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What is the point of the European Union?

*A brief summary of our relationship with 'Brussels',
including the case to leave, and the case to stay.*

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“Sovereignty”; the “British Constitution”; our “democracy”; “self-government”.
What threads run through these priceless things, and hold them together? I submit that there are least two fundamental principles common to all of them. The first is the hard won right of the British people to elect and dismiss those who make their laws. The second is that the British people have given Parliament, the Queen in Parliament, the power to make all their laws for them, but they have not given Parliament permission to give that power away.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I submit that both these principles, for which, over the centuries, millions have willingly given up their lives, already stand deeply betrayed by our membership of the European Union. I propose to justify this depressing statement under three headings.

First, what is the present position under the Treaties of Rome; how much of our democracy have we already handed over to the corrupt octopus in Brussels and how were we deceived into doing it? Second, how much is this costing us in cash and is it worth it? And third, what does the proposed EU Constitution have in store for us?

It is essential to remember that the peoples' pact is with Parliament; it is not with the executive or Government of the day. The people elect and dismiss Members of Parliament once every 4 or 5 years, and our Government is of course formed out of a majority of elected MPs. But only 60% of the electorate now bother to vote in General Elections, and modern Governments are supported by only some 40% of those who do vote, or 24% of the electorate. The percentage of those who vote is declining; trust in our system of Parliamentary Democracy is eroding steadily.

I submit therefore that these temporary Governments, always empowered by a minority of the people, do not have the right to break the great pacts upon which our Sovereignty rests. Yet that is just what they have been doing over the last 32 years.

So, first, how bad is the present situation? Few people realise what huge areas of our national life have already been handed over to control from Brussels. Put simply, these include all of our commerce and industry, our social and labour policy, our environment, including our agriculture and fish, and our foreign aid.

What do we mean by “control from Brussels”? Well, in all those areas of our national life which used to be entirely controlled by Parliament, our Government can be outvoted in the Council of Ministers from the Member States, where it has 11½ % of the votes. You need 30% to block a new law. That is the system known as Qualified Majority Voting, or QMV. If our Government agrees or is outvoted on any new law in all those areas, then Parliament, being the House of Commons and the Lords, must put it into British law. If they don't, the country faces unlimited fines in the Luxembourg 'court'. So Parliament has already become a rubber stamp in all those areas.

Our foreign trade relations are in an even worse category. The EU bureaucracy, the Commission, itself negotiates these on our behalf, and so in this area the EU already has its own legal personality (to which I shall return).

In addition, laws affecting our ‘justice and home affairs’, and our ‘foreign and security policy’, must also be rubber-stamped by Parliament if they have been agreed by our Government and all the other Member States’ Governments in Brussels. In other words, our Government can still veto new laws in Brussels in these areas of our national life, but if they don’t, we have to enact them. If Parliament were to reject an EU law thus agreed in Brussels in these areas, we would not be subject to unlimited fines in the Luxembourg Court, but we would be in breach of our Treaty obligations, which is of course a far more horrifying prospect to our political classes in their diplomatic cocktail parties and so on; a fine, after all, is paid by the people. There is no appeal against the Luxembourg ‘Court’.

The Cabinet Office estimates that over half of all our major laws, and 80% of all laws, now originate in Brussels. No law passed in Brussels has ever been successfully overturned by Parliament.

There are at least four other features of this Brussels system which are worth emphasising, all of them innately undemocratic.

First, the unelected and corrupt bureaucracy, the Commission, has the monopoly to propose all new laws. They simply can’t believe it in Washington when you tell them that.

Second, the Commission’s legal proposals are then negotiated in secret by the shadowy Committee of Permanent Representatives, or bureaucrats from the nation states, known as COREPER. Decisions are then taken in the Council of Ministers, again by secret vote. By ‘secret’ I mean that even national Parliaments are specifically precluded from knowing how their bureaucrats or ministers negotiate and vote, and few details of the continuous horse-trading leak out to the general public.

