



A WEEKLY COMMENTARY

ON TARGET

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The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance –

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THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: *"Wise men, instead of exploding general prejudices, employ their sagacity to discover the latent wisdom which prevails in them."*
– Edmund Burke

LONG-TERM STRATEGY TO DEFEND THE CROWN by David Thompson:

The campaign now building up towards the November 6th referendum on the Constitution is but one more battle in a long-term war. It is a mistake to see it as a one-off battle, to be won once and not be fought again. Those involved in grass-roots politics eventually recognise the truth that the battle against centralised power must be fought again and again. This is why the League has retained Edmund Burke's comment, *"All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing"* on our letterhead over a period of 50 years.

The prosecution of a long-term war against centralised power requires a clear understanding of strategy and tactics, just as a military campaign requires. The present strategy of the Monarchists is to defend the Crown by attacking the proposed republican model. Every effort should go into exposing the many shortcomings of the present model of a president selected by the politicians and appointed by the Prime Minister.

This, however, is a short-term strategy. In attacking the republican model, some groups make the mistake of comparing it with other republican models. This leaves the impression that monarchists might be prepared to support the best republican model. All republican models should be rejected, otherwise at a later date, the monarchists find it difficult to reject a better republican model than that presently proposed.

The long-term strategy must be to promote monarchy as the best system of government. If this is ignored in the short term, we leave the door open to republicanism. A case in point was the Lateline programme last Sunday night, in which the republic was debated. There is no doubt that monarchists are at a disadvantage in dealing with the press. Fighting the campaign exclusively in the press is to fight the battle on the enemy's ground, as the press is overwhelmingly pro-republican.

On this Lateline programme, republican Ted Mack was permitted to make the running in attacking the proposed republican model. This is good tactics, but it is essential that monarchists also defend the Crown. This was not done on this occasion, although Australians for Constitutional Monarchy were represented in the debate.

There is a dreadful suspicion growing among monarchists that some anti-republican groups deliberately neglect to promote the merits of monarchy. Australians for Constitutional Monarchy are accused of this neglect. Be that as it may, it has become more and more notable that groups who insist on supporting the Crown, and promoting the merits of monarchy, are being denied the opportunity of a high-profile part in the campaign.

For example, the Monarchist League, despite polling extremely well for the Constitutional Convention, remains unrepresented on the "NO" Committee that distributes public funds to campaign against the republic. By contrast, the Committee includes two republicans, who are hardly going to defend the Crown!

It is vital that ways be found to not only attack the republican model, but to promote the monarchy as the best alternative. In our view, the present republican model is in danger of a massive defeat in November, if monarchists campaign vigorously enough.

But this will not be the end of the matter. The republicans will regroup, and in promoting a better republican model, will seek to answer all the objections that monarchists are now making to the present model. Unless the monarchy is vigorously promoted as the best system at every opportunity, monarchists effectively "paint themselves into a corner", and have limited grounds on which to reject a better republican model at a later date.

Since the press is pro-republican, it is essential that the pro-monarchist campaign is conducted independently of the news media wherever possible. This means that those who are effective in grass-roots campaigning, like the League, will have an essential role to play.

SOUL-SEARCHING CONTINUES IN NATS by Jeremy Lee:

The National Party of NSW is currently holding its annual State Conference. Among resolutions for debate is one seeking a name-change – to the "National Country Party". There's obviously a nostalgic sigh for the halcyon days when the Party stood for something. It will take more than a name-change to put the Party back onto the "relevant-and-dynamic" map.

This is borne out by a Review carried out on the Party's performance, chaired by former NSW State leader Wal Murray. It found the Party lost 150,416 NSW voters between the March 1996 and October 1998 Federal elections. In the latter it recorded its lowest post-war primary vote – 7.9 percent.

The Nationals have belatedly realised they have reached a critical point. In the Review Wal Murray said: *"We cannot ignore the fact that we have now reached a critical point . . . In both State and Federal terms, the Party will lose more seats if its share of the primary vote declines any further . . . many people expressed dissatisfaction at the Party's handling of One Nation . . ."*

Besides cliches, however, there was little of substance in the Review to remedy the situation. The Party should be more "daring" – but not to the point of breaking away from the Coalition. This means, in essence, it will have to bear all the growing criticism against Howard's "globalism" policies.

Nationals in NSW will, it appears, be allowed to cross the floor against the Coalition. This is a bit more

realistic. But why not a full return to the democratic ideal whereby each member is supposed to vote on conscience on all issues?

With a Party membership in NSW of – it is believed – about 30,000, 60 percent of whom are over the age of 51, it is probably too late for the Nationals – certainly while people like Tim Fischer and John Anderson are still in leadership positions.

