A WEEKLY COMMENTARY

ON TARGET

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The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance –

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THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: *"They see themselves at the helm of the ship of Russian history, but they are not. They do not direct the course of events. As for those who do, their plans to establish a 'final worldwide security' are ephemeral as well. Given human nature we ought never to attain such security. It would be futile, at the very least, to march towards this goal armed with hypocrisy and scheming short-term calculations, as practised by a revolving door, of officials and by the powerful financial circles that back them. Nor can security be bought with any new technical 'super-invention' – for no secret lasts.*

"Only if the creative and active forces of mankind dedicate themselves to finding gradual and effective restraints against the evil facets of human nature to an elevation of our moral consciousness – only then will a faint, distant hope exist. To embark upon this path, and to walk it, requires a penitent, pure heart and the wisdom and willingness to place constraints on one's own side, to limit oneself even before limiting others. But today that path only elicits an ironic chuckle, if not open ridicule."

"The March of the Hypocrites" by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, ***The Times***, August 1997

THE WITCH DOCTORS ARRIVE by Jeremy Lee:

The dollar has now dropped below 49c, and the voodoo experts from the International Monetary Fund are examining the entrails of the Australian economy. The same incantations voiced during the Great Depression, updated a little for the new millennium, are now being regurgitated.

If there is any bright spot in today's gloomy economic news it is that the claims by the gurus are increasingly seen for what they are – sheer nonsense. It must be particularly trying for Treasurer Costello. All the 'bad' of a few years ago is being re-translated into the 'good' of the moment. The low dollar, which he condemned when it was in the seventy-cent range during Keating's last months, now has 'advantages' when it is below fifty cents. Our exports are going to take off – didn't you know? The fact that our potential markets are also being squeezed, and will be trying to ram *their* exports at cut-throat prices into the Australian market is not explained.

To those at ground-level in the Australian economy, the wounds are evident. Tens of thousands of small businesses, led by the building industry, are going to the wall. Shops are closed daily, and "For Lease" signs appear in empty windows previously stuffed with goods. There is less private traffic on the roads. Families which have already reached the last notch in their belts despair of keeping up with costs and interest rates.

To the politicians, their electoral prospects are more important than the misery in the community. Half a million dollars was spent on the recent Ryan by-election, where Labor has just scraped in with a handful of votes. For what? So that a 'representative' can take a seat in Canberra to vote "Aye" or "Nay" whenever the Party Whip dictates?

The idea that the economy is to meet the needs and satisfactions of the Australian people seems the last thing on any political mind. Our task, according to orthodox wisdom, is to "work harder", to produce "growth", which we must export anywhere to satisfy other consumers – not our own.

The whole "growth" argument is full of deceit. It is now tacitly accepted that if the growth rate falls below 2.5%, we are in "negative territory". Even the criticisms of Shadow Treasurer Simon Crean – hitting home with increasing impact on the susceptible Peter Costello – are based on the same assumptions. Give him the treasury reins at the next federal election, and he'll goad or stimulate us back into "growth" and exports.

Much the same witch-doctor talk goes on in economies round the world. It is a deadly variation of 'Alice-in-Wonderland'. Presiding over the whole chaotic mess are the debt merchants, who have all nations in their grip, and who play one against the other with casual indifference. During "growth" periods that take their pound of flesh in interest. When things move to recession they cash in on bankruptcies. It makes no difference either way.

Events must sooner or later focus on the *real* questions:

- Do we produce enough food for all Australians? If so, why are so many going hungry?
- Have we enough bricks and mortar to house all Australians? If so, why do we have so many homeless?
- Do we produce enough wool and cotton to clothe all Australians? If so, why are *Lifeline* and *St Vincent de Paul* overrun by the destitute?
- Do we have enough minerals to feed our manufacturing sectors with raw materials? We produced steel at Broken Hill in the 1800s, and built a debt-free railway across Australia with our own hands in the beginning of the 1900s. We have virtually everything we need.
- Have we enough energy? We have coal, petroleum and natural gas in abundance. We are a net exporter of petroleum products. We may not use it wisely or economically. But we certainly have more than enough for a successful economy. Why, then, do we persecute our motorists and transport systems because some overseas body called OPEC decides to raise prices?
- Have we the resources to educate our children and provide all Australians with the material and cultural requirements for a good standard of living? If so, why is Australia's standard of living slipping down the scale each decade?
- Could we finance ourselves with our own monetary system, instead of grovelling to the global money mafia, selling out our country, our sovereignty and our future generations in the process?
- If the answers to these questions are self-evident, do we need totally different policies to those currently offered by the major political parties? And what will it take to get them?

A VOICE FROM THE PAST: During the worst stage of the Great Depression one leader was prepared to ask such questions. While Australians starved in misery, the Bank of England sent its emissary Sir Otto Niemeyer to insist on debt repayments. Sir Otto's theme was the same as today – tighter belts, more production and exports.