The Euro-crats pretend that democracy is maintained because decisions are taken by national Ministers, who were elected as national MPs. But the point remains that Parliament itself is excluded from the process, except as a rubber stamp when the decisions have been taken. Examples of how we have suffered under this system are too numerous to mention, but there is for instance the ‘Young People at Work’ Directive, which took away our paper rounds, and the Working Time Directive, which is now haunting our National Health Service. On both of these we were outvoted, as indeed we can be on every proposal to do with the Single Market, which covers all of our commerce and industry.

The Government could have vetoed the infamous EU Arrest Warrant because it was proposed under “Justice and Home Affairs”. This allows British subjects to be extradited, purely on the say-so of a foreign EU magistrate, to stand trial in that magistrate’s country, without the benefit of habeas corpus or a jury, perhaps for crimes which are not even crimes in the UK - such as ‘xenophobia’, for which we don’t even have a legal definition (but I expect I’m committing it now!) The decision to proceed with that particularly pernicious piece of EU legislation went through on the nod in the

Council of Ministers. The Home Secretary, David Blunket, did not utter a single word, because the whole project had already been stitched up in COREPER. So much for even the shallowest pretence at real democracy.

Please don't be fooled by the propaganda which says that Parliament can scrutinise and debate EU legislation. Indeed we do, until the cows come home, but we cannot change a comma of any of it unless that change is unanimously agreed by all the Member States in the Council of Ministers, which is entirely unrealistic and indeed no such changes have ever even been suggested by Parliament. We also debate and vote on each new EU Treaty, but again we cannot change a word. We either accept the whole thing, or we reject it all. So Parliament has always accepted every Treaty precisely as agreed in Brussels, even if some of us have forced votes against them in protest.

A third feature of this awful system, enshrined in the Treaties, is that once an area of national life has been ceded to control from Brussels, it can never be returned to national Parliaments. This is known in Euro-speak as the 'Acquis Communautaire' - or 'powers acquired by the Community'. In plain English this translates as the 'ratchet', which can only grind in one direction toward the "ever closer union of the peoples of Europe".

The fourth feature, as I have indicated, is that no changes can be made to the Treaties unless they are agreed unanimously in the Council of Ministers. So renegotiation of the Treaties is not realistic; the only way out is the door.

You have to watch the modern Conservative Party pretty closely on this one. Michael Howard tells us he will 're-negotiate' the return of our fish, but he won't commit to take back control of our seas if the others don't agree. There is no way the Spanish or the Dutch could agree to the return of our fish; our waters contained 75% of 'Europe's' fish before we joined the Common Fisheries Policy. So right now the Conservatives' promise to 're-negotiate' looks pretty meaningless.

Those are the huge areas of our Sovereignty we have already given away. That's why giving away most of what is left, under the proposed new Constitution, is described by the Government as a 'tidying-up' exercise. They have a point. The Constitution would merely sweep most of what is left under the Brussels carpet.

I suppose its time for a couple of jokes about our EU membership, the only two I know. The first is that we shouldn't go on saying that we are 'giving' our Sovereignty away; we are actually paying Brussels tens of billions of pounds a year to take it, as I shall explain. The second is that if the EU applied to join itself, it wouldn't have a hope of being accepted, on democratic grounds alone.

It is perhaps worth saying a word about how we got into this mess.

The European 'Project' was the brain-child of a British civil servant, Arthur Salter, at the end of the First War. He was assisted by a young Frenchman, Jean Monnet.

The Project re-emerged after the Second War and its fundamental idea was (and, believe it or not, still is), that nation states were responsible for the carnage of two World Wars. They must therefore be emasculated, and diluted into a supra-national state, run by

a Commission of wise and honest technocrats. The ‘Project’ therefore confuses dangerous nationalism with honourable patriotism.

Most of us are very wary of conspiracy theories, but the EU Project is indeed a massive deception of the people by the political elite of Europe. Anyone who doubts this should read a brilliant new book by Christopher Booker and Richard North, entitled *The Great Deception*, and published by Continuum Books, which reveals the detailed history of how the people have been misled. The authors have unearthed lots of internal Foreign Office memos under the 30-year rule. There is one beauty from a senior civil servant at the time to a colleague, along the lines of: “Of course this is the end of British democracy as we have known it, but if its properly handled the people won’t know what’s happened until the end of the century. With any luck, old boy, I’ll be dead by then.”

