



A WEEKLY COMMENTARY

ON TARGET

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The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance –

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THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: *"The Christian message with, for example, its deeply mystical and symbolic doctrine of the Incarnation, has been traditionally a message of the unity of the worlds of spirit and matter . . . But during the last three centuries, in the Western world at least, a dangerous division has come into being in the way we perceive the world around us . . . My belief is that in each one of us there is a distant echo of the sense of the sacred, but that the majority of us are terrified to admit its existence for fear of ridicule and abuse. This fear of ridicule . . . is a classic indication of the loss of meaning in so-called Western civilisation . . . This has led to an increasing failure to appreciate or understand tradition, and the wisdom of our forebears accumulated over the centuries . . ."*

"A Sense of the Sacred: Building Bridges between Islam and the West" – Prince Charles, 1996

SPECTATORS, NOT PARTICIPANTS IN THE WORLD AROUND US by Betty Luks:

Any day of the week one can pick up a newspaper or turn on the television and look at scenes of the destruction of property and/or carnage of innocent peoples throughout the world. In the comfort of our armchairs we do not feel that we are part of what is happening, we are not participants (not **part** of), we are merely spectators of a drama or dramas being played out before our eyes.

This was brought home to this writer during the Polyukhovich War Crimes hearing. One elderly man, supported by his loyal wife, was continually placed under the scrutiny, like a bug under a microscope, of the world's media. Every facial expression – or lack of it – was recorded for all the world to see. For the first week, the "jackals" of the media would pounce on the couple as they alighted from their car each morning and again every evening. These people who focussed their cameras and microphones for the best shots or quotes, spilled not one drop of the "milk of human kindness". After all, it was their "job" and they got paid good money for the best shots, the most quotable quotes. We are a nation of "spectators" not "participants": we do not see ourselves as part of the whole of Life.

This common attitude to Life was again brought to my attention by a photograph on the front page of *The Australian* this week. Here were four Indonesian men injured by a car-bomb blast, only one other person (in the photograph) helping them – and yet the photographer (from AFP Reuters) was taking pictures of the horror scene. Again demonstrating that the photographer views the scene as part of a drama that he should record – and be handsomely paid for – but not participate in himself. Where was his compassion for the victims? What values, if any, does that photographer have?

The Australian Broadcast Authority's inquiry into the John Laws and Alan Jones "cash-for-comment" affair provides yet another example of the damaging consequences of the shredding of the moral and

ethical fabric of our people. It has been disclosed that Laws enjoyed sponsorships (unbeknown to his listeners) with nine large corporations, including Qantas, Optus, Foxtel, NRMA, and the Australian Bankers Association. The millionaire broadcaster's colleague, Alan Jones, had three similar sponsorships (*The Australian*, 21/10/99).

The Counsel assisting the ABA in the inquiry opened his address with the following: *"Whose bread I eat, whose song I sing . . . It's a good saying because it captures an essential and obvious truth about human nature . . . that the content of on-air behaviour was influenced by the payments."*

Amanda Meade writing in *The Australian*, 20/10/99, sums up what appears to be Laws' attitude to Life, *"The subtleties about disclosure and journalistic integrity appear to escape Laws, a man who divides the world into his friends and his enemies. At the peak of his woes, he said, he was tempted to walk away. 'I felt I could have, but then I thought that if I did that I am just letting the baddies win.'"*

REPUBLICS AND CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHIES by "Q.B.":

Australians will go to the polls on November 6th, 1999, without understanding the essence of the choice they are being asked to make, and what distinguishes a Constitutional Monarchy from a Republic.

In a Constitutional Monarchy the Head-of-State is *never* a politician.

In a Republic the Head-of-State is *always* a politician.

The proposed Republic to have politicians choose the President is hotly opposed by many who want the people to elect the President.

No people have ever elected a President in the full sense. Presidents are elected by market forces from a short list of candidates proposed by political parties.

The people play the role of the end consumer and as such may choose between Pepsi and Coke, but the best home-made lemonade is not on the supermarket shelf.

The media, the advertising agencies, the political parties, and especially the big financial contributors draw up the short list, with a very careful eye to their interests, and present the people with pre-packaged "brand name" products.

While the people make the last choice, no electable Presidential Product comes to the ballot innocent of making its peace with the mass-opinion distribution networks.

Monarchs do come innocent. Depending on your point of view, they are either elected by God, or result from the random choice of conception.

Either way, they offer the only barrier known to a "politicians-and-their-backers-take-all" world. Is this a barrier we want?

Is it best to gain a limited choice between the politicians contending for the position of Head-of-State, or to deny it to politicians altogether?

Do we preserve and enhance popular democracy by acknowledging its limits, and giving it practical form in an hereditary monarch appointing a Governor-General with immense reserve powers?

Alternatively, do we preserve and enhance popular democracy by denying its limitations, and passing these immense reserve powers to a politician, who simply must placate at least some of the few "Mr. Rupert Murdochs", before his ambitions can begin?

