

A WEEKLY COMMENTARY



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The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance -

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THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: *"The plight of the world is the only hope for the world."*

— C.K. Chesterton

THE DRAMATIC CHANGES IN THE POLITICAL CLIMATE by Eric D. Butler:

The Australian political climate is so volatile that no realist would dare to predict with confidence what is going to happen during 1998. 1997 revealed that the climate had changed far more significantly than was generally thought possible 12 months ago. The dramatic resignation of Democrat Leader Cheryl Kernot, to join the Australian Labor Party, was but one of the manifestations of what has been taking place. As this column has persistently pointed out, one of John Howard's major political mistakes was to believe that his massive electoral majority at the 1996 Federal Elections was an endorsement of the Coalition. It was, in fact, a national rejection of Paul Keating. If the electors had known what Paul Keating has recently admitted in Indonesia, that he deliberately caused the Australian currency crisis that led to "the depression we had to have" in the early 1990's, the anti-Keating backlash would have been even greater. Keating made his admission while in Indonesia having private talks with President Suharto, during which he said that the crisis he had created was necessary for economic "restructuring". Keating said that the changes he introduced set the Australian economy on the path to recovery.

The anti-Keating backlash provided John Howard with a 45 seat majority. A study of the major public opinion polls reveal quite clearly a pattern of declining support for the Howard Government. The latest Morgan opinion poll, issued on the eve of the Hobart Labor Conference, revealed that contrary to John Howard's prediction that the Christmas-New Year holiday period would see an improvement in the Coalition's electoral support, exactly the opposite has taken place. Perceptions are a major factor in modern politics, and clearly Cheryl Kernot's perception is that whatever ambitions she has are more likely to be achieved through the Labor Party than through a Democrat Party threatened, particularly in the Senate, by support for Independents and Pauline Hanson and Australia First candidates. Stronger support for the Labor Party is the result, not only of what is perceived to be weak and indecisive leadership by John Howard, but by the perception that Kim Beazley is attempting to lead the Labor Party back to its traditional electoral roots.

Those who ask what has the League of Rights achieved over half a century or more of endeavour might be reminded that the League was a pioneer in a movement which has progressively come to grasp the folly of economic rationalism and globalism, along with mass non-European immigration

and multiculturalism. The changed stance by both the Coalition and the Labor Party on the tariff issue as it affects the automobile, textile and associated industries, was forced by the threat of electoral pressure. Growing numbers have come to grasp that it is International Finance which is the major force threatening Australia's independence. The League has pioneered every exposure of the subversion of Australia's constitutional system.

One of the miracles of 1997 was the publication by Jeremy Lee of his masterly work, *What Will We Tell Our Children?* The wide ranging endorsements of the book, bringing together politicians and others of vastly different backgrounds, borders on a near miracle. The League of Rights has regarded it as a great privilege to have been able to play an active role in promoting a work which, already a best seller, could play a major role in changing the course of Australian history. As we go to press we learn that an American publisher has ordered 1,000 copies and requests exclusive rights for the American market.

I am a proud Australian who believes that we as a nation have much to be thankful for. Our situation is serious, but it offers hope and great challenges. I have no patience with those who constantly talk gloom and doom. Those who circulate absurd conspiracy theories similar to those promoted by the La Ruche movement are, I believe, the victims of psycho-political warfare. This type of warfare weakens the national resolve. One of the greatest weapons of the Anglo-Saxon-Celtic people has been their sense of humour. Some refreshing examples of this have been provided by former Melbourne *Age* columnist, Michael Bernard, who now writes every fortnight for the Melbourne *Sunday Sun-Herald*. A recent article, worthy of Lewis Carroll of *Alice in Wonderland* fame, presents an hilarious outline of the government setting up a special academy through which Australians could learn how to apologise for whatever they may have allegedly done in the past. I note that one English wit is calling upon the Normans and all their descendants to apologise for having invaded England in 1066. Presumably the Scots will, if they are to be fashionable in today's mad world, have to call on the English to apologise for having invaded them in the past!

That greatest of Englishmen, William Shakespeare, referred to the badly outnumbered English before the famous battle of Agincourt as this "happy breed of men". The story is told of the late Dr. Geoffrey Dobbs, who knew the founder of the Social Credit movement, C.H. Douglas, rather well, being asked during an Australian private meeting at a time of one of the many crises of this century, what did he think Douglas would be doing if he were still alive. "Probably playing golf" responded Dr. Dobbs. Before engaging the Spaniards in the naval battles which ended the threat of the Armada invasion, Francis Drake insisted on finishing his game of bowls.

The great master of the use of paradox to illuminate a truth, G.K. Chesterton, was correct when he observed that the plight of the world provided hope because it was a demonstration that man was violating absolute truths to which he could return if he so willed. Chesterton made the penetrating comment that the man who violated the absolute known as the law of gravity by jumping over a cliff not only suffered the consequences, but demonstrated the truth of the absolute. The obvious correct action was to stop jumping over cliffs! The role of the Social Crediter, the practical Christian, is to offer his fellow man the salvation which is available to him. The true role of the practical Christian is to demonstrate balance and optimism, not to further demoralise his fellows by spreading doom and gloom. Let us always be cheerful warriors infecting others with a spirit of hope. That great and wise man Shakespeare said, "Laugh and the world will laugh with you; weep and you weep alone." What is required is more laughter and less weeping.

DAYLIGHT ROBBERY AT MIDNIGHT by David Thompson:

It is no secret that the public opinion of politicians is at what must be very nearly an all-time low point. Any suggestion that the Federal Parliament should select a republican head of state in the event of Australia becoming a republic is rejected by as many as 80% of voters. This creates a few problems for the pro-republic brigade, but it is most unhealthy for the principle of representative government.

