



A WEEKLY COMMENTARY

ON TARGET

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The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance –

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THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: *"Like Milton's Satan, Sauron will not serve such a Deity. He is intent upon his own supremacy, and he reads all others by his own light... he (Sauron) assumes that Frodo and his friends will seek to overthrow him and to establish their own sovereignty. Yet Sauron's calculus of self-interest blinds him to the surprising strategy of the Company...Not for want of mental power is Sauron thus deceived. He is a creature whose craft and power are very great, as his fashioning of the Ring (of Power) proves. Sauron embodies himself as a terrible all-seeing Eye. He can thus discern the outward operation of things, but he cannot discern the inward workings of the heart.*

"Sauron's fatal lack is not intelligence, therefore, but sympathy. He cannot 'feel with', and so he is incapable of community... Tolkien thus holds out considerable hope that evil cannot form a fellowship: there is no true Compact of the Wicked, but there is a real Company of the Good..."

– *"Lord of the Rings Revisited"*, Dr. Ralph Wood, Professor of English, Baylor University, 2002

THE LAST HURRAH? OR, ON TO MERRIE ENGLANDE? by Jeremy Lee:

The recent immense rally by rural Britons through the streets of London Town has, in contrast to Britain itself, received scant coverage in Australia. Over four hundred thousand people from diverse walks of life, with a minimum of organization, assembled in good-natured but determined mood, to express their anger at the destruction of the rural way of life. The pretext for such an outpouring was Prime Minister Blair's attempt to ban fox-hunting. But it was obvious that this was the pretext for an avalanche of issues, combining into a widespread indignation with the destruction of a traditional part of Britain.

THE CLEANSING OF THE SHIRE: Those familiar with J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, widely regarded as one of the great Christian classics of the 20th Century, will recall the return of Frodo Baggins and his lieutenant Sam Gamgee from horrific encounters with the arch-centralist Sauron – during which the will-to-power in the form of the Ring was disposed of – to find their Shire homeland tied up and stifled under a load of bureaucratic red tape and regulation.

Local residents could not even sit on a bench outside the local inn with a pint, because some anonymous 'do-gooder' had invented a regulation curtailing such a simple freedom.

(Tolkien himself smoked a pipe, which would have been regarded with horror by the 'do-gooders' who have never read a word of what he wrote.)

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Frodo and Sam arrived home at just the right time. Tapping into fuming resentment and banishing demoralisation, they routed the bureaucrats and burned the mountain of petty regulations and unnecessary taxes and fees.

Something akin to "an issue with the necessary steam" must have galvanized rural England to produce the biggest rally in the history of the British Isles.

Incredulous British papers caught the significance of the moment.

Under the heading WERE YOU LISTENING, TONY BLAIR?, Britain's *Daily Telegraph* (23/9/02) said: *"Never before have so many people taken to the streets in protest. The marchers represent a Britain that is often overlooked. In Edmund Burke's metaphor, they are the great cattle, reposed beneath the shadow of the British oak"*

Another report, same paper: *"... Asked what would happen if the Government did not listen to the marchers' concerns he said "I think the countryside will erupt in fury. What form that fury will take I'm not certain, but I have no doubts about the depth and intensity of the fury you will see. We will see a public outpouring of anger of a kind that has not been seen for a very long time Ben Gill, speaking for the National Farmers' Union, said many farmers were working 60 to 70 hours a week and earning about 3 pounds (\$6) per hour – well below the 4.2 pound minimum wage. There had been an 'exodus' of farmers in the past five years"*

The Prince of Wales has written to Tony Blair saying he believes hunting people are victimized more than ethnic minorities and homosexuals. In a letter, the thrust of which was leaked on the eve of the ...march, Prince Charles told the Prime Minister that he agreed with a farmer in Cumbria who told him: "If we as a group were black or gay, we would not be victimized or picked upon....."

Britain's biggest-selling newspaper, *The Sun* (23/9/02), spoke to some of the hundreds of thousands who marched. The comments might have come from Australia:

""I have been a farmer all my life but the Government are forcing us out of business."

"We are trying to produce for less than it costs us to grow and we cannot do it any longer."

Farm worker William Harrison, 40, blamed supermarkets for forcing down prices. The dad of four ... added "Our small shops, pubs and schools are closing."

Gardener Denny Hawes, 51, of Orford, Suffolk, said: "My livelihood is under threat from politicians. They need to stop the towns encroaching on the countryside."

Farmhand Brian Power, 34, had a special grudge against red tape.

Dad of two Brian, of Worthing, Sussex, said: "I've had enough of what the Government's doing; there's too much paperwork....."

"If farming continues to do badly, my home as well as my job could be at risk because I get the house with the job."

Mechanic Geoff Davis, 41, from Edenbridge, Kent, said: "My turnover is down because farmers are doing badly and I mend their vehicles. I worry about the future."

Labourer Blair Allan, 22, of Orsott, Essex, said: "It's impossible to make a living. There might come a stage when it's hard for farmers to employ us."....

The Telegraph added the same day: "...For every marcher talking about hunting, there was another telling you about the local bus service, the closing Post Office, the price of lamb, and the greed of the supermarkets ..."

