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Whose Agenda?

Ralph Atkinson and Gawain Towler
&
Sara Rainwater • Ronald Stewart-Brown
Roger Helmer, mep • Derek Turner • Don Anderson
James Falkenbury • John Mehrzad • John Laughland
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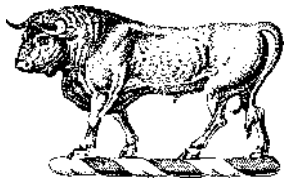
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SOLON

sō'lon, n. a famous lawgiver of Athens (594 b.c.), one of the Seven Sages; a sage; a wisacre.

Home Affairs – The Constitution Bites Back

Whether the government will give up the UK's veto over Home Affairs is the latest acid test as to how it views the issue of national sovereignty, which also raises the issue of the principles and policies of the European People's Party. The EPP supported and promoted the European Constitutional Treaty; the Conservative Party rejected that Treaty and the Bill for that Treaty. There is therefore a fundamental conflict because the attempt by the Commission to persuade the Member States, including the UK, to abandon their veto is now being claimed under the existing Treaties. The Conservative Party must take a position on this not only in respect of the Home Affairs issue but also because the EPP supports the Constitution and inevitably the abandonment of the `Home Affairs veto under the existing Treaties.

During a recent European Union Scrutiny Committee meeting, Bill Cash, MP, and David Heathcoat-Amory, MP, grilled Europe Minister Geoff Hoon, MP, on the Commission's clear intention to replace the UK's veto over matters relating to criminal law and police co-operation with Qualified Majority Voting.

Mr Hoon refused to clearly state why the government was not prepared to dismiss the Commission's proposals and claimed the answer lies in Section 2 of the European Communities Act 1972 – which Bill Cash and Lord Waddington's amendment to the principle of overriding that Act under the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Bill would deal with. However, Section 2 relates to the existing European Treaties. The abolition of the veto over Home Affairs was a key part of the failed Constitutional Treaty. Had the Constitution been passed, which the government had agreed, the situation would have been to all intents and purposes 'irreversible'. However, as matters stand the government still retains a clear choice with the veto and has the right to control matters under Title IV such as asylum, immigration, police and judicial cooperation.

The plain fact is that the government has created this situation for itself by signing up to the Constitutional Treaty, which it is now refusing to abandon and which would have expressly transferred Home Affairs issues to the EU. The government is not prepared to say unequivocally that it will not proceed with the Constitution even though it keeps it on the Order Paper. Bill Cash has put down an amendment to the motion for the European Union Bill, which would implement the Constitutional Treaty and now appears on the Order Paper everyday. This amendment calls on the government to abandon the European Union Bill because the Prime Minster has conceded that the European Constitutional Treaty cannot proceed as originally proposed. Cash's amendment puts them to the test. Moreover, it is not possible to implement the Constitution due to the votes in France and Holland. The fact that the government is preparing to give up our veto on Home Affairs is clear evidence it is still in favour of the European Constitutional Treaty.

If the government forces the UK to give up its national veto, it will actually increase the power and competences of the Commission and the European Court of Justice. The Commission will gain the sole right to initiate legislation in the area of Home Affairs, which would give the Commission more power than it would have had under the failed Constitutional Treaty where it would have shared the right to propose new laws.

There was no question until recently that any other body save our judiciary was responsible for matters relating to criminal justice. If criminal law is moved into the Community Pillar, the UK will lose this historic right and criminal justice will become an EU competence decided on by the ECJ.

Such an extension of QMV over criminal procedural law would alter the fundamental basis of our unique and historic legal system which, according to Sir William Blackstone, precedes even Magna Carta. In essence, abolition of the UK's veto would undo hundreds of years of history and completely undermine Britain's legal and judicial system.

The question now is whether the government will allow the Council of Ministers to create the situation in which the UK would be obliged to give up unanimity and implement QMV under Section 2 of the 1972 European Communities Act.

This issue represents a massive assault on national sovereignty as the European Scrutiny Committee has indicated. To allow QMV on police and judicial co-operation would implicitly include matters relating to visas, asylum and immigration; it takes us into a whole range of matters within Title IV of ECA 1972. These are clearly matters of national sovereignty for national Parliaments. The very idea that the EU – as an institution that lacks any modicum of democratic accountability – should have power over democratically elected legislatures in such sensitive and fundamental areas, with serious implications for national security, is frankly absurd.

Legislation is passed in Parliament which comes from voters when they choose Members of Parliament. When parliamentary debates occur, decisions on hugely important matters are made which affect the people of this country. It is a total betrayal therefore for the British government not to rule out the transfer of the decision making process on matters relating to this particular issue of judicial and police co-operation with the range of issues it involves.

The Conservative Party must come out firmly in opposition to all this, publicly and clearly. Of course, as noted above, the EPP favours the Commission proposals which is clear proof of the incompatibility of the 'basic polices' of the EPP and of the principles and polices of the Conservative Party.

For this and for many other reasons the Conservative Party should leave the EPP and sit on its own in the European Parliament. It may be that for the time being it is difficult for the

Conservative Party to form appropriate alliances with other political parties in the European Union, but this is not the real point. The real point is the total and unquestionable conflict between what the EPP stands for and what the Conservative Party stands for. As David Cameron has said in the past, it is inconceivable for the Conservative Party to say one thing in Westminster and another in Europe. This is why the issue of supremacy of the Westminster Parliament is so essential because it is not only a matter of national sovereignty, but it is how that works out in relation to particular principles and issues such as those relating to Home Affairs. Delaying matters will not resolve this issue and nor will it prevent the issues from re-emerging in spades when the German presidency begins in January 2007 and Chancellor Angela Merkel (head of the Christian Democrats and therefore a key figure in the EPP) rolls out the further integrationist proposals which her country has always insisted upon and will continue to do so as a matter of its own national interests and its own Constitution. That is the root of the problem.

It should be strongly affirmed that we should leave the European People's Party. This issue alone is enough to show that our interests simply cannot be represented whilst we are allied with an integrationist, federalist group. The Poles will surely not agree to give up their veto, nor will the Czechs. Why should we?

from the editor

Dear reader,

July was a busy month.

MPs uncovered that the BBC received a £100 million loan from the European Central Bank, it has been alleged, for use in the promotion of European integration. Whilst the BBC claims that the money carries with it no editorial obligation, its impartiality is yet again seriously questioned. Watch this space – this definitely deserves further investigation.

And then David Cameron announced that the Conservative Party would not withdraw from the European People's Party and form a new grouping in the European Parliament until 2009. This issue has been thoroughly covered in these pages, including commentaries by Geoffrey Van Orden, Martin Callanan, Roger Helmer and others. Considering we now have three years to speculate, I have decided to not to cover the EPP extensively in this issue (save Solon). However, it must be noted that we here at the Foundation are disappointed that, after deciding there are insufficient allies at the moment, the Conservative Party decided it is not prepared to sit on its own in the European Parliament.

The Finnish EU presidency began on 1 July, which James Falkenbury discusses on page 12. Ronald Stewart-Brown also comments on the WTO's failure to come to an agreement on the Doha round by the July deadline on page 4.

Roger Helmer and Derek Turner discuss two other highly contentious issues: Helmer reports on extraordinary rendition on page 8 and Turner gives us a different view on possible Turkish membership of the EU on page 10.

During July, the Foundation began organising several conferences and meetings to be held in the autumn. I will provide more details as on these when when they become available, and I the hope that you may be able to attend one. We also relocated our office in July, please note our new contact details which are listed on page 9.

With the Westminster and Brussels parliaments both on recess, August is always a quieter month. This should give us ample time to settle into our new surroundings in Victoria and gear up for what looks to be a busy second half of the year.



If Doha Fails, Why Stay in the European Customs Union?

by Ronald Stewart-Brown

The Doha round of world trade talks is on the point of collapse. In the old days a trade policy failure as dramatic as this would have provoked impassioned debate in both Houses of Parliament. The Conservative Party split catastrophically over both the Corn Laws' repeal in 1846 and tariff reform in the 1900s. In the early 1930s the old Liberal Party was finally destroyed as a credible governing party by divisions over trade. But the subject gets little coverage today. Perhaps that is because the UK is not in charge of its own trade policy.

The Doha round was launched in late 2001. Since then the World Trade Organisation's 149 members have been labouring to reach agreement on a host of complex improvements to the multilateral trading system. The crux of the proposal was that rich countries would lower their agricultural trade barriers and reduce their subsidies, in return for poor countries lowering their barriers to industrial and service imports.

But when the most recent trade ministers' meeting in Geneva ended on 1 July the gaps between the major players were still gaping. At the G8 meeting in St Petersburg in mid-July WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy was given an apparently final deadline of mid-August to produce agreement. If he succeeds, he will deserve recognition as the greatest French statesman since Talleyrand. If he fails, no one should blame him.

Achieving agreement amongst 149 countries was always ambitious. But fortunately most countries have organised themselves into various groupings. The most powerful of these is our own EU – the 25 members operate as a single state through the European Commission, subject only to whatever blocking power protectionist countries such as France can muster on the Council of Ministers.

And it is the EU that is most to blame for the crisis. The US has proposed very substantial cuts in its ceilings for trade-distorting domestic agricultural subsidies, although it must be said they were not offering to lower actual levels. Many thought the concessions the developing countries were demanding on industrial tariff cuts unreasonably large. But the primary blame must surely lie with the EU for its refusal to honour its Doha commitment to *"substantial improvements in market access"* for agriculture.

To be fair, at Geneva EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson did indicate a last-minute willingness to move on agricultural tariffs. But the fact remains that the EU would only offer minimal market opening for major categories such as beef, butter, poultry, rice and sugar.

For the rich world, the failure of Doha would be a setback rather than a disaster. Trade would continue as the primary engine of world economic growth, just somewhat slower than if Doha succeeded. The serious short-term losers would be the developing countries for whom the round, officially known as the Doha Development Agenda, was originally intended.

But the biggest eventual casualty may be the European customs union itself.

For its first four decades the EEC / EU was in fact very successful in pursuing its original Treaty of Rome objective of "*contributing, in the common interest, to the harmonious development of world trade, the progressive abolition of restrictions on international trade and the lowering of customs barriers.*"

The original EEC-6's internal elimination of industrial tariffs was the prime stimulus to the USA agreeing to the 1964-67 Kennedy Round, which reduced average developed country industrial tariffs from about 15 per cent to under 10 per cent. Through the 1973-79 Tokyo Round the EEC / EU was instrumental in their further reduction to about 6 per cent and then through the 1986-94 Uruguay Round to under 4 per cent. Agriculture would never have been brought into the mainstream of the WTO multilateral trading system if Leon Brittan, as EU Trade Commissioner, had not been able to out-manoeuvre the French on the Council of Ministers during the Uruguay Round.

But if the EU trade bloc now fails in its prime objective of further liberalising world trade the consequences will be profound. For Britain, in particular, the disadvantage of belonging to a dysfunctional customs union will be exacerbated by the astonishing bias the EU's regional trade agreement policy shows against our best interests. Of the nine WTO members to whose exports the EU has never considered negotiating or granting tariff preferences, six have English as a native tongue or widely spoken second language: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Singapore, the USA and the free trading China-Hong Kong. The UK could surely benefit greatly from negotiating free trade agreements with each of the first five.

Outside the EU customs union Britain could benefit from importing food on our own terms, saving the average family of four around £1500 a year

Outside the EU customs union we could also benefit from importing food on our own terms, saving the average family of four around £1500 a year. We could pursue trade disputes at the WTO in our own right without having to wait for a perceived common European interest.

Of course, leaving the customs union would mean leaving the Single Market too. That would involve losing the right to free movement of goods, and would have complex consequences for a number of industries. But overall we ought to be able to negotiate at least as good a deal through an inter-governmental free trade agreement with the EU as we now have through the supranational Single Market. And the prize to the UK of recovering control of its trade policy would surely be glittering indeed.

An earlier version of this article appeared in The Daily Telegraph *on 5 July. We are grateful to* The Daily Telegraph *for consenting for it to be reprinted here.*

Ronald Stewart-Brown is Director of the Trade Policy Research Centre, which is examining the trade policy options open to the UK outside the Common Commercial Policy – Single Market framework. His work in this field has been widely published.

Whose Agenda?

by Ralph Atkinson and Gawain Towler



"There is no future for the peoples of Europe other than in union."
Jean Monnet

These words are used to justify the most recent attempt by the European Commission to prove that, in their great two-year dither named 'the period of reflection', it is listening to the peoples of Europe. This prolonged bout of navel gazing was occasioned by the two 'No' votes on the proposed European Constitution. This tells us all we need to know about how the Euro-elite really feel about engagement with the recalcitrant peoples of Europe.

During this 'period of reflection', the Commission has produced a new plan to 'invigorate' the citizens of Europe. *A Citizens' Agenda: Delivering results for Europe* was launched on 10 May in a blaze of publicity and an interminable two-hour press conference in the glass and marble halls of the Berlyamont building in the Euroville Quarter of Brussels, the home of the European Commission. President José Manuel Barroso and Vice-President Margot Wallström, the EU's pin up girl, stood on either side of the broad blue podium and went into a pre-prepared ennui fest.

"*We are launching a 'Citizens' Agenda' for a Europe of Results,*" asserted the President. "*A Europe of results that derives from a Citizens' Agenda,*" intoned the Vice-President. The assembled crowd of journalists could have guessed that, as the two phrases were writ large across the backdrop. On and on the two Commissioners went, repeating these two key statements as if they were chanting some form of divine mantra, devoid of content but comforting to true believers. Of course, the British press pack, true to form, displayed a proper degree of cynicism. As one of them put it after the event, "*They didn't even provide copies of their Citizens' Agenda before their event, so of course the people left out of the loop were the citizens' themselves.*"

So what in fact is in the *Citizens' Agenda*? There were a few key arguments announced at the press conference; most visibly (and repeated 5 or 6 times over the two hours) there would be a policy to ban roaming charges for international mobile phone calls. So much for results. The *Agenda*, however, represents a colossal exercise in cherry picking from the EU Constitution and flannel.

The key PR tool used by the Commission (something that has also been picked up by the Council of Ministers) is to claim that in future national Parliaments will be able to apply a greater deal of scrutiny towards European legislation. The idea now being peddled by Brussels is that the European Commission now will send all new directives and legislative proposals to national Parliaments, who will in turn have the opportunity to ponder, debate and criticise before sending back a response. As the Commission puts it:

"*The Commission wishes to transmit directly all new proposals and consultation papers to national Parliaments, inviting them to react so as to improve the process of policy formulation.*" [1]

This statement was followed up in the conclusions (on the *Citizens' Agenda*) of the Council of Ministers meeting on 15-16 June, where the Austrian presidency announced:

"All new proposals and consultation papers [should be] *directly available to national Parliaments, inviting them to react so as to improve the process of policy formulation. The Commission is asked to take into account comments by national Parliaments – in particular with regard to the subsidiarity and proportionality principles – to acknowledge receipt and to offer a reasoned response within an acceptable timeframe."* [2]

Though the Council conclusions do not specify exact details, a change from the position outlined in the proposed Constitution has occurred. This had a very similar formulation:

"Commission consultation documents (green and white papers and communications) shall be forwarded directly by the Commission to national Parliaments upon publication. The Commission shall also

forward the annual legislative programme as well as any other instrument of legislative planning or policy to national Parliaments, at the same time as to the European Parliament and the Council."[3]

This is clarified in the following Articles:

"National Parliaments may send to the Presidents of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission a reasoned opinion on whether a draft European legislative act complies with the principle of subsidiarity, in accordance with the procedure laid down in the Protocol on the application of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality."[4]

and,

"A six-week period shall elapse between a draft European legislative act being made available to national Parliaments in the official languages of the Union and the date when it is placed on a provisional agenda for the Council for its adoption or for adoption of a position under a legislative procedure. Exceptions shall be possible in cases of urgency, the reasons for which shall be stated in the act or position of the Council. Save in urgent cases for which due reasons have been given, no agreement may be reached on a draft European legislative act during those six weeks. Save in urgent cases for which due reasons have been given, a ten-day period shall elapse between the placing of a draft European legislative act on the provisional agenda for the Council and the adoption of a position."[5]

For any action to be taken by the Commission, nine national Parliaments (in a European Union of 25) will have to complain within six weeks of receipt; the Commission will only be obliged to take note of the concerns.

"*Where reasoned opinions on a draft European legislative act's non-compliance with the principle of subsidiarity represent at least one-third of all the votes allocated to the national Parliaments in accordance with the second paragraph, the draft must be reviewed. This threshold shall be a quarter in the case of a draft European legislative act submitted on the basis of Article III-264 of the Constitution on the area of freedom, security and justice… After such review, the Commission or, where appropriate, the group of Member States, the European Parliament, the Court of Justice, the European Central Bank or the European Investment Bank, if the draft European legislative act originates from them, may decide to maintain, amend or withdraw the draft. Reasons must be given for this decision.*"[6]

However, at no point does the Constitution suggest that the European institutions have to act other than to explain why they are continuing as planned. There is no appeal procedure envisaged for national Parliaments when their concerns are ignored. What is now being suggested in the *Citizens' Agenda* as an alternative is that the 'one-third' requirement outlined above be dropped and replaced with the idea that any single Parliament may have its concerns noted.

