



A WEEKLY COMMENTARY

ON TARGET

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The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance –

Print Post Publication Number 381667 00258

Vol.37, No.4

February 9th, 2001

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: *"Now all this is absolutely symptomatic of the philosophy which is driving the World to destruction. The cure for every evil is to drown it in an attractively presented variant of itself.*

"The cure for temporary floods is permanent lakes, the cure for poverty is more taxation and compulsory insurance (i.e., taking more money away and only giving some of it back), the cure for Monopoly is nationalisation (i.e., super-monopoly), the cure for national wars and tyrannies is super-national wars and tyrannies, and the cure for those is the World State, with its chronic tyranny and civil war; and for that there seems no cure unless it is death and chaos, and a return to the Dark Ages.

"It is high time that the instinct of self-preservation began to rise superior to the dreadful fear of being called 'unprogressive' or 'against the trend'."

– *"On Planning the Earth"* by Geoffrey Dobbs, 1951

THE CORRUPTION OF BALLOT-BOX DEMOCRACY by Jeremy Lee:

As the majority of Australian voters, under threat of fines for failing to comply, go to State and Federal polls this year, few will have a conviction that their votes will change things, and hardly any will have been consulted about specific policies they want.

Placing bits of paper into boxes without any assurance they will be counted properly, or that some voters have not recorded their votes more than once or are not improperly registered is a poor substitute for the revered ideal of "government-by-the-people" as developed first in Greece 500 years BC.

No ballot paper will list choices on issues, i.e.:

- "Should there be a limit on taxes?" "Should taxpayers have a right to say how their taxes are spent?"
- "Should we increase or decrease immigration?" "What should we do about illegal refugees?"
- "Should we restore a 'peoples' bank'? "Should we limit imports to what we can pay for by exports, instead of incurring foreign debt?"
- "Should interest-rates be variable? Or should there be a ceiling on interest rates by law?"
- "Should Australia continue seeking foreign investment and ownership? Or should we change to a policy of increasing Australian ownership of our industries and assets?"

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- "Should voting be voluntary or compulsory? Should preferential voting be voluntary, compulsory, or scrapped altogether?"
- "Should international treaties take precedence over domestic provisions of the Australian Constitution?"
- "Should the full Parliament consider the signing of treaties? Should the States have any say?"
- "Should the Government create Australia's money requirements? Or should this be left with private banks?"
- "Are Australia's defences adequate? Should we re-develop regional citizens' defence forces as a supplement to our permanent Defence?"
 - and so on and so on.

There is nothing to stop the inclusion, with every ballot, of such a list of questions, to be filled in voluntarily and placed in a special box by each voter who feels so inclined. It should be compulsory to publish the number and percentages on each question.

The art of politics in 2001 is to frustrate any choice by the people on key issues. This was bearable, even if unjust, when Representatives could vote on conscience in Parliament and there was genuine opposition. But the major parties are mere sinecures of each other and what they used to be. The result is the beginning of a stampede towards minor parties and independents – the beginning of a revolt against party perversions which has the major parties jittery. So endless permutations are dreamed up to frustrate any chance of an improvement to the status quo. Compulsory preferential voting is an obvious example.

Take the case of the Queensland election, now in full swing. National Party leader Rob Borbidge, heading a party with no credulity or relevance left, took it upon himself to issue orders that no preferences were to be given to the re-emerged One Nation, which he placed below Labor. He has spent the last few months attacking the proved Labor rorts, but prefers Labor to One Nation!

But reality has rolled over Mr. Borbidge. His own party has overturned his edict – not because it favours free choice for voters, but because stark reality is staring it in the face. If the Nationals are to succeed – a faint chance indeed – they need every preference they can get, and they know the huge disaffected vote which stymied the Coalition at the last State election is, if anything, larger than last time.

One Nation is back in Queensland – not with any merit of its own, but as a hammer which the hugely disaffected electorate will use to club the corrupt, servile, self-serving major parties.

Labor leader Beattie, who is at least more human and intelligent than his Coalition counterparts, has said he will not allocate Labor preferences – it is up to voters to decide for themselves. Nice one, Mr. Beattie!

THE FEDERAL ELECTION: Prime Minister John Howard, described by one wit recently as a "duck-billed platitude" has been doing a bit of foraging of his own in the real world of the electorate, as opposed to the Alice-in-Wonderland world of "growth", "globalism" and "exports". To his surprise, the issues he thought had been swept aside by his lordly statesmanship are still out there. His decision not to reduce the impact of outrageous petrol prices will return to haunt him, as many of his hard-pressed backbenchers will attest. Poverty, the BAS haunting small businesses, the Dairy Industry disaster, growing unemployment and the recently-released survey showing thousands of Australian families unable to put sufficient food on the table are the real issues which his government will have to contend over the rest of this year.

