A WEEKLY COMMENTARY

ON TARGET

• NEWS HIGHLIGHTS
• BACKGROUND INFORMATION
• COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance –

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THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: *"...the government institutionalised the notion of 'enemy of the people'. A decree signed by Lenin stipulated that 'all leaders of the Constitutional Democratic Party, a party filled with enemies of the people, are hereby to be considered outlaws, and are to be arrested immediately and brought before a revolutionary court'. Such courts had just been set up in accordance with 'Order Number One Regarding the Courts', which effectively abolished all laws that 'were in contradiction with the worker and peasant government, or with the political programmes of the Social Democrats or Socialist Revolutionary Parties'. ... Among the revolutionary courts was a 'revolutionary press court', whose role was to judge all crimes committed by the press and to suspend any publication found to be 'sowing discord in the minds of the people by deliberately publishing erroneous news....'"*

– "The Black Book of Communism", 1999

WELCOME TO 2001 by Jeremy Lee:

The short-lived Christmas break is over, accompanied by weeping and gnashing of teeth that spending is down on last year. Under the mantra that passes for modern economics, if an economy doesn't "grow" it is in recession. One recent economic analysis suggested the benchmark was the figure of 2.5 percent. Under the heading GLOBAL RECESSION LIKELY, ***The Australian Financial Review*** (10/1/2001) reported:

"Morgan Stanley Dean Witter has become the first major Wall Street investment bank to argue that the US economic slowdown is likely to trigger a global recession.

"The bank's chief economist, Mr Stephen Roach, issued a note on Monday arguing that the US economy had already begun retracting and that the chances of its recession spreading globally were 45 percent. He defined a global recession as growth below 2.5 percent ...."

Common sense suggests that if a nation produces as many goods and services this year as it did last, it should remain in equilibrium. But in the crazy world of economic theory, we need a minimum growth rate to stay still!

By such illogical logic Australia and the rest of the world face a testing time this year. The analysts are very sober about the future. The plunging Wall Street Stock Market is producing jitters everywhere.

Under the heading "FED SLOWS CRASH TO A SLUMP" Warren Hogan (***The Australian***, 5/1/2001) told us:

".... Evidence of a slowdown is most compelling in the US. Plunging stock markets, deteriorating labour market conditions, and falling confidence are all evident. The concern is that the worst may be yet to come .... US changes will affect the Australian economy with greater ferocity than elsewhere ...."

So Federal Reserve head Alan Greenspan has dropped interest rates by a half percent. The logic? "If we can just encourage Americans to borrow more, the economy should pick up".

But if debt itself is the root problem, such a remedy can only widen the split between 'haves' and 'have-nots' still further, concentrating wealth to an ever-more vicious extent. In the US the top 500 corporations account for 75 percent of all non-agricultural sales in the country; but the same 500 account for only 0.01 percent of all firms in America (*Economics Explained*, Heilbronner and Thurow, 1998).

These corporations are largely international in character, swallowing each other up ruthlessly. ***The Australian Financial Review*** (Weekend, 6-7/1/2001) told us:

"The global tide of mergers and acquisitions, which started out as a trickle in the 1980s has become a raging and unstoppable flood tide..... The gathering speed and size of the worldwide takeover tsunami has been brought home by the latest merger and acquisition statistics from Thomson Financial Securities Data, the M&A industry scorekeeper ....M&A deals worth a record $US3.495 trillion ($6.283 trillion) were launched in calendar 2000 ....The value of global M&A transactions launched in 2000 was up 30 percent on the previous record, set in 1999, and eight times the annual average level of M&A activity in the first half of the 1990s ...."

What about Australia? Two days after Christmas ***The Australian*** (27/12/2000) reported:

"Hong Kong Chinese and Singaporeans are leading a renewed charge of Asian investors buying up Australian assets, a trend only rivalled in growth by South Africans. The Foreign Investment Review Board has revealed that total foreign investment proposals increased last financial year from $67 billion to almost $98 billion...."

Before this new onslaught Australia was sending overseas about $100 million A DAY in interest and dividends. What the new figures are is anyone's guess. Perhaps Mr. Costello could enlighten us?

FURTHER EVIDENCE: Analysing the recent half-percent interest rate cut in the US by Alan Greenspan, London's ***Sunday Times*** said:

"Many analysts believe a recession may be inevitable because it is too late to stop it now. It usually takes between nine and 12 months for an interest rate change to have a general effect on the economy ..... Consumer confidence and spending plunged, largely as a result of the stock market fall after the all-time highs of early last year. About $US3 trillion was wiped off equity values. This has depressed sales of goods and services and forced a growing number of companies to lay off staff or close down, further depressing consumer confidence and spending. ..... Throughout the country retailers are reporting their worst December in five years ....."

FINANCIAL SAVIOUR? The absurdity of a nation's – or a world's – prosperity depending on the whims of a single individual with regard to interest levels will one day be seen as the most bizarre situations in recorded history. But for the moment the voodoo black magic of modern economics has politicians mesmerised. Something of the religious fervour surrounding the current kingdom of mammon appeared in a feature article in ***The Australian Financial Review*** (Weekend, 6-7/1/2001) where a large photo of Greenspan accompanied the headline CAN THIS MAN SAVE THE WORLD? It gave illustrations in which Greenspan was accorded divine status:

" .... The 74-year-old is probably the most widely recognised financial figure ever, a symbol of wisdom and independence in an era when globalisation often limits governments' ability to influence the economic fate of their citizenry. In the financial markets, where the allocation of capital begins, his word is god. On economic policy, he has presidential-like authority.

