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A Referendum is not exactly what it seems. IAIN McGREGOR asks a few questions.

What Price a Consensus?

The Daily Telegraph's satirist Peter Simple got it right: How do you get a Yes answer on the single currency, he asks (22.3.96). Noting this will have to be addressed to "an informed democracy used to continually watching television", he offers:

"If the Single Currency meant you would have more money in your pocket (or, of course, your bank, building society, investment portfolio, etc.), would you be in favour of it?"

The strength of a referendum on the Swiss model is that it can deal with major issues in small measures, item by item, that have been well-chewed by a largely intelligent society, canton by canton. That kind of people's choice, however, is not open to citizens of the European Union. Their decisions have already been made for them, all they are required to do is give assent. The real trouble arises when the decision-makers are hidden. Ostensibly, they can be identified as heads of state, unelected bureaucrats or sundry councils but they are driven by what are loosely termed "market forces". Such forces have multinational names in global finance who swing first one way then another to rock whatever boat they think is getting out of line.

Britain is in continual squall and the reckoning is coming up. With the much-trumpeted inward investment figures, you would think it unlikely that multi-nationals would foul their own nests so complacently. Yet, if examined closely, it makes a kind of sense to have Britain forever dithering, unstable and finally in abdication of its government to a poll of straw.

A nation unsure of itself will cling to any rescuer in a storm, even its own vest torn from its body. Such a lifeline is a referendum. Whatever it tells the populace, a referendum tells market forces that this nation is ready for boarding. Workers will come cheap, government funding will be eagerly thrown at firms giving flimsy promises to enter and stay in a downtrodden community where nobody else would even roam. A referendum is a scenario for collapse of government.

In the present case, Westminster has already passed most of its authority to European Union interests and any call to the nation is simply to rubber-stamp the betrayal and make it communal. The question therefore cannot be about a single currency, or about any one thing - it is about national life in its entirety. The

Bible records the choice behind every such countrywide questionnaire: choose this day whom you will serve. If God be God, choose him.

This is no pious aphorism. The truth of life is one and indivisible - we categorise at our peril. We choose right or wrong as absolutes.

Thus the single currency referendum is fallacious in itself and the whole mechanism is flawed. The Swiss model is not actually a referendum, it is the culmination of a debate. Each result expresses the philosophy of life behind it. This is not the lot of the European Union citizen. We live in a sophisticated version of fascism where the seeping poison of the 40s is replaced by sugar-coated pills for the new millennium.

Opposition to a referendum therefore should not be based on the subject matter but upon its inadequacy as a tool of government.

In the first place, there has to be a common knowledge of - and perception of - the dilemma being faced. An ignorant vote is an act of sabotage yet to deprive anyone of it through their ignorance would be unacceptable in this day of tabloid intelligence for all. The same would go for a prejudiced vote. Yet we are surrounded by such.

Indeed, none of us can claim to be wised-up and unbiased. What is certain today is that we are so blitzed with disinformation that we would not believe anything coming out of Parliament or any one essaying to get into it.

Into the midst of this gloom has come a flash of light - a party dedicated to "letting the people decide". However, on closer inspection, does it add up to its aspirations? Recruiting early from persons voting 'No' in a Thatcher-inspired referendum on Europe by tabloid 'phone-in some years ago, it has trimmed its sails to the prevailing wind and asks these negative voters to place their allegiance to a referendum before their allegiance to a 'No' position on Europe. This is to give the Europhiles a chance to say 'No' to 'No'. So it's sitting on the fence till the wind blows one way or the other.

Such a strange conception of politics has led some alternative politicians to suspect or even declare such a party emanates from the 'conspiracy', i.e. the power politics of the Bilderberger elite. It is not our remit to cast aspersions of double agent on what may be the most sincere of motives held by the most unlikely of

(continued on back page)

Could any harm come from a firm possibility of a definite maybe? Conjecture, by its very nature, must lead to confusion. And therein lay somebody's cool calculations.

