

DEMOCRATIC ROOTS IN MAGNA CARTA

David Bourne writes: In the *Rye Observer* of 28 November 2003 **Catherine Straker** drew the attention of readers to the proposed EU Constitution and that under this Constitution "No one may be deprived of his or her possessions except in the public interest", and that "The use of property may be regulated by law so far as is necessary for the general interest".

Miss Straker quite rightly asked the question, "Who will be deciding what is best in the general interest?" She went on to mention Magna Carta.

Most people have only the haziest idea of the Magna Carta and are wont to consider it ancient and old fashioned having been signed by King John in 1215, and confirmed by Edward I after very heated exchanges, in Winchelsea, between him and his Barons, which almost led to civil war. Edward finally signed the Confirmation under the walls of Ghent in November 1297.

Let us compare the function of Magna Carta to that of the EU Constitution in the matter of personal property.

Article 39 of the Magna Carta, in Lord Halsbury's *Statutes of England* modernised text, states that: "*No freeman shall be taken or imprisoned, or be disseised of his freehold, or liberties, or free customs, or be outlawed, or exiled, or in any other wise destroyed; nor shall we pass upon him, nor condemn him, but by the lawful judgement of his peers, or by the law of the land.*"

This succinct sentence covers the basic freedoms that we all enjoy, but most of all it gives substance to the saying that, "An Englishman's home is his castle".

In wartime the Government may requisition property but at the end of the war that property has to be returned to its rightful owner, the freeholder.

In the proposed EU Constitution there are no safeguards. If the State decides that all property belongs to the State then that is how it will be without any promise that the property will ever be returned. In this situation there is no such thing as a freeholder.

That is what happened in Russia under the Communist Revolution; and remember this constitution was drafted by the *Praesidium* of the EU and that the only dictionary definition of a *Praesidium* is that it's a standing or executive committee of the Soviet or Communist system; and that **Mikhail Gorbachev** said on the BBC2 *Jimmy Young Show*, on 10 June 2002, that communism has not collapsed.

Would your readers prefer to be governed under the EU Constitution, with its intimations of Communism, or under the ancient Magna Carta?

I obtained a copy of the draft Treaty on the EU Constitution from Mr M. Caesar at the UK Office of the European Parliament, 2 Queen Anne's Gate, London, SW1H 9AA. Readers will remember that 2000 years ago a Mr. Caesar came and invaded our country. Julius, of that ilk, had few of the indigenous population on his side in his invasion.

Today's Mr Caesar has our Government, the Queen's Loyal Opposition the Conservatives and the Lib-Dem Party on his side.

However, we ordinary people have **Article 61** of the Magna Carta to fall back upon which allows us to use **whatever means at hand** to bring our country and its Government back into lawful government under our own laws and customs as the Queen promised we should be governed at her Coronation:

"If we ... or any of our servants offend in any respect against any man, or transgress any of the articles of the peace or of this security ... If we ... make no redress ... the [barons] may distrain upon and assail us in every way possible, with the support of the whole community of the land ... until they have secured such redress as they have determined upon."

Sovereignty would add, however, that Article 61 doesn't permit us to do anything "illegal", and that the travails of EU membership can best be put behind us by **political action**.

Ultimately, all that is necessary is that a new Parliament will simply pass an **Act of Parliament** which will repeal the previous EU-related Acts, and it will specify the time frame – which can be "immediate" if necessary.

As concerned citizens, our aim must be to shift the political debate in that direction – which we do by supporting people and organisations and parties who are working in that direction, and by voting appropriately for that end.

CONSTITUTION CENTRES POWER IN SHADOWY ELITE

On the subject of the EU constitution, **Ashley Mote** had the following in *The Times* of 12 December:

Only readers who take it at face value will have trouble making sense of the proposed EU constitution. Its fundamental flaws are all too obvious. It shares none of the great elegance, simplicity, clarity and wisdom of Magna Carta, the Declaration of Rights or even the American Constitution.

Instead, the present draft is grandiose, imprecise and long. It is proscriptive rather than enabling. It includes law, instead of creating a framework for law-making. It offers no effective checks and balances to control the law-makers. Instead, it consolidates power in a shadowy, self-perpetuating political elite.