I have time today to expose only one proof of this terrible deception, by quoting a filleted extract of Sections 2 and 3 of the European Communities Act 1972, which is the Act which took us into what was then the European Common Market. It goes as follows:

“All such rights, powers, liabilities obligations and restrictions from time to time created or arising by or under the Treaties ... are without further enactment to be given legal effect ... and be enforced, allowed and followed accordingly.

Subject to Schedule 2 to this Act, at any time after its passing Her Majesty may by Order in Council, and any designated Minister or department may by regulations, make provision ... for the purpose of implementing any Community obligation of the United Kingdom”.

Section 3 reads as follows:

“For the purposes of all legal proceedings, any question as to the meaning or effect of any of the Treaties, or as to the validity, meaning or effect of any Community instrument, shall be treated as a question of law (and, if not referred to the European Court, be for determination as such in accordance with the principles laid down by and any relevant decision of the European Court)”.

I could also read out Articles 226-229 of the Treaty Establishing the European Communities, which gives the Luxembourg ‘Court’ the right to impose unlimited fines if we don’t obey everything agreed in Brussels, but I will spare you the agony. Anyway, those are the rules.

I apologise for the density of the legal language, but trust you will agree that this set up the system which I have outlined. Yet Edward Heath had the nerve to promise that “no loss of essential sovereignty” was involved in the passing of the ‘72 Act. Harold Wilson told the same lie during the 1975 Referendum campaign. Both Prime Ministers pretended we had merely joined a Common Market. I fear Margaret Thatcher was deceived as to the way the Single European Act of 1986 would be used, which created the system of Qualified Majority Voting. She bitterly regrets it today, as I expect you know. And of course John Major lied to us about the Maastricht Treaty of 1992, and Blair has lied to us over the Amsterdam Treaty of 1997 and the Nice Treaty of the year before last. It has always been essential to keep the true nature of the Project from the British people. They have to be slowly sucked into the embrace of the corrupt octopus, until it is too late to escape. That is the very essence of the Project, and I hope you will agree its working pretty well.

So we really mustn't fall for one of the best tricks up the Eurocrat's sleeve when we come to debate the proposed new Constitution. This re-hashes all the present Treaties in one document and then adds a new set of horrors of its own. The trick is to proclaim that some feature of the Constitution is "nothing new", as though that makes it acceptable to the British people. It doesn't. If a large chunk of our Sovereignty has been stolen when we weren't looking (and it has been), that should not stop us from demanding it back, now that we have discovered what has been going on.

I said I would touch on some of the huge costs we incur through our subservience to Brussels. The Government steadfastly refuses to carry out any sort of cost-benefit analysis, although my friends and I in the Lords have made several attempts to force them to do so (see our debates 27th June 03 and 11th February 04). Presumably the Government doesn't want the following sort of figures to see the light of day.

If we start by looking at annual expenditure, you very easily reach an annual waste of some £35 billion pounds a year. A billion pounds, one thousand million pounds, is a rather confusing figure, and most people don't stop to think what it means. Well, one thousand million pounds builds, equips and staffs a decent district hospital to run indefinitely. You build and equip it for £80 - 100 million, and then you have a fund of £900 million to run it. So perhaps we should measure our Euro-waste in district hospitals, rather than billions, but I'll go back to billions for now.

If we are to believe the Trade Justice Movement, supported by CAFOD and Oxfam, the EU's Common Agricultural Policy costs each family of 4 in the UK about £20 a week, or a fiver a head. Half of this is incurred through higher food costs (against what we would pay for the same food on the open world market) and half through the higher taxes we pay to keep EU farmers in the style to which they have become accustomed. The higher food costs work out at approximately 5p on a pint of milk, 40p on a 60p bag of sugar, and 3p on a loaf of bread. So these costs hit the poorest in our society hardest, and total about £15.6 billion every year. The EU's charming policy of dumping its unwanted excess produce on the developing world also starves millions to death, mostly children, because local farmers can't compete.

