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A WEEKLY COMMENTARY



ON TARGET

- NEWS HIGHLIGHTS
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OF AUSTRALIA

The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance -

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THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: *"The League of Rights offers no plans or blueprints for the cure of human problems . . . The League teaches that these problems cannot be solved by reason or logics. Logic, like Algebra or any other form of mathematics, is only a mechanism, an instrument. Like the slide rule, it can only produce the result of all the factors fed into it. Truth must be discovered. This requires genuine humility. The laws of the Universe, called the Natural Law, transcended human thinking and if man wishes to live in harmony he should endeavour to understand those laws, and to apply them in all spheres - personal, social, government, economic and racial."*

- The Truth About The League of Rights

PAULINE HANSON AND POLITICAL MYTHS by Eric D. Butler:

Before the anti-Pauline Hanson critics quote the factual mistakes of the One Nation leader, they might consider some of the factual mistakes of a number of politicians. It is true that Pauline Hanson was not correct about the 1967 Referendum, but she is in good company. There was the occasion when no less a celebrity than Bob Hawke claimed that the 1967 Referendum result, with an overwhelming YES vote, endorsed Aboriginal Land Rights. It did nothing of the kind. If the 1967 Referendum proposal had been worded as suggested by Bob Hawke, there is little doubt that the Referendum result would have been quite different. The overwhelming majority of the Australian people have always been in favour of a "fair go" for the Australian people of Aboriginal background. They are still in favour of that "fair go". But Pauline Hanson has been progressively gaining support as it becomes obvious that large numbers of part-Aboriginal people are obtaining benefits of all kinds to the detriment of genuine Aborigines and Europeans. This is producing friction, where previously there was little or none, among those who constitute the overwhelming majority of the Australian people.

In view of the controversy initiated by Pauline Hanson's claims, it is not surprising that a number of National Party supporters are suggesting that another referendum is required to eliminate the controversy which has been stimulated by Pauline Hanson's claims. For the record it should be noted that the League of Rights was a minority which refused to endorse the 1967 YES referendum, which, in essence, sought to increase the power of the central Commonwealth powers over the States. This increase in Commonwealth powers has produced a situation which has progressively deteriorated. One of the key questions to be resolved is: "Who is entitled to be listed as an Aborigine?" A study of the debates in the Federal Parliament leading up to the 1967 Referendum and the manner in which the Referendum was conducted reveal the type of confusions which some National Party members feel should be resolved. In spite of the fact that there were more "dinki-di" Aborigines, as stated by one commentator from the Northern Territory, living in the Northern Territory than the total number living

in the Southern States all put together, they were not entitled to vote at the Referendum. No official case against the proposed constitutional change, allegedly only a "minor" one, was circulated along with the YES case as normally required.

Those electors who voted YES in the mistaken view that they were voting to prevent "discrimination" against Aborigines never realised that they were supporting the opening of a Pandora's box which would make it possible for a relatively small number of Aborigines to be exploited by non-Aborigines against white Australians. One of Australia's best known "Aborigines" becoming a senior official in the Federal bureaucracy was Charles Perkins. Thanks to white benefactors, Perkins was brought up enjoying a comfortable European lifestyle and received a first class education in Adelaide. In his autobiography, *A Bastard Like Me*, Perkins claims that he was born on the office table of the Telegraph Station in Alice Springs, on January 22nd, 1936 or 1937, while the operator went on typing out messages. The only problem with the Perkins' version of his history is that the official records show that the last message sent from the Alice Springs Telegraph Station was on January 27th, 1922, many years before Perkins was born. Perkins has a long record of being careless with facts, but he does admit in his book that there are genuine Aborigines of tribal background and those like himself. Perkins writes, "What is going to happen to people like myself ... we will probably be pushed out into the background, which will be a good thing in the long run" Perkins went on to say that people like himself should let the "tribal people" have their day. But the tribal Aborigines have been, like Perkins, the victims of a situation in which they are controlled by the part Aborigines, for whom they have contempt.