And, since many Europeans believe the State exists in its own right and the people answer to it, the proposed constitution attempts to include everything, and thereby implicitly forbids everything else.

Here in Britain, the opposite is true. We, the people, are sovereign and our governments answer to us. Here, everything is permitted, until we elect a parliament that decides otherwise. And if we dislike a law, we elect others to overturn it.

The EU's proposed constitution attempts to change all that.

There are a thousand hacking at the branches of evil to one who is striking at the root.

Henry David Thoreau 1817-1862

www.thoreau.niu.edu

In our July 2003 editorial we dealt with the claim that there were "too many" eurosceptical Campaign Groups and that they all needed to "unite".

Recently, we heard a variation on this: "What is the point of Campaign Groups? You need to translate this into electoral politics."

It wasn't directed at us, since we do engage in electoral politics – we saved our deposit at the May 2003 Scottish elections.

But in dismissing the value of Campaign Groups, it struck us that the person did not understand **basic political strategy**.

For example, if there is an important issue which you want to address then – in deciding whether to represent the issue as a Campaign Group, or as a Political Party, you need to ask two questions: **"What is the best vehicle to achieve the goal?"** And **"Are there any other political parties or candidates already representing this issue within their wider policy agenda."**

Ultimately, laws can only be changed by elected politicians. If you want to change the law, you need to get people elected who will do that. You can do that by standing yourself or ensuring that one of the parties on the ballot – or as many parties as possible – have your issue as part of their policy agendas.

However, that doesn't mean that campaigning activity outside of electoral politics is somehow ineffective.

Campaign Groups and Political Parties are two different vehicles, and sometimes a Campaign Group working outside of electoral politics, can be effective in a way that a Political Party cannot.

In some cases, a Campaign Group can go places and do things and appeal to people and succeed, where a political party would be banned, or treated with suspicion or dismissed and fail.

For example, many people will listen to you if you represent a "non-aligned" Campaign Group, but will immediately dismiss you if you say you are representing a Political Party with whom they are not in sympathy. You may be more likely to get onto a radio programme with an opinion if you represent a Campaign Group rather than a Political Party. Some hotels may not rent a room to Political Parties, but will rent to Campaign Groups.

Take some of the Campaign Groups which we feature regularly in *Sovereignty*. They succeed in getting the message over because they are not associated with any political party.

They have cross-over appeal to many, regardless of party affiliation. Add a party label to these campaigns and you will stunt them.

Also, it is not necessarily appropriate to turn these specific campaigns into ballot box issues.

For example, why should someone campaigning against say, the European Constitution, put themselves up



as an "Anti-EU Constitution Candidate" when there are already parties standing who are likewise against the EU Constitution? To do so would risk splitting the vote and taking votes from parties which **already** have these issues included within a wider policy agenda and who have a better chance of getting elected than you do.

The only case for putting up such a candidate would be in an election where there were no other established parties promoting that policy.

So, before Campaign Groups take their message into the electoral arena – either by standing themselves, or giving their support to a particular party – they need to be careful they **do not lose the wide support they could keep for their issue by remaining non-aligned**, and they need to be careful they **do not split the vote**, and thereby compromise the chances of success for a party which is already promoting their issue.

LATE ISSUES – WE'RE WORKING TO CORRECT THIS

Ideally we want our journal to come out at the beginning of the month in which it's dated. Some people may have noticed that we're running our production around 6 weeks late.

In order to get back on time, we have scheduled production dates on our Year Planner, and providing we are able to keep to them, then we should be back to producing a journal which arrives at the start of the correct month, by around the middle of this year.

