



A WEEKLY COMMENTARY

ON TARGET

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The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance –

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THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: *"... for man the Natural Law becomes a moral law because his actions are free, self-determined and consciously self-directed... Concerning positive human law it is our contention that it is based on the Natural Law, and apart from this has no foundation. This statement follows from the fact that the Law of Nature ordains that man shall live in Society. Social life cannot exist without an authority which shall possess the moral power to control the members and direct them towards the common good.*

"Therefore human laws are valid and binding only in so far as they correspond with, enforce or supplement the basic law of man's nature from which they received their origin. They are null and void if they are in conflict with the Natural Law of man's being. Hence the individual citizen, or any group of citizens, has the duty of scrutinizing enactments of positive law to see whether or not they are in conformity with the principles of Natural Law."

"The Natural Law: Pastoral Statement on the Basis of Social Justice"
by The Catholic Bishops of Australia, 1959

CHAOTIC SEPTEMBER NOW HERE by Jeremy Lee:

Forget about the Olympics and the World Economic Forum, which have already created their own bow-waves. The lives of thousands of ordinary Australians have been savaged by the cost of fuel and the slumping dollar. The fact that almost half the cost of a litre of petrol is government tax has come as a revelation to many. That fuel tax is indexed to rise automatically with rising oil prices sticks in the craw of a lot of Australians.

In more moderate times the Government would have moved swiftly to ensure its own fuel-tax revenue did not rise with the peoples' anguish. An even sounder government policy would have attempted to counter the rise with a corresponding tax reduction where possible.

The Howard/Costello junta has been exposed for what it is – as mean and avaricious as any multinational. It may live to regret its avarice. France first, followed by Italy and Spain has been pulverised by public demonstrations, with France almost at a standstill, against the rise in oil prices. The same reaction has been seen in Western Australia.

It is now anticipated that the Reserve Bank, in the face of the inflationary impact of oil prices and the GST, coupled with the slump in the dollar to near its lowest point in history, will be forced to raise

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interest rates. It is a crazy idea. To increase the heat at a time everyone is hurting is the very opposite of what is needed. But thinking has not changed since the Government decided to cut wages in the middle of the Great Depression to 'make life easier'.

ANOTHER WARNING: Writing in *The Australian* (29/8/2000) the normally sanguine Robert Gottlieb, under the heading STORM CLOUDS SIGNAL DEBT AND DOLLAR CRISIS AHEAD, said: *"This is a comment I hope is wrong. I don't think it is. A number of Australian CEOs, including one in the top five, believe that next year this country is headed for an inevitable debt and currency crisis."*

"At least one big company is adjusting its corporate strategy in readiness. But for now, the share market is basking in good news and believes what the politicians and economists keep telling us – that our current account deficit and total debt are not areas of concern."

"However, the current account deficit recently reached 6 percent of GDP and, although it has since fallen back, it provided an alert. Total foreign debt is more than 40 percent of GDP"

Gottlieb's comments were made before the recent dollar slide. It may well be that the coming crunch will occur any time from October onwards.

'BASKET-CASE' NEW ZEALAND: As Australia stares at an uncertain future, spare a thought for New Zealand. At the end of August the \$NZ fell from \$US45 to \$US42.35, partly due to the just-released monthly current account deficit of \$330 million. Something of the madness among economists was illustrated by the remarks of National Bank chief economist Brendan O'Donovan (*The Press*, Christchurch, August 25th) who said: *"We should all be worried at these levels. But part of the story is a healing thing. Because of our high levels of debt, we need a weak currency and high interest rates."*

Petrol prices are about \$1.22 a litre. Petrol prices have increased by 38 cents in the past 12 months. Government takes 35 cents a litre in excise, plus 12.5% GST on the rest of the price. If prices stay at their present level, the Government will reap an extra 1.7 billion in taxes on fuel in 12 months.

One result is that thousands are leaving New Zealand. In the year to July, 59,000 left the country, the majority under 30. Of these, 26,000 came to Australia – an increase of 15% on the previous year.

NATIVE TITLE IN VICTORIA: A Victorian reader and former Councillor in Victoria has sent us a copy of a letter being circulated by the Department of Natural Resources and the Environment. No works on any Crown land or reserves, including buildings, fences, memorials, etc. – can now be undertaken without notification and approval from potential native title claimants and/or Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Representative Bodies. Among things requiring notification are: new grandstands, gazebos or picnic facilities; walking tracks or broadwalks; internal roads in caravan parks, and the building of tennis courts.

We have heard that native title claimants in northern Australia are seeking rights to the sea. How long before there are claims for air-space?

FULL BLOOD SPEAKS OUT: The following letter, sent by another reader, appeared in *The Cairns Post* (12/6/2000):

"I had to write this letter because I am a full-blooded Aborigine, and I have a lot of full-blooded Aboriginal friends who are fed up with all this harping about stolen children, land rights and reconciliation. The children were not stolen, they were taken away for their own good, as they did not fit in with full bloods. Land rights are a joke. Some tribes are claiming land they never had anything to

do with. I know because being an Aborigine I hear all these things. The white lawyers are a lot to blame.

"If there is to be reconciliation between whites and blacks then the truth has to be told about what both sides did to each other back in the 1800s. The black people killed hundreds of survivors of ships that were wrecked on Australian shores, they killed miners, graziers and explorers. The white people killed hundreds of Aborigines, so both black and white are to blame for what happened. A lot of trouble in Australia is being caused by quarter-caste, half-caste and white Aborigines which we seem to have a lot of.