Evidence given by Margot Wallström to the House of Lords Select Committee regarding the *Citizens' Agenda* suggested that there is currently no procedure in place as to how the Commission may respond to a Member State in this case, nor is it likely that there will be:

"Commissioner Wallström made clear that no decisions have yet been taken on how the Commission will react to the raising of yellow cards and indeed no decisions can be taken until ratification of the Constitutional Treaty."[7]

Be that as it may, we have to admit that this is an improvement to the scrutiny procedure than was originally suggested in the European Constitution. But how effective is it really? To understand that from a British perspective, we must look at the recent paper produced by the pressure group Open Europe. *Getting a grip: Reforming EU scrutiny at Westminster*, produced in May of this year, took a long hard look at the efficacy of the Westminster system of scrutiny of European legislation and found it extremely wanting.

As it points out, Westminster is often denied time to discuss the issues, but even when the parliamentary EU Scrutiny Committees specifically ask the government for an opportunity to debate a new EU law, the government uses the so-called 'override' mechanism to gag debate.

New Labour has used this override nearly 350 times since figures were first collected in 2001. Many pieces of controversial EU legislation have been made exempt from proper scrutiny using this method, including the establishment the European Defence Agency in preparation for an EU army, and the EU Arrest Warrant which allows armed, unaccountable Europol officers to arrest people on British soil, without reference to a British magistrate, for things which may not even be crimes in the UK.

The latter was adopted as part of a framework decision on 13 June 2002 at a meeting of the EU Justice and Home Affairs Council whilst it was still under what is called 'Scrutiny Reserve' at Westminster!

"When it comes to EU legislation – which now accounts for half of all new laws - our Parliament has no power to affect these decisions in a meaningful way," claims Michael Gove MP, a member of the House of Commons EU Scrutiny Committee, in the foreword to Open Europe's publication.[8] According to Sir Digby Jones, Director General of the CBI, "*It feels like MPs are asleep on the job.*"[9]

There is a parliamentary agreement dating from 30 October 1980, called the 'scrutiny reserve', under which Parliament's EU Scrutiny Committee can ask the government not to agree to a piece of EU legislation until it has been debated by Parliament. However in practice New Labour has made a mockery of this by using an 'override' loophole to strangle debate and keep even their own back bench MPs in the dark. Since 2001 this override has been used 346 times to pass 346 pieces of key EU legislation, which Tony Blair and his Cabinet thought their own MPs, never mind opposition MPs, might object to if given the chance.

Former Europe Minister Peter Hain MP remarked that, *"Our national Parliament is very ignorant about the European Union except for the Scrutiny Committee. The rest of the MPs know virtually nothing about the EU.*"

This is not surprising, as Parliament's European Standing Committees are obliged to meet in secret. When Leader of the House of Commons, Hain not only liked it that way but would have gone further, having proposed to abolish the European Standing Committees (EU Scrutiny Committee and House of Lords Select Committee).

Instead he proposed a joint committee with no voting capacity, and meeting quarterly or as "*the need arises.*" He justified this is because, "*Few members see the European Standing Committees as worth attending.*" I wonder why?

In December 2001, a year after the Treaty of Nice was agreed, the European Council adopted a declaration on the future of the EU committing the Union to becoming more democratic, more transparent and more effective. This Laeken Declaration called for a clear, open, effective, democratically controlled Community approach. It completely ignored the fact that the European Parliament cannot initiate legislation but merely amend it, and so is largely a

rubber stamp affair for the Commission and the Council of Ministers.

The peoples of France and Holland were not fooled, and voted no in their referendums on the EU Constitution in the summer of 2005. Many countries, the UK included, did not get a referendum. The EU, having stated that one rejection would stop the whole EU Constitution, then called for a 'period of reflection' during which ratification of the Constitution has simply continued in some EU countries. 16 Member States are expected to have ratified the Constitution by Autumn 2006. One more ratification will constitute a more than two-thirds majority.

The French and Dutch referenda also triggered the EU's so called 'Plan D'. The 'D' standing for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate.[10]

Plan D requires 'greater openness' – exactly what Gove is calling for in our UK Parliament. Indeed it included a transparency initiative in November 2005, and on 3 May 2006 the Commission adopted a green paper, authored by Estonian Commissioner Kallas, to launch a debate on lobbying and on the introduction of legal obligations for Member States to publish information on the Commission's consultation practices.

However, since the Amsterdam Treaty the EU has instituted a 'fast track' procedure, which allows laws to be adopted immediately after their first reading by the European Parliament. This denies MEPs an opportunity even to amend EU legislation.

One must judge Plan D by its effect rather than its presentation. Regimes have used the word 'democracy' for a host of ills in the past. The Deutsch Demokratische Republik (East Germany) springs to mind.

In effect the EU is allowing less time for debate on EU legislation and New Labour is permitting little at Westminster. Collectively UK MEPs at the Euro-Parliament make up only 11 per cent of the EP vote, meaning foreign MEPs have more say in the governance of Britain than our own MPs.

Moreover, the European Parliament is in recess for only six weeks in July and August. The UK Parliament is closed for 16 weeks of the year, allowing two and a half months a year when the EU continues to produce legislation which Parliament is not there to scrutinise – even if this were permitted by our government.

According to 2005 parliamentary written answers, the Council of Ministers adopted proposals that had not been cleared by the Commons EU Scrutiny Committee, on no less than 68 occasions during a parliamentary recess in 2005 alone. The override was used a total of 77 times in 2005, a parliamentary record. This included 22 during the UK presidency of the EU when Blair and his Cabinet had control over the timing and agenda of EU Council meetings and were therefore overriding discussion in the UK Parliament of their own EU agenda!

51 scrutiny overrides actually took place while the UK Parliament had been dissolved in preparation for the general election, a period during which British MPs are supposed have handed their power back to the people. This is power that the people are deemed to have loaned to MPs during the period of a UK Parliament and which they must return at the end of it. Power, moreover, which our MPs have not only never been legally authorised to hand on to a foreign body, but are specifically forbidden from so doing.

In the end, Open Europe's publication not only admits that Westminster has singularly failed to stand up for itself, let alone the British people, but has pointed the finger squarely at New Labour as the agents of this betrayal of our rights.

In a communication from the Commission to the European Council (2006),[11] the EU is presented as "*acting, for it's citizens, as a shock absorber for external change*" whilst in fact being the engine of some of the most rapid changes in British constitutional history. The European Arrest Warrant, for instance, changes the relationship between the people of Britain and the police and courts completely.

The French and Dutch referendum results have simply been brushed aside. The *Agenda for the Future of Europe* states, "*Even after the two 'No's the EU has shown its ability to deliver. Now the EU needs to step up the momentum.*"[12]

Readers do not need reminding that the British Prime Minister is chosen from the largest grouping of MPs, whether a party or a coalition. He or she is not a 'President', is not elected to the office of Prime Minister, and has neither a mandate from the electorate to override the authority of Parliament as a whole, nor to give away its powers.

Defending his prime ministerial record on Europe, Tony Blair said, "*Yes there is still a debate to be had but the argument in favour of Europe is winning.*"

William Hague, Conservative Shadow Foreign Secretary, explicitly recognised the problem of Westminster scrutiny in his recent policy speech made on 7 June:

"*National Parliaments, for all our problems with election turn out, are still the main political bodies people identify with and look to for accountability. Their role must increase if we are to restore public faith in the EU. So how we handle European legislation at Westminster is important. It is widely acknowledged that the current system is seriously inadequate. Most European legislation remains obscure to both Parliament and public. MPs and Peers have little control over what the government does and there are insufficient means to ensure that European legislative proposals are properly debated… If this government fails to improve the situation, we will reform the system to give Parliament a greater say over EU legislation.*"

The problem is, sadly, deeper than the current Conservative leadership is prepared to admit as they swing in their odd Europe-free policy vacuum. As the Chairman of the Eurorealist Independence/Democracy Group in the European Parliament, Nigel Farage, MEP, has pointed out:

"*New Labour has garrotted discussion on the EU and they, the Liberal Democrats, the Greens and even the Conservatives are all effectively pro-EU, with one or two honourable exceptions. However as these parties tend to send their Europhiles to the European Parliament critical voices are marginalised… With Eurosceptics of all persuasions making up less than 10 per cent of the membership in Brussels, they really could do with some help from Westminster.*"

1 *A Citizens' Agenda: Delivering Results for Europe* - 10.5.2006 COM(2006) 211.
2 *European Council (15 and 16 June 2006) - Draft conclusions* POLGEN 79.
3 The Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe: Protocol 1, Title 1, Article 1.
4 Ibid: Article 3.
5 Ibid: Article 4.
6 Ibid: Protocol II, Article 7.
7 House of Lords European Union Select Committee, 'Strengthening national parliamentary scrutiny of the EU - the Constitution's subsidiarity early warning mechanism' 14 April 2005 http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200405/ldselect/ldeucom/101/101.pdf.
8 *Getting a grip: Reforming EU Scrutiny at Westminster,* Open Europe, May 2006.
9 Ibid.
10 (COM(2005)494).
11 *A Citizens' Agenda: Delivering Results for Europe* - 10.5.2006 COM(2006) 211.
12 Ibid.

Ralph Atkinson is a senior researcher and Gawain Towler is head of media for the Independence/Democracy Group in the European Parliament.

The CIA and Extraordinary Rendition

***Roger Helmer**, MEP, has been an active member of the European Parliament's Temporary Committee on the CIA and 'extraordinary rendition' since its inception. He reports on the experience.*

Back in January, the European Parliament was slavering at the mouth at the prospect of condemning the USA and the CIA on the 'extraordinary rendition' issue. (After all, moral posturing is what the European Parliament does best.) 'Rendition' is the claim that terrorist suspects have been transported to European and other countries where they may face inhumane treatment. The Parliament set up a 'Temporary Committee' to investigate the matter, and I managed to get a much-coveted seat as a member of that Committee, hoping to play a counter-consensual role and to challenge the hypocrisy of the knee-jerk anti-Americans in the Parliament.[1] As often happens in Brussels, I found myself in the minority.

I found that we were dealing with little more than speculation and conjecture. We had speculative press reports. We had reports from plane spotters about aircraft landing in European airports, but we had no idea of who or what was in those aircraft. We had the Council of Europe report[2] by Swiss Senator Dick Marty, which was described by a former British government Minister as *"having more holes than a Swiss cheese."*[3]

My fear – fully justified by subsequent events – was that the main purpose of this Committee would be to provide a platform for anti-American propaganda. It was clear that many members of the Committee had formed an *a priori* view that the US and the CIA were guilty,[4] and were merely seeking evidence to support that view. But they have had little success.

On 27 April, the Committee sent a delegation to Macedonia (or for purists, FYROM), led by Italian Socialist MEP Claudio Fava to research the case of Khaled Al Masri, alleged to have been detained in Macedonia, flown elsewhere, and subjected to ill-treatment. The delegation reached the unremarkable conclusion that Macedonian hotels, and Macedonian immigration posts, keep rather poor records. Beyond that, it appeared to add little to the evidence.

We had higher hopes of the subsequent delegation to Washington (8 – 12 May). Here at least we should get to the root of the matter. The planners were in bullish mood. We should summon Cheney, Condy and Rummy before our Committee. We should force them to face difficult questions. They would break down and confess all. We also planned to meet Porter Goss, the head of the CIA, but he resigned a couple of days before we arrived. Maybe he heard we were coming.

Strangely, things didn't quite run to plan. The good and the great declined to be grilled by a Committee of the European Parliament, and we ended up with a B-list of left-liberal human rights NGOs, foaming with conspiracy theories and determined to attack the US Administration. These included Human Rights Watch, Human Rights First, the Centre for Human Rights & Global Justice, the Guantanamo Global Justice Initiative, and a handful of better-known players like the New York Bar Association, Amnesty International and ACLU.

Jonathan Sifton of Human Rights Watch alleged that the US Administration was engaged in a *"vast criminal conspiracy"*, but then added, *"It would be absurd to expect criminal standards of evidence."* Asked how he could be so sure of his allegations, he replied, *"We have no doubt this happened, but we have no proof."* Asked to provide evidence backing her allegations, the Amnesty International spokeswoman replied, *"the best you can do is guess."*

On arrival in Washington on 8 May, we had only three federal politicians in our schedule, all Democrats. As a Conservative myself, I don't always have the highest expectations of Democrats, so I was pleasantly surprised by Congressman Robert Wexler of Florida, who made excellent sense.

He made a key point that seemed to have escaped our Committee. He reminded us of the well-established principle of criminal law that, *"It is better that ten guilty men go free than that an innocent man is convicted,"* but said that he was not convinced that this applied in terrorism cases, where the ten guilty men going free were such a huge threat to the public. He is right: where terrorism is concerned, the balance between rights of the suspect and protection of the public has to change, because the potential downside of giving terrorists the benefit of the doubt is so vast.

Wexler also attacked the line that the Committee was taking: *"You're trying to present me with a false choice. Either you expect me to take a wholly anti-US line and condemn our actions in the war on terror, or you see me as 100% backing George Bush. Now I disagree with a lot that George Bush has done, but if the choice is to be anti-American, or to back Bush, I have to back Bush."*

The nearest we got to the Administration was a meeting with Dan Fried (say 'Freed'), Deputy Secretary of State, and Legal Counsel John Bellinger.

Our Chairman, Carlos Coelho, MEP, made the usual courtesy remarks, and passed the floor to rapporteur, Giovanni Claudio Fava. He started by demanding answers to a list of rather provocative questions, and he got a pretty spirited response from Bellinger. As near as I can remember, Bellinger said, *"Let's get the rules of engagement clear. This is the United States of America, and the European Parliament has no jurisdiction here. We're happy to have a debate about these issues, but we're not prepared to be subjected to an inquisition."*

Bellinger was careful not to give any specifics, citing security concerns, but he gave the strong impression that the total number of extraordinary renditions which may have been carried out by the US would be in low single figures, that they occurred in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, that none had taken place for three years, and that the US had never sent any detainee to a third country *"for the purpose of, or in the expectation of, torture."*

I have heard no evidence during the course of my work in the CIA Committee that would run counter to the impression presented by the State Department.

Bellinger was particularly concerned about media reporting in the EU which has attempted to conflate evidence of CIA flights with allegations of rendition. This is a point that I myself have made repeatedly since the CIA Committee was set up. The CIA will have all kinds of perfectly good reasons to fly personnel and equipment to all sorts of destinations. It may well be that

human rights activists have compiled evidence of hundreds of flights that they claim are associated with companies which may be linked to the CIA. But we have no evidence of who was on the flights, and nor should we expect to, since intelligence activities are necessarily secret. Evidence of CIA flights is not evidence of detainees, and hundreds of flights do not prove the existence of hundreds of detainees, or indeed of their mistreatment.

The level of prejudice is evident in Fava's draft report,[5] in which he refers to the rendition activity which is 'presumed' to have taken place – a big presumption.

Nothing I have seen while working on this Committee has changed my view that it is very unlikely to obtain new evidence, and that its main purpose is to provide a platform for anti-US propaganda, or as the noble Baroness Sarah Ludford, MEP, Vice Chairman of the Committee, likes to put it, is "*helping America to get out of the hole it has dug for itself.*"

Far from the committee *"strengthening transatlantic relations"*[6] its work is widening the transatlantic divide and illustrates the need for the US to re-evaluate the European project.[7]

One of the experts giving evidence[8] recalled a point that appears to have slipped the minds of this Committee: Foreign and Security Policy remains the responsibility of Member States, and therefore the remit of this European Parliament Committee is open to question. It has no legal powers to sanction the US or European governments, so it simply giving comfort to human rights zealots.

Like it or not, we are facing a war against terrorism. And it is the United States which has borne the burden of this war in the heat of the day, which has provided the lion's share of men and *matériel*. We would do well to treat our American ally with a little more respect and gratitude.

It has been my privilege on the Committee to argue, contrary to Baroness Ludford's view, that America has not *"dug itself into a hole,"* but rather is leading the Western world out of the hole created by radical Islam and global terrorism. It is about time that we in the European Parliament started to help rather than hinder that exercise. And it is time to challenge the simplistic human rights agenda, to re-balance our priorities, and to put public safety ahead of the 'rights' of terrorists and murderers.

1 I was able to do this as an independent – I should not have been able to do so were I still in the pro Federalist EPP group.

2 AS/Jur (2006) 03 rev.

3 Denis MacShane, quoted in *The Daily Telegraph*, "Gangster US Accused Over Torture", 25 January 2006.

4 *"Deplores the fact that the CIA has on several occasions been clearly responsible for the illegal abduction and detention of alleged tourists on the territory of Member States and for extraordinary renditions"* – Interim Report on the alleged use of European countries by the CIA for the transport and illegal detention of prisoners (2006/2027(INI)) Rapporteur: Giovanni Claudio Fava.