These basic "facts of life" cannot be glibly dismissed by loose talk about "Racism". Consider what happened following the end of the Vietnam War in 1975. The retreating American troops left behind a quarter of a million children of Vietnamese origin. The Marxist doctrine concerning "the brotherhood of man" did not extend to children of Vietnamese backgrounds but with American fathers. There was no place for these halfcaste children in the new Vietnam. Eventually the American Government accepted that the USA had a moral responsibility to accept the biological products of the war in Vietnam. They were adopted into American homes or orphanages. But no one has seriously suggested that they should have the right to return to Vietnam and claim land, or any other kind of rights, on the basis that they are of Vietnamese origin. Why then should a Charles Perkins, or similar Australian, claim that they have more rights than other Australians simply because they can claim some Aboriginal origins? What is required is a dash of realism if the further fragmentation of Australia is to be prevented.

The situation is not helped by the absurd claims of Victorian Premier Jeff Kennett who, in his recent Menzies Trust Address in the United Kingdom, described Sir Robert Menzies as a strong supporter and pioneer of multiculturalism. The Australian Prime Minister who claimed that Australians were British "to their bootstrap" would be amazed to hear such nonsense. Pauline Hanson has never said anything as silly as that. Every educated person knows that the nation described as the United Kingdom is an amalgam of Saxon and Celtic peoples; that because primarily of geography they had organically developed into what has become known as a "United Kingdom". The founding peoples are basically from the same stream of history, sharing a common Christian culture. It is a complete myth that Western Europe is a nation in the sense that the United Kingdom is a nation. While it is possible to describe the USA as a nation because of the biological and cultural roots of the people, it is generally agreed that the USA is starting to display signs of fragmentation as a result of a departure from the original immigration policies, which sought to maintain a homogeneous society.

One of the greatest services Pauline Hanson may render the Australian people is to force a rethink of immigration policies and their long term effects on Australia. Another referendum may be necessary to clarify what have developed into dangerous myths.

HOW SENATOR COLSTON SAVED THE COALITION by David Thompson:

Not for the first time, Senator Mal Colston finds himself in a curious position. Having to bear all the ritual hatred accorded to an ALP "rat", and reviled by the rather holier-than-thou Coalition figures who have not, themselves, been caught with hands in the public till, Colston has suddenly achieved almost hero-status by those deeply uneasy about the selling off of public assets and infrastructure.

Colston's position also highlights a common grassroots gripe that has endured for 10 years, that between the big parties, there is very little difference. The greatest effort for the big-party politicians seems to be to depict themselves as "against" something they supported in Opposition, or vice versa. In Mr. Howard's case, he is now faced with trying to "sell" the GST that he once swore was stone dead ("never, ever") after assisting Liberal Leader John Hewson to campaign for a GST. Does he ever have the feeling with the GST that travellers often have upon awaking in the morning, and wondering where on earth they are today?

Mr. Beazley, on the other hand, now has to try to convince "true believers" that he is again in favour of some sort of industrial protection, having just done his best in partnership with Mr. Keating to shove Australia onto the level playing field of free trade. Is Beazley ever invited to address, say, the Textile Workers Union these days? Perhaps there are no textile workers left?

Perhaps Mr. Tim Fischer now has to recast himself as the champion of retaining public infrastructure, instead of privatising everything that belongs to the public. Mr. Fischer might yet owe Senator Colston a huge favour. If it wasn't for Colston, the Telstra privatisation legislation would have gone through the Senate, and Fischer would be left to bear the brunt of the enormous regional dissatisfaction with the whole privatisation process. As it is, the Coalition between the Liberals and Nationals will clearly be stretched to breaking-point, but without Colston it may well have been completely blown to bits.

National Party MPs who dare to do so, like the admirable De-Anne Kelly, are roasting Fischer publicly on more issues than just Telstra. It is almost certain that the rest are roasting him privately. So much so that Fischer has now declared that the ALP may even win the next election, with Simon Crean the next Prime Minister if Beazley loses his seat because of a One Nation challenge in Brand. This declaration has been taken up with a vengeance by other "conservatives" around the country, including National Party leader in WA, Hendy Cowan. Clearly Fischer is attempting to restore some Party discipline upon the likes of Kelly, who can sniff the political breeze.

HOWARD DETERMINED TO GO DOWN WITH THE SHIP: Deputy Prime Minister Fischer claims that the next election will boil down to a choice between the politics of fear and hate versus the politics of achievable progress. His Prime Minister, Mr. Howard, has declared that there is no way he will be "resiling" from tax reform and selling off Telstra. We now notice that Mr. Howard never refers to a GST, but always to "tax reform", in which something like a broad-based consumption tax is merely one element. Tax reform is "non-negotiable".