Moving as we constantly do at the grassroots level of politics, the League is fully aware of public contempt for their "representatives". Our system of government has been corrupted precisely because there is very little effective representation at all; certainly at Federal or State level. Such a situation tempts voters into injudicious measures in an attempt to redress the situation. Several years ago New Zealanders were persuaded to vote at referendum to change their electoral system to a multi-member electoral system on the assumption that any change must be better than the corrupt system now existing. The fact that they were wrong is only now becoming apparent. In fact, it left the system even more in the hands of the politicians than was previously anticipated. We in Australia are offered the suggestion that accountability could somehow be improved if we had "an Australian head of state" instead of a monarch.

When Aboriginal Affairs Minister John Herron toured outback aboriginal settlements to inspect conditions, he was confronted by a group of aborigines who wanted to know what he was going to do about poor housing, etc. He explained that it was out of his hands, and that ATSIC was actually responsible for such matters. One elder, Dicky Cox, asked him was he not the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs? He agreed that he was. "Then why do you take the money, if you can't do the job?" asked Cox. Herron had no answer.

This is why politicians are held in such contempt. It is well-known that some are extremely hard-working, selfless people, genuinely trying to do their best for their constituents. But these, of course, are in a minority. The main reason that the contempt has become so thorough is that the MPs are quite content to take a financial salary (that many regard as inadequate) without being prepared to accept responsibility for results. When constituents attempt to hold them accountable for political results, most MPs claim that real decision-making is out of their hands, and controlled by the political party. Why, then, do they continue to take the money?

Perhaps one of the worse examples of the greed and arrogance of politicians was that of the NSW parliamentary superannuation grab. In a deal that was cooked up between the Liberals and the ALP, legislation was sneaked through the NSW Legislative Council at 1.00am on the last sitting day before Christmas, taking about ten minutes, without single objection. It effectively lumped MPs perks and expense entitlements into their official salary which, they claimed, was fair enough, because they were taxed on the perks anyway.

But what they didn't explain, and which took a few weeks to emerge, was that this had a dramatic effect on politicians' super, increasing it by about 30%! In addition to this, it was made retrospective, and even retired MPs were to benefit from huge super hikes. An embarrassed Premier Carr, when finally flushed from his bunker, agreed to reverse the legislation, but the damage was done. He claimed that hardly anyone really knew what the legislation meant, and that it was a result of incompetence, rather than a conspiracy.

This was a rather brazen attempt to fob off a media pack baying at his heels, and a clearly enraged public. The fact is that it was very clearly a conspiracy. How else does Mr. Carr explain that **not one MP voted against the legislation?** Normally the Opposition will vote (sometimes senselessly) against the Government as a matter of course. But not this time, in the dead of night when the deal could be covered up.

The Parliamentary super rort in NSW was actually cooked up by Liberal front-bencher John Hannaford. It was agreed to by Treasurer Egan, and the two selected Independent MLC Richard Jones to put up the amendment. Why was Jones chosen? Because he is not standing for re-election, and if there were electoral consequences, they would fall on a pot-smoking nudist opportunist who didn't have to face the electorate again anyway! And Carr has the gall to say it wasn't a conspiracy.

As it is, MPs in NSW had the best salary package in the country even before the midnight robbery. They have been forced to suffer a rise in salaries of around 90% in the last decade, and have super schemes (largely funded by the taxpayer) that an industry CEO would kill for. Not to mention secure tenure for four-year terms.

If such pay packages were available for the police, or ambulance services, or nurses, perhaps the public would accept it. But the same MPs who took the super hand-out fought tooth and nail to resist pay increases for all these services, for people who actually do something constructive for the community.

The question that could be asked of politicians anywhere, is whether a republic could prevent such outrageous rorts from taking place? The answer is clearly NO. The simplest and most effective constitutional change that could help correct the situation is the introduction of initiative and referendum. If politicians propose to continue to "take the money", then let them permit a constitutional change that will give voters a mechanism to make them accountable.

I.M.F. CENTRE OF WORLD POWER: Few could have overlooked the press images of Indonesia's President Soeharto being forced to sign the demands laid down by the International Monetary Fund for "fiscal changes" as a condition for the multi-billion-dollar IMF-brokered bail-out. It was most embarrassing to hear reports that even people like Prime Minister Howard, and Acting Prime Minister Fischer were urging Soeharto to toe the I.M.F. 'line'.

As the developing skeleton of global government becomes more visible, institutions like the IMF and the United Nations become a visible part of a potential global tyranny. A report from *The Weekend Australian* (11/1/98) was most candid and revealing:

"The IMF is the most important centre of power in the world at the moment. Yet it is not an adjunct of the UN, let alone the US Federal Reserve or of any other sovereign government. It is a super-sovereign institution that is trying to prevent Asia's financial influenza turning pandemic. . . ."

Rather than blind reverence for the IMF, a number of hard questions should be asked. If there is no sovereign control of the IMF, from where does it derive its authority? What are the likely consequences if the IMF "medicine" for Asia turns out to be ineffective, or worse, more damaging?

It is interesting to note that such questions are now beginning to be aired in the United States. A "left-right bi-partisan educational forum" in Washington has raised questions about whether the IMF remedies will further impoverish Asians, help destroy their environment, stimulate a drive for Asian export-led recoveries, and therefore damage the US economy.

There is increasing uneasiness that an almost unaccountable IMF can demand of President Clinton that the US offer assistance to corrupt regimes in the third world, while American poor are told that there is no assistance available for health services and children living in poverty. Can the message penetrate to Western voters before the grip of global government becomes too strong to dislodge?