On March 20, for reasons still unclear, Health Secretary Stephen Dorrell MP chose to publicise the ill-founded speculation of the government monitoring unit, the Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee (SEAC). With absolutely no scientific proof, nor even a written paper to provide a degree of authority, Mr. Dorrell informed the world that "the most likely explanation at present", according to his "experts", was that recent CJD cases were linked to the cattle disease known as BSE. The consequences were inevitable. The British beef industry went into a tail-spin. The EU Commission gleefully slapped a "world-wide" ban on all beef and beef-related products from the UK. The latter included such well-known harbingers of death as lipstick and jelly-babies. It was an instructive moment. Few of us were aware that the EU had the power to prevent the UK trading with the rest of the world. The true power of the EU was exposed for all to see.

BSE was first officially diagnosed in November 1986. A theory was devised which suggested that BSE had originated from cattle feedstuffs, partly derived from rendered animal protein. It was surmised that matter from sheep brains, infected with a disease called Scrapie, had survived a new rendering process. In July 1988, the British Government banned the use of rendered animal protein in feed stuffs. This was termed "the offal ban".

The BSE agent has only ever been found in the central nervous system in cattle; that is, in the brain and spinal cord. No trace of BSE has ever been found in muscle nor even the nerves which run through the muscle. In November 1989, after concern that parts of infected brain or spinal cord might be entering pies, sausages and burgers, the Government banned the use of these parts for human consumption. The gut, tonsils, thymus and spleen were also included in the English ban. Three months later the measures were introduced in Scotland.

Several points lead us to contradict the official line that CJD is derived from "exposure to BSE" which is, in turn, derived from Scrapie:

Is BSE Derived from Scrapie?

- *There is no proof that the sheep brain disease, called Scrapie, is contractable by cattle. Diseases do not, as a rule, jump species barriers.
- *Feeding herbivores products which are partly derived from rendered carcasses has been a practice for many decades before BSE appeared. However, the current theory argues that the infectious agent from the Scrapie disease has only recently been able to survive the rendering process due to manufacturing at reduced temperature. It is incorrect to suggest, as some have, that this is part of a "greedy" profit-at-any-price policy by the feed-stuff firms. In the 1970s, rendering businesses switched from an old-fashioned technique that used a noxious solvent and high temperatures to the American Carver-Greenfield process, which operated at lower temperatures and which was meant to make meat and bonemeal more nutritious and

Alistair D. McConnachie looks at an i

Mad Cows and

appetising (*Economist* 30.3.96).

- *Even if one is tempted to believe that the infectious agent survived this process, the quantity of infected matter in the feed-stuffs would be equivalent to a grain of sand on a beach.
- *Organic dairy farmer Mark Purdey also noted in an article in *The Independent* (22.3.96) that "this same UK ingredient was exported in millions of tonnes (of cattle feed) to cattle in BSE-free countries all over the world. It was also manufactured in a similar way in the US without any BSE erupting there. Furthermore, 24,000-plus UK cattle born after the offal ban in 1988 have still gone down with the disease".

Is CJD Linked to BSE/Scrapie?

- *People have been directly eating Scrapie-infected sheep since the 18th century and have not contracted a brain-debilitating condition from their lamb chops. Indeed, in Iceland, farmers tended to eat Scrapie-infected sheep, but up to ten years ago, the last period on which we have information, there have only ever been two cases of CJD (*Scotsman*, 28.3.96).
- *Countries such as New Zealand, where Scrapie is unknown, still record cases of CJD (*Independent*, 22.3.96).
- *The incidence of CJD in the UK is the same as its incidence in other parts of Europe where there has been no corresponding BSE scare. In fact, the cases of CJD have been falling in the UK. In 1994 there were 52 cases. In 1995 there were 44. The 10 cases of CJD - later revised to 12 - which gave rise to the current speculation, were all contracted before the November 1989 food restrictions.
- *Recent research is also indicating that many more people than previously suspected died of CJD before BSE struck in 1986 (*Sunday Telegraph*, 31.3.96). This throws doubts on the idea that CJD is linked to BSE in any way.

Further Points to Consider:

- *The BSE agent has only ever been found in the brain and spinal cord. No trace has been recorded in meat nor in meat-nerves (*Economist*, 30.3.96).
- *Since November 1989, the brain and spinal cord of all cattle - whether dairy or beef - has not been allowed to enter the food chain. Known BSE cases are, of course, incinerated entirely.
- *The overwhelming majority of BSE cases have been in dairy cattle. The *Daily Telegraph* (1.4.96) reported that out of 159,134 cases of BSE 134,710 were in Friesian/Holstein cattle. Even healthy dairy cattle are never sold for meat chops in butchers or supermarkets. They are ground down into pies, sausages and burgers exclusively.

logical scare and asks "who benefits?"

