated by governments attempting to solve genuine problems by discriminating in favour of racial groups. Jones and Laws have been scathing of the inefficiencies of ATSIC, and in particular, of the failure of the much heralded \$232 million five-year national strategy to improve Aboriginal health, which was never effectively implemented. Both agree that Aboriginal health is a national disgrace, and both call upon ATSIC to account for the billions of dollars that have been poured into a bottomless pit by taxpayers.

Laws responds to Perkins: "Don't call me a racist. Don't call me a liar. Don't give me a list of government and other bodies around the world that you are going to have me reported to. Just give me and the other 98 percent of people who are not aboriginal some accountability."

Critics of Jones and Laws charge that they accommodate a racist, redneck rump that relies upon unsubstantiated, anecdotal evidence to support racist attitudes. But it is much more likely that the explosive response to the Radio 2UE talkback programme is a result of a rare (and politically incorrect) opportunity to give expression to an enormous resentment that is never permitted any other form of expression, lest it threaten the sacred cows of multiculturalism, etc. In fact, the NSW Anti-Discrimination Board (which is independent of the Commonwealth) confirmed that racial vilification laws could be used to silence Laws and Jones.

It is ironic that while one Aboriginal radio station, Townsville radio 4K10, has cancelled Laws' syndicated programme, it was the Laws programme that generated 90% of its advertising budget. And a former general manager of the station, Aboriginal Mr. Wayne Waughton, actually agrees with Laws. "I agree with what he was saying because ATSIC isn't working. The point that is missing is that **we didn't want ATSIC in the first place,**" he said.

In all the controversy, it has generally been ignored that Aboriginal pastoral holdings are now enormous – easily bigger than any other pastoral holdings in the country, with dozens – perhaps even hundreds – of leases now in Aboriginal hands. Billions of taxpayer-dollars have been poured into these holdings, and **not one cent** has been generated to assist with problems of Aboriginal health, housing or education, **because the holdings run at a loss.**

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