



A WEEKLY COMMENTARY

ON TARGET

- NEWS HIGHLIGHTS
- BACKGROUND INFORMATION
- COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS



The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance –

Print Post Publication Number 381667 00258

Vol.39, No.18

May 16th, 2003

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: Individuals with a realistic faith, I believe, have the potential power to develop an association, organic association, which will enable them to foster the growth of diverse activity and unity of purpose. That out of the decay resulting from centralised power, a new civilisation will emerge. The quality of faith, not a blind faith, but a faith that has been constantly nourished, will be decisive in the drama unfolding.

Many battles have been lost primarily because there has been a failure in faith. But many battles have been won when the situation was so desperate that faith was the only justification in continuing the battle.

– Eric D. Butler, 1970

THE POLL-DRIVEN LYNCH MOB by Jeremy Lee:

The hunt for the Governor-General's head is on again. There is little doubt that Archbishop Hollingworth's performance with regard to scandals in his own church was inadequate. But there is nothing to be gained – except for the republican movement – by soiling the nation, provoked by salacious and sensational headlines and opinion polls, onto the office itself.

Screaming headlines, proclaiming over 70 percent of Australians want him to resign, were based on a poll covering 1,400 people. Another poll, a Newspoll published by *The Australian* (7/5/03) on latest proposals to reform Medicare, covered 1,200 people by phone. It was conducted in all States, and in city and country areas alike. This means an average 170 people in each State.

Polls have a valuable part to play, provided a number of principles are observed. Run at a time of crisis or sensation, they can vary widely from the same question two months later. The Iraq war was a classic example, where the results varied by wide margins between the prelude and the aftermath of hostilities. There is no doubt that a retrospective poll in, say, six months time on the virtues or otherwise of the war will produce a far more considered result.

In other words, electorates can be stampeded into all sorts of opinions which would be tempered by time for reflection and consideration. For the media to demand instant political reaction to polls run at a moment of heat and controversy is irresponsible – however accurate the poll may be at the instant of implementation.

There have been two periods of intense pressure on Hollingworth: one when the church scandals first surfaced, and now the latest with the church-inquiry findings. Both periods were used to run polls on

IN THIS ISSUE: • *Thought for the Week* • *The Poll-Driven Lynch Mob* • *Afghanistan And The Re-emerging Taliban* • *Budget Time Approacheth* • *The Latest Wage Increase* • *Menacing Candour*

whether the Governor-General should resign. What would – or did – the same polls find in the intervening periods?

Through all this, the really worrying issues surrounding the office of the Governor-General do not appear.

Constitutionally, the Governor-General is appointed by Her Majesty the Queen – the sole remaining duty she performs for the Australian people. The Governor-General, as the Queen, is bound by the principles of the Coronation Oath, and the Governor-General becomes the operative head of state, bound to ensure the compliance of government with the Constitution.

It has now become a convention that the Governor-General is selected by the Prime Minister of the day, to whose decision the Monarch at all times complies. In other words, in practice the Prime Minister selects the Governor-General, although never given this privilege by the Constitution. Immediately, the strict non-partisan nature of the office becomes suspect. It has only been the high quality of past Governor-Generals that has prevented the political tainting of the office.

What the answer is to this dilemma is a matter that will concern Australians more and more in the future. The republican idea would be a disastrous alternative, delivering the office straight into the hands of "big money" as can be seen in the United States.

If there is an issue of real concern about Hollingworth's performance while in office, it lies in his apparent failure to ensure that the Constitution was observed in Howard's decision to go to war in Iraq. Constitutionally, the whole Parliament should have had a binding vote on the matter. Constitutionally, the Governor-General's duty was to ensure this happened. That was his duty. It never happened.

Governor-General Peter Hollingworth may limp through the remainder of his period in office. It seems unlikely that he will be anything but a lame duck

Who should select our head of state? Short of an Australian hereditary monarchy, it will be a testing question. Whatever else is said, it should not be the politicians, nor any member of the executive – including the prime minister.