The same death-wish faces the ALP. There is now an open rift between one group, represented by Martin Ferguson and Simon Crean, who believe that the Party should go back to its traditional base, and another, comprising international socialists such as Mark Latham, with Kim Beazley wavering somewhere in the middle.

The publication of a new book, *Labor without Class, the Gentrification of the ALP*, by Michael Thompson, and launched by Martin Ferguson, has widened the rift. A review in *The Sydney Morning Herald* (18/6/99) explained:

"... the essence of Thompson's argument – supported by Ferguson in the book's preface – is that Labor has been hijacked by a new middle class more interested in multiculturalism, migration, feminism, Aborigines, welfare and the environment than working class values of 'family, hard work, independence and patriotism' ..."

The same accusation could be levelled at both the Liberals and the Nationals. All the major parties have been dispossessed of their original philosophical bases by small 't' liberalism with an internationalist agenda. Self-interest and the hedonistic plums of election have silenced those who should have kept their parties tied to principle.

Opposition leader Kim Beazley is trying to keep a foot in both camps. But, as former Queensland Premier Joh Bjelke-Petersen once graphically pointed out, *"If you try to keep a leg each side of a barbed-wire fence, you'll do yourself a mischief."* Beazley has recently said he is in favour of free global trade, but not at the expense of living standards! Why can't he face the truth? Free trade is synonymous with the 'lowest common denominator' when it comes to wages and job opportunities.

The position was made quite clear by former Cabinet Minister Clyde Cameron, now in his eighties, in an interview on the 7.30 Report. Cameron, who sounded like a million dollars compared with the current mob of stooges in the major parties, was scathing in his description of the betrayal of Australian workers by the globalists. He pledged himself to do what he could to get the ALP back to its original base. He has a long job ahead of him.

QUEENSLAND CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION: Queensland Premier Peter Beattie, foreshadowing the November 6th Constitutional Referendum on the republic, held his own convention on the situation facing the States if Australia voted "Yes" in November.

Few have read the Queensland State Constitution, which also contains the proviso that changes cannot be made without a referendum of Queenslanders. This was flouted when Queensland signed the Australia Act in 1986. Governments do not feel themselves bound by constitutional restraints when they can get away with it.

Perhaps the saddest and most disturbing outcome of the convention (held in Rockhampton) was contained in the views of the Liberal leader in Queensland, David Watson. *The Courier-Mail* (19/6/99) gave the following report:

"... The delegates were told by Liberal leader David Watson yesterday morning that they should take the opportunity offered by the republic debate to rock the system, rather than merely making cosmetic changes to the constitution.

"He pointed out that under a republic, Queensland and other States could dispense with their governors or heads of state.

"The no-governor option has some merit in Queensland, especially if we work out a reasonable mechanism for adopting fixed parliamentary terms,' Dr. Watson said.

"If we have a set date every so many years, then the premier hardly needs to hop in the Ford LTD and drive out to Fernberg Road to ask the governor's permission to have an election.

"The other circumstance that makes the no-governor option viable for Queensland is that we don't have an upper house to cause constitutional chaos ..."

Dr. Watson went on to say that all the ceremonial duties usually carried out by the governor could just as well be carried out by the Premier, Brisbane's Lord Mayor or other local government heads.

Whatever else is said about Dr. Watson – and we find it hard to think of much – he needs a primary-school lesson on the principles undergirding our system, designed to ensure that politicians are NEVER the head of state, but servants to be kept in line by constitutions, the separation of powers and an independent umpire with reserve powers to be used when the politicians get out of line.

To its credit, the convention rejected the radical views of Liberal leader Dr. Watson.

TROUBLE BREWING ON GENETICALLY-ENGINEERED FOOD: Genetically engineered agricultural crops now threaten to wipe out the burgeoning and much-in-demand organic farming industry. *The Australian Financial Review* (18/6/99) reported:

"Australia's small but expanding organic food industry has warned that farmers who grow genetically-engineered crops may face legal action from their neighbours, adding to the bitter debate which is unfolding over the looming gene technology revolution in agriculture ..."

Scott Kinnear, President of the Organic Federation of Australia, said genetic engineering was similar to the threat posed by chemical spray drift, posing a major commercial threat to farmers who chose not to use genetically-engineered plants. Pollen from genetically-engineered crops could be transferred by wind, bees or other insects to organic crops. Plant thus affected could result in the loss of organic certification, as well as GM-free properties. This was more than speculation. Mr. Kinnear gave an example which had already occurred in Europe, in which 87,000 packets of organic corn chips had been destroyed after random testing. They had been 'contaminated' by pollen transfer from a neighbouring farm.

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