"John Howard should not say sorry because he had nothing to do with what happened in the past – neither did a lot of other Australians. The past should be forgotten. Bringing it up does not solve anything.

"I have lived in Cairns for more than 50 years. I have my own house, which I worked hard for. I have always got on well with white people, and I was treated like a person with respect.

"People should forget about the bloody past and look to the future where we can all live in harmony. If the whites have to say sorry, so should us Aborigines."

Lenny Creek, Bruce Highway, Edmonton

CALIFORNIA – LIGHTENING CHANGE: The most populous State in the Union has, for the first time in the US history, reached a situation where whites are in the minority. *The Guardian Weekly* (7-13/9/2000) reported that the latest Census Statistics just released showed the white population dropping to 49.9% Asians and Hispanics continue to move to California. The report added:

"....The transformation of California to a 'majority minority' state occurred with lightening speed for a state with about 33 million residents.

"From 1990 to 1999, the years covered by the new Census estimates, the Latino population of California grew by 35 percent to 10.5 million, while the Asian and Pacific Islander population soared by 36 percentIn the Los Angeles area, there are whole suburban neighborhoods dominated by Vietnamese, Armenians, Chinese and Koreans....."

Almost sounds like Cabramatta!

DENMARK TO VOTE ON CURRENCY: In a couple of weeks the people of Denmark are to vote in a referendum on whether to abandon their national currency – the krone – in favour of a European single currency. There's considerable worry in the air. In 1992 Denmark voted against the Maastricht Treaty, and only passed it in a second attempt when an "opt-out" clause was included.

Reporting on the approaching September 28th referendum *The Australian Financial Review* (2/9/2000) said:

"....Those campaigning for a 'yes' vote in Denmark, which includes just about every major political party, business group and trade union, are playing down the significance of the vote this timeThe possibility that the great dream of a European super-State could be derailed by Denmark has certainly warmed the hearts of the anti-Euro forces in Britain, who have been popping up in Denmark in recent days to lend a hand to the 'no' cause"

In Britain, Blair's Labour Government is wondering how to get Britain to accept the Euro. *The Guardian Weekly* (7-13/9/2000) wrote:

".....Labor's policy, once decided on the conference floor, is now drawn up by a shadowy 'national policy forum' which effectively tells conference delegates the line they are required to support. The document on Europe, agreed at the last policy forum meeting, is expected to emphasise the benefits of

signing up for the euro, and to stress the determination of ministers 'to educate voters who are overwhelmingly hostile to the euro that they must face up to the reality of the currency'.

"Opinion polls suggest that a sizeable majority of the British electorate remains hostile to the single currency, and William Hague is hardening the Conservatives' anti-European stance in the belief that it will be a vote-winner for his beleaguered party"

The British Pound is not doomed yet!

ALP SCUTTLES SAFEGUARDS AS DEFENCE BILL PASSES SENATE: The combined numbers of the ALP and Coalition Government pushed through legislation that allows the Federal Government to call out troops against unarmed civilian protests and strikers, according to Greens' Senator Bob Brown.

The Defence Legislation Amendment (Aid to Civilian Authorities) Bill 2000 passed 46 votes to 10 after a marathon debate in the Senate. It was the longest debate this year and the 22nd longest since federation.

"The ALP spin on how it improved the Defence bill, and that the bill was essential to fetter Commonwealth powers, fails when account is taken of the cross-bench amendments it voted down. The ALP joined the Coalition to prevent:

- * An unqualified ban on the use of troops against strikers**
- * An unqualified ban on the use of troops against peaceful protests**
- * A conscience opt-out for Australian troops called out against Australians
- * A requirement that the relevant state agree before troops are deployed
- * The recall of parliament where troops are called out but a state of emergency is not declared
- * A post-Olympics sunset clause on the bill
- * The need for a Federal or Supreme Court warrant before troops are deployed against Australians.

"The Government will now have the power to call out troops in a wide range of circumstances. This could include a future dispute over transport, environmental or industrial matters. The legislation corrodes a century of ALP policy on democracy and civil rights," Senator Brown said.

**The ALP-Coalition deal will allow troops to act on strikers or protestors where damage to property might occur, ie, in any situation."

The ALP joined the Coalition to prevent a conscience opt-out for Australian troops called out against Australians?

Are we talking about the same parties that support the War Crimes Act with its "No Defence of Superior Orders" legislation? *Part III, War Crimes s16* states:

"Subject to subsections 6(2) and 13(2), the fact that, in doing an act alleged to be an offence against this Act, a person acted under orders of his or her government or of a superior is not a defence in a proceeding for the offence, but may, if the person is convicted of the offence, be taken into account in determining the proper sentence."

What does this tell us about the laws of our country? Certain citizens can be charged with (selective) 'war crimes' alleged to be committed in another country, because they didn't defy their superior officers, (following orders is 'no defence') and yet, under the Defence Legislation Amendment Bill, Australian servicemen cannot opt-out if their conscience is troubled at using military force (even shoot to kill) against their fellow-countrymen!

Is one an Act of vengeance, the other an Act of tyranny; in both cases, isn't the choice of prosecution strictly ideological/political?