A WEEKLY COMMENTARY

ON TARGET

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The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance –

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THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: *"Putting usury on a pedestal, in order to set avarice on high, the protestant countries twisted all morality out of shape. 'Moral' was narrowed down to application to carnal relations. Thus acting as usurer's red herring. The hogger of harvest has always set up a red-herring system.*

"Usury is contra naturam. *It is not merely in opposition to nature's increases, it is antithetic to discrimination by the senses. Discrimination by the senses is dangerous to avarice. It is dangerous because any perception or any high development of the perceptive faculties may lead to knowledge. The money-changer only thrives on ignorance. He thrives on all sorts of insensitivity and non-perception. An instant sense of proportion imperils financiers."* – From Ezra Pound's ***"Guide to Kulchur"***
as quoted by Thomas Robertson in ***"Human Ecology"*** 1948

A NEW FORM OF POLITICS by Jeremy Lee:

A lot of eyes are on the annual conference of the World Trade Organisation, due to commence in Seattle on November 30th. The Global Free Market concept is scheduled to be ratcheted up again, with the re-emergence of the Multilateral Agreement on Investments (MAI), possibly under a new name.

The 'big boys' have been manouevring for months, with John Howard demanding, at the recent CHOGM in South Africa, a united Commonwealth front for the further reduction of any form of protection for national economies. There was some resistance from devastated, debt-ridden lesser-developed members of the Commonwealth. But Howard was adamant, showing a tendency for tunnel-vision that is truly remarkable:

" .... A grouping as diverse as the Commonwealth is bound to produce a range of views on how far you should go in particular directions, but I am sure there'll be a general support for a successful outcome out of the World Trade Organisation," he told reporters.

"We really don't have an option. Globalisation is with us, it's a fact of life. Nobody has an option of saying, well, I won't take globalisation, I'll take something else, because there isn't anything else. It's the paradigm under which the world operates now and we can't avoid it ..." (***Australian Financial Review***, 15/11/99)

Well, there you have it! Freedom of choice is a thing of the past, as are other things, such as national sovereignty, parliamentary integrity etc.

The wheeling and dealing has been going on for some time, as the following article from Britain's ***Sunday Independent*** (21/8/99) makes clear:

"Some of the world's biggest companies are paying hundreds of thousands of dollars for privileged access

to key heads of state, ministers and negotiators, at an international conference which will decide the future of world trade.

"They have taken up an offer from a committee headed by Microsoft supremo Bill Gates to exploit 'a very exciting opportunity' provided by a crucial meeting of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) – the body which regulates world trade – in Seattle at the end of the year. Both the White House and Sir Leon Brittan, the outgoing Vice President of the European Commission, have protested.

*"In a letter to the White House obtained by the **Independent** on Sunday, Sir Leon says that the scheme threatens to have a 'devastating effect' on the credibility of the WTO, which is already heavily under fire from development experts, green campaigners and some governments for promoting the interests of big companies against those of poor people, public health and the environment.*

"The conference will open a new round of negotiations over extending the WTO's powers into new areas of world trade. Some 700 organisations from 73 countries are about to launch a campaign to fight the extension. In a joint declaration, they say the WTO has worked 'to prise open markets for the benefit of transnational corporations at the expense of national economies, workers, farmers and other people'.

"Forty companies, including Proctor and Gamble, General Motors, Xerox, Hewlett Packard, Northwest Airlines, Boeing, Ford Motor Company, as well as Microsoft, agreed to sponsor the meeting, after receiving a letter offering different levels of access, graded according to the amount of money they give.

"The letter, from the Seattle Host Organisation, says that companies who help pay for the conference's running costs will 'become part of a process to develop substantive business input into the WTO through a series of business programs".

"Yesterday, Ronnie Hall, Trade Campaigner for Friends of the Earth International, commented. 'This comes as no surprise. The WTO consistently offers a priveleged place to business in its negotiations, at the expense of ordinary people.'"