The Institute of Directors has put a minimum figure of £9.6 billion per annum on the cost of EU over-regulation. But there's a new study out from the Dutch Finance Minister which finds that EU over-regulation costs the Dutch economy some 2% of their Gross Domestic Product annually. Our GDP is around £1,000 billion, and so 2% of that would come to £20 billion annually. And it's fair to assume that EU over-regulation doesn't cost the UK economy any less than it costs the Dutch, given Whitehall's well-known practice of 'gold-plating' EU proposals. But let's be generous, and say that EU over-regulation costs the UK something between the IoD's estimate and that of the Dutch Finance Minister - so let's go for £15 billion a year.

Then there's the straight hard cash we hand over to Brussels every year. Over the last 10 years we have given Brussels an average of £11 billion per annum to help them finance the whole vast swindle. Of this, they have been good enough to send back to us an average of some £7 billion annually, always for projects here which are designed to enhance their wretched image (including the CAP). So that leaves £4 billion straight cash outflow per annum.

There are lots of other areas one could throw into this calculation, such as at least a £billion p.a. for the destruction of our fishing industry, and another billion for our modern art market, and so on. But just sticking to the figures I have mentioned, we have a comfortable 35 district hospitals chucked away every year.

Let's examine that figure, £35 billion per annum, a little further, shall we? It comes to £96 million a day, £4 million per hour, £66,000 per minute, or well over £1000 a second. It's 8 times our railways budget, which Heaven knows could do with a bit of a boost. It's 2½ times our whole transport budget. Its two-thirds of our education budget, and its 10 district hospitals per annum more than our entire defence budget, which weighs in at a mere £25 billion per annum.

So that's a conservative estimate of how much our EU membership is costing us in cash each year: £35 billion. What about some of the longer-term projects which we pay for, courtesy of the Martians in Brussels?

Well, the last time the Government dared to answer my Written Questions, about 3 years ago, we had already spent £48 billion on the pointless water directives - there was nothing wrong with our water before. Then there's £18 billion so far on the useless Euro-fighter; £8 billion on the foot and mouth saga (which was directed entirely from Brussels); another £8 billion for removing the harmless kind of asbestos from our buildings; £6 billion for "Reach" the new chemical analysis Directive, and yet another £6 billion for the Waste Electrical and Equipment Directive, which is starting to cause dumping all over the countryside. I could go on, but that's another 94 district hospitals so far.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I trust you now get the joke about "giving our Sovereignty to Brussels".

For good measure, we should perhaps remember at this point that the EU is corrupt and corrupting from top to bottom. Its own internal auditors have refused to sign its accounts for the last 9 years. No less than 5 whistleblowers have been side-lined and silenced in the last 5 years. Part of the problem is that there is no European demos, so there can be no European democracy to hold the fraudsters and free-loaders to account. The MEPs are supposed to sort the Commission out in this area, but their own travel and office expenses are famously bogus. The MEPs are also far too frightened of bringing the EU into further disrepute with the people to do their duty to the taxpayer. They would risk bringing the whole gravy train to a halt, or they might be pushed off it, and most of them are unemployable elsewhere, certainly at anything like their present salaries and 'conditions'.

Its also worth saying that continental Europe will continue in steady and irreversible demographic and therefore economic decline over the next 50 years. The UK and Ireland will improve their demographics, as of course will Turkey. The USA also looks healthy, Japan looks terrible, China and the Far East are set to boom. Add to this the unemployment and decay caused by the Franco-German social and labour policies, and you have to ask: 'Why stay on the Titanic?'

Ladies and Gentlemen, surely there must be good things we get out of our EU membership? Well, I will try to set out the case for staying in the EU, as put forward by the

Government and other Europhiles in our most recent Lords debates, to which I have already referred (June 27th 2003 and February 11th 2004). Presumably it's the best case they can make.

