



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 following report from the Sydney *"Daily Telegraph"* of August 9th 1940, makes further interesting reading: **Sees America As Our Ruler.** Leon Trotsky, exiled Russian Communist leader, predicts that the United States will become 'the legitimate inheritor' of Canada, Australia and New Zealand... Trotsky predicted that the United States, without entering the war, would emerge as the most imperialistic nation in the history of the world as a result of it...

"With the military war raging, the attack upon the British people and British institutions is being ruthlessly carried on. Here in Australia the position staggers from crisis to crisis. Finance is 'sovietising' us from above... Democracy means that power should reside with the electors, and further, and much more important, that they should be CONSCIOUS of that power. The conflict now raging goes much deeper than mere monetary reform; those who talk about monetary reform without showing the electors that they, as INDIVIDUALS, have supreme POWER, are doomed to be disappointed."

– "The War Behind the War: the real nature of the opposing forces" by E.D. Butler, 1940s

THE RETREAT FROM TRUTH AND FREEDOM by Jeremy Lee:

Under the guise of fighting terrorism there is now a massive attack on traditional freedoms in western nations. President Bush's declaration of a state of emergency is being thrown in the teeth of Benjamin Franklin's warning that those prepared to trade freedom for security will end up with neither. Since September 11th the President has taken unto himself the right to determine which prosecutions will be conducted by civil courts and which by military tribunals. Francis Boyle, professor of international law at the University of Illinois, commented on November 11th: "What we've seen since September 11th, if you add up everything that Ashcroft, Gonzales and their coterie of Federalist Society lawyers have done here, is a coup d'etat against the United States Constitution"

Many civil liberties have been suspended, including open and fair trials, limited detention before trial, provision of representation, etc. There is even a debate going on about the legitimacy of torture as a weapon of war.

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The American attack on civil liberties has its counterpart in the "Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Bill" currently before the British Parliament.

Writing of this Bill, author Ashley Mote says, ".... The Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Bill currently going through Parliament has buried within it a provision to empower any British Government to sweep away our centuries-old system of criminal law. It will be able to impose the European Union's system of Napoleonic criminal law known as *Corpus Juris* on the British people without parliamentary scrutiny or debate. Only the introduction of a Statutory Instrument at Westminster will be needed to implement such a momentous decision by the EU in Brussels. Crucial fundamental rights will disappear overnight, the right to habeus corpus, the right to trial by jury, the right to see the evidence against the accused, the presumption of innocence, and freedom from double jeopardy, amongst many other safeguards currently imposed by the British system of criminal justice.

They will be replaced by the threat of indefinite and renewable detention without trial, no right of access to the evidence against the accused, and secret courts. Instead of trial by jury, cases will be heard by professional judges appointed by the state and dependent on it for their career advancement.

The police and prosecution will be merged into a single organization. Extradition to a foreign country without the protection of a British court or the need for *prima facie* evidence and repeated trials on the same charges until the state wins a guilty verdict, are also part of *corpus juris*.....

The Anti-terrorism Bill is in 14 parts, only one of which is directly concerned with terrorism. The rest, including Article 109, appear to be a motley collection of measures based on what was probably a long-standing Home Office wish-list. But international reaction to events of September 11 has provided this profoundly illiberal government with a rare opportunity to snatch powers that it would never have dreamt of acquiring under normal circumstances.

If this Bill completes its passage through Parliament as currently drafted, the centuries-old British criminal justice system is finished, with Parliament powerless to stop it"

It was Arnold Toynbee who commented that only under war, or threat of war, could the British people be persuaded to abandon traditional freedoms.

The same government indifference to the sanctity of our rights is evident in Australia too. Every authoritarian step is tested to see whether there is reaction from the people. If there is only a little grumbling from the minority, or worse still, silence, then the next step is taken until there is nothing left. As the RSL so rightly say, "The price of freedom is eternal vigilance ..."

WORLD TRADE ORGANISATION GOOSE-STEPS ONWARD: Almost unnoticed behind the Afghan situation, the World Trade Organisation gathering at Doha, Qatar, has been completed behind a chorus of protests from developing countries. There was huge arm-twisting of Third World countries by America and the OECD to "open their markets", while the industrial giants increased their own subsidies to farmers and tightened up "anti-dumping laws" – the replacement for tariffs. Devinder Sharma, a food and trade policy analyst from India, commented: "The 'explicit' way the QUAD countries – the United States, the European Union, Canada and Japan – bludgeoned their way into gains on virtually every issue on the agenda at the fourth WTO Ministerial, which ended at Doha recently, the world is certainly up for sale. The greatest tragedy of Doha is that the world's richest

economies, which invariably swear in the name of democracy, used all 'undemocratic' norms and arms to force a 'consensus' down the throat of developing countries. In the bargain, the autocratic process of takeover of the global economy puts at risk millions of people, especially women and children, without basic rights and opportunities, and hoping against hope"

Caroline Lucas, writing in *The Guardian* (UK, 21/11/01), added: " the absence of democracy was a leitmotiv running through the entire meeting from November 9-13. Developing countries were already furious before they arrived because the negotiating text drawn up in Geneva was weighted entirely in the interests of the rich north. But that was nothing compared to the ruthlessness of the negotiation tactics employed against them.