In the republican debate, there is no discussion of the right of citizens of the republic to initiate referenda to decide public issues if sufficiently motivated to do so, though simple mechanisms are available. Nor is there any discussion of an initiative to establish an exclusively Australian hereditary monarchy – perhaps by electing someone in line to the throne (though not closer than perhaps fifth-in-line) – to give us an exclusively "Australian" Head-of-State without a republic.

This Republic is an initiative by the dominant political market forces of our time, to displace random selection of our Head-of-State, with a pre-selection of candidates for Head-of-State, who are all wholly dependent upon those forces to be in-with-a-chance.

There is no passion for this Republic, just a push for the power vacuum it will produce.

SHOULD THE MONARCH HAVE TEETH? It is fashionable now for pro-monarchists to explain that the Monarchy has no powers. Once we're comfortable with this, the unavoidable question to follow, is what is the use of an anachronism?

The blessing of a constitutional monarchy is not only in the powers the sovereign has, but in the powers it denies to others. As long as the politicians don't have the last reserve of powers, there is room for freedom still.

However, it is ridiculous to insist that a monarch would not, or should not use the reserve powers. Indeed they must, in every crisis which the politicians are unable, or unwilling, to resolve. Moral abdication is quite unthinkable for a monarch, once any elected government is unworkable, or persists in unconstitutional activity.

A partisan and readily sackable politician-President, is no bulwark against a rogue government acting unconstitutionally.

MORE THAN ONE "DEMOCRACY" by Alfred King:

The world is in an increasingly convulsive state. "Democratic" republics in every part of the world are shown to be hopelessly inadequate for their function. In Niger, the military junta gunned down the President and took control. To our north, President Habibie pleaded with parliament to be given another term, saying that Indonesia's massive problems are the legacy of past dictators – but to no avail.

Shortly before Australians go to a "Republic" Referendum, Pakistan has demonstrated the shortcomings of its republican system. The people of Pakistan were unable to call on a non-party-political monarch with constitutional powers to dissolve parliament in times of a political crisis, referring the matter back to the people, and also to call on a monarch who is the Commander-in-chief of the Armed Services.

While the Australian Armed Services are paid their wages by the Parliament it is the Queen who is Commander-in-chief. Again a separation of powers.

Pakistan is now under military rule after the Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif, was overthrown in a coup. The army chief, General Pervez Musharraf, said intervention was necessary because "... uncertainty and turmoil" was gripping the country. It seems the coup came shortly after the Prime Minister moved to sack the Army Chief; the Prime Minister is now in "protective custody".

Former PM Benazir Bhutto says the crisis has little to do with the army's desire for power, it has more to do with the PM's manner of running the country. He has been sacking everyone, the Chief Justice and the President, attacking the press, foreign investors and the Opposition.

This is another example of the reality of the corruption of power and the tendency of government to try to increase its own power. Without the checks and balances built into the system, this could happen to Australia. Under the present Constitutional arrangements the Parliament pays the salaries of the Armed Services, but the Governor-General acts as the Commander-in-chief.

US State Department spokesman James Ruben says, "... we would obviously seek the earliest possible restoration of democracy in Pakistan." What does he mean by this? We must be clear about the two conceptions of democracy. That which grew out of the British conception of separated and balanced powers, ensuring that none of the powers could become a tyrannous monopoly or, eg, the centralised powers of the former Soviet Union.

No one supposes that our present Constitution has finished growing or reached perfection, but under it Australians have enjoyed peace and stable government and were moving towards even greater freedom.

As the authors of the book *"The Republic of the Rich"* have summed it up, *"The ruling-class elites loathe our culture and traditions and will not be satisfied until they have completely destroyed them and our sovereignty. The republic is about changing the Constitution to recreate Australia in their own image."*

WHAT A WONDERFUL ELECTION by Tom Fielder:

Political power in Victoria has been decentralised between three Independents, a minority Labor Lower House and a hostile Upper House. Nothing too much will happen in Government, so at least the possibility of more damage is strictly limited. But then, nothing much will change either; under the orthodox financial rules, Premier Bracks will continue to sell off Victoria's assets to "liquidate" debt and when everything possible has been sold he will quietly return to the debt "treadmill". Not one single politician has the intestinal fortitude to break with financial orthodoxy and implement sound debt-free financial policy as Social Crediters have been advocating for at least 50 years. Prime Minister Howard is reported as saying "... it would be a great pity if Mr. Kennett was no longer Premier". Mr. Howard has been known to get it wrong before today. One thing more: I almost enjoy watching TV now that Jeff's smug grin has gone! Next that needs to go is Costello's "smarmy smirk". **Further Information:** *"What Has to be Done"* (book) and *"A Commonsense Programme for Recovery"* (tape) both by Charles Pinwill. **Special offer – Book and Tape \$10.00 posted.** MEA Tapes, Box 184, The Basin, Vic., 3154.

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