"Senator Phil Gramm, the Texas Republican in charge of his confirmation hearings, declared him 'the greatest central banker in the history of the world'. Senator John McCain promised to keep him on if elected president, beyond death if necessary.

"'I would not only reappoint Mr. Greenspan, if Mr. Greenspan should happen to die, God forbid, I would do like we did in the movie Weekend at Bernie's' the Senator said. 'I'd prop him up and put a pair of dark glasses on him and keep him as long as we could .....'"

It is probably doubtful if the aging Jewish Alan Greenspan appreciates such adulation any more than Australia's Reserve Bank chief Ian MacFarlane. But the cult of economics, built on a privately-controlled Monopoly of Credit, is totally obscene. The warning about this state of affairs was given 2,000 years ago by Our Lord – *"You cannot serve two masters – You cannot worship God and Mammon ...."*

The year 2001 looks as though it will reinforce this warning in graphic and unmistakable terms.

THE AUSTRALIAN SCENE: We reported late last year on the impending automation of Australia's wharves, where computer operators in their own homes would operate the robotic system which will replace the on-site operators and the labour force of the moment. Now the same thing is happening in the mining industry. The ***Australian Financial Review*** (10/1/2001) said:

"Automation will all but eliminate jobs in the mining industry within the lifetime of the present generation of mine workers, according to a senior trade union researcher.

"Mr. Peter Colley, research director with the Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Union, said the technology for driverless trucks was already being tested in Australian coal mines and would become commercially viable within the decade.

"'Global positioning systems and satellite systems are used for monitoring now. Within ten years they will be used to undertake operations combined with automated machinery options .... It is all technologically feasible. What stops it is the need to have failsafe systems – to make sure fully automated machines don't accidently run someone over, or drive over a cliff. That is what makes them expensive.

'[But] computing power basically halves in price every 18 months to two years, so what is prohibitively expensive will be quite feasible within a decade and probably much earlier. It is only a matter of time' .."

ILL FARES THE LAND: With a spate of elections in the coming year, culminating in a Federal election, Prime Minister Howard and Deputy Prime Minister John Anderson will be hoping to lead their respective parties back into office. The National Party has become a pitiful little tail on the Liberal dog, trailing in the opinion polls behind the Democrats and, in some cases, what is left of One Nation.

The Coalition leaders know they will stand or fall in the Australia outside the metropolitan areas. Already the pork-barrelling has started, with funds suddenly available for roads in vulnerable rural seats. But bribes are no substitute for the urgently needed tax, credit and interest-rate relief required to stop the rural exodus and then rebuild our country areas.

The ***Australian Financial Review*** (10/1/2001) showed how futile the Coalition's current policies really are:

"Australians are leaving the land. In the 12 months to June 1999, 120 local rural areas lost more than 1 percent of their population base, a staggering figure that far outstrips population losses over the past 24 years ......"

Before his election John Anderson said he was determined to stop the exodus from the land. What a sorry pipe-dream that appears now! But he will still be asking country folk to trust him and his party mates, and vote them back into office.

THE CENTENARY OF THE DEATH OF QUEEN VICTORIA: The Australian Monarchist League has criticized the Victorian Bracks Government for ignoring the centenary of the death of Queen Victoria. Philip Benwell, National Chairman had this to say on the matter: *"1851, the Port Philip district of New South Wales, became a separate colony and was given the distinct honour of being named after Queen Victoria. Just three weeks following the inclusion of the Colony into a Federated Australia as the State of Victoria, its namesake Queen Victoria died on the 22nd of January 1901."* Condemning the Victorian Government he reported, *"To our knowledge the State Government of Victoria has made no plans to mark the centenary of the passing of Queen Victoria."*

He said, *"It is reprehensible that, in its tremendous prejudice against the Monarchy – a Monarchy I emphasise which was overwhelmingly voted in by the People of Victoria just over a year ago, the Bracks Government has seen fit to ignore this occasion important in the history of the State. Such is the petulance of republicans."*

"It is surely not too much," continued Mr. Benwell *"To expect the Government to honour the person after whom their State was named to at least formally lay a wreath at an appropriate statue of Queen Victoria and I strongly urge them to do so for the sake of the honour of the State."*

TRUTH WILL PREVAIL: This has been a sobering first issue of ***On Target*** for the year. Crisis threatens on every quarter.

But the very nature of evil and dislocation ultimately serves to highlight the fact that truth offers viable alternatives. The polluted, glutted, dislocated world of the moment contains the possibilities of a brilliant dawn if events force us to recognise the Nature of Reality. The League, attacked and despised over many years, has continued to offer the vision outlined by C.H. Douglas, the founder of Social Credit. There are more seekers now than a few years ago. The League's challenge has been, and is, to preserve intact the information those seekers need. A challenging and rewarding New Year to our readers!

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