



A WEEKLY COMMENTARY

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The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance -

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THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: "Another defence by Israelis against the anxiety from their relationship with the Palestinians is a denial of Palestinian humanity, depersonalising them. As 'cockroaches' or 'locusts' they may be exterminated without conscious guilt. The Israelis are sorely in need of liberation from their constant diet of mental violence and negative thinking. We need to liberate ourselves and our children from the pervasive psychological, flagellation, oppression, violence and negatism of 'Holocaust studies'."

— Two eminent Jewish psychiatrists quoted by
Dr. Robert John in *Behind The Balfour Declaration*

THE CONTINUING MIDDLE EAST CRISIS by Eric D. Butler:

The victory of the Likud Israeli party, headed by Netanyahu, but relying upon minor parties to form a government, including the new pro-immigrant party headed by former Soviet dissident Sharansky, has caused concern not only among the Palestinians, but right throughout the Muslim world. The much discussed peace programme has been exposed for what it always was: a mirage without real substance. No understanding of the Middle East situation and its international implications is possible without an understanding of the history of events which have produced what has taken place. Eminent authority on the Middle East, Dr. Robert John, in his work *Behind The Balfour Declaration*, provides a vivid picture of the incredible events which, at the end of the Second World War, led up to the United Nations, created to "preserve international peace", formally endorsing the expulsion of the Palestinian people, many of them Christians, from their native land to make way for the establishment of the Zionist State known as Israel. The story is also told by famous British writer Douglas Reed in *The Controversy of Zion*.

Even after the United Nations had allocated the borders for the new State, the Zionists showed their contempt for the U.N.O. by using violence and terror to deprive more Palestinians of their country. Based on the "Chosen Race" philosophy, the Zionists and their backers have contemptuously ignored any suggestions that the dispossessed Palestinians had any rights. The 1967 war, promoted by the Soviet strategists, was used to expand Israel, with the taking over of the West Bank of the Jordan and East Jerusalem, and in spite of resolutions carried at the United Nations, flatly refusing to hand back these areas to the Palestinians. Not surprisingly, the desperate Palestinians started to resort to violence in an attempt to publicise their plight throughout the world. The Zionist response was a campaign to further expand Zionist control. In 1982 Zionist Israel unleashed a massive military campaign which reduced much of Lebanon to ruins. U.N.O. "peacekeeping" forces were ignored. The same happened

prior to the Israeli elections, when the Peres Government attempted to bolster its sagging electoral support by further military aggression in Southern Lebanon. Approximately 1,000 refugees were killed in an attack on a U.N.O. camp. Apart from a little tut-tutting no international action was taken against the Israelis.

No American President has been so firmly under the control of the Zionists as Bill Clinton. Not only has he declined to take any type of a stand against Zionist Israel, but both in Bosnia and Russia he has supported anti-Muslim campaigns. A reading of moderate Muslim papers around the world reveals a growing anti-Western resentment. Not surprisingly developments are being exploited by the more militant Muslims. Yasser Arafat has been attempting to placate the more militant Palestinians, arguing that, given time, the peace programme being encouraged by the Western powers would eventually lead to the Palestinians regaining some control over their own destiny. But the Likud victory has badly weakened his position. Arafat is now urgently calling for promised Western economic aid. But how can the Palestinians be expected to have much confidence in Western powers endorsing a peace programme which Netanyahu has already violated. According to the peace programme, the Israelis should be withdrawing from the explosive centre of Hebron now. They have said that they will not be honouring that agreement. The eventual establishment of a Palestinian State has been ruled out. Israel will never cede authority over foreign affairs and security. The Palestinians are now told that Jerusalem is non-negotiable. West Bank settlements, bolstered by a flood of Russian Jewish migrants, will be permitted to expand with Israeli troops being sent into Palestinian run towns to destroy those Palestinians whom the Israelis regard as guerrillas.