If you read those debates, you will see that there isn't really a case for the EU. It just isn't possible to identify any genuine benefits we have had from our EU membership, which we couldn't have had under simple free trade arrangements and collaboration between Governments. But I will do my best. The propaganda runs as follows:

1. First "*we strengthen our sovereignty by sharing it. Look at NATO and the United Nations. We gave up sovereignty to join them*" Answer: Sovereignty is like virginity. You either have it or you don't. NATO doesn't dictate most of our unwanted laws and regulations, and we could leave it tomorrow if we felt like it.
2. "*Our membership of the EU makes us the gateway for inward investment into Europe*". This is obvious nonsense. Foreigners invest here because of our reliable workforce, low tax and regulatory regime (until the EU destroys that), and because we speak English. In fact, the Government's own 'Invest in Britain' agency does not put our membership of the EU amongst the top 10 reasons why foreigners say they invest in Britain.
3. Then there's the claim that our bond market, the City of London, and so on, would all collapse if we left the EU. That's what they told us would happen if we didn't join the euro, of course (which now is off the agenda, thank goodness). The greatest threat to the City and our bond market actually came from the EU, with its withholding tax proposals, which even Gordon Brown had to veto.
4. We're told that the EU Project and especially the proposed enlargement is "re-uniting Europe". But when you ask them when Europe was last "united" in the way they wish to see it "re-united", you get a rather lost look.
5. Then we are threatened with the dishonest threat that if we left the EU we would still have to obey all their rules, but not be able to participate in making those rules. The truth is that those who sell to the EU (who make up only about 9% of our economy - I shall come back to that) would of course have to meet Brussels' requirements, just as it pays to put the steering wheel on the left if you are selling a car to the US market. But the other 91% of our economy would no longer have to obey the dictates from Brussels. Exports to the EU from the USA and Switzerland, who are not members, are going up faster than those from any of the member states.
6. We are told that if we Euro-sceptics would only shut up, the UK could get into the heart of Europe and the affections of its politicians and lead the whole enterprise into the paths of righteousness; that the French and the Germans would somehow abandon their ruinous social and labour policies, instead of forcing them on the rest of us through the Single Market. But how can we persuade them of our national interest, with only 11½ % of the votes? Why have we been unable to change even the notorious Common Agricultural and Fisheries Policies in the 32 years of our membership? I'm amazed they even bother to continue with this rubbish, but they do.

7. There's a new one now. They ask how the EU can be so awful if all the 10 new applicant nations have voted to join it. The answers here are that, first, turnout in all the referenda was very low. Second, the people weren't told the truth about the EU. For instance, most of them weren't told about the proposed new Constitution at all. Third, the spending by the 'Yes' sides was massively more than the 'No' sides. In Estonia, for instance, the 'Yes' campaign spent 60 times what the 'No' campaign could raise. But most important of all, the key to understanding the 'yes' votes is that nearly all the bureaucrats and politicians who negotiated the entry of their countries into the EU will now get jobs in Brussels or paid on the EU scale. The Polish ambassador has told me that 1,400 Poles will now get EU jobs, at a minimum of 10 times their present salaries. That is the key to EU enlargement.
8. Which brings me to the two big lies from the Eurocrat camp. The first is: "*60% of our trade and 3 million jobs depend on our membership of the EU*". This is obviously designed to fool the British people into fearing that they cannot afford to leave the EU. But once again, it is nonsense, as closer examination shows. By the word "*trade*", they actually mean "*exports of manufactured goods*" and even there the figure is now below 50%. But since Brussels' dictates apply to and strangle 100% of our economy, the only way to understand the effect of our EU membership is to look at the whole of our GDP and all our jobs. Then we see the true picture, which is that only about 9% of our GDP and jobs support our trade with the EU, about 11% goes in trade with the rest of the world, and of course the remaining 80% stays right here in our domestic market. Our healthy 91% dog is being wagged by its 9% mangy tail.

Not that the 9% of our GDP and jobs which support our trade with the EU are unimportant. No-one is saying that. But the obvious fact is that we would not lose that 9% of GDP or jobs if we left the EU and continued our trade with the Single Market. And there really isn't any doubt that that is what we would do. The EU trades in massive surplus with the UK. They sell us far more than we sell them. This means they have many more jobs dependent on their trade with us than we do on our trade with them. We are by far their largest client. So if we left the EU, they would come running after us to make sure we signed a free trade agreement with them. After all, Switzerland and even Mexico enjoy free trade agreements with the EU. So if we left the EU we could maintain all our present trading arrangements, plus no doubt "free movement of persons" and so on, which again Switzerland already enjoys. We could dictate our terms.