5 Interim Report on the alleged use of European countries by the CIA for the transport and illegal detention of prisoners (2006/2027(INI)) Rapporteur: Giovanni Claudio Fava.

6 Claudio Fava quoted in Press Release dated 10.05.06.

7 'The Great EU Inquisition: Europe's Response to the US Rendition Policy' by Nile Gardiner, PhD, and James Jay Carafano, PhD, published by the Heritage Foundation.

8 Mr Gijis De Vries, EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator. CIA Committee Meeting, 20 April 2006.

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Correction:

In Vivian Linacre's article, 'Metrication – three years left to save democracy' (July 2006), it was stated that, *"granting another extension, say to 2010,* [for the UK to metricate] *would incur Brussels' displeasure and destroy the momentum and credibility of the whole metrication policy."* This should have read *"granting another extension, say to 2020 …"*

Change of Address

Please note that as from the 1st August 2006, our address with be:

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Will Christians Vote for Turkey?

Whilst most EU Member States officially support Turkish membership, the picture among the EU's individual nations varies greatly. On the one extreme, 82 per cent of Austrians over the age of 55 and 75 per cent of those below the age of 55 oppose Turkey's membership. Opposition is similarly high in Germany, France and the Netherlands. By contrast, the populations of Britain, Spain and Poland favour Turkish accession to the EU. The European Foundation also advocates Turkish membership, but realises the issue is highly contentious and, as evidenced, holds the capacity to divide nations. In light of this, it is useful to look at the other side of the picture in order to understand and appreciate the arguments offered by those who oppose Turkey's membership of the EU. ***Derek Turner*** *says that admitting Turkey as an EU member would be exceedingly unwise.*

Tony Blair, Chris Patten, William Hague, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Spectator*, Jacques Chirac and George Bush differ in many ways. But there is one thing on which they all agree – that Turkey should be admitted as a full member of the EU as soon as possible. In this, they are all profoundly wrong.

There are so many arguments against Turkish membership of the EU that it can seem as if Turkey's supporters have given little more thought to this topic than the following profound thinker: "*I think Turkey should be allowed to join the EU because it would be the first bit of the Arab world to join the European Union*" – C. Chinn (aged 5), Portishead, UK.[1]

There has been relatively little discussion of this subject in British media and political circles – probably because it temporarily unites otherwise antipathetic factions. In other European countries, by contrast, there has been lively debate, and it was an important contributory factor in Angela Merkel's narrow election victory in Germany last November (the CDU was against Turkish membership), and the Dutch vote against the EU Constitution last summer. In April this year, Nicolas Sarkozy asked Chancellor Angela Merkel to issue a joint declaration proposing 'privileged partnership' status to Turkey instead of full membership.[2] Although a supporter of Turkish entry, Jacques Chirac said in 2004 that even if Turkish accession succeeds, France will hold a referendum to ratify any agreement.[3]

There is widespread distaste for the idea in many European countries, with opposition in some reaching 80 per cent. In July 2005, the European Commission carried out a Europe-wide poll which showed that 52 per cent of respondents were opposed to Turkish membership, and only 35 per cent in favour.[4]

A clash of civilizations

Chief amongst arguments given for Turkish membership is that 3 per cent of Turkey is in Europe. But that 3 per cent of once-Greek Thrace is the forlorn remnant of a vast and tyrannical Ottoman Empire that, as recently as 1683, was able to kick hard at the gates of Vienna[5] – and which has left unhappy mementoes of its centuries-long domination in Albania, Kosovo, Cyprus and elsewhere. No one would advocate the 'reconquest' of Turkey's segment of Thrace, but Thrace was classically regarded as an integral part of the West (whereas *Anatolia* literally means 'the East'). It is difficult to express such sentiments in meaningful political terms, but there can be little doubt that the Bosphorus is a psychological frontier of great antiquity and considerable historical and cultural importance.

Turkey's continued presence in the south-easternmost corner of our continent is an aberration. If we are to start admitting countries with such tangential claims to 'Europeanness', logically we would have to treat seriously the suitability for membership of Algeria, Morocco and other countries, the ancestors of whose inhabitants likewise once occupied large tracts of Europe. By the same logic, Spain is a Latin American country, and Britain part of Asia, because of their former colonies.

Europe is more than a geographical signification. However they may differ in some ways, European countries share common origins in Celtic, Germanic and classical paganism, Christianity, the Renaissance, the Reformation and the Enlightenment – all of these powerful influences overlaid on a genetic substratum of ancient tribes, most of whom have lived and died in the western end of the Eurasian land mass since prehistoric times. The similarities of language, mores, architecture, literature, music and the fine arts are obvious, whether one is in London, Paris, Berlin or Warsaw. Whatever the recent depredations of political correctness have been, all European (and European-descended) countries share, to some degree, a common heritage. Countries which have not been subjected to these same complex historical forces are quite simply neither European nor Western.

That Turkey is Muslim increases the difficulty. It is not regarded as polite to say so nowadays – but nonetheless some say the historical record shows that Islam is a militant and aggrandising ideology that brings with it 7th Century attitudes. Since its first contact with Christianity, during the siege of 'the red apple' of Constantinople between 674 and 678,[6] Islam has been at loggerheads with the Christian world, whose lands it regards as part of the *Dar al Harb* (or 'house of war') – territories populated by infidels who must be compelled to see the error of their ways.

One example of many sanguinary Koranic exhortations is: "*Those who fight Islam should be murdered or crucified or their hands and feet should be cut off on opposite sides.*"[7] While many Muslims may not take their religion as literally as others, there will always be a minority drawn towards strict interpretations of the Koran. This could very easily become a large minority, if Western policymakers continue to make blundering foreign policy forays into Islamic countries and ultra-Left ideologues continue to make inflammatory allegations of systemic Western 'racism' against Muslims. Muslims are the least assimilated of European ethnic minorities, with relatively low rates of employment, home ownership and university qualifications, and this alienation has sporadically broken out in large-scale unrest, as in Bradford in 2001, and in Paris more recently.

The present percentage of Muslims in the EU stands at around 5 per cent. If Turkey joins, this proportion will leap overnight to 15 per cent. This is not even to consider the large differential between the birthrates of Muslims and non-Muslims in Europe.[8] Admitting Turkey can only hasten this looming demographic and cultural implosion.

Security and crime

At a time when relations between the Western and Islamic worlds are notoriously problematic, it is surely reckless to open Europe's borders even more widely than they are already to a country of 73.1 million – projected to be 82 million within ten years[9] – the majority of whom are conservative Muslims[10] and could potentially contain a minority of Al-Qaeda sympathisers. Britain's anti-terrorism capability is already overstretched, and her borders are already highly porous. There are Al-Qaeda sympathisers present in Turkey, and even the famously ruthless Turkish army cannot keep them entirely under control. In May this year, a gunman shouting "*I am the soldier of Allah*" killed a senior judge and wounded four others in an attack in an Ankara courtroom.

This is not to mention non-Turks who would use Turkey as a conduit. Turkey shares largely unguarded borders with Syria, Iran and Iraq – none of which are exactly models of wise stewardship. During accession negotiations in 2004, Tony Blair adduced Turkey's signature of an anti-terrorism agreement to assuage security fears – but is a signature on a treaty (which may or may not be observed) a good enough return for such a vast concession?

Apart from Al-Qaeda using Turkey as a jumping-off point into Europe, Turkey has a serious security problem with its Kurdish minority, many of whom want to break away from Turkey and form an independent Kurdistan with their fellows in Iraq and Iran. Since 1978, some 35,000 people have been killed. As part of the accession negotiations, the government introduced Kurdish linguistic rights, including programming on state television – but these are underwhelming,[11] and a five year ceasefire was lifted in 2004, since which killings and bombings have been continuing. This is not Europe's war yet – but it soon could be.

By admitting Turkey, the EU would also tacitly justify the mass murder of at least 300,000 Armenians between 1915 and 1917, in what even the European Parliament has termed 'genocide'. Turkey has failed to face up to this aspect of its history, and has never apologised to its neighbour. It is now an active supporter of Azerbaijan in that Muslim republic's dispute with Armenia over the republic of Nagorny Karabakh. This is not even to mention the Turks' forced expulsion of their Greek minority just after World War II.

As if these concerns were not compelling enough, incorporating Turkey will also facilitate non-political crime – especially illegal immigration, sex trafficking and drug smuggling – to add to the massive burden of European police forces already facing a tsunami of organised crime, often from ethnically-based gangs. The admittance of Turkey can only bring closer the unhappy near future predicted by Rear Admiral Chris Parry, in which he warned of the possible overthrow of the West within the next two decades through uncontrolled immigration, negative assimilation, overpopulation and environmental degradation.[12]

The 'spreading democracy' argument

Another argument for admitting Turkey is that it will help to spread democracy to a troubled part of the world. In 2005, then Foreign Secretary Jack Straw said that Turkey in the EU would become *"a beacon of democracy and modernity"* and *"a shining example across the whole of its neighbouring region."* Turkish membership, he went on, would also disprove the 'clash of civilizations' theory so hated by those whose geopolitical outlooks appear to be founded largely on wishful thinking.[13]

But whilst superficially attractive, 'ethical foreign policies' may have unexpected consequences, as British troops are now discovering in Iraq. This is not even to discuss how 'democracy' or 'freedom' can be defined within the secular framework of Islamic law and culture. While Turkey has made efforts towards becoming a liberal democracy, Ankara's policies have at times been contradictory. The real arbiter of power, until very recently, has been the military.[14] The present government of Recep Erdogan's Justice and Development Party (AKP)[15] also sends mixed signals – populist Islamist one moment, soothingly liberal the next. The liberalising exemplar who aspires to lead Turkey into the EU is the former Istanbul mayor who banned alcohol in the city's cafes, who segregated beaches and school buses by sex, and who spent four months in prison for inciting religious hatred after publicly reciting a poem in 1997 containing the lines, "*The mosques are our barracks, the domes our helmets, the minarets our bayonets and the faithful our soldiers. This holy army guards my religion. Almighty! Our journey is our destiny, the end is martyrdom.*"

A simple matter of economics?

Centre-right apologists for Turkish entry view the matter in terms of economics – believing that accession would mean larger markets, investment opportunities and cheaper labour costs.[16]

This goes to the heart of what modern conservatism means – shouldn't it be about preserving national culture and social cohesion more than increasing shareholder dividends? Even if one believes that the market is the *ne plus ultra* of human endeavour,[17] Turkey does pose economic challenges. At present, the Turkish economy specialises in products (agriculture, tourism and low-end clothing) that have little or no impact on European economies. But if there is completely free movement of capital, personnel and technology between Turkey and EU countries (and it is already quite free), it is inevitable that many European companies will outsource processes and services to Turkey, with its low wages, minimal employee rights and lax environmental controls.

Those who argue that Turkish immigration is required to support an ageing EU population are forgetting that these immigrants will themselves grow old, that they will be used to sustain rather than reform the welfare state, that mass immigration tends to depress not only wage levels but also investment in new technology, and that there are infrastructural and environmental implications. Turkey will continue to trade with Europe and offer investment opportunities whether she joins the EU or not.

Objections have also been raised to Turkey's vast foreign debt, which is around 80 per cent of its GDP.[18] There will also inevitably be invisible burdens on European taxpayers, businesses and individuals in 'harmonisation costs' and suitably Byzantine layers of new bureaucracy.

Other motivations

George Bush favours accession as a thank you for the use of Turkish airbases during the attack on Iraq. The present Greek government favours the accession of its old enemy because it believes it will bring regional stability, and allow Greek access to

Northern Cyprus (during last year's accession negotiations, Turkey gave partial recognition to Cyprus as an EU Member State). Speaking in October 2005, Jack Straw had one simple reason: "*It has been promised membership of the European Union for the last 42 years*" – which goes to show that political myopia is not merely a recent phenomenon.

There are more parochial reasons – such as *The Daily Telegraph* saying that because the newspaper had opposed Gladstone's campaigns against the Greeks, and supported the invasion of northern Cyprus in 1974, it was perforce obliged to support Turkish entry – *"so it is with some enthusiasm that we again take up the cause of our old friend."* [19] This is nostalgia taken too far. But perhaps the most parochial reason of all is that of Boris Johnson, MP – who is in favour because one side of his family stems from Turkey, and because it would mean reincarnating the Roman Empire, for which he has a truly Gibbonian admiration.[20]

The underlying 'cultural cringe'

Underlying all this preoccupation with letting Turkey join, a deeper, somewhat unhealthy mindset can be detected – Turkish accession will be a means of 'outreach' to the Muslim world, a demonstration that the EU is not the rich, white, Christian club of Leftwing and Third World demonology. This is not an argument, but an attitude – summed up by an anonymous contributor to a BBC News forum: "*The bridges of racism, separation and discrimination should be defeated. Turkey should join whatever they want to – X, South Africa.*" [21] The presumption underlying this attitude is that diversity necessarily means strength – a curiously old-fashioned argument to advance in foreign policy at a time when the limitations of diversity have become abundantly clear at home.[22]

And there are also hints of a lack of self-belief – as expressed in Jack Straw's comments last year that, "*We're concerned about this theological-political divide, which could open up even further down the boundary between so-called Christian heritage states and those of Islamic heritage.*"[23] It speaks volumes that Straw did not say 'so-called Islamic heritage', but took Turkey's cultural claims at face value, whilst decrying those of his own civilisation. It is an admittedly impressionistic feeling, but it seems to me that it is this subtext of self-doubt (amounting, at times, to a desire to appease a resurgent Islam) that is the real driving force behind this fervour to embrace Turkey. It is, almost literally, an apology for a policy.

Notes

1 BBC News forum, 11 October 2005.
2 A powerful exposition of this argument was made by Wolfgang Schauble, the CDU/CSU spokesman on foreign affairs in Foreign Affairs, Nov/Dec 2004 – an argument seconded by Conservative MEP Roger Helmer – see http://www.rogerhelmer.com/turkey2.asp.
3 See http://c2d.unige.ch/news/rel.php?rel=2019&lang
4 Standard Eurobarometer, 63/2005.
5 The croissant is traditionally supposed to have been invented after the lifting of the siege, as a tasty reminder of a great victory over the ominous sign of the crescent.
6 The siege was eventually relieved by the Byzantines' use of 'Greek fire', a form of napalm, against the Arab fleet.
7 From Sura 5.33.
8 It is difficult to find reliable figures, but there have been suggestions that the Muslim birthrate in Europe is three times higher than the non-Muslim birthrate. The 2001 UK census revealed that one-third of Britain's 2.8m Muslims was under 16.
9 UN figures – see http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/WPP2004/World_Population_2004_chart.pdf
10 In March 2006, an opinion poll of Turks showed that two-thirds of respondents disapproved of going to bars and nightclubs, with even more disapproving of homosexuality and saying that women should stay at home and look after children – BBC News, 17 March 2006.
11 For instance, 'Kurdish' television programmes are often actually unintelligible to genuine Kurds.
12 10 June speech to the Royal United Services Institute, quoted by Peter Almond, *Sunday Times*, 11 June 2006
13 As quoted on BBC News, 30 September 2005. Apologists for accession have spoken about 'an alliance of civilisations', but have to date provided few historical precedents.
14 Military leaders tend to be hostile towards EU membership, no doubt because it would mean a decline in their influence – see Ian Traynor, *The Guardian*, 12 June 2006.
15 The AKP was formed in 2001, after an amalgamation of several previously banned Islamist parties. Erdogan currently enjoys a massive parliamentary majority of almost two-thirds of the seats. Next year's general election is unlikely to threaten his position.
16 Turkish gross national income per capita in 2005 was US$3,750. This is in marked contrast to Germany ($30,120), France ($30,090), Greece ($16,610) and is dwarfed even by small, recently joined member states like Hungary ($8,270) – all figures World Bank, 2005.
17 Sir Alfred Sherman, one of the key architects of the Thatcher revolution, put it well by saying that, *"The rationality of the market is genuine, but it constitutes the lowest form of rationality"* – *Paradoxes of Power: Reflections on The Thatcher Interlude,* Imprint Academic, Exeter, 2005.
18 Eurostat, 2005. Turkey's external debt in 2005 was US$161.8 billion, according to the website www.allaboutturkey.com.
19 *Daily Telegraph,* 18 May 2004.
20 See his book *The Dream of Rome,* Harper Collins, London, 2006.
21 BBC News forum, 11 October 2005
22 In April 2004, Trevor Phillips of the Commission for Racial Equality admitted that *"multiculturalism is a dead letter"* – following on from a ground-breaking article critiquing multiculturalism from the Left, in the February 2004 issue of *Prospect*. For a fascinating discussion on how diversity can decrease social capital, see Mark Easton, BBC News, 30 May 2006.
23 BBC News, 2 October 2005.

Derek Turner is editor of Right Now! www.right-now.org.