The shape of things to come has been indicated by the recent two-day Arab summit in Damascus, Syria. This is the first summit of the Arab nations since Iraq's invasion of Kuwait six years ago. A joint statement issued after the Damascus summit was to warn that if the new Israeli Government slowed down the peace process this could trigger "a fresh cycle of violence". This violence will then be exploited by the Zionists to advance their own long term strategy. The Israelis are confident that in an election year they are unlikely to strike much resistance from either the Clinton administration or Clinton's republican opponents. The Howard Government can be expected to passively fall into the pro-Zionist line, even if this helps to inflame Muslim fundamentalists around the world. Zionists from around the world have again openly intervened in events in Israel, as witnessed by the support given to the election of the new Israeli Government by Mr. Joe Gutnick, estimated to be in control of a fortune of \$430 million. Gutnick is an ultra-conservative Jew and a personal friend of Netanyahu whom he claims will set Israel back on to a more religious base. As he lives in Australia, presumably he is an Australian citizen.

FIREARMS: CRACKS IN THE CONSENSUS by David Thompson:

Members of Parliament around Australia and the press alike have been shocked by the strength of the backlash against Mr. John Howard's proposed firearms legislation. The strength of the "gun lobby" had been derided as a paper tiger, which could not threaten Members of Parliament. But what M.P.'s. and the press alike have overlooked, is the fact that the backlash **is not just about guns**. The gun issue is a powerful, almost visceral issue, that transcends political party loyalties, but over the last month it has acted like a catalyst in an electorate disgusted with political betrayals over at least 20 years.

Like many politicians, Mr. Howard has made the mistake of believing his own Party's propaganda. He came to **believe** that Australians voted for him and the Coalition on a massive scale, giving him a

mandate to practically do as he likes. But as the League warned, this is not the case. Having failed to produce any policy differences from Keating's A.L.P., John Howard is being seen to be "doing a Keating" with his harsh gun control measures, with no consultation, and little care for the constitutional restraints of centralising power. The betrayals on other issues, like immigration, multiculturalism and the erosion of the industrial base have all been irritants, but the betrayal on the firearms issue has been the detonator to generate the massive expression of public discontent.

In order to hold the firearms agreement together, the press, anti-gun campaigners and nervous politicians have invoked all sorts of ogres to intimidate shooters. Those who are offended by the Howard legislation are now widely accused of belonging to the "small, redneck, extremist gun lobby". The "La Rouché"/C.E.C. movement, portrayed as a powerful, shadowy rural lobby directed by an ex-convict in the U.S.A., has been accused by National Party leader Tim Fischer of exploiting the discontent. Such charges are a serious insult to the vast majority of those who oppose the new measures. Even Reserve Bank Board Member Janet Holmes a Court, who should be more responsible, has indulged in such inflammatory language.

INVOKING SIR ROBERT SPARKES: As a measure of the extreme tension that the gun issue has generated in Queensland, the National Party has even invoked Sir Robert Sparkes, who claims that the dreaded League of Rights is responsible for destabilising the National Party. On the night of the Kingaroy meeting addressed by Graeme Campbell, Sparkes warned the National Party that it **must support the Howard proposals**, or else Queenslanders would bear the guilt for the next firearms murder. This is an evil suggestion, unworthy even of Sparkes, but such is the desperation of the Queensland Nationals.

The truth is that Premier Borbidge's support for gun controls is wreaking havoc at National Party Branch level. Members are deserting the Nationals in numbers of a magnitude that terrifies the Party hierarchy, and Mr. Borbidge has been forced to concede that the Party's members will have a chance to debate the Government's change in policy on guns at the Annual Conference in a few weeks. This could see the Queensland Government drop the Howard proposals, or seriously modify them. This would undermine Mr. Howard's "nationwide" approach, for which he has no constitutional power.

FISCHER SPILLS THE BEANS: Others who have sought to place pressure on "the gun lobby" include Deputy Prime Minister Fischer. In a press conference in Washington in the U.S.A., Mr. Fischer made an extraordinarily damaging threat to those protesting about gun controls. Mr. Fischer warned that if the firearms ban failed, and there was another massacre, **"almost all guns could be prohibited"**. With this amazing statement, Fischer simply confirms the suspicion that the present Howard proposals are **just the first step in the complete banning of all firearms**. This would fulfil an obligation for "general and complete disarmament" entered into by Australia in the U.N. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in 1983. Could it be that Howard would actually welcome another "massacre" to save his political position?