Even free trade with the EU is no longer such a big deal as it used to be. The World Trade Organization has brought the EU's average external tariff - paid by the US and every other country in the world to export into the EU - down to about 1.5%. Indeed, every major economic study this century agrees that leaving the EU would be at worst neutral for our trade and jobs. The leftish and fairly Europhile National Institute of Social and Economic Research said that in March 2000. The neutral International Trade Commission in Washington, perhaps the world's largest and most prestigious economic think-tank, said it in a report to Congress in August 2000. Our Institute of Economic Affairs said it in 1996 and again two years ago. Even Neil Kinnock and the EU Trade Commissioner, Fritz Bolkestein were forced to admit it on the *Today* programme in February 2000. In fact, no-one except the Europhile propagandists pretend

that leaving the EU would bring economic disadvantage to the people of Great Britain. Our trade would continue, and so would our jobs.

9. Which leaves me with the other major piece of Europhile propaganda: that the EU has secured peace in Europe since 1945, and is essential to maintain it in future. This is the big lie. This is the deep one, really, which plays at the almost unconscious level. It is a warm misty conviction that the EU must be inevitably good. It does not tolerate any rational examination of history or the facts. It's the one which makes those of us who query the divinity of the EU Project into dangerous nationalists, xenophobes, Little Englanders, or worse. You start to be guilty of all this as soon as you dare to point out that NATO was entirely responsible for keeping the peace in Europe until the Wall came down in 1989, or if you ask which European country would have gone to war with another in the absence of the EU. So even this essential plank of Euro-propaganda is simply not true.

Indeed, if you stand back, scratch your head a bit, and take a calm look at the EU, you see it is a well-trying model for discord, not peace. It contains perhaps the two most important ingredients for conflict.

First, it is a top-down amalgamation of different peoples, put together without their informed consent, and such arrangements usually end in conflict. You only have to look at Northern Ireland, Yugoslavia, the Trans-Caucasus, Gibraltar, the Falkland Islands, Kashmir and most of Africa to see that.

Second, as I have pointed out, it is profoundly and incurably undemocratic. It is also hopelessly corrupt, which is another ingredient for trouble. I repeat, the Project aims to expunge dangerous national democracies, and replace them with a supra-national government, run by a Commission of wise and honest technocrats. But history shows us that on the whole democracies do not provoke war, and indeed it's hard to think of a genuine democracy which has declared war on another. So Euro-sceptics believe that a free trade association between the democracies of Europe, linked through NATO, is much less likely to end in tears than is the emerging undemocratic megastate.

Whilst on the subject of peace, I should perhaps mention that a very dangerous new *raison d'être* is coming to the surface in Brussels. A large majority of Eurocrats and Europhiles now see the EU's main purpose in life as being to stand up to and undermine the United States of America. In fact, this was always part of the Project, and is of course inspired by France's deep psychotic need to bite the hand that freed her in two World Wars. We saw this ambition most clearly in the Franco-German behaviour over Iraq, and I fear there will be more to come.

You may notice that I have said nothing about the euro, the Single Currency, which is an essential part of the Project. As I have said, it is off our national agenda for the time being. I have time only to deal with its worst aspects. First, it is not an economic project at all. It is a purely political project designed as the cement to hold the emerging EU megastate together. It also has serious design faults. The eurozone has no common language, its mobility of labour is low, and its single interest rate cannot suit 12 different and diverging economies for long. Above all, no currency can endure unless taxes are paid from rich to poor regions within its area (e.g. South to North in the UK; West to East in

Germany; North to South in Italy; the federal budget in the USA). There is no federal budget to speak of in the EU, and of course the plan has always been to set one up in response to the stress which will therefore occur in the euro-zone. No prizes for guessing who will be in charge, or what this would do to our tax rates.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I end by touching briefly on the proposed new Constitution. The worst feature of this Constitution is that the EU will acquire its own legal personality, superior to that of the Member States. There is no longer even the bogus pretence that the EU is an arrangement between sovereign nations. The EU, the Brussels system, becomes Sovereign. The EU flag, which at the moment is flown as mere advertising, becomes real. The EU anthem becomes the anthem of the new mega-state. (Alas, poor Beethoven!)

