

Imperfect union

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EUROPE HAS the reek of death. Our nomenklatura seeks to destroy the pillars on which Europe was built, its nations. They have set about creating a supranational, centralized, bureaucratic state - a homogenized union, which would convert a community of nations into a multicultural space in which national identities would be fused and sovereignty abandoned. According to Article 123 of the Treaty of Maastricht, they even desire to promote the uprooting of peoples with the consequent migrations, so as to shuffle European populations like a pack of cards. Too often we forget the fundamental difference between nations with deep historical and social roots and states that have been created, almost from scratch, through immigration. What is valid for the latter is not necessarily for the former.

To accomplish this plan, power progressively has been transferred to 17 unelected technocrats who have been appointed members of the European Commission. To them has been granted the monopoly right to propose new initiatives for the development of the European Union. Their ambition is not modest. For example, Jacques Delors, the outgoing president of the Commission, declared that in future 80 per cent of all laws governing each European nation would originate in Brussels and therefore from proposals put forward by the Commission. As was bound to be the case, this rush for technocratic hyper-centralization has created a Europe which is hopelessly weak externally, unable to influence the course of events. Internally the power of the technocracy is employed to destroy sovereignty, freedom and self-reliance.

In theory the appointment of the Commission and its president must now be approved by the European Parliament. I am a member of that Parliament and president of one of its parliamentary groups. So I was present when Helmut Kohl visited Brussels on 15 July to inform a meeting of group presidents of his choice of candidate to replace Jacques Delors as Europe's leading civil servant.

I have nothing against the new candidate, Jacques Santer, who, I understand, has been a successful prime minister of Luxembourg, a nation of about 400,000 citizens. But if members of the European Parliament are to exercise their vote in a responsible manner and not just jump to attention when instructed to do so, then they should insist on finding out what candidates really stand for. That can only be ascertained in a full and public confirmation hearing. If they do not insist on such a hearing, members of the European Parliament would confirm to the world that they are a sham, no more than a disguise to mislead Europeans.

It must be understood that the European Union has been built in secret. Not through carelessness nor casualness, but in a carefully planned and skillfully executed manner. Claude Cheysson, minister of foreign affairs of France from 1981 to 1984 and member of the European Commission from 1985 to 1988, described the mechanism in a recent interview in the French newspaper *Le Figaro*. He explained with pride that the European Union could only have been constructed in the absence of democracy and he went on to suggest that present problems were the result of having mistakenly allowed a public discussion on the merits of the Treaty of Maastricht.

This belief that the nomenklatura knows best and that the public is no more than a hindrance, explains why there now exists a profound and dangerous divorce between European societies and their governing elites.

I am wholeheartedly committed to the creation of Europe. The Europe in which I believe would be built on the strengths, cultures and heritage of its constituent nations. The fundamental principle which would guide its institutions would be that everything that can be done at family level would be entrusted to the family; everything that can be done at the

local or regional or national level would be decentralized accordingly. Only those things which cannot be decentralized would be regrouped within European institutions. These, principally, are defense, diplomacy, protection of the environment and maintaining the necessary conditions for an effective economic market within Europe.

Of course that was the stated purpose of the principle of 'subsidiarity.' But 'subsidiarity' has been used by the Eurocrats to mask their lust for centralization. The word is now hopelessly discredited. What a farce it has been to witness the Commission claiming that they are acting according to the spirit of subsidiarity whilst at the same time predicting that 80 per cent of all national laws would originate in Brussels.

The institutions of Europe should be designed to accomplish only those tasks that are necessary and to do so under firm democratic control. Secrecy and artifice must be eliminated.

The principal executive institution should be the European Council, which consists of the elected national heads of state or their representatives. So as to ensure executive continuity, a vice president of the council would be elected and would be responsible to the members of the council.

The European Commission, for its part, would return to the normal role of a team of functionaries. It would be stripped of executive and legislative power and would behave in the disciplined and efficient manner which we expect from the civil service.

Defense and diplomacy would be entrusted to a form of European Security Council not too dissimilar to the UN Security Council. The large European nations, which would provide the bulk of its military capacity, would be the principal members of the Security Council. All European nations would be free to opt out of military initiatives decided on by the European Security Council. The council would be able to draw on the armed forces of those nations which agree to participate. Now that the Cold War is over, Europe must grow up. It is absurd that 250 million Americans should be asked to defend 350 million Europeans against an unknown enemy. Europe and the US should cooperate as independent allies.

Environmental concerns need to be addressed centrally because environmental problems do not respect national frontiers. Norms should be established at the European level and applied throughout Europe. European diplomacy should seek to obtain international acceptance of these norms. Also it must be remembered that major disasters such as Chernobyl and major potential environmental disasters must be tackled by prompt and effective international action.

Finally, the principal economic duties of the European institutions are to create the conditions for a free and competitive internal market which serves Europeans and a stable common currency, sometimes known as the hard Ecu, (emphatically not a single currency) which, in due course, would become one of the world's reserve currencies. Europe will need one other major institution. All organizations, as they degenerate, become centralized and bureaucratic. The founding fathers, in Philadelphia, originally conceived the United States as a true federation of free peoples. James Buchanan, the American Nobel prize winner, once said that he considered that America has now evolved into a state not much different from other centralized states. He went on to suggest that James Madison could never have believed that his concept of federalism would degenerate into a centralized leviathan. The supreme duty of this new institution would be to prohibit the accumulation of power by the center. Decentralization must be a fundamental principle on which Europe is built. Only in this way can Europe, in the fullness of time, peacefully accommodate the Eastern European nations.

Everywhere around us we witness the failure of artificial states which sought to force a diversity of nations into an unnatural union. Sometimes the disentanglement has been civilized such as in Czechoslovakia, sometimes brutal as in Yugoslavia and Rwanda. Sometimes the first steps toward devolution have been activated by altering the

constitution as in Belgium or Canada. But on every continent we see violence and the potential for civil war as true nations seek liberation from artificial states.

The Treaty of Maastricht is an attempt to create the largest artificial state in history. If it is implemented, Maastricht will unleash centrifugal forces which will lead to great tragedy.