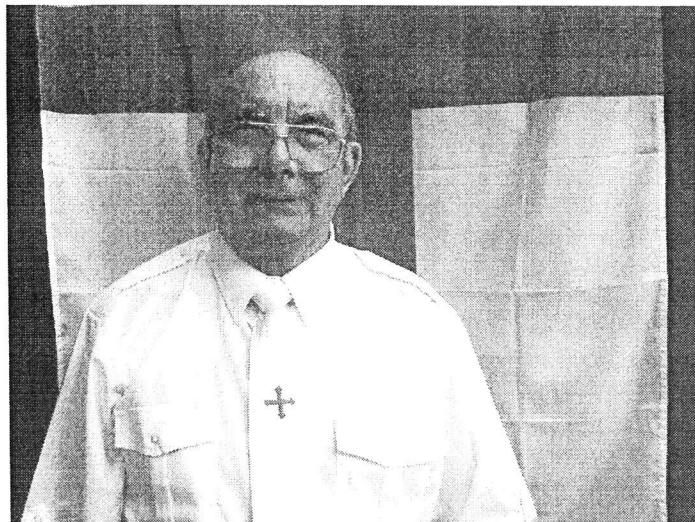
You can help by sending us material we can use.

We regret that we can't pay for submissions, although we intend to be able to do so eventually.

It doesn't have to be on euro-sceptical politics, it can be on popular culture, and also on history – two crucial themes which we want to develop.

Thanks for your support and for your patience.

CAMPAIGN FOR A REFERENDUM ON THE EUROPEAN CONSTITUTION Derek Norman explains



ABOUT CREC AND ITS AIM

CREC is a grass-roots organisation and was the very first campaigning group to press for a referendum on the European Constitution.

It was created on 15 March 2003, in Harlow, Essex, by a few ordinary patriotic people who were concerned about the implications for our great country if this alien constitution ever became enshrined in British law.

The founder members decided that the campaign should appeal to as many people as possible whatever their political or religious views.

CREC was formed to allow individual citizens to lobby the Queen under an ancient Right of Petition by sending her a personal postcard with a printed message asking her not to give the Royal Assent to any Act of Parliament that incorporates the European Constitution into British law.

Each card has a space for a name, address, and signature and is individually numbered. The postcard is addressed to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II at Buckingham Palace, and only needs a postage stamp to be mailed.

CREC is cross-party and appeals to all true patriots to try to persuade the Queen that the vast majority of the British people are against being incorporated into the proposed new European Empire. As we have a duty to serve and protect the monarchy when in any of the armed services, or in high civil office, so the Queen has a duty to protect the British people from rule by foreign princes, prelates or potentates.

All we are asking is that the Queen implements the pledges made in her Coronation Oath to the subjects of her realm. It is time for the Queen to rescue us from the traitorous politicians that are trying to destroy the "Queen's Realm" and make her, and us, all citizens of a foreign polity.

Our aim is to impress on the Queen, and our treacherous politicians, that there is an overwhelming desire by the British people to retain their national sovereignty and the independence of the United Kingdom and that the Government does not have the legitimacy to change the constitution without the consent of the people in a free and fair referendum.

The success of our campaign has been overwhelming with **over 125,000 CREC postcards** having been

despatched to supporters from every part of the United Kingdom.

The postcards are, themselves, a valuable publicity tool to help spread the message to other people. Some people send them out inside their Christmas cards.

We have been surprised at the huge number of requests for our postcards from Scotland and Northern Ireland and even a few from overseas. Our next target is a quarter of a million, and then, a million, and so onwards and upwards!

THE END OF BRITAIN AS AN INDEPENDENT NATION

Readers of **Sovereignty** will be aware that the proposed new European Constitution, if incorporated into British law, will change the way we are governed, for ever.

Many of the rights that we have taken for granted will be swept away and replaced by dubious European Union legislation initiated by the unelected and unaccountable European Commission and enacted by the puppet European Parliament in Brussels.

This legislation is for one purpose only; to bring about a United States of Europe in which the UK will be just a vassal state controlled by unelected and unaccountable bureaucrats in foreign lands across the sea.

THE BIGGEST LIE OF ALL

Tony Blair has been accused of lying to the British people on many occasions in the past, but his statement that ***there is no need to grant the British people a referendum because the European Constitution is only a tidying-up exercise***, is the biggest lie of all.

The European Constitution is the greatest single threat to our traditional freedoms since World War 2. The monarchy itself is threatened with extinction, as is true Parliamentary democracy.