FABIAN-GLOBALIST HEADS WTO: Since the article above was written, the former New Zealand Prime Minister Mike Moore – Fabian and author of the book ***"The Pacific Parliament"*** which argued for a Pacific bloc equivalent of the European Parliament – has become Director-General of the WTO with the task of getting a popular agenda for the November 30th start. But, as the ***Australian Financial Review*** (Weekend, 21-22/11/99) argued:

"..... The preparations for the launch of a new round of global trade negotiations are not going well. In just over a week's time, 134 trade ministers and up to 5,000 officials will arrive in the rainy city of Seattle on the west coast of the US. Their task will be to agree on a blueprint for a comprehensive three-year negotiation aimed at freeing up global markets in agricultural products, industrial goods and trade in services. The current draft runs to 34 pages and, with time running out, is riddled with bracketed, highly contentious text. .....

"...Aside from the haggling over the negotiating agenda, a further cloud hangs over the Seattle meeting. More than 50,000 environmental, labour and human rights protesters will try to disrupt the meeting, claiming the WTO functions solely to 'prise open markets for the benefit of transnational corporations at the expense of national economies, workers, farmers and the environment .....'"

MAI RE-EMERGES: With this picture of the imminent WTO Millennium Round in mind, the following comments by Christian De Brie, of the Observatoire de la mondialisation (Globalisation Watch) are significant:

"The corpse of the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) hardly had time to get cold in the vaults

of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development before the ultra-liberal Dr. Jekylls led by Sir Leon Brittan, the outgoing European Commission vice-president and Thatcherite die-hard, have tried to clone it, excitedly hoping to see new Draculas emerge from their test tubes by the year 2000 ..... The insatiable Brittan, far from being content to deal with the outgoing Commission's current business, , is actively preparing for the success of the second: the Millennium Round. The idea is to convert the meeting of the ministerial conference of the 131 WTO member countries in Seattle in December 1999 into an enormous globalisation fair, where the removal of the final obstacles to capital's freedom of action would be negotiated pell-mell. Without any prior decision to that effect, public contracts, competition, product controls and investment would be added to the initial agenda for the revision of the 1994 Marrakesh accords on agriculture, services and industrial property. In other words, it is the MAI Dracula.

"In the case of intellectual property and farming, for example, this would mean absolute compliance with patent rights in seed, especially soya and transgenic rice, in which American corporations hold a monopoly, and strict limits on member countries' rights to hold buffer stocks against the risk of famine.

"In the case of public contracts, foreign firms would have the same rights as national ones for all local, regional and national public contracts, with the contract going to the most 'efficient'.

"In competition matters, countries would no longer have any control over public purchase offers and mergers. In the name of trade facilitation, controls in ports and airports would be restricted to one sample or container. For investment the proposals are the same as the MAI, except for arbitration.

"The multinationals intend having their way in everything: apart from the Transatlantic Business Dialogue and the European Round Table of Industralists a new lobby, the Business Investment Network, is hard at work. The Seattle meeting looks set to be a Millennium Merry-Go-Round; come next June, the International Chamber of Commerce will be rallying public opinion in its support, while Sir Leon Brittan will be touring Southeast Asia, trying to win over such recalcitrant countries as India, Pakistan and Indonesia ...."

It is certain the the December WTO gathering, with a huge amount of preceding manipulation, is crucial to the closing of the New World Order as the millennium opens. But – "there's many a slip ...." With a new coalition of widely differing groups across the world making contact through the Internet, a new form of political and social pressure is emerging. The multinationals and their banking masters can no longer work at ease and in secret. They are continually exposed by better and better-informed watchdogs. We won't die of boredom in the coming year!

<u>GLOBAL MONEY ON THE MARCH:</u> Perhaps with the WTO programme in mind, the United States Congress has just passed legislation sweeping aside many restrictions on banks and financial institutions. Banks, stockbroking firms and insurance companies can now merge and sell each others' products. One prediction is a wave of mergers resulting in one-stop financial services supermarkets. Treasury-Secretary Lawrence Summers (who replaced former Goldman Sachs Director Rubin) is ecstatic. But others, contemplating the coming mergers into global superbanks, are not so sure. ***The Australian*** (15/11/99) reported:

"'Were they to falter, they could take down the entire global financial system with them,' wrote Garten, a former under-secretary of commerce who is now dean of Yale's school of management. 'Sooner or later, perhaps starting with the next serious economic downturn, the US will have to confront one of the great challenges of our times; how does a sovereign nation govern itself effectively when politics are national and business is global? When the answers start coming, they could be as radical and as prolonged as the backlash against unbridled corporate power that took place during the first 40 years of this century.'"