To Infinity and Beyond

by James Falkenbury

It's that time of year again when we welcome in a new EU presidency for a brief, six month stint of running the EU. Finland took over the presidency on 1 July, its second chance at the job since it joined the Union in 1995 (its first run was a rather lack lustre performance in 1999). Finnish Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen has replaced Austrian President Wolfgang Schüssel as EU President. True to the 'troika' spirit, Finland formulated a joint work programme for 2006 with Austria and Vanhanen has also made clear his intention to work in an *"equally positive spirit with the German presidency, which will follow our own."*

However, like all good EU Presidents, the Finnish leader has his own ideas for the EU agenda. Vanhanan *"will endeavour to turn the Union's gaze outwards, and forwards"* and has high hopes that his presidency will be able to look beyond the here and now. He believes that, *"though there might be something of a wait-and-see mood in the Union… We would be doing future generations a disservice if we were to simply shut our eyes … and wait for better times to come."*

Vanhanen outlined his agenda in a speech to the European Parliament on 5

July, which included the usual suspects – legitimacy, efficacy, transparency, better regulation, etc. He has promised to *"fully apply the principles approved at the European Council concerning greater openness in the Council's work"* and to continue work on other outstanding legislation such as the REACH Chemical Regulation, the Services Directive and the Regulation on Roaming Charges. Aside from these basics, the core of Vanhanen's presidency includes four major areas: the future of the EU; external relations; competitiveness; and justice and home affairs.

The Future of Europe

This aspect of Vanhanen's agenda primarily centres on enlargement and the EU Constitution. Enlargement seems to be a reoccurring theme for each EU President. Most pressing are the ongoing negotiations with Turkey, Croatia, Bulgaria and Romania, with a final decision on the date of accession for the latter two countries to be made in the autumn.

Vanhanen also wants to concentrate discussions on Turkey's possible accession However, the issue is set to be a contentious one, with Ankara recently being warned that its membership talks could be halted unless there is a major move to open its ports and airspace to Greek Cypriot ships. Vanhanen is determined to make progress over this apparent impasse, stating that he would take the breakdown of talks between the EU and Turkey as a "*personal failure.*"

The term 'caretaker' has been used to depict the Finnish presidency thus far. With regard to the Constitution, in particular, this is an apt description. The German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, is determined to resurrect the Treaty. She has pushed Finland to lead the EU in the 'period of reflection', because she feels that in approximately six months – conveniently around the start of her presidency – Member States will be revitalised and ready to discuss the Constitution in depth again. However, Vanhanen dislikes the term 'caretaker' and wishes to *"move on from mere reflection on the Constitutional Treaty to a more active stage*" during his presidency. But with Merkel and the Commission breathing down its neck, it is hard to determine how much independence Finland will truly be able to exercise over this during the next five months.

External Relations

Vanhanen's main concern in relation to EU external affairs is Russia. Given that Finland was once a part of Russia and the close proximity and history between the two nations, the Commission feels Finland is in a good position to lead negotiations between Brussels and Moscow. The relationship, however, will not be limited to trade and energy; instead, Finland's aim is a *"broad-based partnership with Russia*" centred on common values and global interests. This is an especially important policy area, considering the current EU-Russia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement is due to expire at the end of 2007. The new negotiating framework will be discussed under the Finnish presidency, which provides Vanhanen with a major opportunity to influence its direction and scope.

Competitiveness

The Finns have also pledged their commitment to the EU's economic competitiveness. Attention will be focused on improving growth through innovation, energy solutions, openness in global trade and *"properly functioning social protection.*" Vanhanen has called upon Member States to assume responsibility over competitiveness. However, he stated that the *"Union must also do its share."* With the high volume of legislation emanating from Brussels, which places huge burdens on business and industry, the Union seems to be doing more than its fair share already. The call for Member States to take responsibility over competitiveness demonstrates that Finland does not understand that greater competitiveness cannot be achieved whilst the EU produces legislation at its current rate.

Justice and Home Affairs

Vanhanen announced in his speech to the European Parliament that, *"During Finland's presidency, the Member States will face a test of their political will and their commitment to more effective decision-making, particularly with regard to police and criminal matters.*" His emphatic statement shows Finland's determination to push forward the process of "*integrating the police and judiciary areas by using a special legal procedure to shift policies to another level of decision-making.*" This would ultimately give more powers to the Commission and EP at the expense of Member States, as it would introduce Qualified Majority Voting in place of the national veto. That bodes well for the smaller countries of the EU, whom Finland has vigorously supported. Finland feels that it has *"gone out of its way to defend the rights of small countries."* Vanhanen also hopes to see a common asylum policy instituted by 2010.

Vanhanen has high hopes for other vital issues, including his grandiose plan to raise taxes on alcohol – namely spirits – across the EU. The well-known teetotaller claims this measure is needed to *"even out the price levels of alcohol.*" Finland will also lead preparations for the ratification and implementation of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of Diversity and Cultural Expressions, as well as finalise the decision to make 2008 the 'European Year of Intercultural Dialogue'.

Finally, it should be noted that Finland is already making strides on the 'transparency' part of its agenda. Well, sort of. It has decided to publish weekly EU news bulletins in Latin on the presidency's website, thus "*paying tribute to European civilisation.*" This will be particularly helpful to the Vatican and its 783 inhabitants, which is the only other country to report news in Latin.

Vanhanen's goal of looking to 'infinity and beyond' is admirable, but extremely optimistic. Sceptics would hope he might look to the past instead, to the existing EU Treaties, to help solve the problems that currently beleaguer the Union. Whether it is negotiating treaties with Russia, attempting to revitalise the Constitution, achieving greater transparency or deeper integration in justice and home affairs, Finland is likely to follow the path of most other presidencies. It will lead the EU to accomplish not what is better for EU citizens, but what is better for the Commission and the Eurocrats. At this point, though, it is too early to speculate whether the Finnish government will suffer the same ill fate as Blair did during his presidency. Much to Vanhanen's chagrin, all we can do now is wait-and-see.

The quotes in this article are from Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen's speech to the European Parliament on 5 July 2006.

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Appraisal of Our Membership of the EU

by Don Anderson

I was in my forties when Heath deceived the country into believing that the switch from the European Free Trade Area (EFTA) into the EEC was merely a move into a larger trading bloc. He and Geoffrey Rippon lied to Parliament about the priceless asset of our fishing waters, which were ceded to Europe as a price for our entry. I heard him, more than once, protest that he had indicated what was implied by the weasel words *"ever closer union"* at the time. It was, apparently, contained in a speech he made in Paris that, somehow, didn't get reported here.

This has been typical of the underhand, covert way that the Community achieved its purposes by stealth and subterfuge, making sure the people didn't know about the piecemeal progress, presented as faits accomplis that only the politicians were allowed to vote on.

In 1993 they came clean and announced that the EEC had metamorphosed into the EU. They had already stolen much of our sovereignty, and it slowly became apparent that they were working inexorably towards a federal state of Europe, without having the least democratic mandate to do so. All three main parties in the UK are pro-EU, or appear largely so, so the electorate has had no means of registering its disapproval. It is interesting that in the last EU election, held by proportional representation, the 2.6 million votes cast for UKIP, a fledgling and very underfunded party, brought them 12 MEPs.

All polls show a general distaste for the EU. The newspaper poll taken when the Constitution reared its head, showed only 18 per cent in favour. John Prescott's poll in the north-east for the heavily promoted, EU-inspired Assembly was defeated by 78 per cent to 22; a similar result occurred when Jeremy Vine asked Radio 2 listeners to vote on which piece of legislation they would most like repealed, and they overwhelmingly chose the European Communities Act. Knowing, as he must do, the feeling of the country that he is supposed to represent, Tony Blair still went ahead and signed the Constitution at the launch ceremony, one of the excuses which has allowed the EU officials to continue working in the background to implement as many of the provisions of the Constitution as they can, without it being actually ratified by all Member States. The External Borders Agency is being set up, as is the EU Foreign Minister and his diplomatic services, the European Defence Agency and Rapid Reaction Force, the European Space Programme and the Charter of Fundamental Rights, the European Public Prosecutor, etc. When the Constitution returns to be voted on again, as EU leaders are determined it will, the bulk of it will already be in existence – we will be in it up to our necks and vulnerable to the final push that will submerge our country forever. We will have become Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and a group of nine provinces formerly known as England, all directly subservient to Brussels, with no rights left to decide our policy or conduct our own affairs. There is no way of stopping the Frankenstein's monster that has been created – the juggernaut has no brakes. We must jump off while we can still do so without breaking our legs.

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Even if the EU were instantly to cease its machinations and evolve no further, it would still be totally unacceptable to our citizens.

We have lost the bulk of our sovereignty. 60 to 70 per cent of our laws now come ready-made by foreigners in Brussels and bypass discussion in Parliament. These laws do not defer to our way of life, our expectations, our freedoms, and many relate to aspects of our living which should not be the remit, or even the concern, of a state government. They are initiated solely by the top two layers of the hierarchy, who are unelected appointees, and who meet in secret session with no minutes. The appointees, such as the twice-disgraced Labour spin doctor Peter Mandelson, would probably never have been chosen by the electorate to be our sole representative at the highest level of power. The Commission and Council are supported by a massive bureaucracy, whose members are immune from prosecution or job loss (unless they blow the whistle on illegal activities), even if it can be shown that they are involved in dodgy contracts, handling slush funds, or being simply incompetent. The EU, in seeking to control its people, record and regulate all their activities, and putting the state before its citizens, is in the true definition of the word, fascist.

Democracy is, in the EU, a sham. We vote for MEPs who sit in a 'Parliament' that has no opposition, and no debate – 90 seconds for each delegate to read out a prepared statement cannot be termed debate. Our MEPs sit on committees in which their opinions and advice are regularly overridden, ignored or recorded as minority views, especially if they are perceived not to advance the process towards federalisation.

This Parliament railroads through an excessive amount of legislation which stultifies our industry, stifles entrepreneurs and inhibits business creation. On the continent particularly, there is stagnation and record levels of unemployment. In the UK the regulation/inspection/enforcement/licensing/compliance industry is now bigger than our main employer, the NHS. No constitutional lawyer can keep up with the avalanche of regulation, and no citizen can be sure that his activities have not been criminalised. The cost of licences is crippling people carrying out ordinary activities, is preventing touring performances, even preventing villagers holding events in their own halls. PC and Health & Safety restrictions create another nightmare. Whilst all this red tape was being imposed, the UK has lost a million manufacturing jobs since 1997, and inward investment, which used to exceed that placed in the rest of Europe, has continued to decline sharply.

The cost to the British taxpayer is enormous – £119 million a week, after deducting the amount the EU returns to us in so-called 'grants'. We are the second largest net contributor to the EU, and we put in double what we get back. In addition, 'grants' have to be matched with new money, so every £1 that comes back to us actually costs us £3. We support the EU budget which is dissipated on bloated salaries and unjustified expenses, waste, duplication, fraud, and spent on projects chosen by foreign officials that our taxpayers would not have approved. With 10 new poor and populous members, and the possibility of countries like Turkey

joining, the cost of the budget must rise exponentially.

We can no longer control immigration. The Foreign Office was hopelessly wrong in forecasting the numbers of people wanting to come here from the new EU members, and entitled to do so. We need to take control of our borders, impose a language requirement as Holland has just done, and accept immigrants solely in accordance with our country's needs. Unbridled immigration is a major factor forcing the building of houses that are swallowing up our open spaces. It is also a huge drain on our benefits system.

We seem to be taking a disproportionate share of EU defence. The MoD is now procuring hardware at exorbitant cost simply to be compatible with continental equipment, when there are better weapons systems available, offering more value for money. The Joint Strike Aircraft has been put in jeopardy, affecting jobs in the UK. We have even given up making our own munitions and have to rely on supplies from France – scarcely a reliable ally.

The Common Agricultural Policy is a disgraceful contrivance designed to benefit the inefficient type of farming which prevailed before we joined in 1973. High prices are the result, and surpluses that have to be dumped abroad, ruining third world economies. It is open to rampant fraud and operates to the detriment of our farmers. In 30 years we have not been able to reform the CAP and there is no reason to suppose that we will ever change it from our impotent position within the EU.

Similarly the Common Fisheries Policy is an abomination, with unfair quotas and thousands of tons of dead fish being dumped back to pollute the seas. When we joined, we had the largest fleet in the North Sea. Now only 9 per cent of the cod we consume is landed by a British boat, and the fish stocks are not being competently managed. At the same time as our fleet is being put out of business, we are subsidising the building of ever larger Spanish trawlers.

There is no equity in our dealings with other Member States. Foreign car manufacturers and airlines have been illegally bailed out by their governments, French farmers are allowed to attack our lamb exports and they still won't take our beef, and whereas EU companies can take over our industries, UK bids for their firms get blocked. There are many examples of unfair competition.

The EU *corpus juris* system has been declared supreme over English law. This will alter our whole concept of justice, depriving us of *habeas corpus* and trial by jury, and subjecting us to the EU Arrest Warrant and the prospect of extradition to a foreign jail, perhaps for something that is not recognised as an offence here. Oddly enough, a German cannot be extradited from his home country to stand trial at the Old Bailey.

Smaller political parties will be squeezed out and those critical of European federalisation simply will not be allowed to exist. If Article 6 of the proposed Constitution had been effected, I might be in trouble just for writing this appraisal. A totalitarian state cannot tolerate dissent.

The avalanche of EU legislation, plus its zealous implementation by our government, has exploded the number of bureaucrats, and the funding of their salaries and index-linked pensions are draining our resources. At the same time, private pensions, in which the UK used to have more money invested than in the whole of Europe put together, have been stripped of their funds. The pensions situation in France, Germany, Portugal, etc. is even more dire. The productive sector, hog-tied with red tape, can no longer make the profits to fill the black holes. With 'ever closer union', and particularly if we were foolish enough to adopt the euro, their problem will be equally ours. With European countries regularly breaking their own conformance criteria, with the waste and corruption and the flat refusal of the Audit Committee to sign off the EU accounts for the last ten years, it is apparent that there will have to be a new tax to support the euro.

I have tried to find benefits to balance the downside and show some return for the vast resources we have poured into the project. We have been motivated by the EU to clean up our rivers and bathing beaches. One of the objects of setting up the Community was to prevent war in Europe. The EEC did that successfully right up to the time it was heavily politicised and became the EU in 1993. Since that date, the EU has started arming itself and dabbling in external conflicts. It is questionable how much militarisation it needs – after all, who is going to invade such a huge agglomeration? I used to ask my MP about the value of our membership and he would claim that there are huge benefits but, when challenged to be specific, he never ventured a reply. Having thought about it, I can see why. We joined for trade and achieved that with the EEC. What further benefit has the politicisation and the monstrous bureaucracy brought us?

Even the facility to trade with a vastly extended community has been a mixed blessing. We used to have a trade surplus with the countries of Europe – now we have a large deficit with the EU. Goods in which we used to be self-sufficient, from warships to bath taps, now get made on the continent, and we lose far more contracts for requirements, which by EU law have to be placed in the Official Journal, than we gain.

We should be associate members like Norway.

Since first writing this Appraisal, I have written to the leaders of the three main parties and to some MPs who are known Europhiles to ask them to identify what they see as benefits of our membership. Tony Blair declined to answer, but I may get an response from a correspondence official at the Foreign Office, who will print out the standard text on the EU, in the fullness of time and weather permitting. David Cameron appears to have no policy on Europe and doesn't want to talk about it. It appears that it is solely our political classes backed by a small minority of the electorate who favour our membership. If no solid advantages can be demonstrated to offset the very real downside, then the inescapable conclusion is that politicians are acting perversely in defiance of the obvious opinions of the electorate.

Sir Menzies Campbell is so far the only Euro-enthusiast to reply. He challenges none of the points in my analysis, but claims as benefits peace and freedom in Europe, promotion of trade and investment, and protection of the environment. He also identifies the promotion of human rights (which does not seem to work entirely to the advantage of our society) and supporting global development. By which, I take it, he doesn't mean the dumping of CAP-produced goods on the third world, creating dependency, and erecting tariff barriers against their exports. I don't feel that the EU has enhanced my freedom – with proliferating databases, the hot breath of officialdom, licenses for activities that used to be unrestricted, loss of *habeas corpus*, the proposed restriction of dissent and ID cards – this aspect of life has not improved at all.

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The Impact of British Eurosceptic Groups 1990-97

*In the first of a 3-part series, **John Mehrzad** investigates the major players in British Euroscepticism.*

"We have not successfully rolled back the frontiers of the state in Britain only to see it reimposed at a European level with a European super-state exercising a new dominance from Brussels."

Margaret Thatcher, 1988[1]

Few characteristics of British political history remain unquestioned. Tory divisions during the Major Premiership are one such rare example. Commentators have concentrated on three reasons behind the election defeat in May 1997.[2] First, the Tories' reputation for economic competence was shattered by withdrawal from the Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM) on 16 September 1992. 'Black Wednesday' undermined the claim that they would not bring economic crisis upon Britain unlike the previous Labour administration. Secondly, the swamp of sleaze bogged down the Tories. Accusations led to the resignations of David Mellor, Michael Mates, Tim Yeo, Graham Riddick, David Tredinnick and Tim Smith, and sullied the names of Alan Clark, Tim Sainsbury, Norman Lamont, Malcolm Caithness, Stephen Milligan, Michael Howard, Jonathan Aitken, Neil Hamilton and most importantly the Party itself. Thirdly, *"the great political wrecker of the 1990s"*[3] was the question of Europe. The mechanics of this issue have proved more difficult to uncover.

