



ON TARGET

- NEWS HIGHLIGHTS
- BACKGROUND INFORMATION
- COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance –

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THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: "Government, through the taxation system and other means should encourage investment in productive industry and not mere property development and speculation. This unproductive squandering of investment in property for short term gain was not only a feature of the 1980's, but has occurred repeatedly throughout our history. Immigration has basically been used to fuel such booms ... only to end in devastating economic depressions and severe debt. If the pattern continues there will come a day when our debt will be so large it will cripple us."

– Graeme Campbell, M.P., in his New England University address,
"The Struggle for True Australian Independence", September 2nd, 1994

AUSTRALIA DAY REFLECTIONS by Eric D. Butler:

Former Prime Ministers Gough Whitlam and Malcolm Fraser have at least got one thing right: both agree that it would be unhistorical to change the date of Australia Day. With increasing stridency, the self-proclaimed leaders of the small number of Australians who claim some Aboriginal background, men like the predominantly European Geoff Mansell of Tasmania, have been claiming that the celebration of Australia Day was "offensive" to the Aboriginals; that it is the celebration of a British "invasion" which resulted in the "slaughter" of the Aboriginal people. But as genuine Aboriginal leaders like the Rev. Cedric Jacobs have pointed out, the colonisation of Australia, a vast relatively unpopulated land, was an inevitable historical development, and that if the colonisation had been by the Japanese or the Chinese, the Aboriginals would have been wiped out.

Initially Eastern Australia was seen by the British as a means of easing the pressure on their overcrowded penal system. Colonisation progressed with the enterprising English, Scottish and Irish moving across the world to ultimately develop a new nation. Under the British Crown they brought a civilising value system with Christian roots. Law and order ensured that the worst features of the inter-tribal killing of the Aboriginal peoples was curtailed. It is tragically true, as historian Geoffrey Blainey has pointed out, that large numbers of Aboriginal people died, not as a result of "mass slaughter", which the mythologists never cease to talk about, but by the European-borne diseases with which the Aboriginal immune system could not cope.

The reality about Australian history is that starting with a small penal system based in New South Wales, with starvation never far away, the predominantly British pioneers successfully laid the foundations for a new nation which by 1960 was providing one of the highest standards of living in the whole world. The achievements of the first 100 years were the outpouring of the creative spirit of a people who never ceased to be proud of their British heritage. Large numbers of non-British people from all over the world flocked to join in the development of the new nation. None of these non-British migrants, like the Germans, sought to overthrow or undermine what was essentially an extension of the British constitutional system; they did not agitate that the Union Jack should be torn down because it was a "foreign flag"; ethnic minorities did not seek special treatment; they strived to join the mainstream of society and become Australians. The term "multiculturalism" was unknown.

While it is true that Australians have traditionally claimed to have created a classless egalitarian society, with a "fair-go" for all, and a sympathy for the underdog, they have always appreciated and applauded those who have succeeded in any field. A natural hierarchy of genuine leadership developed. But with the passing of time subversive influences have sapped the spirit of genuine leadership, of service. This subversion can be seen in the political fields. The polarisation of society under the debt financial system has developed a new underclass with an increasing violent culture. This culture is fostered by a centralised media.

Australia's traditional sympathy for the underdog has been exploited to seek to turn the whole nation into one of permanent underdogs. People who came to Australia only a few years ago as Asian refugees are used to browbeat the majority. The nation has reached a time in its history when a major effort must be made by the majority to go back to their constitutional and other roots. The Aboriginal people and ethnic minorities must be told that they are free and welcome to join with the majority to regenerate traditional Australia, and to enjoy, with responsibility, what this nation can provide. Australians must free themselves of a sick guilt complex and boldly proclaim their faith of what was once called the Australian dream. Every Australia Day should be used for this purpose.

WILL MR. HOWARD TURN THE TIDE? by David Thompson:

We are often confronted by semi-apologetic Liberal Party supporters, who claim in desperation that Australians MUST vote Liberal, because while the Coalition is not perfect, ANYTHING is better than Keating and the A.L.P. Now that Mr. John Howard has returned to the leadership of the Liberal Party, this refrain is certain to become more insistent.

However, it should be noted that in the dying days of Mrs. Kirner's A.L.P. Government in Victoria, with the memory of her predecessor, John Cain, still fresh, it was also agreed that anything would be better than Labor in Victoria. The performance of Mr. Jeff Kennett has caused many Liberals to change their minds. Even Mr. Peter Costello's brother, Tim Costello, former Mayor of St.Kilda, horrified by the Kennett Liberal massacre of local government, thought of joining the Democrats, saying that Kennett and Co. had "radicalised" him.

The truth is that Mr. Keating is only Prime Minister now because in March, 1993, even with massive unemployment and economic disaster, the electorate was not convinced that anything was better than the A.L.P. Especially when the alternative was Dr. Hewson's G.S.T. Is Mr. John Howard a better alternative Prime Minister than Mr. Keating? Irrespective of the political virtues of either, it appears almost certain that by 1996 we are going to find out.