Even the prestigious *Times* was jolted: "This was not just, or even largely about hunting. "Only stupid Sheep hide under Bushes, Tony", one placard said, in what appeared to be about IraqOne marcher had clearly spent hours painstakingly printing the following argument on to her T-shirt: "There are no natural predators of foxes and deer yet they have to be controlled. Let us mirror nature." Another, rather more pithily, declared: "For Fox sake, listen!"

A group of Portuguese farmers had come to show solidarity, but found there was only space to show half their banner"

William Rees-Mogg, in another *Times* article, wrote: "... It is an expression of the alienation of a major part of British society. Apart from field sports, the issues are cultural, economic, and social, and there were some placards which referred to each of these issues"The BBC (i.e. British Broadcasting Corporation – Ed.) is England's number one enemy." The economic issues are keenly felt. They are expressed in various, often quite specific, statements: "14p a litre for milk is not a living." Down in Somerset, where the rain and the grass provide an ideal environment for milk production, we all know that it's true. In recent years Somerset farmers have been going out of milk in large numbers. One slogan neatly combined the economic with the hunting issue: "50,000 foxes can't be wrong! Eat British Lamb!"

THE NEED FOR A SANCTION: There is both something heartening, and a hint of pathos, in this national outpouring in England. C.H. Douglas once asked the question: "What use is the logic if you don't have the guns?"

Australia's farmers have been through the same routine in the 'seventies, with big rallies in the capital cities. The politicians simply waited until they had gone home again, sadder and more demoralized, then carried on as before.

The loss of Australian farmers since then has altered the whole social structure of Australia.

Short of physical force, which everyone agrees is destructive, the only sanction is the vote. If Tony Blair thought he would lose the votes of rural England, he would do something about it. But he knows his Opposition is without policies, or the courage to do what must be done.

Only when a nation is driven to the point where a minority of voters – big enough to determine election results; say 5% to 10% – is determined to withhold votes completely until iron-clad contracts are established between electors and politicians, will the pendulum start to swing towards representative government.

A FAINT WHIFF OF HISTORY: Britain's Sun newspaper recorded that three women marchers from different parts of England – who had probably never contemplated such a thing before – marched topless among the 400,000.

Such a thing has happened before in Britain at moments of intense crisis. The famed British warrior Queen Boadicea, whose two daughters were savagely raped by Roman foot-soldiers during the invasion of Britain, appeared topless before her army and made the following speech, according to the historian Dion Cassius:

"I appeal to thee as a woman. I rule not, like Nitocris, over beasts of burden, as are the effeminate nations of the East, nor the Semiramis, over tradesmen and traffickers, nor like the man-woman Nero, over slaves and eunuchs – such is the precious knowledge these foreigners introduce among us – but I rule over Britons, little versed in craft and diplomacy, but born and trained in the game of war, men who, in the cause of liberty stake down their lives, the lives of their wives and children, their lands and property. Queen of such a race, I implore thine aid for freedom, for victory over enemies infamous for the wantonness of the wrongs they inflict, for their perversion of justice, for their contempt for religion, for their insatiable greed, a people that revel in unmanly pleasures, whose affections are more to be dreaded and abhorred than their enmity. Never let a foreigner bear rule over me or these my countryman; never let slavery reign in this island"

Boadicea's statue, riding her chariot, stands at one end of Westminster Bridge, over which many of the recent marchers trod.

When the immense liner Queen Elizabeth was preparing to depart, packed with troops, for the Falklands war, a number of British papers commented on the lone girl who stood on the wharf topless, at the sight of which a roar of anger and determination like nothing heard before, engulfed the whole ship.

Perhaps one can read too much into these things, but there is something in the mystique of femininity beyond sex which, if applied correctly, brings out the best in men. When women truly become women again, men will become men. Watch out, Tony Blair!

ISRAELI REFUSENIK: A public meeting was held at the University of Technology, Sydney, September 17th, 2002, for Rotem Dan Mor, the young Israeli soldier who served a term in prison rather than continue to serve in the Israeli Army. The meeting was hosted by "Jews for a Just Peace, Sydney". Advertised as a meeting on: "Israeli-Palestinian Dialogue & Peaceful Co-existence", the flyer we received explained Rotem Dan Mor is an Israeli 'refusenik'. He is 20 years old, and has recently been released from the Israeli Defence Force after conscientiously objecting to serve. He spent 28 days in jail for his stand.

In a political statement that he published shortly before his arrest, Mor wrote: For a long time I have had my doubts about the honesty of military service. These questions began to arise long before I was drafted. They stemmed from information I had acquired about the Israeli-Arab conflict, and from discovering the false information about it, to which I was exposed for years. As I learned more, I was increasingly skeptical about the official Israeli version of what happened. This official version is the basis on which most Israeli youth justifies its military service. I started to understand to what extent fear and hatred had been instilled in me from a very early age. I discovered that I do not believe in the existence of an 'enemy', but rather in the existence of people of different cultures, who are frightened and angry, just like me."

Let's believe Rotem Dan Mor learns 'to grow roses', that he learns to 'engage with beauty' (OT, September 27th, 2002). It would seem many young Israelis need to feast on the beautiful things of Life, not fear and hatred.