Authorities on the period refer to Eurosceptic groups but only tangentially. John Turner offered them a derisory two pages.[4] Hugo Young made three references to one group[5] while Alan Clark made only fleeting references to Eurosceptic parties.[6] Margaret Thatcher, despite being the patron or ideologue of many, barely granted them a mention.[7] Norman Lamont did not go into detail despite being a member of several.[8] Michael Heseltine gave them little over a paragraph.[9] Even the vehement Eurosceptic Teresa Gorman did not decisively treat all groups, preferring to concentrate on her own.[10] It was left to John Major to divulge the extent they undermined his premiership, albeit in a disorganised manner.[11] There is little doubt, therefore, that there remains a lot to be explored.

This study tracks the activities of a number of these organisations from 1990 to 1997. One of the most well known non-parliamentary groups was the non-partisan think tank The Bruges Group, which was founded on 8 February 1989 by thirteen academics following Thatcher's speech of 20 September 1988 to the College of Europe, Bruges. Other notable extra-parliamentary groups included the publisher of this journal, the European Foundation (previously the Democratic Association for Nation States in Europe and also the Great College Street Group), established by Bill Cash, MP, in September 1992.

Within Parliament, there were several fringe groups but only three were uniquely concerned with Europe. Cash established the backbench parliamentary 'Friends of Bruges' in May 1989, though this was not a Westminster branch of the Bruges Group. The Fresh Start group was created following the Early Day Motion (EDM) signed by 69 Tory MPs on 3 June 1993 calling for a 'fresh start' to Britain's relationship with Europe. Jonathan Aitken and Teddy Taylor had also founded the Conservative European Reform Group, the longest established anti-EU fringe group in the parliamentary Conservative Party, on 18 November 1980.

Other parliamentary Eurosceptic groups were primarily Thatcherite. The No Turning Back group was named after a 1985 pamphlet in favour of Thatcherism produced by thirteen MPs. The 92 Group (named after the flat in which they first met), also avowedly Thatcherite, was led by George Gardiner and made representations to Major about Europe. The largest Eurosceptic organisation within the Conservative Party, however, was Conservative Way Forward (CWF), which was set up on 22 March 1991.

In electioneering terms, the '90s also saw the birth of Eurosceptic parties. The Anti-Federalist League, named after the Anti-Corn Law League, was established in November 1991 by the co-founder of the Bruges Group, Alan Sked. The same academic founded UKIP in October 1993, leading the Party until after the 1997 election. In addition, James Goldsmith created the Referendum Party on 27 November 1994 to fight for a referendum on whether Britons wanted to be run from Brussels or Westminster.

This investigation covers three periods between 1990 and 1997. The first is the period from Major's accession on 28 November 1990 until October 1992. This timeframe incorporated the Gulf War, the general election, the 'Fresh Start' EDM and 'Black Wednesday'. Secondly, the stretch between late 1992 until December 1994 will be discussed in the September issue. It covers the final reading of the Maastricht Bill, the Social Chapter and 'no confidence' votes, the EC Finance Bill, by-election defeats, the withdrawal of the Whip from MPs and heated Tory conferences. Finally, the run-up to the 1997 general election will concludes this study in October. The end-game included John Redwood's leadership challenge, Major's meeting with the Fresh Start and 92 groups, more by-election defeats and the emergence of the Referendum Party and UKIP.

NOVEMBER 1990 to SEPTEMBER 1992

"My aim for Britain in the Community can be simply stated. I want us to be where we belong. At the very heart of Europe. Working with our partners in building the future."

John Major, 1991[12]

Initially, the Cabinet's mood to John Major's succession was akin to that of prisoners released from the dungeons in Beethoven's opera *Fidelio* emerging into the sunshine blinking and singing for freedom.[13] With a general election due within eighteen months and British troops in the Gulf, there was little time to celebrate Major's democratic style as tasks remained in hand. Behind the smiles, however, there were those who were *"getting ready to be 'disillusioned' and who duly arrived in that state."*[14] Furthermore, according to one of the few studies on the period, Europe in 1990-1 *"consumed a greater proportion of Major's energies … than any other political problem."*[15] A new Prime Minister could have expected a honeymoon. Yet it was not long before Major came under attack from unexpected quarters.

The most pressing issue was the Gulf War. Strangely for the Bruges Group, it was this

non-EC subject that brought them to loggerheads with Major for the first time. A Bruges Group pamphlet entitled *Cheap Excuses*, published on 20 February 1991, accused the Germans of twisting their Constitution to shirk participation in the Gulf. The 22 February *Evening Standard* reported on the subsequent scandal under the title 'Brugistes upset the Germans'. With the Foreign Minister, Douglas Hogg, the German Ambassador, Baron Hermann von Richthofen, Margaret Thatcher and Norman Tebbit all embroiled, the German embassy appeared ironic in stating, *"The Bruges Group is not as important as it thinks it is."*[16]

A greater polemic erupted over safe-havens for the Kurds. In April, the *Guardian* reported the Bruges Group as asking *"was the price for the overthrow of Mrs Thatcher paid for with blood of thousands of innocent Iraqis?"*[17] The next morning Sked stoked the flames by retorting, *"I am not saying Major is a wimp. I am saying he is in danger of looking like one."*[18] *The Daily Mail* reported the affair as the *"Outrage of the Bruges brigade"*[19] but all were not pleased. Thatcher issued a statement of disagreement, Norman Tebbit thought it *"a grave lack of judgement"* and Central Office reaffirmed its faith in John Major. Patrick Robertson and Alan Sked had to offer their resignations to non-partisan groups (with 90 per cent Conservative membership[20]) *"on the condition that they were not accepted."*[21]

These affairs brought The Bruges Group publicity. Academic pamphlets were read and translated into popular language by journalists like Trevor Kavanagh at *The Sun*. A leaked 10 June report claimed that Robertson's paper, "*The Bruges Group urges Parliament to reject the Delors Report for European Monetary Union,*" threatened to split the Tories.[22] Major, infuriated by *Telegraph* leaders by Robertson and Nicolas Ridley, admitted *"these eruptions began to widen divisions within the Conservative Party."*[23] The battle of ideas over Europe entered the public domain while The Bruges Group happily criticised a man believed to be *"simply not one of us"*.[24]

The Bruges Group, based at their Whitehall offices, had regular meetings at locations like the Reform Club, chaired by Lord Harris of High Cross (an advisor to Thatcher in the 70s and 80s) and attended by some 2-300 people including MPs, the press and academics. Several well-known individuals began to donate considerable amounts to Bruges. Notable names included Michael Caine, the Duke of Devonshire, Ian MacGregor, Garfield Weston, Lord White of Hull, Lord Young of Graffham, Conrad Black and James Goldsmith. All groups, however, fell over themselves to attract one particular individual.

Even before Margaret Thatcher left office, she had associations with such groups. She received support from No Turning Back (NTB) *"who drafted themselves as helpers and pulled out every stop"* in the leadership election.[25] Subsequently, Thatcher persuaded many of them, like Michael Forsyth and Michael Brown, to vote for Major. The 92 Group, including George Gardiner, John Townend, Edward Leigh and Christopher Chope, also visited her room in the Commons to lobby against resignation. Once she had left the gates were open for closer links and 'the Iron Lady' was not slow to establish them.

Believing 'you can't expect a person who's not been in the heat of the fire and the teeth of the wind to have the same viewpoint as someone who has been through it all' Thatcher saw in the issue of Europe a way to become a *"back-seat driver"*.[26] She accepted the presidency of The Bruges Group in January and that of Conservative Way Forward (CWF) in March 1991. The former becoming a subject for Prime Minister's Questions during the Kurdish affair:

Neil Kinnock: *Will the Prime Minister now be asking his right hon. Friend the Member of Finchley to step down as President of the Bruges Group?*

The Prime Minister: *That is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Member for Finchley.*[27]

So significant were attacks that Major abandoned any hope of calling an early 'khaki election' at the end of the Gulf War. He acknowledged that an autumn 1991 contest was *"a much-mooted possibility"* although with the economic weather unfavourable and the defeat at the Monmouth by-election in May this option was soon rejected. The Prime Minister also *"remained nervous about Europe as an issue in the minds of voters"* and about Maastricht negotiations due for December.[28]

The actions of The Bruges Group had another important effect; it became *"the mother and father to other Eurosceptic groups."*[29] Following discussions with Robertson, Bill Cash established the backbench Parliamentary Friends of Bruges (PFOB) in March 1989.[30] It was independent from, but co-operated with, the older extra-parliamentary group. Mark Worthington became the parliamentary liaison between the two organisations and the PFOB soon boasted 130 predominantly Tory MP members.[31]

The same Thatcherites who had visited her office in 1990, Gardiner and Chope, founded CWF on 22 March 1991 with Cecil Parkinson as Chairman, Norman Tebbit as Vice-President and a claimed membership of 1,200 including Alan Duncan, Iain Duncan Smith, Gerald Howarth, Bernard Jenkin and John Townend. The 92 Group also soon became *"one of the centres of opposition to Major."*[32] The Conservative European Reform Group (CERG), founded in 1980, was given a new lease of life by its Chairman, Jonathan Aitken. According to one source, this group and The Bruges Group became *"the most prominent"* critics of developments within the EC.[33]

The only notable pre-election skirmish following those of spring/summer 1991 occurred in the autumn. On 13 November, Bill Cash was ousted as chairman of the backbench Euro-Committee when many Conservatives were prevented from voting. Nevertheless, difficult Maastricht negotiations passed without incident and the opt-outs of EMU and the Social Chapter were enthusiastically received domestically.

Considering the subject, this event oddly promoted little reaction from Eurosceptic groups. Major and his Chief Whip, Richard Ryder, repressed dissent in a debate on 20 November, heralding a 101 majority with only 6 Tory MPs against. However, silence from groups was also due to another factor. Following arguments over Iraq, some Eurosceptics felt wrong issues were been focused upon. In consequence, from November, there was disruption in the ranks.

In the same month, Sked founded the Anti-Federalist League (AFL) as he felt "*The Bruges Group was not alive to change government policy since there were too many good Tories in it.*"[34] This party was formed *"to mobilise public opinion in defence of British sovereignty and to prevent the UK becoming a province of a united European super-state."*[35] By March 1992, Sked was dismissed from The Bruges Group for being an *"embarrassment."*[36] The Bruges Group left its Whitehall offices, ending up in a flat in West Hampstead. The self-proclaimed *"odious Thatcherite creep"*,[37] Robertson, left for Switzerland. The Bruges Group had little impact over the following eighteen months until the selection of Jonathan Collett as campaign director in July 1993.

With the parent organisation in a state of flux, relations between The Bruges Group and parliamentary groups also suffered. The PFOB reached its membership peak in 1991 and thereafter fell into disrepair. Cash consequently turned his attention away from PFOB to form his own think tank, the Democratic Association for Nation States in Europe, in September 1992. A month later it evolved into the [17] Great College Street Group to oppose the passage of the Maastricht Treaty.

By spring 1992, Tory MPs were fighting to prevent a general election defeat. With setbacks to Eurosceptic fortunes and the press' endorsement of Major's Maastricht policy, the impact of Euroscepticism was limited during the contest. Sked's AFL put up 17 candidates in predominantly Conservative constituencies, such as Chelsea, Kensington and Oxford West and Abingdon. Only 2 achieved more than 1 per cent of the vote, with the candidate for Staffordshire West attracting the highest with 3.4 per cent.[38] There was one notable scalp, however. In standing against Chris Patten in Bath, Sked helped oust the Party Chairman and one of the most vehement Euroenthusiasts in the Cabinet. With 0.2 per cent of the vote, this was not done wat the ballot box but indirectly at the hustings. In a meeting covered by the press, Sked asked Patten if he supported the unpopular Poll Tax. A positive reply drew gasps from the audience and was then repeated on air.[39]

Having clutched victory from the jaws of defeat, on 15 April 1992 John Major *"arrived at his peak moment, never to be repeated, of personal authority."*[40] There was a post-election lull in Eurosceptic activity but this was because of regrouping as much as anything else. Major, once more, saw the Maastricht Bill as a vehicle for dissent but it passed comfortably through its first two readings. The eerie silence, however, was the eye of a storm. The tempest would soon crash in from, of all places, Denmark. Thereafter, *"all hell broke loose."*[41]

For some time, Eurosceptic groups had tried to cultivate international networks. On the eve of the December 1990 Inter-Governmental Conference (IGC) in Rome, The Bruges Group tried to organise a conference in Vienna for 23-26 November with representatives from *Institut EURO'92* (France), *Frankfuter Institute-Bad Homburg* (Germany), *Centro Einaudi* (Italy), *Instituto de Economica de Mercado* (Spain) and *Carl Menger Institue* (Austria). However, differences over federalism led to its abandonment. A more successful international occasion followed the Danish 'No' vote to Maastricht on 2 June 1992. On 8 July, CERG invited leaders of the Danish 'No' campaign to a meeting at Westminster to bolster opposition to the ratification of the same Treaty in the British Parliament.

In the Commons, *"the Tory Party had begun to imitate the structural defects of old Labour."*[42] The day after the Danish result, 91 Conservative backbenchers signed Michael Spicer's 'Fresh Start' EDM calling for a rethink on Maastricht. The Fresh Start Group was born with 26 stalwarts and dozens of others attending meetings. Roger Knapman set up lines of communication with Ulster Unionists and other fringe groups while Christopher Gill and James Cran, their unofficial 'Whip', covered the Liberal Democrats and Labour. Their aim was to secure a referendum on the Treaty. Fresh Start was to be a constant thorn in Major's side.

If 1975 had proved 'enthusiasts' right, then 16 September 1992 would do much the same for the 'sceptic' cause. After an uneasy summer of hesitancy, speculation against the Pound reached such a pitch that it crashed out of the ERM on 'Black Wednesday'. While Major considered resignation, 'sceptics' and the press went to town. Fresh Start gathered signatures of 60 MPs on an EDM celebrating withdrawal. *The Times* reported Major to have *"wobbled"* and the Editor of *The Sun*, Kelvin MacKenzie, is to have said, *"I've got a large bucket of shit on my desk, and tomorrow morning I am going to pour it all over your head."*[43] The Tories, in consequence, went behind in the polls where they would stay until and beyond 1997.

1 Margaret Thatcher, speech delivered to the College of Europe, Bruges, 20 September 1988.
2 John Charmley, *A History of Conservative Politics 1990-1996*, London, Macmillan, 1998, pp. 241-256; Alan Clark, *The Tories*, London, Phoenix, pp. 1998, 499-539; Peter Hennessy, *The Prime Minister*, London, Penguin, 2001, pp. 437-75.
3 Hugo Young, *This Blessed* Plot, London, Macmillan, 1999, p. 444.
4 John Turner, *The Tories and Europe*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2000, pp. 28-9.
5 Young, pp. 407-8, 410. The group in mention was the European Foundation. Its founder, Bill Cash, was on the same youth cricket team as the author.
6 Clark, pp. 526-7.
7 Margaret Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, London, HarperCollins, 1993, p. 855.
8 Norman Lamont, *In Office*, London, Warner, 1999, p. 10, 27, 433.
9 Michael Heseltine, *Life in the Jungle*, London, Coronet, 2000, p. 232.
10 Teresa Gorman, *The Bastards*, London, Pan, 1993, pp.11-15, 52-61. See also Gorman, *No, Prime Minister*, London, John Blake, 2001, p. 246.
11 John Major, *The Autobiography*, London, HarperCollins, 2000, p.268-9, 366-7, 587, 614-5, 641.
12 Major, extract from speech delivered to the Konrad Adenaur Stiftung, Bonn, 11 March 1991.
13 Chris Patten in *The Economist*, 8 December 1990. This metaphor has also been attributed to Robin Butler, see Dennis Kavanagh and Anthony Seldon, *The Powers Behind The Prime Minister: The Hidden Influence of Number Ten*, London, HarperCollins, 1999, p. 224.
14 Clark, *Diaries*, p. 377.
15 Bruce Anderson, *John Major: The Making of the Prime Minister*, London, Fourth Estate, 1992, p. 380.
16 *Evening Standard*, 22 February 1991.
17 *Guardian*, 10 April 1991.
18 The Today Programme, BBC Radio 4, 11 April 1991.
19 *Daily Mail*, 12 April 1991.
20 Bertrand Lapaire, *Le Groupe de Bruges*, maîtrise d'histoire, Université de Paris IV, Sorbonne, 1992-3, supervisor – François Crouzet, p. 190.
21 Alan Sked, interview.
22 *Independent*, 12 June 1991. A planned split of the Tories was denied by Stephen Haseler (Bruges Group Academic Advisory Council) in a letter to the same paper, 13 June 1991.
23 Major, p. 269.
24 Sked, interview.
25 Thatcher, p. 841.
26 Thatcher in *The Times*, 29 June 1991.
27 House of Commons *Hansard*, Debates for 11 June 1991.
28 Major, p. 292-3.
29 Martin Holmes (Chairman of the Bruges Group, February 1993 – June 2001), interviewed at Mansfield College, Oxford, 22 April 2003.
30 Lapaire, p. 143.
31 Young, p. 423. Some confusion arises over this figure as Young incorrectly attributed this figure to The Bruges Group. In fact, they were members of PFOB. Collett, interview.
32 Clark, *The Tories*, p. 495.
33 Keith Alderman, "Legislating on Maastricht", *Contemporary Record*, Winter 1993, vol. 7, no. 3.
34 Sked, interview.
35 AFL leaflet, spring 1992.
36 This is attributed to Kenneth Minogue. Sked, interview.
37 Patrick Robertson in *Esquire*, November 1991.
38 See David Butler and Dennis Kavanagh (eds), *The British General Election of 1992*, London, Macmillan, 1992.
39 Sked, interview.
40 Clark, *The Tories*, p. 502.
41 Major, p. 347.
42 Major, p. 347.
43 Andrew Neil, *Full Disclosure*, London, Macmillan, 1996, p. 9.

