



A WEEKLY COMMENTARY

ON TARGET

- NEWS HIGHLIGHTS
- BACKGROUND INFORMATION
- COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance –

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THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: *"The natural tendency of all government is to increase its own power."*
Lord Bryce in *Modern Democracies*

REGENERATING THE DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM by Eric D. Butler:

Democracy is one of those omnibus terms which mean different things to different people. There is, for example, Abraham Lincoln's famous statement about democracy being government of the people, by the people and for the people. Like the definition "Majority rule", this definition is far from satisfactory. All government is restrictive and, as pointed out by James Guthrie in his little booklet, *Our Sham Democracy*, with the subtitle "The Majority Vote Racket", every nation consists of different minorities and governments claim that, as they penalise minorities, they are doing this "on behalf of the majority", which means the progressive destruction of all minorities. The bigger the organisation, the less effect the individual has over the policy of the organisation. The world of today provides a growing number of examples of how minorities are being penalised under various slogans, such as "the common good" or "world opinion". As Australians move towards yet another election, the major political parties, using all the techniques of totalitarian propaganda, will attempt to convince electors that they "should not waste their votes" by voting for independent or minor parties". With public opinion polls indicating that perhaps nearly 50 percent of the electors have yet to decide how to vote, it is a most appropriate time for electors to examine some basic issues concerning government.

As Lord Bryce observed in his great classic, *Modern Democracies*, there are some absolutes which should be observed. The first is that all governments, irrespective of label, tend to increase their own powers. And there is the absolute mentioned by Lord Acton, that all power tends to corrupt and that absolute power corrupts absolutely. Over the centuries man has struggled with the problem of how to have government of some kind without government becoming an oppressive monster. The lessons of history are clear: the bigger and more centralised a government of any kind becomes, the more difficult it becomes for the individual to control it. In his essay on how to rebuild post-communist Russia, Alexander Solzhenitsyn observes that the more centralised a nation becomes, the greater the corruption at the top, and that it is a waste of time attempting to regenerate from the top; such regeneration must start from the "grassroots".

Australians can make a start to solve their problems by insisting that they want to have a direct say in their own future. It is helpful to recall that the term "democracy" is derived from the Greeks. The Greeks in their efforts to create a democratic form of government, one in which the people were genuinely represented, demonstrated that the basic requirement for a government was that it was

decentralised, that the people were basically the same type of people sharing the same philosophical views. If a genuine democracy is one in which the will of the people prevails, it is obvious that there is little genuine democracy in Australia today. Consider how the major parties select their candidates. There was a time when the old Country Party, forerunner of the National Party, supported genuine democracy, believed that new States should be created and that social harmony required a harmonious nation. They even believed that Country Party members should have a direct say in who should represent them in Parliament. There were occasions when multiple Country Party Members stood, generally finding that they actually increased the total Country Party vote. But only recently there was controversy in the National Party in New England concerning whether the current Speaker of the Parliament, Ian Sinclair, should remain as the official National Party candidate because John Howard wanted him to stay in Parliament. Currently there is a rumour that the coming Federal Elections, instead of resigning as originally announced, Sinclair might be moved to another "safe" National Party electorate. The Labor Party treats its supporters like a flock of sheep who are expected to "baa" in favour of any Labor Party candidate chosen by any of the different "factions" in the Party. Former ABC news presenter Mary Delahunty is having a battle to be accepted by one of the Victorian Labor Party "factions".

The Age, Melbourne, has been providing selections from a book which purports to tell the story of how former Democrat leader Kernot was successfully persuaded to join the Labor Party. There is no reference to either Labor Party or Democrat Party supporters being consulted. Press reports claim that Liberal and National Party bosses are planning a campaign to remove Independent Russell Savage from the Victorian Parliament. Savage has been a thorn in the side of the power men and has provided an example of the type of representation required in Australian parliaments. He dared to stand up and vote, as a minority of one, against the absurd gun controls introduced by the Kennett Coalition Government. "Convention" demands that in Federal electorates like Murray, Victoria, the National Party, which previously held the electorate for many years going back to the days of Sir John McEwan, cannot stand a National Party candidate against the present Liberal Party Member. Regeneration of genuine democracy requires that the electors start to reject the concept that they are merely political fodder for the parties.

C.H. Douglas said that genuine democracy required electors to have the opportunity to vote on **one issue at a time**. Changes to the Australian Federal Constitution provide electors with such an opportunity. What is required is an extension of this principle, enabling electors to demand such a vote on major issues. The concept of the Electors "Veto and Citizens Referendum" should be made an issue at the next Federal Elections. Every effort must be made to persuade electors to refuse to vote for any candidate who will not give a **written** pledge to work and vote for the introduction of this concept into the Federal Constitution. Here is a starting point for the regeneration of the Australian political system, a regeneration which will restore Australian national pride, making it a leader in the struggle to preserve what is left of Western Civilisation.

WATERFRONT WAR WAGED ON TWO FRONTS by David Thompson:

The Liberal Party leadership aspirations of Workplace Relations Minister Peter Reith must be firmly on the line, and perhaps even jeopardised as the waterfront crisis continues. Success for Reith, Howard and the Government depends upon a short campaign with an emphatic victory over the Maritime Union. If the crisis goes against Patrick and the Government, it would appear that not only Reith's leadership aspirations would be dashed, but his tenure as a Minister curtailed.

This would be unjust, since it is clear that the waterfront crisis is **not an industrial dispute**, but a **political dispute** brought on not by Patrick Stevedores alone, not by Mr. Reith alone, but in collusion

with the Howard Government. Without the Government's support, it is highly unlikely that Mr. Corrigan of Patricks would have embarked upon such a high-risk confrontation.