Immense pressure was exerted on the poorer countries by the powerful trading nations, in order to get their way. It was these backroom bruising that finally forced developing country delegates into resentful acquiescence. At one point two countries – one from Latin America, the other from Africa – were threatened with the removal of agreed access to richer country markets. ... The EU, Britain and the WTO are congratulating themselves on getting a new round of talks. But the reality is that we now have a global trade race, with the poor countries arm-twisted and bullied into the starting blocks. None of the developing countries' main demands were even addressed in Doha. They wanted a fairer trade system, to be allowed to protect their domestic farmers, and to analyse the adverse effects of the previous Uruguay round of talks in order to inform future trade deals. They were simply ignored...."

Sounds like a great way to 'win friends and influence people'. And where does Australia fit in? With the United States *increasing* agricultural subsidies by \$370 billion over the next ten years, the future for rural Australia – if forced to depend on export income for survival – does not look bright.

HANDING OUT HOW-TO-VOTE SLIPS: It now appears the Democrats employed casual labour to hand out how-to-vote cards in the federal election. *The Weekend Australian* (24-25/11/01) wrote: "*The Australian Democrats used paid casual workers to hand out how-to-vote cards in the federal election.*

"Between 50 and 60 casuals were supplied by Drake Overload for four-hour shifts in Victoria, and about a dozen in South Australia, according to party officials. It is likely they were paid the Property and Business Services award minimum of \$14.89 an hour"

What questions and possibilities this conjures up! First of all, did "affirmative action" apply? In other words, were there an equal number of men and women employed in this enthralling occupation? Secondly, is \$14.89 really enough? I know plenty of people who would think \$100 an hour to recommend the Democrats inadequate. Thirdly, are those employed in the "how-to-vote-card" industry covered by any special award? Should there be a "HTVC" union? What about counseling? Surely, there would be unwarranted stress for supporters of other parties or candidates to be required to recommend a group they personally disagree with? Perhaps there should be emotional or grief counseling for such traumatized people? What effect did a four-hour stint at a polling group have on employment figures? One hour a week makes you fully employed. What does a four-hour stint make you? Was there "personal injury cover" taken out by the Democrats to cover such recruits? After all, they could have been attacked by rabid Nationals – or even bitten by a One Nation dog.

Was this productive effort included in the GDP figures? It must, after all, have made the Australian

economy 'grow' that little bit more. And, finally, were these jobs advertised nationally, under Competition rules? We need answers to what could eventually become an exciting new industry.

NOW THE ELECTION'S OVER: Who remembers Treasurer Costello valiantly fighting off "foreign control" of Australia's North-West gas industry when Shell tried to muscle in? It must have gained the Coalition a few extra votes.

But the election is now behind us. *The Australian* (22/11/01) told us: "*China's third largest oil company, CNOOC Ltd. has signed a heads of agreement to take equity in the North West Shelf gas project.*

The deal is conditional on the Shelf joint venture securing the supply contract for the proposed Guandong receival terminal, China's first LNG project.

In August, CNOOC, which is 70 percent owned by the Chinese Government, signed a memorandum of understanding with Chevron that could lead to it taking equity in the Gorgon gas reservoir, also off the North-West coast of Australia. Both deals reflect the potential of coastal China as the most prospective new regional market for Australia's LNG"

Somehow, we doubt if we'll hear Mr. Costello talking about "Australia's national interest" until the next federal election in three years' time.

WRITING OFF DEBT: Japan, according to a report in *The Australian* (26/11/01), has sanctioned the big banks writing off \$92 billion in bad debts, while cutting jobs and cutting down on costs.

Funny how only banks and the bankrupt ever have their debts written off. The bankrupt have penalties attached. But the banks simply charge forward with new loans of freshly-created credit.

What difference would it make if the same sum – in this case \$92 billion – was simply used to pay off mortgages. The money would end up in repayments to the banks, but a whole lot of people would be liberated from debt-slavery. As it is now, the banks are the only ones given favoured treatment – and they already have the unfair advantage of creating money when they lend.

GREENSPAN FACES COURT CASE – GOLD PRICE MANIPULATION from Aida Parker newsletters January, August 2001:

The essence of the situation is that a cartel of major financial institutions was allowed by the United States authorities to manipulate the price of gold and purchase at a price convenient to massive re-investment elsewhere. This not only endangered the mining industry in Africa but, when the price of gold dropped below the original purchase price this resulted in a negative interest repayment differential, and losses in paper money in a falling market that rendered the debt unrepayable.

A private case brought by Gold Anti-Trust Action (GATA), is currently being heard in a Federal Court in Boston. The defendants are the Swiss-based Bank of International Settlements (BIS), Goldman Sachs, Deutsche Bank, J.P. Morgan-Chase Manhattan, Citigroup, the United States Treasury Department, the Federal Reserve Board and the New York Federal Reserve Bank.

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