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*If CJD was contractable from meat chops then it would be localised around butchers who sell from infected herds. This is not the case.

*Roasting and tinning destroy all infectious agents completely.

*The UK has the highest abattoir standards in the world. We have no control over the rearing, slaughtering, processing, packaging and transporting conditions in the rest of the world. It is almost certainly of a lower standard than that which exists in this country. Yet some regional councils have been serving Argentinean beef to schoolchildren on the pretext that it is safer than British beef (*Herald*, 4.4.96). A butcher known to us in the south of England was recently offered the chance of beef from Namibia.

If BSE does not Originate from Scrapie then what Triggers it?

On April 6 1996, Mark Purdey, the organic dairy farmer, addressed a meeting organised by the McCarrison Society at the Royal Museum of Scotland. He made it clear that he blamed an organo-phosphorus pesticide used to treat warble fly as the main cause of BSE. Organo-phosphates are used in nerve gas. The chemical, which he named Phosmet, was poured along the backs of cattle and was designed to penetrate the central nervous system. The use of this chemical became widespread in 1985. Previous to its use, dairy farmers were required to withdraw their milk from sale for a period of days after treating for warble fly. Phosmet allowed milk to be sold 6 hours after treatment. It is no surprise that it became especially popular among dairy farmers. Northern Ireland started the use of Phosmet three years after the rest of the UK and the Northern Ireland BSE scare started exactly three years after the scare on the mainland. Mr Purdey informed the audience that cattle are still being treated with this chemical, particularly at the point of importation. He said that all farmers he had contacted could trace their herd's BSE problems to the use of this chemical. A full exposition of Mr Purdey's views are to be found in two papers which he has written and which, we are told, are due to appear in the May 1996 issue of a journal called *Medical Hypotheses*, published by Churchill Livingstone. Unfortunately, one issue costs £44! It will be, nevertheless, available by writing a cheque payable to "Pearsons Professional" and sending it to: Subscription Dept., P.O. Box 77, Harlow, Essex, CM19 5BQ.

Faced with the reality of an illogical scare we need to ask two questions:

Who are the Culprits and who Benefits?

The SEAC

The scare originally emanated from the SEAC. This is a 13-member committee. We know that five new members were appointed in December 1995 (*Guardian*, 22.3.96). We also know that their Edinburgh CJD research unit was facing funding cuts and redundancies (*Sunday Telegraph*, 31.3.96). So why did the SEAC start the scare? *Private Eye* (5.4.96) came to the obvious conclusion; "Not least of their 'scientific' considerations must have been that the unit researching CJD in Edinburgh was facing massive funding cuts and was planning major staff redundancies. Scaling down the BSE threat could do nothing but hasten the process.

The Government

The timing of the announcement was certainly opportune. The Government knew that the start of the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) was only nine days away. The Government knew that the EU would use the crisis to its own advantage. Despite this, the Government, keen to give the impression that it was only listening to its "experts" appeared to set a trap for itself and then walk into it.

The Consumers' Association

This organisation obtained a high television and radio profile in the days immediately following the statement. It lost no chance to play-up what it termed "an unquantifiable risk". The recorded message on its "helpline" (0645 245490) continually emphasises the word "risk". The Director, Sheila McKechnie, tells us that scientific advisors to the government "admitted for the first time" that the most likely cause of CJD was exposure to BSE. The CA has no scientific evidence available to assess "just how great the risk is" but if we want "to avoid the risk" then there is "no choice" but to stop eating beef and beef related products. However, if we feel that "the risk from eating beef is acceptable" then it "would advise reducing the risk" in several ways. Later in the tape it is specifically emphasised that "it is still a risk".

The Consumers' Association has come a long way from scientifically testing goods and services, alone. Objectivity has given way to subjectivity here.

Multi-national Corporations

McDonald's and Burger King undoubtedly triggered further panic with hasty and offensive bans on British beef. McDonald's makes an annual operating profit of £91 million from the British people (*Guardian*, 2.4.96).

The European Union

The EU believes the UK is standing out alone against moves to weaken the national veto, extend majority voting, and give greater power to the European Parliament. The EU ban is a straightforward attempt to put the screws on.