The Prime Minister claims that he will defend some 'red lines' at the eventual Inter-Governmental Conference which will decide the Constitution's final shape. These include foreign policy, social security and tax. But large chunks of these areas have in fact already been ceded to the Treaties. For instance, Mr. Blair's red line on tax is clearly a red herring. If you look at the tax provisions of the Treaties (Clause 93 of the Treaty Establishing the European Communities) you do indeed see that we have retained the veto for indirect taxation. The Treaties are silent on direct taxation as such, but if you look at the Single Market provisions (Clauses 43 and 44) you will see that all direct tax is exposed to the 'anti-discrimination' and 'right of establishment' provisions. In other words, the Commission could claim that our direct tax system gives us an unfair advantage over the other member states. If the Court agreed (which of course it would), we would have to fall into line. It is a little known fact that the Court has already moved into corporation tax, and has issued some 90 judgements, usually against nation states keeping control of multi-national companies' dividend policy, etc.

M. Giscard D'Estaing, who you will remember drafted the proposed Constitution, has done us all one great favour. The wording of the document is really very easy to understand; it is not written in the usual impenetrable verbiage of the Treaties. Anyone who takes the trouble to read it can understand it. Even so, there is one attempt at Euro-deception. The draft introduces the concept of "Exclusive Competences" and "Shared Competences". "Competence" itself is an old Euro-deceptive word. It does not mean being able to do something well. It means "power", and it usually means power transferred to the EU, where of course it is always exercised incompetently, and corruptly. So in the draft the Exclusive Competences are clear enough; the EU alone can act in those areas of our national life which are transferred to the EU's Exclusive Competence, upon which I have touched. The deception lies in the "Shared Competences", where you could be forgiven for thinking that power might be shared with the Member States. Not a bit of it. Member States can only act in areas covered by 'Shared Competence' when Brussels can't be bothered, and with Brussels' permission. These 'Shared Competences' are pretty wide. They include the internal market, which covers all of our commerce and industry; the 'area of freedom, security and justice' - so our legal system and judicial procedures will gradually pass to Brussels' control; our agriculture and fisheries (of course); all European transport and 'trans-european networks'; our energy (bang goes our oil and gas); social policy; 'economic, social and territorial cohesion' - which will mean almost anything when the Luxembourg 'Court', that engine of the Treaties, gets going;

our environment; consumer protection; and ‘common safety concerns in public health matters’. Not much left, you might think.

And sitting astride and above all this is not only the superior legal power of the new Union. There is also the fact that the EU’s Charter of Fundamental Rights will be all-embracing and justiciable in our old friend - yes, you’ve guessed it - the Luxembourg ‘Court’.

All this is still in draft and we shall have to wait for the final wording to emerge from the secret negotiations on 18th June (the anniversary of Waterloo, chosen to celebrate the peace brought to Europe by the EU, of course!).

To conclude, Ladies and Gentlemen, the European Union is a bad idea. It’s a bad idea like slavery, communism and high rise flats. I need hardly remind an audience such as this of the damage which ideas can do when they become generally accepted, but turn out to be wrong. Perhaps I can remind you of the letter written by the young White Russian officer in 1918 to his fiancée from the front against the Bolsheviks:

“Oh, my darling! Please do not worry. In a few weeks I shall be home with you in Moscow, and we shall be married. These people are not very well armed, and their ideas are even worse.” A few days later he was killed, so he was wrong about their arms. But he turned out to be right about the ideas which inspired Soviet Communism. Its just that it took 70 years and 50 million lives to prove his point. Let’s hope the EU doesn’t end up as quite such a dangerous idea as that. With any luck it will start to decay from within, if we have the energy to understand it, expose it, and fight it.

Ladies and Gentlemen, there is nothing right-wing, negative or frightening in leaving the EU and keeping our hard-won right to govern ourselves. As the fourth largest economy in the world, and as its second military power, leaving the EU would be a liberating, refreshing, positive, modern thing to do. And we would be very much richer as well!

Thank you.

Malcolm Pearson
(February) June, 2004

NB for detailed bullet-point analyses of the above, supported by official figures and impeccable sources, see the Briefing Notes and other material on www.globalbritain.org