There may be a number of reasons for Mr. Howard's intransigence. The determination to press ahead, despite the obstacles, is regarded as a virtue. But the leading businessmen have raised over \$4 million for an advertising campaign for the GST, most of which has already been committed. Having just regained support from the big-business types, Mr. Howard would be extremely embarrassed to announce a withdrawal of the GST proposal. The big-business types would not be amused. They may be so disgruntled that, come election time, the cheque-book is kept buttoned in the back pocket when the Liberal Party fundraiser calls.

Perhaps Mr. Howard also banks upon the Government's own GST sales campaign, in which \$10 million of public money is to be wasted telling us what a good thing the GST will be. Except the advertising gurus are now searching for a new name for the hated GST. The latest suggestion was BBT (broad-based consumption tax), which might not last long when the first wag re-names it the "bobbitt tax" after the American Wayne

Bobbit, whose enraged wife severed his vital member with a butcher's knife. The allusion is surely enough to make even John Howard wince!

The whole issue is once again thrown into focus by former Treasury Secretary and National Party Senator John Stone. In his column of July 17th (*The Australian*), Stone writes that for some reason Mr. Howard still thinks the GST is a taxation matter, and continues to proffer the technical arguments in its favour. He then includes himself among the "Hansonites" for whom he suspects the GST is not a taxation matter at all, but one of big political parties simply not listening to the people.

First, says Stone, we rejected the Hewson GST in 1993, condemning us to three more years of Keating. Second, Mr. Howard promised to "never, ever" propose a GST. And third, Howard is obviously blithely preparing to break that promise, whatever the tax is actually to be called.

"None of this matters," writes Stone. "If only out of sheer rage and frustration over the arrogance of Howard and Peter Costello – not to mention the stupidity of Nationals' leader Tim Fischer – we will vote against the GST in any case."

The only hope for the Howard administration rests on Howard himself. Either he will eat humble pie, and completely change political tack, or he will go down in history as a one-term Prime Minister. Will Mr. Howard actually "listen to the people" – **and represent their views?** He doesn't have to do a grand nation-wide tour to "listen". He only has to talk to his backbenchers. But Australians are increasingly convinced that Mr. Howard cannot bring himself to respond to the wishes of the electorate. He would rather wear a bullet-proof jacket while assuring innocent people that the confiscation of their firearms is for their own good. In short, Mr. Howard appears determined to stick to his guns, and like the captain of a sinking ship, go down with the ship as a point of personal honour.

PRIVATISATION: THE TRUTH LEAKS OUT: Mr. Howard and his Deputy Fischer are struggling to convince regional Australia that their interests will be considered when the public infrastructure is sold off "in the national interest". De-Anne Kelly, in a forthright letter to the newspapers (*The Australian*, 17/7/98), quoted a telecommunications analyst as saying that "the Government would be foolhardy to guarantee regional Australians the same level of communications services received in the cities . . . The one thing the Government absolutely cannot do is guarantee the same quality of services".

Now Senator Alston has guaranteed that when Australia Post is "partially privatised" (echoes of Telstra all over again) **"not one bush post office will close"**. Never ever. And the price of posting a letter will remain 45c until 2003. Some people actually believe this, although it is notable that they all live in the cities.

The promises of equivalent services in remote areas could be kept, after a fashion, if Government remained responsible for telecommunications, postage, electricity, etc. When the services lag behind in the regions, a Minister for Communications can have his chain rattled. Someone **for whom we will have the chance to vote** will be accountable. Not so once privatisation sets in.

After the promises about more efficient and cheaper electricity under a privatised grid system within the national Competition Policy, much is expected of the new electricity services. But it comes as no surprise that one of those responsible for delivering the cheaper, better service, admits that it may never be delivered.

The company set up two years ago to ensure cheaper electricity prices warned last week that the opposite will happen when the national market is introduced on November 15th. National Electricity Marketing Management Co. Chairman Olaf O'Duill said a national electricity market could lead to higher wholesale prices as network owners would have to provide open access for retailers (*The Australian*, 17/7/98). Retailers then pass the higher prices on to their customers. And during peak use periods, like midsummer or winter, high demand would produce higher wholesale prices. When the demand falls off, will the retailers drop their prices back again?