The question remains, however: who is the British Government's 'enemy within', toward that end? Could it be that treachery and continental venality will mean the UK's place in the Union is finally untenable. Will a mad cow save us?

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What Price a Consensus? *(continued from front page)*

candidates, but we are intrigued by the methods being used. By dividing the 'anti' vote they are 'spoiler' tactics, when viewed in relation to the Euro-exit party, UKIP.

Yet there is a precedent.

When the Social Credit movement took off in Alberta, Canada, it set out a manifesto that it wished political parties to embrace. The considerable clout then available to the Social Credit movement would have put any accepting party in power. All parties declined to run on the Social Credit platform but the United Farmers were most sympathetic and indicated they would do their best with it. This caused the Social Credit movement to realise that if no existing party would see sense, they would have to form their own party to place before the electorate what they deemed the best and only viable policy. In the event, the United Farmers reneged on their honeyed tones and at the last minute, a bunch of ingenues, with no experience of politics among them, had to put their faith to the test. They had to stand on their principles. As a result, they were swept to power and stayed there for thirty-six years, albeit progressively corrupted, as the Christian element gave way to hard-nosed politics.

So the current referendum party is seeking certain assurances, too, in the UK. If these are not forthcoming, then seats will be contested. This threat will quite simply not emulate the Alberta experience. The Social Credit movement began and continued as a philosophy of life and the outworking of that philosophy. All the original Social Crediters were acting from Christian commitment. They had a sense of calling over and above civic concern. This is not evident in the protest movement here considered.

It is generally assumed that the Government will fulfil their promise of a referendum on the single currency, after Cabinet and Parliament have come to a decision, one way or the other. The referendum party, seeking a plebiscite on the original Maastricht Treaty, has intimated a single currency vote will not be enough. Yet this is all that can be realistically conceded by the Tories. To do otherwise would be to deny the Maastricht Treaty and its opt-outs.

Yet, a present Tory Government promising a referendum on anything, whatever the procedure, still means nothing. Any Tory promise is about to vanish into thin air as Labour takes over. Nothing of a protracted Intergovernmental Conference will be decided until Labour wins the next British election. Then, the party leader who said he would never break ranks with Europe will be available to be stitched up nicely.

The Bilderberg elite have already decided that and the BSE beef scare was designed to expedite the process, bringing the Tory Government into maximum disrepute with its own people and worldwide. Only a Labour Government will be fully recompensed for falling into line with its European partners, the outgoing Tories will be by-passed as the European Union gives regional aid to areas of Britain over the discredited Government's head. Then the people of Britain are expected to thank God we're in Europe.

"It's Providential you were there" the God-fearing Britons are to say to the secular European Union.

So, the great referendum question will be eased aside in grateful solidarity with our European partners whose benevolence will have been held to exceed what the British forces did to save Belgium, Holland and France from Nazi oppression, and conquest.

In any case a referendum at national level can only reflect a view of a majority of people on the day. They, or their circumstances, may change or be made to change overnight. A shot in the dark, a sprinkling of nuclear dust, an ill-composed speech, all have historically changed perceptions in a moment. Peoples can be swept by crazes and fears, placing millions of lives into a melting pot. And in the midst of this, we dare to hold a cool, calculating referendum with an unknown consequence!

Were a referendum to be seen as the citizenry seizing the initiative, demanding to make their own assessments and decisions about life, a quiet incipient revolution, in effect, then we might have some praise for the measure. But it is presented as a non-plussed government casting around for political support in the face of political defeat.

This abnegation of responsibility places decision-making about a complex issue in the laps of the mass, rather than the wise. It is no more scientific than the toss of a coin. It is in the spirit of what we highlighted last issue as the Culture of Chance.

RECOMMENDED READING

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|---------------------------|---|
| Douglas, C. H. | The Brief for the Prosecution.
The Development of World Dominion.
Economic Democracy.
Monopoly of Credit.
The Policy of a Philosophy.
Social Credit. |
| Eringer, R. | Global Manipulators. |
| Maré, Eric de | Matter of Life or Debt. |
| Monahan, Bryan W. | The Moving Storm.
The Survival of Britain.
Why I am a Social Creditor. |
| Robertson, Thomas | Human Ecology. |
| Social Credit Secretariat | Elements of Social Credit. |

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