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Intelligence Digest

by John Laughland

Kaczynski twins take over

The President of Poland, Lech Kaczynski, has appointed his twin brother, Jaroslaw, Prime Minister. Poland is now governed by a strange diarchy of twin brothers who started life as child cinema stars. The Polish government is already viewed with deep suspicion by many liberals and leftists in Europe who dislike its social conservatism and nationalism. The appointment of Jaroslaw follows the resignation of the previous Prime Minister, Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz, and it comes in spite of a promise by Jaroslaw Kaczynski (who is the leader of the governing Law and Justice Party) that he would not be Prime Minister if his brother were elected President. He had said that such a diarchy would be *"completely unacceptable"* to Polish society. The world's globalist media seems to be furious at the departure of Marcinkiewicz. Many are saying that the appointment of Jaroslaw Kaczynski will be bad for 'the markets'. The appointment follows a string of bad publicity after the Law and Justice Party decided to include in the government the anti-EU parties, the League of Polish Families and Self-Defence. [*Le Monde*, 10 July 2006]

It did not take long before the new Prime Minister was mired in controversy. In June, the German daily *Tageszeitung* published a caricature of Lech Kaczynski, the President, which annoyed the Prime Minister, Jaroslaw, so much that he has demanded that the German government take measures against the newspaper. The Prime Minister said that insulting a head of state was *"a crime"* and that whoever committed it needed to face the consequences. The cartoon had shown Lech as 'a new Polish potato.' The Polish Foreign Ministry, meanwhile, poured oil on the flames by comparing the *Tageszeitung* to the Nazi paper, *Der Stürmer*. Jaroslaw Kaczynski told the Polish newspaper *Wprost* that it was up to the Germans to take a step to improve the deteriorating relations with Poland *"because we have not insulted anybody."* He said that he thought the relations between the two countries had been seriously damaged. A three-way meeting between the heads of government of Poland, Germany and France in Weimar was cancelled by the Polish side at short notice after Warsaw protested at the 'inappropriateness' of the cartoons. The German government has said that it wants to maintain good relations with the new Prime Minister but says that it cannot apologise for the cartoons because that would infringe press freedom. However, concern is being expressed in some political circles in Germany at the nationalism and anti-Europeanism of the new Polish government. Matthias Wissman, the CDU Chairman of the Bundestag's European affairs committee, said, *"Germany will always have an outstretched hand towards Poland. But at some point the Polish government will have to understand that this is not a one-way street."* Wissman emphasised that without Germany, Poland would not have joined the EU at all. [*Handelsblatt*, 11 July 2006]

Giertych praises General Franco

Further controversy was generated when a prominent member of the League of Polish Families, Maciej Giertych, whose son Roman is the leader of the party and Deputy Prime Minister in the coalition government, said in the European Parliament that Europe needed more politicians like General Franco, Salazar and Eamonn de Valera. He said that Franco and the others had preserved traditional values and stopped the spread of communism in Western Europe. The remarks were made during the course of a debate in the European Parliament during which the former Spanish dictator was condemned by MEPs. Giertych said, *"We observe deep sorrow some attempts for a historical revisionism which tends to criticise all that is traditional and catholic while portray in a positive light all that is lay and socialist."* The ineffable Martin Schulz, the leader of the Socialist Party in the European Socialist Party, who is always attacking right-wingers, flew into a fury. *"What we have just heard is Mr Franco's ghost,"* he shouted, *"It was a fascist speech and such a statement has no place in the European Parliament."* Mr Schultz shouted, *"You are Nazi"* to some protesting Polish deputies. After the session, Schulz showed his dedication to free speech when he said, *"We can still see people like that spread around Europe… We need to create strong international pressure to fight against such tendencies as we are definitely not going to tolerate them."* [Lucia Kubosova, *EU Observer*, 5 July 2006]

Spooky scandals

The replacement of the Prime Minister himself followed the unexpected replacement of his Finance Minister, sacked at the beginning of July following revelations that she had collaborated with the Communist secret police without declaring the fact as is legally required. This scandal was itself part of a wider problem, namely that incriminating information about Ministers is being released into the public domain by people who probably want to try to influence or blackmail Ministers. Experts on the Polish secret services say that the old networks remain economically powerful. According to reports, allegations are circulating on the internet about the Defence Minister, Radek Sikorski, but it is not clear exactly what the substance of these allegations is. [Reinhold Vetter, *Handelsblatt*, 3 July 2007]

These scandals have been unfolding at the same time as the Catholic Church has been shaken by similar revelations about priests collaborating with the Communist secret police. The scandal has centred on Father Michal Czajkowski, 72, a professor at the Catholic University in Warsaw and co-chairman of the Polish Council of Christians and Jews, who has been forced to admit that he was a secret police informer from 1960 to 1984. Czajkowski's *mea culpa* follows his earlier strenuous denials that he ever collaborated. He informed especially on what was going on at the Catholic University in Lublin and in the diocese of Wroclaw. The influential daily, *Rzeczpospolita*, has said that a line should be drawn under the affair and that bygones should be bygones. The scandal has not been confined to Czajkowski, however; it is estimated that 10-15 per cent of Catholic priests were Communist informers. An earlier scandal involved a Dominican priest who was a close associate of Pope John Paul II. [Celia Chauffour, *Le Monde*, 14 July 2006]

Big Brother is watching you

Brussels has said that it is 'observing' the developing situation in Warsaw after the Self-Defence Party, which mainly represents the interests of Polish farmers, has said that it wants a re-negotiation of the coalition agreement or else it will not vote in the confidence motion in the Polish Parliament. Self-Defence wants the coalition agreement to state very clearly that the policies outlined in the agreement will indeed be implemented, and not just those of the majority Law and Justice Party. Hartmut Nassauer, the Chairman of the CDU-CSU group in the European Parliament, said that the EU would be keeping an eye on whether the new Polish government would respect the principles laid down by the EU. He said that the rule of law, democracy and the rights of minorities had to be respected, the implication being that these were

now under threat. Nassauer also said that Brussels would watch how Warsaw's attitude to the Constitution and the further development of the European Union developed. President Kaczynski has said that he does not think that the Constitution can ever be ratified. In mid-June, the European Parliament had called on heads of state and government to react to the political changes in Poland; MEPs said they were concerned at the increase in racism, intolerance and homophobia. The deputy leader of the Liberal group, Silvana Koch-Mehrin, said that the EU ought to think about using Article 7 of the Nice Treaty. This allows the EU to suspend a Member State's voting rights if democracy and human rights are not respected. The Article was included in the EU Treaty after Austria included the Freedom Party in its national government in 2000. [*Die Welt*, 13 July 2006]

Spooks in Bulgaria as well

A similar scandal to the one in Poland is also unfolding in Bulgaria. The President of Bulgaria, Gyorgi Parvanov, admitted that he collaborated with the state security services although he did not realise that he was doing so because he did not know who was reading his written reports. As in Poland too, the 'scandal of the files' has been shaking the political class for a while and one has to ask in both cases why this information (if it is true) is being revealed now. The scandal started when two journalists were revealed as agents, perhaps as a way of getting at the press or the result of a settling of accounts. [Rouja Lazarova, *Le Monde*, 17 July 2006]

Slovakia in the dog house again

European noses have been turned up at the new Slovak government as well. Following the victory of the SMER party led by Robert Fico, now Prime Minister, the Slovak government is now composed of a coalition between SMER, the HZDS led by former Prime Minister Vladimir Meciar and the right-wing Slovak National Party. This alliance has brought waves of condemnation from European Socialists. The Socialist group of the European Parliament, in a meeting in Strasbourg on 4 July, unanimously condemned its Social Democratic member, SMER, for allying with the populist HZDS and the extreme right SNP and demanded that SMER be suspended from the European Socialist Party and that it be barred from joining the Socialist International. Martin Schulz, the Chairman of the Socialist group in the European Parliament, said, *"The Slovak government coalition is unacceptable."* Schulz denounced the Slovak National Party, led by Jan Slota, as *"an intolerant, ultranationalist, extreme right and racist party."* For many years Slovakia was isolated by the *bien pensants* in the international community while it was governed by Vladimir Meciar, who was repeatedly attacked for not being democratic. International investors and financiers are now sounding very gloomy about Slovakia, since the new government has promised to abolish the flat tax introduced by its predecessor. Many are saying that it will not, as predicted, be able to adopt the euro in 2009. [Rafaële Rivais, *Le Monde*, 6 July 2006]

In a notable act of left-right harmony, the centre-right European People's Party has also expressed the same disapproval of the new Slovak government led by Fico as the supposedly enemy Socialists. Wilfrid Martens, the President of the EPP, said that the coalition between SMER, the HZDS and the SNP represented *"a setback for Europe." "I am deeply concerned with the current political developments in Slovakia,"* Martens said. *"I am appalled that a party like the SNP, with its xenophobic views and hostility towards ethnic minorities will become a coalition partner in the new Slovak government."* The same displeasure was voiced by Hans-Gert Poettering, the Chairman of the EPP parliamentary party in the European Parliament. He said, *"I am astonished that the most extreme xenophobic party is to be part of the next government. This development is not justified by any lack of suitable partners in the Slovak Parliament and it can only harm the real interests of Slovakia. It will certainly put at risk the substantial political, economic and social progress achieved under the leadership of Mikuláš Dzurinda."* Martens welcomed the open letter sent by the European Socialists to Robert Fico. [3 July 2006, *epp-ed.org*] The spectre of ethnic discrimination against Slovakia's Hungarians and gypsies takes no account of the fact that Meciar's HZDS is especially popular among Slovakia's gypsy population. The Euro-grandees are also guilty of double standards, since there is no substantial discrimination against Hungarians in Slovakia, while there is massive and systemic discrimination against ethnic Russians in the Baltic states, especially Latvia. Although these EU states have refused even to give their numerous Russian inhabitants passports, and although they massively deny them cultural rights, for instance in education, the Baltic states are customarily held up as model of inter-ethnic tolerance.

Czech mate

The centre-right governing party in the Czech Republic, the Civic Democratic Party or ODS, has said that it will put on ice for the time being the plans to form a Eurosceptic grouping in the European Parliament with the British Conservatives. The leader of the parliamentary party, Jan Zahradil, has said that it will not join a new Eurosceptic group until after 2009. Zahradil said that the plan was being abandoned because it was important to complete negotiations on a national coalition government first. The implication is that the alliance with the Conservatives might make creating such a coalition more difficult. The ODS has in any case taken some steps away from Euroscepticism, the party leader Mirel Topolanek having decided not to appoint Jan Zahradil as Foreign Minister. Zahradil, a close ally of the Czech President, Václav Klaus, and a friend of the European Foundation, would have been a strongly Eurosceptic voice in Czech diplomacy if he had been given this job. [Lucia Kubosova, *EU Observer*, 11 July 2006]

Czechs introduce gay marriage

The Czech Republic has become the first former Communist country to pass a law legalising same-sex marriages. The law was passed only with great difficulty, following a veto by President Klaus. This is the fifth attempt to introduce the law and it was passed, following the President's veto, only when a seriously ill deputy was carried into the Parliament chamber to vote for it. The new law does not allow same-sex couples to adopt children but children from a heterosexual relationship may remain in the custody of a parent even if he or she has subsequently entered a homosexual partnership.

'Another Russia' holds Congress

The former world chess champion, Garry Kasparov, has inaugurated a conference of leading Russian oppositionists at a Moscow hotel. The meeting was disrupted by protests by youth groups who support President Putin. They put on the costumes of American Indians ('native Americans') in order to make their point that Kasparov wants to turn Russia into a colony of the US, reducing ordinary Russians to the state of native Americans. The conference was notable for the presence, as participants, of people from the extreme fringes of Russian politics, especially Red Young Vanguard and the National Bolshevik Party. For this reason, the main liberal parties in Russia, especially Yabloko and the Union of Rightist Forces, declined to participate in the conference. The meeting was attended by the US Assistant Secretary of State, Daniel Fried, and by the British and Canadian Ambassadors. The meeting has caused several people to comment on Kasparov's strongly pro-American sympathies. According to Leonid Ivashov, Vice President of

the Russian Academy of Geopolitical Sciences, *"It was long ago when the CIA established a network of non-commercial and non-governmental organisations. In addition, it funds over 400 scientific organisations too. I know many of our politicians and scientists of politics who would at first express Russia's state interests but then immediately change their points of view as soon as they start receiving money from Western funds, Carnegie or Soros funds, for example. Instead, they would start propagandising the US system, NATO, etc. In fact, they started lobbying American interests with a view to conquer Russian oil and gas resources."* In a similar vein, State Duma Deputy and historian Natalia Narochnitskaya has commented, *"Kasparov's behaviour is revolting. It is not about the opposition, it is about the promotion of US interests in Russia. The CIA has gone into the background as a public structure during the recent decade. However, the anti-Russian activities are being carried out through various foundations, institutes and councils under the guise of human rights protection."* Political scientist Sergei Markov commented, *"The fact that the conference 'Another Russia' is chaired by Kasparov shows that this event is not serious. He is a genius and a madman for me at one and the same time. Of course he is a genius in the game of chess and a madman in the game of politics. He directs his energy against Russia, being completely irrational as a politician. He was awarded for his Russophobic ideas in 1991. Kasparov is one of the most devoted supporters of the USA in the world. I do not think that he deliberately cooperates with the CIA. However, it is obvious that US special services use him."* [Andrei Scherbakov, www.pravda.ru, 12 July 2006]

MEPs support Khodorkovsky

More than 100 members of the European Parliament have signed an open letter to President Putin calling the jailed oligarch, Mikhail Khodorkovsky, a 'political prisoner' and his trial 'a travesty of justice'. The letter was initiated by Vytautas Landsbergis, the former President of Lithuania, and it stressed that Khodorkovsky feared for his life. [www.lenta.ru, 13 July 2006] At about the same time, an organisation has been created called 'Association of the Victims of Yukos' (Yukos is the oil company Khodorkovsky headed) which alleges that hundreds of people were murdered by Yukos' security service in the form of contract killings. It has held demonstrations outside the European Parliament in Strasbourg on the occasion of a debate on Khodorkovsky's imprisonment.