FOOTNOTE: Since the above was written, news has broken that the Governor-General has been indicted on a charge of rape, alleged to have occurred some four decades ago at a Church Camp in Bendigo. The allegations were made by a woman who committed suicide two weeks ago. The Governor-General has – foolishly, I believe – made a public statement on television defending himself. We can expect weeks of lurid, sensational publicity which will bring enormous harm to Australia's highest office. At the very least, we can expect more poll-driven sensationalism, plenty of political back-stabbing, and further attacks on the Constitution and the Monarchy.

AFGHANISTAN AND THE RE-EMERGING TALIBAN: US Secretary for Defence Donald Rumsfeld followed his visit to Iraq with a visit to Kabul, where he claimed the US had moved from a period of combat to re-stabilisation and construction. But events seem to be denying his claim. *The Weekend Australian* (3-4/5/03) said: "... Most Afghans say their nation is overrun by thieving warlords, and the Government's control is largely limited to Kabul, which is protected by nearly 5,000 international peacekeepers..... Western intelligence as well as former Taliban members say resurgent Taliban fighters have re-established a command structure, and have divided the country among fugitive leaders who organise and carry out guerilla attacks. Mr. Karzai has vowed to end the rule of warlords in the country. But each region now is ruled by a governor whose power is his private militia, who collects his own set of taxes and imposes his own rule of law."

How long before the bombing starts again? In the name of "peace 'n' freedom"?

Meanwhile, we are getting a clearer picture of the enormous scope of US ambitions in the Middle

East. A major review in *The Australian Financial Review* (Weekend, 3-4/5/03) by Peter Hartcher, described it thus: "... Consider the administration's work in the last few days. It has declared the end of major combat operations in Iraq, declared the end of major combat operations in Afghanistan, announced the withdrawal of almost all the US forces that have been in Saudi Arabia for a decade; published a non-negotiable 'road map' for peace between Israel and the Palestinians; and dispatched the Secretary of State, Colin Powell, to Damascus to continue the intimidation and pacification of Syria.

"This is a shrewd and subtle balance of aggressive advance and political withdrawal, warmaking and peacemaking, intimidation and concession, rampant imperialism and altruistic liberation."

Just about all of which depends on the Muslim world seeing things America's way. It depends, too, on Israel's preparedness to give up its "Greater Israel" policies, its illegal settlements in Palestinian Occupied Territories, and its opposition to an eventual Palestinian State. A shrewd betting man would bet on the new "road map" meeting the same fate as the Oslo Accords. And on who is really running the Middle East agenda – Israel or the US?

BUDGET TIME APPROACHETH: We're now being softened up for Peter Costello's eighth – and, he hopes, his last – budget. We can almost write his speech for him; how the greatest drought in Australia's history, the international financial crisis, and the war, have made it impossible for the government to deliver the tax cuts it promised when it brought in the GST. But nevertheless, Australia was one of the strongest economies in the world. "Just look at our strengthening dollar!" (which is really a picture of a collapsing \$US). Australia will remain in surplus, with high growth figures, and only a few adjustments to such anomalies as Medicare, to carry us forward to a golden future.

Almost unanimously, the States have planned their own tax increases. The most innovative is the Bracks government in Victoria, which is indexing fees and fines after massive increases. It is now clear that fees and fines are a major source of State Government revenue – so much so that even the police are complaining. *The Australian* (7/5/03) reported: "... The strategy prompted an angry reaction from the Police Association. 'We don't want our members to be seen as revenue raisers,' secretary Paul Mullet said last night. Mr. Mullins said he feared police would be put under pressure to issue more fines to meet the projected revenue increase rather than exercise their discretion. 'We wouldn't want our members being placed under pressure to have to book in all circumstances to reach a budget forecast,' he said."

Somebody will have to explain to the old-fashioned Victorian police that there's hardly anything else left to tax – and we all have to do our little bit to bolster "the State".

THE LATEST WAGE INCREASE: The latest wage increase has added \$17 to the minimum wage. But don't imagine wage earners will receive it. Most will get as little as \$3. In order to get any benefit at all, many will sacrifice means-tested benefits such as child payments etc.

Employers, on the other hand, will pay not only the \$17, but additional indirect costs such as holiday-loading, superannuation benefits, etc.