Australia's answer to the question has been to sell its assets and utilities on a scale that must even have amazed the multinationals. The result is that a diminishing number of decisions are made nationally, despite our impressive parliaments and constitutional traditions.

The article continued by saying that the US move would inevitably increase pressure for bank mergers in Australia: *"There is persistent speculation that should the Coalition win the next election, Costello will allow one round of mergers to allow the big four to become the big two ...."*

Not big enough to make fair profits?

PRESSURE FROM ABOVE AND PRESSURE FROM BELOW by Alfred King:

There is yet another illustration this week that there is no basic difference between any of the major parties. At the time of the last election, the parties and the media combined to take us through the façade that the Liberals were in favour of a GST and that the Labor and Democrats were against it. This made good political sense to the latter as the GST is proven to be massively unpopular with the electorate.

Now that they are mid-term, and can count on voters' short memories, both Labor and Democrats are clamouring to be the ones to support the passage of the Bill through the Upper House. Labor no longer pretends that they are the anti-GST party. In the news this week, Democrats Senator Andrew Murray is most concerned that Labor has done a back-flip and might pass the legislation without the Democrats involvement. He tells us, *"Labor are well in on this. I mean we might not end up being very much involved at all. Labor have said they will pass it if it is revenue neutral."*

No longer is anyone surprised that the Party which pretends to represent the working classes is eager to support the policy of the 'other side', and the Labor and Democrat Parties therefore support it. Behind all the main political parties lies the controlling hand of Money Power.

In truth, money capitalism (which shouldn't be confused with productive private enterprise) is merely the opposite side of the same coin as represented by the leftism of the Labor Party. The Money Power submits the economy to the slavery of interest, perverts the free enterprise system and creates many injustices, which cry out for remedy. The Money Power cunningly creates in the Labor Party the supposed remedy. Left-wing agitation inflames the workers, not against their real exploiters, the international debt merchants, but against the management and ownership of industry, who are as much victims of the system as they are. In this way the nation is held in a vice: control by money from above, and subversion by socialism from below.

The reader will recall Bob Hawke's promise to eliminate child poverty in Australia. He delivered the opposite result. This is typical of his kind. Socialism has failed to find answers to the problems of poverty, unemployment, inflation and social injustice because it is not founded on genuine recognition of the causes of the problems. It is tied to the same system of economic internationalism and deficit financing as the Liberal party. No true regeneration can occur in this or any other country, until the fundamental problem of debt finance is recognised and overcome. Social Credit, which is a practical Christian economics, is a viable alternative.

FARMING BODY, THE RALPH REVIEW AND GST by Ken Grundy:

The Stock Journal (11/11/99) reveals many farmers could be forced to pay thousands of dollars extra because of costly hiccups in the Ralph Review of business taxation and GST legislation. *"The National Farmers' Federation is seeking an urgent meeting with Prime Minister Howard to try to head off the changes, some of which the peak farm body has branded as 'ludicrous'."*

NFF President Ian Donges said Mr. Howard would be told that many of the recommendations in the Ralph Report were completely unacceptable to Australia's farmers. He continued, *"It's all about getting more tax, that's the bottom line."* With all the expertise at the disposal of the NFF, one could be forgiven for asking where has the NFF been for the last year? Why has it taken so long to discover the bad aspects of the GST?

But to give credit where it is due, at least the NFF is stirring. Readers should encourage Mr. Donges to roar! If the PM does not agree to suitable changes, then the NFF should be looking to the Governor General to cancel the GST legislation under Section 59 of the Constitution. *Section 59 of the Constitution would have 'disappeared' if the republicans had had their way at the Referendum – Ed.*

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