

## THE WEEK THAT WAS

by Harry Dunn

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We used to think that one-man rules  
Was the province of the despots,  
Caesescu, Saddam, Benito and other power-mad tools  
Who believed they were omnipotent  
Such men are history's unforgiven fools  
Murdering their enemies and millions more as well  
They broke all the natural rules  
And now they're still remembered - not revered,  
As murderers and monsters, torturers and ghouls  
And when each one died or was despatched  
Their subjects waved and cheered,  
Blood-lusting, vengeful, liverish and spleeny,  
Many despots faced the mob - the mob they always feared -  
Remember Mussolini!

Well, we don't have blokes like those  
In the benighted land Down Under,  
But a PM recently-departed  
Made an innocent little blunder,  
He found himself - quite unexpectedly - a minister,  
Not once but five times over,  
That's *over* other ministers, not under,  
But failed to mention it to cabinet colleagues  
For fear they might become a bit emotional  
And tear the man asunder.

He decided it was better to keep them in the dark,  
Golly, gosh, egad, bejabers and forsooth,  
It's said that dear old Scottie - up from Marketing,  
Was always economical with honesty and truth.  
But was he really planning another bloodless coup  
Or was he just a silly prat?  
You really have to wonder,  
But sometimes, safe at home, he must have muttered,  
"I'm PM of this nation with ministries aplenty  
It might be only five today,  
But one day it could be *ten* or even *twenty*  
Now I ask you, brother.

## How good is that?

Meanwhile, things roll on apace  
In this land of milk and honey  
And when you make your weekly visit  
To Aldi, Coles or Woolies,  
You must bring lots of money  
To exchange for groceries and the least expensive meat-  
Not prime beef and lamb, or tasty steak and kid,  
- These days such luxuries are a special treat -  
But packs of chicken wings with onion rings,  
And cleverly disguised porcine snouts and ears and feet  
Meat pies big on palm-oil pastry, but very light on meat.

There's vegetables available, if you has the clams,  
Cabbages in halves and even quarters  
Tomatoes now a steal at nine dollars, five hundred grams,  
And it's no wonder those poor housewives on a budget  
Look so worried at the checkout  
When there's kids at home to feed  
In their high-chairs, cots and prams,  
Young kids - they're a fussy breed,  
And they don't fancy bread and jam.  
With prices ever-rising, but family incomes fixed,  
Is it any wonder, there's so much sausage, bread and pasta,  
In their shopping mix.

But our troubles here are just a trifle,  
A passing nuisance, nothing more,  
Compared to what's on offer in Ukraine,  
Where the Russian bear's still trying  
To settle some old score,  
And make Putin's Russia great again -  
Now where have we heard that vain wish before;  
Could it have been the US-Circus, with ringmaster Donald Trump,  
And how about those nosey blokes from FBI,  
Digging up the dirt on shady deals and declarations  
By that sad, delusional old lump.

Now take a look at President Biden, dear old Sleepy Joe,  
A man of good intentions to be sure,  
But surely USA, vibrant, rich and clever, always on the go,  
With so many brilliant sons and daughters  
Could produce some *younger candidates*  
As presidents and leaders  
Aged forty years or fifty, to replace  
The Donald Trumps, the Bidens, the Connellys and Pelosis,  
The ancient high court judges, the Murdochs and their readers,  
And other geriatric, inflexible old bleeders.  
Where are today's Jack Kennedys,  
Obamas, Trudeaus, Macrons, even Nixons (for a while)  
Remember Pitt The Younger, British PM way back in 1783;  
His lack of age was no impediment to performance,  
Pitt was only twenty-four but he led for twenty years  
These younger men had vigor, strength and style  
They looked more ornamental,  
And they all had their given share  
Of imagination, guts and guile,  
And where's the long-awaited female president  
Black, white or brindle, Republican or Democrat  
Who, to half the population,  
Would surely bring an emancipated smile  
And inspire a mighty nation.

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Now, Australia has problems  
With its attitude to China  
And head-honcho, Xi Jin-ping  
Who says he needs Taiwan to make his nation *great again*,  
And thinks it might be a good and noble thing  
To re-educate twenty million Taiwanese Chinese,  
But this is a prospect rather un-appealing  
To a well-educated nation,  
Those prosperous, progressive  
Hard - working Taiwanese.

But how far can Australia go in criticising China  
With its long-term plans to resume what used to be Formosa  
And how much moralising can Australia afford  
At the risk of losing our best and biggest customer,  
Whose money we so badly need to pay our bills.

And that's the diplomatic poser:  
Do we keep on poking the massive Chinese bear,  
The one we need to fund our economic health,  
To keep us still in trading surplus - meaning easy wealth,  
While we look for other markets - not China, but elsewhere  
And that's not as easy as it looks,  
But we still need to balance our import-export books  
And in these troubled times,  
Who else but China  
Makes a seventy-five inch TV screen  
And where would we poor Aussies be, without our goggle-box  
A bigger one each year:  
You lay awake at night, you toss and turn and worry  
About the size of your existing screen,  
To view episodes upcoming, on things like how to cook a curry  
Or renovation sagas like the Block  
Or those never-ending cooking lessons  
On how to fry an egg, or how to peel a spud,  
And other culinary schlock,  
I mean... you wouldn't want it to be known  
That you're watching shows like these  
On last year's tiny fifty-five inch screen.  
It's just so *old hat*  
So we need to stop and think, before we vent our spleen

The China we have learned to love and hate  
Has a proud tradition of five millenia of learning  
They don't take kindly to our stern warnings,  
Or our efforts to berate  
And like every Asian nation,  
They're easily insulted, and don't like *loss of face*  
So our diplomats must tread warily,  
To be a runner in the economic race,  
And we must listen to their point of view, consider and consult  
And don't forget, if we didn't still have have China,  
Who else would we insult?

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Somewhere in Australia,  
There's a very special school,  
It's name is never mentioned in the Halls Of Power,  
It's the *School of Amnesiacs Anonymous,*  
*Obfuscation, Cock and Bull;*  
its students are all trained in mem'ry loss  
And how to keep their cool,  
Suppress what's best forgotten,  
Red Shirts, land deals, hotel quarantine  
And all things on the nose or rotten.  
They learn how to be convincing,  
When they solemnly declare  
"I have no recollection",  
"I simply can't recall",  
"To the best of my extensive knowledge",  
"Not as I remember it",  
"Don't remember that at all",  
They learn how to say it without wincing  
Especially when they're seeking re-election  
And campaigning in the Mall.

Now, of course this school exists  
Although no graduated politician  
Can actually remember  
Attending, graduating and becoming  
An alumnus proud but not admitting, and an honourable member,  
And if you're wondering why this institution's still permitted  
Don't raise the matter with your local member;  
Don't ask why governments  
Refuse to close it down,  
And they'll refer you to their leaders,  
Mathew, Pete and Daniel,  
And it's no good asking them,  
Because they're the boys who wrote the training manual,  
And that's politics, dear readers.