



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 great instrument of all these changes and what infuses a particular venom into all of them is Party. It is of no consequence what the principles of any party or what their pretensions are, the spirit which actuates all parties is the same, the spirit of ambition, of self-interest, of oppression and treachery. This spirit entirely reverses all the principles which a benevolent nature has erected within us – all honesty, all equal justice and even the ties of natural society, the natural affections. In a word we have all seen – we have some of us felt such oppression from the Party Government as no other tyranny can parallel."*

by Edmund Burke "Vindication of Natural Society"

POLITICAL REALITIES BREAK THROUGH by Jeremy Lee:

This article is being written two days before the Queensland State election. The reverberations of West Australia are still hitting home, and Queensland, not to be outdone, may increase the savage battering the coalition parties received in the West.

Only a very few voters analyse the policies of the competing candidates. The majority go on feelings, prejudices and anger, which they mix together to use against the most disliked group. Elemental in the process is the motivation of fear, which impels many voters to seek the "lesser of the evils" on offer, and vote accordingly.

When things are bad enough voters are apt to turn on the incumbents using any weapon to hand. For many, One Nation is simply a weapon to bash the party in power.

It is difficult to anticipate what will happen in Queensland. By the time you read this you will know. My guess is as follows: The Nationals and the Liberals will be reduced to an ineffectual rump. One Nation, and other minor parties and independents *where there is no One Nation candidate*, will pick up a sizeable protest vote.

After its rorting record I would be surprised if Labor increased its vote. But it won't lose nearly as many as the coalition, whose record of ineffectiveness can be recognised by blind Freddy!

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DEAD MAN WALKING: A feature article in *The Courier Mail* (Qld. 15/2/01) by Matthew Franklin, headed DEAD MAN TALKING, suggested the Queensland election resembled a funeral march and Rob Borbidge (National leader) could be its corpse. It's no overstatement. Borbidge, the Premier at Queensland's last election, was tossed out by the One Nation phenomenon, and has done nothing in the last three years save mark time. A resolute leader would have created and led the protest against the destruction of the State's Dairy Industry, hit the National Competition Policy for six, and come out fighting against foreign ownership and the tax avoidance enjoyed by multinationals at the expense of Australian small business. To do this he should have publicly opposed the weak-kneed federal National Party.

But the Nationals and the Liberals have drifted along with nothing but benign smiles, and a series of personal attacks on Labor leader Peter Beattie, which still constitutes the base of the Coalition election policy..

A more perceptive article by Malcolm McGregor in *The Australian* of the same day pointed out that the Hanson phenomenon was merely the tip of an iceberg which had been developing for a long time, focussed on two main reasons:

" First the trivialisation of political discourse to meet the demands of television has transformed politics into just another electronic game show. This has impoverished political debate in Australia and substituted game schema analysis of the tactical and conflict aspects of politics for serious analysis of issues. The media revels in dissecting these aspects of politics that sicken voters.

"Secondly, the convergence of the two main parties around a faddish neo-liberal economic agenda, and the privileging of the market over every other aspect of national life, has fuelled a deep anger and a sense of impotence among a significant portion of the electorate There is now virtually no legitimate dissent from the arid economoetric agenda of balanced budgets and reduced government services. Hanson is harvesting the votes of those who feel betrayed by the drab ideological conformity of this debate"

ILLEGALS TO BE SHIPPED OUT: For Australians who have been appalled at the self-torturing position of Immigration Minister Phillip Ruddock and the Coalition in Canberra over illegal immigrants, Pauline Hanson has picked up the issue with a simple solution which should have been applied ages ago:

" She said the Government should intercept the vessels off Australia's north coast, provide them with water, food, fuel and medical supplies and send them back.

"These people are queue jumpers," she said. "They have destroyed their identification. We do not know of their backgrounds. We don't know if they are criminals, but we certainly know that they are bringing out diseases." (Courier-Mail, 15/2/01)

While describing the Hanson remarks as "generalisations", Mr. Ruddock had to admit that both diseases and criminals were coming in.

So why won't the Howard government take action? Because the international treaty on refugees prevents them doing so – at least until they are prepared to put Australian interests above "international obligations".

With a federal election due later this year, the matters raised in the Hanson revival will dog the Coalition's path every step of the way.

FARMERS UP IN ARMS: Queensland's main rural paper, *The Queensland Country Life*, in its February 15th issue, carried the front-page headline BUSH FURY DRIVES VOTE. It said:

"Rural and regional Queensland is ready to punish the major parties in the forthcoming election, believing neither has served the State's rural interests to the best of their abilities. An exclusive Queensland Country Life survey of rural and regional Queensland sounded out likely voting intentions.