Who, then, are the beneficiaries? The government, of course, which will receive what it calls a tax 'windfall'. Actually, it is a deliberate policy called 'bracket-creep', originally designed by Karl Marx, and set out in *The Communist Manifesto*, by which ordinary families are taxed at an ever-higher rate through "progressive income tax".

The other beneficiaries are the trading banks, who simply tie up employers with freshly-created loans to fund the new wage rates.

All these new costs – debt, interest, new wage rates, tax increases etc. – finally end up in the price

structure which, in aggregate, is lifted further ahead of the purchasing power in Australia's pocket. More people have to borrow to live, more people lose their jobs as employers replace humans with machines and robots, and the poverty level of the country rises. The gap between rich and poor widens to canyon-like proportions. And the unions, like blinkered cart-horses, start preparing their next case for a wage rise.

And it could all be altered tomorrow, with some much-needed alterations to the money system.

MENACING CANDOUR: Under the heading "Menacing Candour" Nicholas Watt of *The Guardian* (UK) 5/5/03 reports on the move by influential Jews in the UK to take the "scalp" of Tam Dalyell, veteran Labor MP, following his remarks to *Vanity Fair* magazine that Mr. Blair relied too much on Jewish figures in Britain and the US. Mr. Dalyell faces an investigation 'for inciting racial hatred' after he accused Tony Blair of being unduly influenced by Jewish ministers and officials.

Nicholas Watt writes, "...leading British Jews criticized Mr Dalyell for his 'misguided' remarks," and one announced his intention to refer the matter to the Commission for Racial Equality.

President of the Zionist Federation, Professor Eric Moonman, who believes the matter should be taken further, said he was seeking advice on whether there was a case for 'referral'.

Mr. Dalyell, who has publicly opposed every war involving British soldiers for the last 20 years, made the 'mistake' of naming the former cabinet minister Peter Mandelson, the foreign secretary, Jack Straw, and the prime minister's Middle East envoy, Lord Levy. According to *The Guardian*, he said: "I am worried about my country being led up the garden path on a Likudnik, [Ariel] Sharon agenda", adding that "Straw, Mandelson and Co." were leading "a tremendous drive to sort out the Middle East."

Dalyell's critics "took exception after it was claimed that he felt Mr. Blair was influenced by a 'cabal' of Jewish advisers". In his own defence Mr. Dalyell claimed, "he used the word cabal only in reference to the Bush administration, not Downing Street," claiming the cabal he referred to was the US one. He insisted, "That is the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs. I was thinking of [Paul] Wolfowitz, [deputy defence secretary], [Richard] Perle, [Douglas] Feith, [Ken] Adelman, [Elliott] Abrams and [Ari] Fleischer, [Mr. Bush's press secretary]. Those people drive this policy."

But Jewish figures were furious. David Garfinkel, the editor-in-chief of the London *Jewish News*, was quoted as saying: "Coming a few days after the BNP (British National Party... ed) won council seats in the north of England this is the kind of menacing candour which the country certainly does not need."

Comment: What these people are saying is that a member of the British Parliament, in this case, Mr. Tam Dalyell, has no right, to express in his own country, his concern about the influence this group of people has over his country's Prime Minister and the Middle East political agenda imposed on his country. What were his words? : *"I am worried about my country being led up the garden path on a Likudnik, [Ariel] Sharon agenda", adding that "Straw, Mandelson and Co." were leading "a tremendous drive to sort out the Middle East."*

That which editor-in-chief David Garfinkel of the London *Jewish News* sees as a 'kind of menacing candour', is, in fact, the British spirit rising, and the bravest of hearts are saying to those who now lord it over them: "Enough is enough, we are a free people, we have our own national sovereignty and identity, history and culture. We are heartily sick of those now lording it over us and who threaten us with all sorts of dire consequences if we dare to publicly challenge them."

"ON TARGET" is printed and published by The Australian League of Rights, 145 Russell St., Melbourne.
Postal Address: GPO Box 1052, Melbourne, 3001. Telephone: (03) 9650 9749, Fax: (03) 9650 9368.

Subscription \$40.00 p.a.