Mr. Howard and Mr. Reith need to win more than just the waterfront war. Since a Federal Election is looming, they need to win the public relations war just as convincingly as the war with the MUA. So far it would appear that whatever the chances of defeating the union, the public relations war is being lost by Mr. Howard.

In public relations, as in election campaigns, perceptions are everything, and facts only incidental. Whatever the courts rule on the facts of the matter, the clear perception is that there has been collusion between the Government and Patricks to smash the MUA. And the history of bloody-mindedness of the Maritime Union tends to be neglected in the face of television images of families without incomes through no **apparent** fault of their breadwinner.

While the issue has been cleverly "managed" by the press, there is no dismissing Mr. Howard's assertion that the Patrick employees were sacked not because they were on strike (at the time, they were not), **but because they were unionists**. Just how this sits with Mr. Reith's new Workplace Relations Act (which was passed with Cheryl Kernot's collusion as Democrat leader) has not been adequately explained.

Similarly, the perception is that while some of the more outrageous union rorts in the bigger ports of Sydney and Melbourne deserved industrial retribution, other sacked waterside workers were highly efficient, relatively untroublesome, and as innocent of industrial thuggery as waterside workers have ever been. For example, the case of Launceston and Townsville waterside efficiencies are well reported. It is not reported that in Townsville most ship loading is in bulk, not containers, and therefore handled not by the MUA, but by the Australian Workers' Union.

Perhaps the greatest threat to whatever victory Mr. Reith is able to claim from the waterfront crisis, is the way Patricks (with Government approval, presumably) have gone about it. In the new age of vast industrial technology, it is crystal clear that the importance of wage rates is becoming secondary to long-term job security. If companies like Patricks are able to off-load their employees by dumping them into an insolvent subsidiary without their knowledge, and then sacking them with relative impunity, then the way is left open for the ALP to stump the country in an election campaign on job security.

Such a campaign could have devastating consequences for the Coalition. The National Party is as culpable in this as the Liberals, since they are closely identified with the NFF in this issue. Whatever our politics, Australians facing the reality of unemployment in "the global market" become extremely nervous, and more likely to vote to protect our incomes than to appease our ideology. The recent cases like that of miners in Cobar being sacked by an insolvent subsidiary of a wealthy multinational company, and being denied their entitlements with no means of recourse only make us more nervous still.

The resources available to the Government suggest an (eventual) victory over the MUA, but the question of a public relations victory in advance of an election campaign is another matter.

SANCTIONS BITE IN GLOBAL MARKET: The speedy effects of the waterside dispute on domestic business is an illustration and a warning of how vulnerable the Australian economy has become to even a temporary suspension of importing or exporting. Both big and small businesses are threatened with serious disruption, and possibly even insolvency if they are isolated from foreign suppliers or clients.

Although the suggestion is regarded as too outrageous to contemplate, the effect of economic sanctions or even war upon our ability to function domestically should be seriously considered. If it was "the international community" that instituted economic sanctions instead of the waterfront dispute, could Australia survive? In the short term, the disruption would be considerable, as we are beginning to discover.

But in the long term, Australia has sufficient food and other resources to sustain our people for a lengthy war or encounter with economic sanctions. It simply means that "industrial protection" would be forced upon us, rather than chosen by us as a deliberate policy. While Australia remains a victim of "economic rationalism" which insists that the future belongs with the global economy, we lack the freedom to set our own policies on matters concerning foreign affairs. Either we do as we're told, or we are quickly brought to heel with forced isolation from "the international community". That the "international community" is either completely amoral, or holds totally different standards to those accepted by a western, once-Christian nation is quite beside the point.

IMF CONFIRMS POWER OF "THE MARKET": The IMF appears to have been forced to recognise reality when it urged governments to attempt to curb the activities of "hedge funds" last week. Hedge funds are vast private investment pools with billions of dollars to invest, which can be quickly transferred from the investment to another around the globe. By sheer size and volume, the funds are able to dramatically affect commodity prices, currencies or confidence in financial markets world-wide.

It was the hedge funds that were blamed by Prime Minister Mahathir of Malaysia for the collapse of his country's currency. He charged that this was a new form of colonialism, bent on preventing Asian nations from benefitting from their own growing wealth.

But the existence of the problem is largely a product of the new philosophy championed by the IMF itself. It seems ludicrous to call upon **governments** to take steps to curb the hedge funds when groups like the IMF have been insisting that governments "deregulate" their financial systems, ceding effective sovereignty to "the markets" that are virtually the playground of the private funds.

One of the billionaire financiers controlling a "hedge fund" singled out by Dr. Mahathir was George Soros. Soros, a Hungarian-born Jew, was the man credited with raiding the British pound, and "breaking the Bank of England". But since Mahathir's allegations, Soros himself has warned that the international financial markets are "inherently unstable". He should know; he used that instability to generate a massive fortune by manipulating currencies.

COLSTON ON WIK: The relative unimportance of representative government to the major political power groups was demonstrated by disgraced former ALP Senator Mal Colston on the Wik issue. It is apparent that the Coalition Government may have deliberately engineered the defeat of its native title legislation in the Senate by "refusing to accept" the vote in support of their Bill from Senator Colston.

The Government, on a "point of principle" refused to accept Colston's vote. How can they do this? Simply by using the strategy of **sending one of their own Senators out of the Chamber** when the time came to vote! As a result, the legislation failed.

Which Senator was sent from the Chamber? Which State was deprived of Senate representation by the all-powerful party political machine? How is representative government improved by a government gaining a double dissolution "trigger" with the device of depriving a Senator of the right of representing his constituents? Would Government strategists resort to similar strategies on other legislation, such as the complete privatisation of Telstra? Or would they swallow their pride, and permit Senator Colston to vote with them?