MR. HOWARD'S POLITICAL COMPROMISES: Towards the end of 1994, a group of Liberal backbenchers who supported Dr. Hewson, approached Mr. Howard offering a political "deal". If he would commit himself to a few favours, they would agree to support him against Downer for the leadership. Howard made a virtue of rejecting the approach, saying that he does not "do deals". But, in effect, Howard has compromised himself to win the leadership.

For the past two years, Howard was regarded as perhaps Australia's most prominent anti-republican campaigner. He was responsible for stiffening both Hewson's and Downer's position on the Crown, insisting that a constitution that works should not be tampered with. However, with the sniff of Liberal leadership, Howard has compromised. He admitted to Mr. Laurie Oakes, the Nine Network political editor, that he now believed that the republic should at least be debated. This is a very significant reversal, and a short step to merely debating which form of republic is desirable.

Howard's most obvious compromise, however, is on the issue of Asian migration. He has bent over backwards to erase the memory of his quite valid comments in 1988 that the rate of Asian immigration may be too fast for Australians to accept. When he expressed those views in 1988, a great many Australians silently or vocally applauded him, hoping that some of the sacred multicultural cows would get a good boot from someone with integrity and political courage. Those who had agreed with Professor Geoffrey Blainey's views expressed four years earlier at Warrnambool, held great hopes for a genuine debate on immigration and multiculturalism under Howard. He was beaten into submission then, and the renewed temptation of power has now led him to recant completely. Howard has sold out to the multiculturalists, bending the knee to the politically correct.

KEATING: HOWARD'S EDGE: Since it is true that elections are rarely "won" by the Opposition, but rather "lost" by the Party governing, Mr. Howard enjoys an important advantage. In addition, the A.L.P. has a growing list of debacles to surmount, the latest of which is the woodchipping issue, which could easily rival the Kelly "sports rorts" affair. The racial hatred legislation is also doing the A.L.P. much damage. And there is one "sleeper" issue, which has been identified by the A.L.P. backbencher, Mr. Graeme Campbell. This is the "English" vote, which, although taken for granted, has always been important to the A.L.P.

Campbell points out that the majority of English migrants to Australia were of middle class Labor-voting origin, and instinctive monarchists. Together with their descendants, there are now two million "English" voters, all of whom Mr. Keating has successfully alienated with his vicious anti-British attitude. Even considering the heavy Asian immigration content, this is by far the most important "ethnic vote", which the A.L.P. has completely ignored. These factors taken together indicate that Mr. Howard can certainly "win" the next election.

Even Mr. Keating's nasty epithet that John Howard is "yesterday's man" could count heavily in Howard's favour. Many Australians of middle age and older have a strong nostalgia for the era of the 1950's, because they remember political stability, low unemployment, low inflation, economic prosperity, a commitment to the family, moral values, etc. They also remember that Australia then had many domestic industries that have now been allowed to disappear under the policy of integrating with the "global market".

Only time will tell whether Mr. Howard is prepared to stand firm on anything. He speaks of the importance of supporting the traditional nuclear family, increasing mortgage interest rate burdens, and traditional moral values. How will his policy approach be different from the A.L.P.? What about taxation? We recall that as Fraser's treasurer, Mr. Howard proposed the tax on books, which was withdrawn after heavy protest. Where does Mr. Howard stand on the use of international treaties to undermine the federation? What are his views on C.I.R. – initiative and referendum? Will there be an overt attempt to apply Christian standards to issues like marriage or homosexuality? These are the issues by which Mr. Howard needs to be judged before an intelligent comparison between a Coalition Government and the A.L.P. Government can be made.

It is no answer to elect the Coalition because anything would be better than an arrogant, abrasive Keating. The lesson of the Fraser years is that the A.L.P. devil we know may even be better than the bitterness of betrayal by those claiming to stand for conservative values. Howard must be forced to nail his colours to the mast, and then to keep them there. Mr. Howard can certainly get elected, but can he do the job required?

WOODCHIPPING AND GREEN PROPAGANDA:

If the facts concerning woodchipping were permitted to spoil the green election campaign propaganda, woodchipping would not be an issue at all. Basically, woodchips are produced from trees unsuitable for logging, removed to make room for forest regeneration. The campaign to stop the woodchipping export licences may have no impact on the amount of timber chipped for paper pulp if, instead of exporting woodchips, the paper is produced domestically, and then exported to a hungry international paper market.

Former A.L.P. Finance Minister, ex-Senator Peter Walsh, makes the point that the environmental lobby now constitutes a defacto government department. He writes: "The Environment Department should no longer be regarded as a component of the Commonwealth bureaucracy, but as a fully taxpayer-funded extension of the partially taxpayer-funded A.C.F. (Australian Conservation Foundation) propaganda machine....." (*Financial Review*, 24/1/95).

Walsh's biting criticism acquires further substance when it is revealed that Environment Minister Senator Faulkner helped fund green groups to draw up their objections to woodchipping in the forests.