Ukraine's political stalemate

In the three months since the parliamentary elections in Ukraine, the country has spectacularly failed to find a new government. The loser of the 2005 'Orange Revolution,' Viktor Yanukovich, won those elections and ought to have been asked to form a government. President Yushchenko, however, gave the task to his orange allies who have since split into rival factions and are now bitter enemies. The vying for position between them has caused every attempt to create a government to collapse. Yushchenko has refused to appoint Yanukovich Prime Minister and Yulia Timoshenko, the former Prime Minister, has led the disruption of parliamentary sessions to prevent the formation of a government from which she was excluded. Yushchenko justified his refusal to appoint Yanukovich by saying that his party had violated the Ukrainian Constitution. The situation is aggravated by the fact that deputies have refused to appoint judges to the constitutional court and so that body is not functioning either; it was this court which gave the victory to the 'orange' forces in early 2005. It is obvious that Yushchenko (and those foreigners who support him) are determined to prevent Yanukovich from becoming Prime Minister for foreign policy reasons. The President has stated, *"We will not stray from the path we have chosen. Ukraine is moving towards the European Union. The path we have chosen in foreign and domestic policy will remain unchanged."* [*Le Monde*, 14 July 2006]

Bomb in Transdnistria

A bomb exploded on 6 July in a maxi-taxi in the Transdnistrian capital, Tiraspol, killing eight people and injuring about twenty. Transdnistria is a small strip of territory, which is legally part of Moldova (which aspires to join the EU). Transdnistria has in fact has been independent since 1990. Whereas other small territories around the world, such as Montenegro and Kosovo, are encouraged to secede from the larger states to which they belong, Transdnistria has always been encouraged by the international community to stay in Moldova and indeed to reintegrate itself politically with that state. The terrorist act comes at a time of worsening relations between Moldova and Russia, which has peacekeepers in Transdnistria, and conspiracy theories abound that the Moldovan government was somehow behind the attack. In mid-June, Transdnistrian authorities had arrested five Moldovan police officers who were taking photographs of buildings and, they said, *"engaged in subversive activities."* They were obliged to release them by Russia and the OSCE. [Reports, 6 July 2006]

Commenting on the attack, the special envoy of the Transdnistrian Parliament, Grigory Marakutsa, has said, *"Somebody outside Transdnistria does not like that a calm situation has been established in the republic for a long time. For 14 years of Russian peacekeeping mission in the Moldovan-Transdnistria conflict zone not a person died. Whenever Moldova raised the question of changing the peacekeeping format, this fact was the main counter argument from our side. However, someone did not like our argument. Somebody did not like that the Russian peacekeepers went on so well with their duties. The terrorist attack is just an attempt to discredit the Russian peacekeepers before the summit of the G8 in Saint Petersburg in order to raise the question of their withdrawal from the conflict zone, change the peacekeeping format and satisfy ambitions of the Moldovan party. In my opinion, a definite trace of the Moldovan special services can be seen in the terror act. Recently, state officials and members of Moldovan special services have become regular visitors to some countries where terrorist organizations are present, particularly, to Albania. Voronin* [the president of Molodova] *has met people who support terrorists in Chechnya and Al-Qaeda. According to our data, President of Moldova Vladimir Voronin and officials of Moldovan special services inclined members of terror organisations in various countries to carry out terror acts in Transdnistria. They seem to have succeeded in it."* [www.regnum.ru, 7 July 2006]

Macedonian Albanian parties shoot it out

The general elections in Macedonia, a country which hopes to join the EU in a few years, have been marred by a series of shoot-outs between members of the two rival ethnic Albanian parties in the country. In spite of this gang warfare, the judgement by the EU has been that Macedonia is well on the way to membership. The centre-right party VMRO-DPMNE will probably ally itself with the so-called Democratic Union for Integration, an ethnic Albanian party led by a former paramilitary rebel, Ali Ahmeti. [Christophe Châtelot, *Le Monde*, 7 July 2006]

Italian Minister sparks row

The leader of the right-wing Northern League party in Italy, Roberto Calderoli, has put a cat among the pigeons by attributing Italy's victory in the football world cup to the fact that all the players in the national team were ethnic Italians – *"people from Lombardy, Campania, Calabria, the Veneto"* – whereas France had fielded *"a team which has lost its identity by including negroes, Muslims and Communists."* He said the Italian victory was *"a victory for our identity."* The French government is

furious and the French Ambassador in Rome, Yves Aubin de la Messuzière, has written a formal letter of protest to the President of the Senate, Franco Marini. He said that Calderoli's statements *"could only nourish hatred"* and that France was proud of its team which consisted of *"sons of the country."* Calderoli had been a member of the Berlusconi government until last February when he resigned because he was pictured on TV wearing a T-Shirt with Mohammed caricatures; the resulting protests outside the Italian consulate in the Libyan city of Bengasi led to the deaths of eleven people. [*Handelsblatt*, 11 July 2006]

Italian spooks arrested

On 5 July 2006, the Italian police arrested two officers of Italian military intelligence, while a judge signed arrest warrants for four Americans, as part of the ongoing enquiry into the capture by the CIA in Milan in 2003 of a man suspected of terrorist activities. Marco Mancini, director of the 1st Division of SISMI, the Italian military intelligence agency, and another officer from the same agency, are accused of having collaborated in the capture of Hassan Mustafa Ossama Nasr, an Egyptian imam also known as Abu Omar. Of the four Americans, three are CIA agents while one works at the US air base at Aviano in northern Italy. An Italian court had previously issued arrest warrants for 22 American agents in connection with the affair but this is the first time that Italian citizens have also been named. Although Abu Omar was suspected of links to Al-Qaeda, he alleges that he was tortured in Egypt following his capture in broad daylight in a Milan street. The judicial authorities believe that his capture violated Italian law, since he was not arrested but simply bundled into a van and taken out of the country; they also alleged that his kidnapping sabotaged an investigation into his activities which was bearing fruit. The affair has been in the newspapers for some time in Italy, and the previous Prime Minister, Silvio Berlusconi, has strenuously denied that his government knew anything about the capture or that it organised it. Berlusconi says that he summoned the American Ambassador at the time to protest against the capture and to tell him that Italian sovereignty had to be respected. [6 July 2006]

Bush and Merkel

As a result of his visit to Germany, President Bush has agreed with the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, that the United States and Germany will *"cooperate in the management of global crises"* and that together they will seek a solution to the escalating conflict in the Middle East. They also agreed to cooperate on the Iranian nuclear question. Addressing a selected audience of citizens in the Chancellor's constituency, Bush said of his German hosts, *"We have common values and common interests. We can achieve a great deal when America and Germany stand side by side."* [*Die Welt*, 14 July 2006]

Bush's visit took place under conditions of extremely high security, with manhole covers being sealed in the city of Stralsund and police going from house to house to check who the inhabitants were. All vehicles had to be removed from the city centre and no one was allowed to open their window. The port was closed. People were not allowed out into the street from 7 a.m. on the day of the visit, so that Bush could walk around the centre. The mayor of the town, a close ally of the Chancellor, compared the security measures to the 16th Century siege by Wallenstein's army. [*Die Welt*, 12 July 2006]

Commission wants to cut roaming costs

On 12 July, the European Commission published a proposal for a directive, the purpose of which is to reduce the costs of 'roaming' on mobile telephones. The proposal will limit the profit margin which telephone companies are allowed to make on roaming to 30 per cent. The Commission claims that some phone companies currently make a profit margin of 400 per cent on calls received or made abroad. Roaming made €8.5 billion for the phone companies in 2005, 5.7 per cent of the sector's turnover and 15 per cent of its profits. The Commission says that its directive would save consumers some €7 billion while the companies say they will lose €4.3 billion in turnover. When the Commission first looked at the question in February, Commissar Viviane Reding said that the objective was to remove the difference in tariffs between national and international calls (within the EU) saying that this was contrary to the principles of the Single Market. However, the phone companies successfully lobbied other Commissars, especially Günter Verheugen, Jacques Barrot and Peter Mandelson, who communicated to Reding their fear that a flourishing European industry would be damaged if it was subject to too much regulation. [*Le Monde*, 11 July 2006]

Finland will ratify Constitution

The Prime Minister of Finland, Matti Vanhanen, whose country has taken over the presidency of the European Union, has said that it wants to *"keep the process alive"* by which the European Constitution will be ratified. On the one hand, Finland's will be something of a caretaker presidency until Germany takes over in January 2007; on the other hand, the country intends to become the 16th EU Member State to ratify the EU Constitution in October, and it also wants to continue the consultations initiated by Austria with a view to reaching agreement on a new treaty in 2008. Helsinki does not think that the present Constitution has any chance of being adopted but it also thinks a new Treaty will not be radically different from the present Constitution. The Finns therefore expect that enlargement will be the focal point of their presidency. They want to persuade Turkey to respect what they say are its obligations towards Cyprus, in particular that Turkey ratify the protocol extending the customs union to Cyprus, which would be almost equivalent to formal recognition. Mr Vanhanen has said, *"It is possible to suspend the negotiations,"* which is a clear threat to the Turkish government that this is what will happen if the protocol is not ratified. The EU is also trying to keep the door open to states in the Western Balkans, i.e. the former Yugoslavia, while both Romania and Bulgaria are to join the EU in 2007. [Philippe Ricard, *Le Monde*, 4 July 2006]

Cresson let off for favouritism

The European Court of Justice has found the former Commissar and former French Prime Minister, Edith Cresson, guilty of favouritism while she was a member of the European Commission but has decided that she should nonetheless continue to draw her pension. The revelation that Cresson had given a job in her *cabinet* to her 'close friend' was what led to the wholesale resignation of the Santer Commission in 1999. She came to symbolise the arrogance and corruption of Brussels. But the ECJ has also ruled that Madame Cresson does not need to suffer any penalty for having abused public money. *"The judgement itself constitutes an appropriate sanction,"* it ruled, saying that there was no reason to remove her pension or to impose any other financial penalty. Cresson's 'friend', a dentist, was 66 at the time when he was appointed a 'scientific visitor' in her *cabinet* and therefore above the age limit. There were already plenty of 'advisers' anyway. Moreover, although his job description involved scientific research, he in fact only ever advised Madame Cresson. There was therefore clear abuse of office. Edith Cresson, who was a member of the European Commission from January 1995 to September 1999 becomes the first senior official to be convicted in this way by the ECJ. Its failure to sanction her will doubtless only consolidate the culture of corruption in Brussels. [*Le Monde*, 11 July 2006]

The Relentless March

*Since the end of the Second World War, the European Union and its predecessors, have, to the detriment of the national sovereignty of its Member States, been mapping out the road to a federalist, politically integrated organisation. Here is a look back at some of the major events that occurred during the month of **August** over the past 60 years.*

1947 The European Union Federalists Congress is held in Montreux, Switzerland.

1949 The statute of the Council of Europe enters into force.

1950 The Council of Europe Assembly approves the Schuman Plan, which was the basis for the ECSC.

1952 The ECSC High Authority takes office.

1953 The ECSC and the International Labour Organisation sign a cooperation agreement.

1954 The six EC members meet in Brussels. French statesman Pierre Mendès does not succeed in his request to prevent intensification of the supranational character of the European Defence Community (EDC).

The French National Assembly rejects the EDC Treaty.

1961 Denmark and the UK formally request membership negotiations with the Community.

1969 Upon request of the Council, the Commission brings up to date the opinion it rendered on the EC membership application of the United Kingdom, Denmark, Ireland and Norway.

1975 The final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe is signed in Helsinki by 35 States.

1981 The UK's presidency of the Council of the European Communities moves into its second month and Prime Minister Thatcher begins her long struggle with EU federalists.

1990 The EC considers the applications for membership made by Malta and Cyprus.

1992 The Council adopts a regulation on the extension of the economic aid programme (PHARE) to Slovenia.

1993 Following great turbulence in the currency markets, the bands for all currencies in the ERM, apart from the Deutschmark and the Guilder, are increased to 15 per cent. This followed the crisis the previous autumn where Sterling and Lira suspended their ERM membership.

The UK formally ratifies the Maastricht Treaty .

2004 José Manuel Barroso, President-designate of the Commission, presents the policy portfolios of the 24 nominee Commissioners.

European Commission opens a new Liaison Office in Pristina, Kosovo.

Advertisement for Roger Helmer, MEP

BOOK REVIEWS

The Future is a Foreign Country

By Matthew R. Illsley, June Press, 2005, 361 pp, £10

Reviewed by Robert Broadhurst

Matthew Illsley is an angry young man; the uncompromising tone of his book quickly conveys a feeling of politically inspired frustration, even rage. Indeed, his account of the destruction of the UK would incline any Briton who cherished their country to feel infuriated. *The Future is a Foreign Country* is a panoramic look at, as Illsley sees it, the decline and final demise of Britain as a self-governing nation, a situation largely brought about by the country's absorption into a burgeoning European superstate.

Some of Illsley's ideas are very contentious, but he always backs his assertions up with a deluge of references clearly rooted in a comprehensive research effort. The level of detail entered into is gratifying and illuminating, and even the most sage observer of European integration is likely to find facts and connections that are new to them. One practical problem is that the sheer number of endnotes (totalling 1,648 for the book), as well as the volume of text often included in them, meant the author felt compelled to publish them separately to the book itself, in the form of a PDF document available from his blogging website. The 215-page length of this document makes printing it out unappealing, however, so the reader has to have a computer on with the endnotes open if he wants to refer to them as he encounters them in the book. Compounding the problem is the fact that in many cases the numbering in the main text and the online document fail to correspond. Sadly, all this undermines the impact of Illsley's apparently very thorough research.

The vast majority of the book is arranged as a more or less chronological account of the process of European integration. Sometimes the narrative does skip around. For instance, in Chapter 4.8 the subject matter jumps from the second stage of Economic and Monetary Union, which tied up directly with the end of the previous chapter, to the issue of taxation competence, to the general significance of the European Court of Justice, to corruption in the EU institutions, and then onto the Treaty of Nice. Given the great detail Illsley can go into, when this structural incoherence occasionally arises it does not make for an accessible read.

Controversially, Illsley traces the origins of contemporary European integration back to the Nazis and their pan-Europeanism, which he does fairly convincingly. The Nazi aspirations for the Third Reich were couched in terms of uniting and defending European civilisation, at that time largely against the menace of the Bolsheviks. The economic aspect of this was even explored by the Nazis at the height of their power in a conference called 'The European Economic Community'. Illsley is adamant that Allied victory in World War II did not end Nazi influence. Through the Bormann Plan, formulated when German military defeat seemed inevitable, Nazi wealth was dispersed to German corporations that would survive the hostilities and form the basis of the resurgence of German power, this time through economics. Denazification in occupied Germany also petered out fairly early on, due to the scale of complicity in the activities of the totalitarian state, and the fact that the skills of many ex-Nazis were needed to fight the incipient Cold War.

A second factor kick-starting the construction of a European state was that it was basically US policy to see it happen. The anti-Americanism evident in some quarters of the European elite, analysed by the *European Journal* fairly recently, is rather ironic given the assistance the US has at times rendered to the cause of European integration. Driven by powerful supranationalists within the American executive, who were allied to big corporate interests that stood to gain from such designs, the Marshall Plan obliged European political 'co-operation'. This made it easy for European federalists to hijack the scheme through the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation, set up to administer Marshall aid in Europe. The head of its secretariat is quoted as saying, *"We discussed at great length how we could expand our objective and instead of the Marshall Plan being simply a matter of rescuing Europe, how it could be made into an instrument for the unification of Europe."* Illsley frequently takes the approach of letting the integrationists hang themselves with their own rope, or rather their own words – a large proportion of the text is contained within quotation marks. Sometimes this serves as a powerful indictment of key actors' motives and gives the work poignancy; however, the problem already described with the separation of the endnotes from the book means that in many cases the reader does not know who is actually being quoted. Knowing this, Illsley should perhaps have included names in the text itself, particularly when such eminent thinkers as J. S. Mill and E. H. Carr are being cited.

The Future is a Foreign Country goes on to chronicle the federalising path the EEC/EU has taken since its beginnings, and highlights the connivance of the British political and administrative elite in the process. The reader is given gut-wrenching detail of the deception the British public has been subjected to from officialdom, the most obvious example being the lies of the Heath government over British accession in 1973. A recurring theme, supported by some evidence, is Illsley's belief that European integration is part of a larger process driven by a global supranationalist elite drawn from both the public and private sectors (indeed, the author contends that the two are indistinguishable at the highest level). These people desire the universal end of the nation-state as we know it. They operate through the shady organisations of Bildeberg, which has included, amongst others, every British Prime Minister for the last 30 years, and the Trilateral Commission, a couple of members of which are Giscard d'Estaing (the man who should shoulder much of the blame for the draft EU Constitution) and former External Relations Commissioner Chris Patten. Using some disarmingly logical arguments, Illsley is ready to counter the inevitable scepticism of the reader about any James Bond-esque conspiracy aimed at world domination. If these organisations are so insignificant, why do their very powerful and busy members expend time and effort attending their meetings? And if their intentions are pure and members act in a way consonant with their public position, why are these organisations so secretive? Bildeberg, for instance, never records its meetings and members never divulge what goes on at them.

The chronology ends with a detailed look

at the run-up to the draft Constitution, including the Blair government's spin and deception about the nature of the document, and then takes a few critical articles from the draft and analyses their significance. Hence the book is up-to-date with the major stages of integration; and the description of how Blair and his Ministers were outmanoeuvred by the likes of France and Germany from stage one of the constitutional process (the British government even said it did not want a constitution initially) would be laughable if it were not so serious.

Until the final chapter, then, there is little that is particularly original, however, it is exceptional and commendable in the detailed assessment it gives the reader about how and why the EU has come to be as it is. In this sense it is simply a well-researched, opinionated version of events. Marking this work out as different is Illsley's proposed solution to the British loss of self-government. To understand why he comes to the conclusion he does, it is necessary to appreciate that he is working on radical, even revolutionary, premises: that the Conservative Party is an integral part of the elite that has conspired to give away British independence and will never truly repel European supranationalism; that the great majority of the British public has been rendered politically apathetic by the soporific effects of materialism and dependency on the state; that with the British electoral system and vested elite interests, no political party could win power and deliver national salvation through the existing political channels. Some of this may be true, but the answer Illsley comes up with seems a little far-fetched – secession of those loyal to his undoubtedly virtuous vision of limited government, personal liberty and direct democracy (a kind of cross between Burke and Aristotle) to form a new state.