Stephen Koukoulas, writing in *The Australian Financial Review* (29/1/2001) summed it up thus:

"Suggestions that Australia is heading for recession were kiboshed by the Prime Minister, John Howard, and his Treasurer, Peter Costello.

"Yet the murmuring of a looming recession has been inspired by dismal business confidence surveys, a slump in housing and consumer spending, falling employment and job ads and a severe deterioration in the global economic outlook. Stunningly low inflation outcomes following the fall of the \$A, the oil price rise and the introduction of the GST from last July only added to the perception that the economy is weak.

"In the fog of the debate about whether Australia is heading for a recession, the issue of defining what a recession means has been lost"

It may have been lost to politicians who have not had to tighten their belts in the slightest, but hundreds of thousands of Australians know exactly what a recession is. They and their families are experiencing it. And they have votes. All the glib Howard and Costello slogans that "our fundamentals are sound" won't wash when it comes to voting.

RECESSION IS HERE FOR MANY: Under the heading GET READY FOR YOUR VERY OWN RECESSION, *The Australian* (29/1/2001) quoted Mr. Saul Eslake, chief economist for the ANZ bank. Mr. Eslake said businesses who were not supplying to government – about 55 percent – were going to find it tough:

"....Mr. Eslake said ANZ's survey of newspaper job advertisements showed a fall of 22 percent in the past six months to the worst level since 1990.

"The GST, the Olympics, rising interest rates, the collapse of the dollar, higher petrol prices and even the money forked out by shareholders for Telstra 2 had contributed to the slowdown

"Mr. Eslake said the fact that many businesses were set to pay two tax bills – for 1999-2000 and the current year – at one time was compounding the profit squeeze and the choking of cash flow. He said profit in a cash flow sense was critically important for business owners' decisions about investment and employment.

"The outlook for both is not healthy. Mr. Eslake said manufacturing, retailing, the dotcom sector and building would struggle, especially those which did not sell exports or have government contracts"

Compounding Mr. Eslake's forecasts is the fact that the United States provides 25 percent of the world's export markets. It has been running a massive current account deficit with the rest of the world, of over \$US1 billion every 24 hours. Nations round the world have hooked their survival, and their ability to pay the world's bankers, onto exporting to the US. A feature article in *The Australian* (29/1/2001) said:

"American consumers and companies devoured imports from Asian nations, Mexico and Canada, fuelling their growth and driving the US trade deficit to record levels.

"Now those countries could get dragged down if the US falls into recession"

A slow down in Asia will decimate Australia's exports. Hence, under today's insane rules, when the US sneezes, Australia catches cold.

Look at the cycle. International banks, with head offices on Wall Street, lend money round the world and send out their affiliated multinationals to set up businesses to export back to America. Borrowing nations are hooked into exports as a means of paying back the international banks! If the US stops buying exports, all these 'hooked' nations go into crisis or receivership. Australia, despite being in natural terms the richest country in the world per capita, is numbered among them.

As C.H. Douglas and the Southampton Chamber of Commerce pointed out over 60 years ago, nations do not and should not have to depend on their exports *for their incomes!* The true purpose of trade is to exchange surpluses for domestic satisfaction. The debt system has distorted this into "export or perish". As Douglas pointed out in a well known address, this is a primary cause of war. (*The Southampton Chamber of Commerce Report, \$4 posted, from League bookshops.*)

LOOKING FOR ALTERNATIVES: The existing crisis keeps elevating the sanity of what Douglas had to say into ever-increasing prominence.

For those looking for an alternative to the existing perversion of crippled ballot-box democracy, Douglas outlined the only possible alternative to violence. He called it the Electoral Campaign idea. But it can only happen when there is enough pain to persuade people to look for another way.

Speaking to a conference of Social Crediters in London on June 26th, 1937, Douglas described it thus:

"In the Electoral Campaign, the action is perfectly simple; you have to get an undertaking on the part of a sufficient number of people to bring effective pressure, by methods which are perfectly well known to everybody here, to bear upon the Member of Parliament so that he will do what you want; that is to say, you have got to make your Member of Parliament a representative – not a delegate....."

"The fundamental fact is the sovereignty of the people, but at the present time we are not exercising our sovereignty at all" (*The Policy of a Philosophy, C.H. Douglas, \$4 posted from League bookshops.*)

All of which sounds simple. But timing and the issue are all-important.

We have recently heard about a Liberal back-bencher confronted by an ultimatum from a gathering of voters in Victoria. If she did not speak out and oppose Mr. Howard's policy on petrol taxes, each voter would put her last when voting at the next election.

Her majority may not be big enough to take the risk of alienating voters. She is now facing pressures she has not experienced before.

This should be happening in every electorate in Australia. The party label or otherwise of the Member does not matter.

But it will only happen when enough of us can raise our energies to initiate such a development. The battle for Australia will be won in the electorates before meaningful changes occur in Parliaments.