In N.S.W. the "bi-partisan" support for the Howard proposals has suffered a major reverse as a result of massive National Party pressure on their M.P's. National Party leader Ian Armstrong has retreated from the registration of **all firearms**, as proposed by Howard, to simply **register shooters**, without listing their weapons. This has enraged Premier Bob Carr, and placed strains on the united Coalition position. The Liberal leader of the Opposition, republican Peter Collins, is actually urging the A.L.P. Government to **pass the legislation as quickly as possible**. Why is this?

"The longer it takes for this to come before the Parliament," said Collins, "the greater the pressure will become. The gun lobby is not sitting back there resting – they're out there working to increase pressure, and target M.P's. . . ."

This is an amazing position for a Party leader to take. Is it not the role of M.P's. to **respond to their constituents?** Collins wants to rush through legislation in order to **defeat the process of representative government.** Clearly the gun issue is forcing all politicians to reveal their true colours.

KATTER TAKES A STAND: Those who have stood their ground against the new gun controls have suffered dreadful press, but also enjoyed massive grassroots support. Queensland National Party M.P. Bob Katter has warned his colleagues in the Queensland State Parliament that they risk electoral defeat unless the controls are watered down. Katter is quoted as saying: *"A whole stack of people believe it is their moral obligation to protect their wife and kids and homes. If the politicians can't get the message, then they will be replaced."* Addressing a Sporting Shooters' rally in Brisbane last weekend, Katter went even further. With tongue in cheek, Katter paraphrased the Howard demand for gun controls. *"Trust us. We're from the government. We're here to protect you . . . Give us your guns . . . No-one with more than a modicum of intelligence would give them more than a slingshot. . ."* said Katter. These comments have been seized upon and construed as Katter urging shooters to defy any new legislation, and refuse to hand in their guns. Katter now faces exclusion from the National Party Caucus in Canberra, with calls for his expulsion placing great pressure on Tim Fischer.

THE EMERGENCE OF AUSTRALIA FIRST: Perhaps the most extraordinary support has been offered to W.A. Independent M.P. Graeme Campbell for his position. Stressing that the Commonwealth has no constitutional power to interfere in State firearms legislation, Campbell has announced that his new Australia First group would oppose the firearms legislation in favour of more sensible measures. When Campbell went to Kingaroy, in National Party heartland, to address a huge protest meeting last week, the response was electric. Campbell's appearance in Kingaroy has sent shockwaves through the National Party hierarchy of seismic proportions. The psychological impact of such a popular dissident appearing in Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen's home town in a direct challenge to National Party authority has been massive. This was merely enhanced by Sir Joh's public endorsement of Campbell. And the endorsement was not limited to the firearms issue. Sir Joh announced on ABC radio that he also supported Campbell's position on immigration and multiculturalism. Campbell's visit to Kingaroy itself has acted as a catalyst at the grassroots of the National Party. Mass resignations from the Party have been reported in two of the biggest Party Branches in Australia: Biloela and Kingaroy. There is no doubt that there is a huge groundswell of support for *Australia First*, which could fill the rapidly developing political vacuum created by Borbidge's support for Howard's gun controls.

HIGH PRICE FOR NATIONAL PARTY: Apart from the political problems of imposing the gun controls, the full impracticability of enforcing them is also becoming clearer. The report last week that one of the weapons used in the Port Arthur killings **had already been handed in** to the Victorian police at Bayswater in 1987 raises serious questions about the viability of registration of firearms. Such a proposal could offer a bonanza to criminal elements within the police forces. It simply underlines the dictum that when guns are outlawed, only the outlaws will have them! The other report, that some elements of the Tasmanian Labor Party have serious reservations about the new regulations, is also significant. Some A.L.P. figures are reported to hold the view that the draconian legislation has gone too far, and that the A.L.P. may have to stand up for the rights of Tasmanians to protect themselves.

Events are quickly overtaking Prime Minister John Howard. But it is clear that the National Party is bearing the brunt of the anger over gun controls. The Nationals, having betrayed the interests of rural Australia for so long, may now have to pay the price. As the League has warned, the National Party could be swept away altogether in a few short years. This, of course, would not dismay the Liberals. But it would leave a serious political vacuum that will be filled by something. Perhaps it will be Graeme Campbell's *Australia First*?