"It noted the electorate's disenchantment with politicians in general, increasing frustration at the lack of consultation on issues of importance, and a yearning for the emergence of a strong alternative party in Queensland....."

Symptomatic was an angry protest march in Brisbane of dairy farmers facing destruction due to deregulation. They gained maximum coverage, and have a sympathetic city audience.

Another big protest of farmers in Victoria – where there is no election – took place at Tallangatta, with farmers coming from as far away as Swan Hill, Ballarat and Benalla. *The Stock & Land* (8/2/01) reported:

" More than 700 farmers voted unanimously to accept a motion by the Wodonga Victorian Farmers' Federation Pastoral District Council, rejecting the Farm Dams (Irrigation) Review Committee draft report The motion endorsed the Murray-Darling Basin cap but objected to its use to deny farmers' existing rights to store and use water falling on their farm as they pleased if it was not a waterway"

It is doubtful whether even concerned farmers in Victoria understand the full ramifications of the threat confronting them. A recent American media report claims the World Bank is now behind the programme to control water globally:

"The World Bank states that current governments mismanage their water resources by: Misallocating and wasting water; enforcing weak and distorted policies which damage the environment; neglecting financial accountability and user participation; charging too low a price for water; failing to effectively deliver water to users, especially the poor and by administering water policy under a centralised structure....."

"The World Bank proposes three solutions to the water 'problem': (1) Productive water users will be charged fees to subsidise the poor water users: (2) Benefit taxes will be charged for any benefits received from the water 'owners' land: (3) Pollution charges will be assessed for any pollution that may be generated in the use of water for industrial purposes.

"The World Bank proposes to remove federal government authority over water policy by replacing all country and state political boundaries with geographical 'River Basins Boundaries'. This will be accomplished with the transfer, by contract, of all water jurisdiction by governments to private corporations and user associations" (The Idaho Observer, 15/11/00. <http://www.proliberty.com/observer/20001013.htm>)

The excerpts above are only a small part of the whole article. To get a copy of the 1993 World Bank "Water Policy Paper" contact the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 1818 H. Street, NW Washington, DC 20433, USA.

MEDIA MONOPOLIES: Stephen Romei, writing from New York in *The Australian Media* (15-21/2/01) described the ever-increasing threat to democracy through media monopolies. The world was already in the hands of eight media giants, with the possibility of further mergers. The eight, with the number of employees and their annual revenue are:

AOL Time Warner: 81,000 employees, annual revenue: \$US 36.2 billion; News Corporation (Murdoch): Employees, 30,000; Annual revenue: \$US 13.4 billion; Disney: Employees, 120,000; Annual Revenue: \$US 25.4 billion; Viacom: Employees: 126,820; Annual Revenue: \$US 33.4 billion; General Electric: Employees: 340,000; Annual revenue: \$US 129.8 billion; Vivendi-Universal: Employees: 250,000; Annual Revenue: \$US 41.9 billion; Sony Corporation: Employees: 189,700; Annual Revenue: \$US 63.1 billion; Bertelsmann: Employees: 76,257; Annual Revenue: \$US 15.5 billion.

Mind boggling! Seven world media corporations earn between them a revenue equivalent to \$60 for every living person on the planet! And the news isn't all that good!

THE WA ELECTIONS by Betty Luks:

Why do I feel such a sense of unease with all the media hype about Pauline Hanson and "One Nation" and its deals with the Labor Party in WA? It could be because it takes our eyes off the real issues, the effects of the oppressive taxes on us all, the usurious money system and the continuously upward-spiralling debt and the erosion of our freedoms and sovereignty.

One report from WA says Labor won because the Liberal and National primary vote collapsed – not because of One Nation's preference deals.

Not enough consideration has been given to the effect of the Green vote and their preferences. Labor gained only 37% of the primary vote; the other minor parties – including One Nation – and the Independents gained just over 30% and this left the Coalition with just over 30% – a rout without a doubt!

The dust needs to settle before any realistic analysis can be made, but one thing is certain, many people have had enough of tweedle-dum and tweedle-dummer! They are looking for genuine alternatives.

But they must exercise their own muscles...the freedom/responsibility muscles!

They must not vote blindly and must *insist on results* whether their representative belongs to One Nation, Liberal, Labor or Calathumpian! The People must play their part in this thing called *Democracy*.