The author admits, *"the description of secession given here is long on rhetoric and short on specifics,"* but Illsley is clearly serious about his suggestion. However, on reflection this idea may seem confined to a form of romantic utopianism. The actual possibility of a group of people achieving statehood in a world where every square foot of territory (excepting Antarctica under special agreement) is claimed and controlled by a state, and technology allows the authorities more effective territorial control than at any point in history, is remote. Illsley points to the trend of separatism over the last century to support his idea, but for the international community to recognise any claim of a people to statehood they would need to occupy a fairly distinct geographical area.

This book is excellent for a distinctive perspective on the European project, and for its meticulous detail about some critical parts of recent history. As a manifesto for change, however, it is perhaps a little fanciful, despite the author's excellent intentions.

Robert Broadhurst recently graduated from the University of Durham with a BA Honours degree in Politics with Law.

Guide to the European Union

Foreign & Commonwealth Office, 2006

Reviewed by Jocelyne Saunders

The overriding issue I take with the Foreign and Commonwealth's new *Guide to the European Union* is that, having being funded out of taxpayers' money, it takes an unashamedly pro-EU stance. The same can also be said of the FCO website, www.europe.gov.uk.

Whilst both claim to present 'information', they are in fact hopelessly biased and give only positive 'facts' about the EU. Both the website and the pamphlet are – I presume – intended to be educational devices. If this is the case, then the general public are being fed a one-sided, extremely skewed image of the European Union.

Having accepted the *Guide to the European Union* as little more than a piece of pro-EU propaganda, it actually makes rather an amusing read. Favourite chapters include, 'Can the EU Overrule Parliament and the British Government?' and 'If the EU works so well why is it sometimes unpopular?' I was startled also to see within these topics the subsections, 'What has the EU achieved?' and 'How much does the EU Cost?' My initial thought was *"Finally! Here the extreme waste and utter pointlessness of the EU will be exposed!"* Alas, this was not the case.

The information included in the 30 pages of the *Guide* ranges from being mildly amusing to strongly farcical and simply untrue. For example, the pamphlet claims that, *"EU institutions are designed to ensure that it respects the wishes and interests of its member populations."* In light of the developments that have occurred since the French and Dutch rejected the Constitution last summer, this statement is comical. Was it not Jean-Claude Juncker who recently claimed, *"I really believe that neither the French nor the Dutch rejected the constitutional treaty,"* and our own former Europe Minister, Douglas Alexander, who said in a speech that, *"what we saw in June was the rejection not of a text but of a context"*? The way in which numerous aspects of the Constitution are being implemented via the backdoor shows little respect for the wishes of the French and Dutch – indeed, the actions and words of various Eurocrats should be seen as a direct insult.

Other issues in which the FCO seems to glide over the truth is their discussion of the CAP and the cost of the EU to Britain. The pamphlet proudly writes that under the British presidency of the EU, European leaders agreed that a *"competitive review of all EU spending, including the CAP would take place in 2008-9."* The pamphlet conveniently fails to mention that this 'review' is in no way binding and France has already indicated it will veto any attempted changes to the CAP. The pamphlet also defends Tony Blair's actions over the budget negotiations last December by claiming, *"to meet our fair share of the costs, the UK agreed in 2005 to gradually make limited changes to the rebate. In future, the UK's payments will be very similar to those of France and Germany."* In truth, by giving up £6.8 billion of our rebate, Britain now pays £6 million more to the EU than it receives, meaning that we gain less EU funding per person than any other Member State. Furthermore, over the period 2007-2012, Britain will not pay the EU roughly the same as France, but actually around 20 per cent more.

Taking its cue from the 'Ted Heath School of Thought', the *Guide* cites on numerous occasions that continued membership in the Union gives Britain a more *"powerful voice in the world"* and *"we are stronger at trade negotiations if we negotiate as one economic bloc … the EU and its members can therefore play an important role in*

reducing global poverty and promoting a more stable, prosperous and democratic world." In light of the current fiasco over the Doha round negotiations it is ludicrous for the FCO to claim Britain has either a powerful voice in the world or that the EU is collectively moving to alleviate global poverty. In the first instance, it is well known that Peter Mandelson is a puppet in the hands of France and Germany. In the second instance, it is the EU's intransigence over its high tariffs, domestic support and export subsidies which is preventing the Doha round from moving forward and reaching a final agreement.

The FCO website has a forum for debate, where members of the public are able to have their say as well as read the views of politicians and policy makers. It is amusing to read the contrasting opinions of the people – as shown on the website – and the government – as embodied by the pamphlet. Indeed, Tony Blair himself might do well to read the views of the general public to understand just how unpopular the EU really is. Whilst quotes from politicians and policy makers give the usual spiel of how the EU needs reform but is essentially a good thing, the general public make their opposition clear. Criticism of the EU outweighs praise by about ten comments to one. The CAP is described, for example, as *"a nonsense system that tries to deny the very existence of globalisation."* A number of postings call for Britain's outright withdrawal, with one confidently stating, *"I have no doubt that Britain will repeal the ECA of 1972. The sooner the better."*

Whilst the *Guide to the European Union* may be one of the worst pieces of sycophantic EU rhetoric I have read in my entire life, it is highly gratifying to read the general public's insightful and perceptive comments on the website and see how these challenge such propagandist jargon. As one contributor on the website put it, *"I think we should withdraw from the EU and forge closer links with the commonwealth, whilst remaining a member of the EFTA. The EU has done nothing for us except make it easier to holiday in Spain and erode our sovereignty."* Bravo.

Jocelyne Saunders is Head of Research at the European Foundation.

Advertisement for
The Future is a Foreign Country

FACTS

by Joseph Cookson

1 Romanian division over Iraq withdrawl

Calin Tariceanu, Romania's Prime Minister, has called for the withdrawal of Romanian troops from Iraq, thus provoking a serious rupture in his country's governing coalition. A withdrawal, while unimportant militarily as the force numbers only 890, highlights the Prime Minister's division with President Traian Basescu. Basescu, who as head of the 10 member Defence Supreme Council must approve any proposals along with a vote in Parliament, criticised the announcement, branding it *"unacceptable."*

[*The Scotsman* 30 June 2006]

2 Turkey gets itself in a flap

"It is not the right moment for Turkey to join the European Union," Cardinal Walter Kasper, head of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, said after another Catholic priest was attacked in Turkey over the weekend. On Sunday, 2 July, 74-year-old French priest Pierre Brunissen was stabbed, suspectedly by a mentally unbalanced man in the Black Sea port of Samsun. The priest has since left hospital and Turkish police have detained a 47-year-old suspect. Pierre Brunissen is the third Catholic priest to be attacked or harassed in Turkey since February. This latest attack has prompted strong reactions from the Catholic Church. [*EU Observer* 6 July 2006]

3 Central energy policy has IPPR backing

As the British government was announcing its tougher than expected UK carbon emissions cap, a new report has argued that the EU should impose minimum national limits across Member States. The Environment Secretary recently told MPs that British industry would be restricted to eight million tonnes of carbon emissions per year, prompting likely electricity price rises of 0.5 per cent. But David Miliband also said that would be a price worth paying to meet the challenge of global warming: "*The case for tackling climate change and the human contribution to it is overwhelming.*" An Institute for Public Policy Research report issued on the same day as Miliband's comments said that time limits should not be set by national governments on whatever basis they choose.

[*Epolitix* 29 June 2006]

4 Commission change their tuna

The European Commission, on behalf of the European Union, and Madagascar, have concluded a new 6-year fisheries partnership agreement (FPA) that will replace the current agreement, due to expire on 31 December 2006. The new agreement exclusively covers tuna and marks a new era in fisheries relations between the two parties. The arrangement puts an approach focused on the promotion of sustainable fisheries at twhe center of the deal. An EU financial contribution of €990,000 per year includes €275,000 paid directly to Madagascar to support their National Fisheries policy. Smells a bit fishy! [*Europa* 26 June 2006]

5 Small countries, small problems?

Michael Frendo, the Foreign Minister of Malta, has been lamenting the lack of EU commitment to tackling the island's current illegal immigration problems. On 2 July, he insisted that, *"the European Union is dealing with Malta with the mentality of 'small countries, small problems' and this is unacceptable."* Southern European countries such as Spain and Italy have also been plagued by such immigration. Malta, according to Frendo, has been *"getting no assistance and has been left in the lurch. The recent landings in Malta in the last ten days are equivalent, with regard to population density, to over 50,000 illegal immigrants landing in Spain in the same period."*

[*EU Observer* 4 July 2006]

6 Chicken welfare a top priority

Finland has indicated its commitment to conclude negotiations on a directive on minimum requirements for chicken protection during their EU presidency, which ends in December. The meat chicken sector is a major area of intensive livestock production so far not covered by the species-specific programme of European Union farm animal welfare standards. An amendment called for the Commission to *"control and where necessary prohibit imports of chickens from third countries which … do not observe similar rules on the welfare of chickens."* MEPs have also called for an end to the practices of beak trimming and castration of male chickens.

[*Defra* 3 July 2006]

7 Out of India

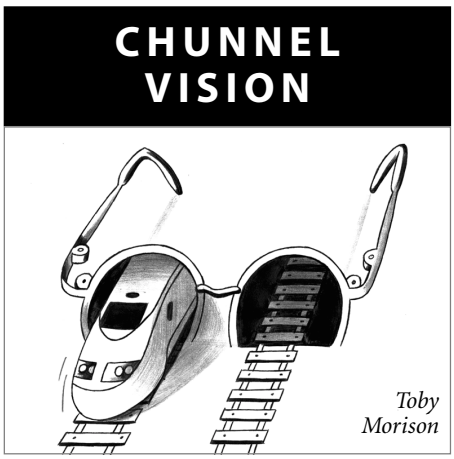
Bombay Mix, the tasty Indian snack, should be renamed Mumbai Mix according to EU officials, to reflect the re-naming of the Indian City in 1995. The bureaucrats support the change because Mumbai is *"in the news so much."* Critics, meanwhile, are lining up to say that the European Union is, per usual, pointlessly trying to effect change in less than worthwhile areas. Will the great question now be asked, whether Bombay Duck should properly be called 'duck' or 'dark'? *Metro* 18 July 2006]

8 Mandelson kicks democracy into touch

European Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson has insisted that a new EU Constitution should not be put to the people. Germany plans to start the process to revive or redraft an EU Constitutional Treaty in due course, following last year's referendum rejections in France and the Netherlands. Mandelson is clear that any new text should not be held hostage to democratic votes – referendums in the UK, Denmark and Ireland were called off amid concerns negative results would plunge the EU into deeper crisis. *"Anything that crosses the threshold of requiring a referendum will immediately run into difficulties,"* he told *E!Sharp* magazine. *"We have to come to terms with the fact that getting any constitutional treaty past a referendum in our Member States will be an uphill struggle."*

[*European Parliament* 3 July 2006]

Joseph Cookson is a research assistant at the European Foundation and will begin studying politics at university in the autumn.



25 Useful Facts About the EPP

by Dr Lee Rotherham

For gluttons for punishment who still want to know more about the Conservative Party's current associates in the Brussels hemisphere, here are a number of factoids that may or may not be entirely accurate, gleaned from muffled conversations overheard on the bus to Zeebrugge.

1 The Group's name is an anagram of *Postpone a repealer, yup*. This is believed to be a subliminal message directed against William Hague.

2 In a celebrated quantrain, Nostradamus predicted that the break-up of the EPP would presage a hundred years of war, an outbreak of general unpleasantness, and the decline of the cheese industry.

3 The Group was set up in the aftermath of the Second World War, as a response to a general dearth of industrial-strength baguettes.

4 Founding members included Crown Prince Wilhelm Bilderberg, Captain von Trapp, Ernst Blofeld, Charles Bronson, and Evil Knieval.

5 Every Europe Day, it has a big dinner and an awards ceremony for people who have best advanced the cause of Radical Centrism. Past laureates include Al Gore, Pontius Pilate, and Leon Trotsky.

6 The European People's Party has a special section for members who don't like parties, and are neither European nor actually people at all. They have a special staff member dedicated to nurturing such liaison, who spends a lot of his time visiting the North Pole, and various caves in Norway.

7 The last post holder got eaten.

8 Official meetings of the secretariat are held on the second Tuesday of the month in a giant teepee set up outside O'Farrell's, for ease of access to the bar and sundry nibbles.

9 The sole function of the leader of the EPP is to exchange e-mails with Roger Helmer. He has a staff of eight just to keep up.

10 Whenever the leader of the Conservative MEPs visits, Mr Kirkhope is forced to stand over an ACME booby hatch. Such is the reign of terror.

11 The EPP holds a 29 per cent share of all of Liechtenstein's pastureland. Once they reach 51 per cent, they intend a corporate takeover of the country in order to gain a seat at the UN in their own right.

12 Rumours persist of a giant smuggling ring in which EPP members travelling to Strasbourg hide stashes of Congolese gorilla burgers in their official metal boxes, and on the return leg, jam them full of jars of counterfeit irradiated Ukrainian choucroute.

13 In Palace etiquette, the EPP delegate is preceded by the Archbishop of York, but takes precedence over the Mayor of Dunstable, even when accompanied by his wife.

14 The EPP theme tune is *Knockin' on Heaven's Door*, which Bob Dylan wrote in memory of his time as Jean-Luc Dehaene's chauffeur during a power cut.

15 The mascot of the Party is Bert, a Woyto-Guji goat. He was found in a deserted kraal in southern Sidamo by an EPP vice-president when his jet ski broke down. It is kept in a filing cabinet on the thirteenth floor.

16 Some Conservative MEPs are reported to want to stay with the EPP. Rumours suggest that this is because there is a large sherbert fountain in a secret room off the EPP library, in which bathers are granted eternal youth and wisdom, for as long as they there shall wallow.

17 In 1971, the EPP expelled a Swiss observer for noisily eating a raw carrot in a key meeting. Switzerland has refused to join the European Communities ever since.

18 Standing instructions forbid a number of items from ever being brought into EPP offices. These include: cacti; the *Daily Mail*; life-size cardboard cut-outs of David Prouse; crossbows; rhubarb; and orange jelly babies.

19 British staff in the EPP are thoroughly indoctrinated before being allowed anywhere near committees. For the first week, they are forced to stand in the corner in a fire bucket impersonating a teapot, short and stout. Then comes the live fire assault course.

20 EPP staff next spend two years manning a trireme as it rows across the Aegean, protecting Greek territorial waters from sundry incursions.

21 The President of the EPP signed up to the Shadow Proclamation in late 2003. He thought he was approving the Laeken Declaration, until he stepped out of the police box onto the planet Zarbaton, and was confronted by the Elog of Wurbi and the Imperial Cloud Guards of the Star City of Xen Zu 9.

22 The EPP secretariat amuse themselves on weekends by chartering a boat and going out on the North Sea to fish with dynamite.

23 Leading MEP, Elmar Brok, owns a town in Westphalia, which he uses as a life-size Monopoly board. He is often to be seen roaming the streets in a gigantic motorised boot.

24 The Secretary-General of the EPP is the design model for all contemporary Action Man toys. The radio pack that plays little coloured records has him issuing such pre-recorded orders as, *"Get the jeep and bring the Quaestor pronto,"* *"Let's not be too hasty with that bazooka,"* and, *"Now is the time for Croatian accession talks to begin."*

25 The 1973 Bruce Lee classic, *Enter the Dragon*, was shot on an EPP away day using group staff as extras during a tea break.

Dr Lee Rotherham is the editor of www.adieu-epp.com

The European Foundation

Mission Statement: The aims and objectives listed below are summed up in The Foundation's overall policy of 'yes to European trade, no to European government'. We believe that greater democracy can only be achieved among the various peoples of Europe by the fundamental renegotiation of the treaties of Maastricht, Amsterdam and Nice. The Foundation does not advocate withdrawal from the European Union, rather its thoroughgoing reform.

Objectives

- To further prosperity and democracy in Europe;
- To renegotiate the treaties of Maastricht, Amsterdam and Nice and prevent the ratification of the European Constitution;
- To reform and scale down the *acquis communautaire;*
- To ensure that future member states get a fair deal from EC/EU membership;
- To halt the continuing arrogation of power by the EC/EU;
- To prevent the UK from adopting the euro;
- To contribute as actively as possible to an informed public debate about the future of Europe;
- To liaise with like-minded organisations all over the world;
- To liaise with organisations affected by EC/EU action and policy.

Activities

- Addresses itself to the general public and to politicians, journalists, academics, students, economists, lawyers, businessmen, trade associations and the City;
- Organises meetings and conferences in the UK and in mainland Europe;
- Publishes newsletters, periodicals and other material and participates in radio and television broadcasts;
- Produces policy papers, pamphlets and briefs;
- Monitors EU developments and the evolution of public opinion and its impact on the political process in the EU.

The Foundation's History: The Great College Street Group was formed in October 1992 in order to oppose the Maastricht Treaty. The Group, consisting of politicians, academics, businessmen, lawyers, and economists, provided comprehensive briefs in the campaign to win the arguments both in Parliament and in the country. The European Foundation was created by Bill Cash after the Maastricht debates. It exists to conduct a vigorous campaign in the UK and across Europe to reform the EC/EU into a community of free-trading, sovereign states. The Foundation continues to establish links with like-minded organisations across Europe and the world.

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