The famous Billy Hughes, who had represented Australia at the Versailles Peace Conference some 15 years earlier, issued his own pamphlet on the nature of the depression crisis. He said:

"Nothing better exemplifies the baffling complexity of modern production than the present situation in Australia. Trade is depressed, our unemployed are numbered by tens of thousands, who walk the streets of our great cities and tramp the country roads downcast and in many cases dependent for food on charity – while their country is a veritable Garden of Eden in which blooms in luxuriant confusion almost everything that man could desire. We have a population of a little over six millions of people – many now in sad trouble – yet we shall produce this year enough wheat to feed thirty millions, enough wool to clothe 100 millions, and meat, butter, dried fruits, sugar, and other kinds of food and raw materials, including minerals and metals, sufficient for double or treble our present population. And yet they say Australia is in a bad way because we produce too little. Wealth in abundance meets the eye on every hand, yet men are unemployed and trade is depressed. Surely the trouble does not arise because we produce too little. Yet Sir Otto says we ought to produce more ...."

Billy Hughes was writing at a time when technology was primitive compared to today. The car was in its infancy, many rural areas and small towns still did not have power, the aeroplane was still poking its nose over the horizon, computers had not been dreamed of and robots were science-fiction. Productive capacity has increased tens of thousands of time since then.

The problem is not a "growth" or "productive" problem. It is a distribution problem and the bottle-neck to a world of peace, harmony and sufficiency is the financial system, currently operated solely through debt.

The destruction wrought by the debt system is now so universal that it is causing havoc in the production system. Farming and manufacturing is being decimated. Sustainability is being destroyed. Persisted with, the attrition rate could well reach the stage where massive world shortages replace over-production. Turning farming into "monoculture-for-exports" by eliminating the family farm could result in the disappearance of the household products we now take for granted – fruit, milk and dairy products, vegetables and meat.

For many younger people such possibilities cannot be imagined. For older, more experienced people, some of whom remember the Great Depression, this is simply the replaying of an old, cracked record trotted out at various times in the boom-bust cycle. Treasury Ministers are simply the disc-jockeys in the lamentations of depression dirges.

Which is why the writings of C.H. Douglas are so important. Not only was he the most accurate analyst of truth as compared to propaganda, but he was by far the most advanced and able of those offering realistic solutions.

Thankfully, there are stirrings of interest in our all-but-forgotten history and the writings of Douglas.

There are fresh young minds who have picked the hypocrisy of today's political argument and are looking for answers. The banks are universally disliked, and, belatedly, even the Howard government is calling them a 'cartel'. The banker's monopoly, which sooner or later will be exposed, lies in the creation of credit and the expropriation of our heritage.

(For a basic understanding, ***"The A.B.C. of Social Credit"*** by E.S. Holter, described by C.H. Douglas as "A straightforward, honest and simple outline of Social Credit" – $7.50 posted from League bookshops.)

SHADOW-BOXING: ***The Australian*** (22/3/01) under the heading CABINET ATTACKS BIG END OF TOWN reported: *"Howard Government ministers have launched a stinging attack on the top end* *of town, accusing the banks and credit card companies of running a cartel that is fleecing consumers and small businesses.*

"The attack yesterday triggered an immediate reaction from the banks, with ANZ saying the Government's comments were unhelpful in the current delicate environment.

"The clash is bound to help the Government's shaky standing with struggling small businesses, embattled farmers, pensioners and the 'John Howard battlers' ....."

Prime Minister Howard was quoted as saying – *"I think the Reserve Bank should look at all the powers it has."*

If only he really meant it! The 1937 Royal Commission into Banking made it clear that the government bank can lend money without interest – <u>or even without the necessity for repayment</u> (Section 504). In other words the Reserve Bank could, if instructed by Parliament, write off existing debt by issuing measured quantities of debt-free money, thus massively reducing costs throughout the economy.

But it is doubtful whether Prime Minister Howard could bring himself to consider such a possibility.

<u>ROYAL AID FOR EMBATTLED FARMERS</u> by Betty Luks:

Prince Charles is to give £1.5 million to help British farmers devastated by the "foot and mouth" epidemic. He will hand the money to charities in the frontline of the crisis including three trying to combat the high rates of stress and suicide in the farming community.

The Herald Sun (16/3/01) reports *"Aides say Prince Charles is acting out of a growing sense of despair and frustration. Prince Charles said, 'I want to do everything I can to help these farmers and their families keep their heads above water. I pray with all my heart that the farmers, those who depend on them for their livelihoods, and everyone whose life and business depend on the health and well-being of our countryside, may soon see better times.' "*

So far other countries that have acknowledged outbreaks of the disease include France, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Argentina and France and Italy.

Prime Minister Tony Blair indicated his plans for a May 3rd election were unchanged, insisting the crisis needed to be kept in perspective – according to him life was carrying on normally in many country areas.

<u>BRACKS GOVERNMENT FLAGS CHANGES TO RACIAL VILIFICATION BILL</u>: In a move to win over the three Independents and secure the support of the Liberals in the Upper House, the Bracks Government has put forward the possibility of changes to its draft 'racial vilification' legislation. The Government needs the support of just one Independent to pass the legislation in the Lower House.

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