MAKING GOOD USE OF THE EXTRA TIME

Although the recent talks on the European Constitution broke down, the same heads of government took the opportunity to set up ten new EU agencies to take power away from national governments.

It is only a matter of time before the European Constitution is back on the Brussels agenda. We must use the extra time to make sure that all the campaigns for a referendum – for example **Referendum 04** (see **Sovereignty** November 2003) – gather momentum and eventually force Tony Blair to give the people of the United Kingdom a say in their own political future.

Derek Norman is the Chairman of the Campaign for a Referendum on the European Constitution.

Other Committee Members: Tony Bennett – Secretary, Bryan Smalley – Press officer, Peter Rogers – Webmaster, Helene Davies, Ray Lomas, Kay Norman, Graham Wood, Jenny Embrey, Jose O'Ware, Jenny Sleep. Visit the CREC Website at www.european-referendum.org.uk

CREC postcards can be obtained via the Website or from: 66 Chippingfield, Harlow, Essex, CM17 0DJ; Tel: 01279 635789, or 9 Station Cottages, Brampton Road, Huntingdon, PE29 3BW; Tel: 01480 435837.

Cards cost: £1.50 for 10, £3.00 for 25, £5.00 for 50, £6.75 for 75 and £8.00 for 100. Membership of CREC is automatic for an expenditure of £8.00 or more.

COUNTERING THE EU APOLOGISTS

In the run-up to the European Parliamentary Election on 10 June 2004 we'll be addressing some of the popular myths about the EU, in order to help arm you with useful facts, figures and soundbites for the contest. For starters:

"If we leave the EU we will have to obey all the European rules on the single market without the possibility of influencing their making"

No. The only thing we would have to ensure is that our exports to the EU's single market would have to meet the requirements of the single market, just like the exports to the single market from the USA, Japan, Norway, Switzerland or anywhere else. Our position would be no different than any other country outside the EU.

Only a small part of our economy is involved in trade with the EU, but 100% of it is affected by single market regulations which is especially difficult for small and medium-sized enterprises on which our economy depends.

"If we leave, we will have to follow EU laws relating to internal security and foreign policy without being able to influence their making"

This is pre-supposing that we exert influence at the moment, and that such policies work to our advantage, and that we'd lose more than we'd gain if we left the EU! The opposite is more likely, we'd gain more than we'd lose!

Dr Richard North considers some "alternative mechanisms for dealing with the many issues requiring cross-border co-operation or co-ordination, outside the framework of the European Union" in his essay at www.sovereignty.org.uk/siteinfo/newsround/eu-const.html

Regarding police and judicial co-operation, he points out that the emphasis should be on taking a wider perspective. Compared to 'Interpol', **Dr North** writes: *"it is hard to accept any rationale for the much smaller and more geographically limited 'Europol', other than its value as a mechanism for European political integration."*

Nor are we precluded from *"making bilateral agreements, to serve more specific needs."*

Regarding foreign policy, national ministers will still meet and act outside of the official EU framework.

As **Dr North** writes: *"Given a political will, common polices can be developed without needing institutional architecture, while the existence of formal institutions, in the absence of political will, in no way assures agreement on common action ... Should there develop a need to initiate formal common action on a European level ... the Council of Europe still exists and could provide an adequate forum for discussion and negotiation. Where a common military approach is desired, the institution of Nato can still provide an adequate means for co-ordinating action."*

"Being in the EU means we have the right to travel, work, study and live, visa-free throughout the EU"

It is wrong to suggest all these things would somehow come to an end if Britain left the EU.

Any positive benefits which accrue from the present system would continue to exist in those cases where it was in European countries' **mutual interests** for such benefits to continue to exist.

New legal agreements between countries would be drafted as quickly as you can say "jobs for lawyers".

Alistair McConnachie researches

"Leaving the EU today would cause huge disruption"

It's been said that Britain could leave the EU in "13 and a half hours". This is the record time for passing a Bill through three readings in each House and obtaining Royal Assent. It was done on the occasion of the Abdication Act of Edward VII, in December 1936.

Ideally, though, leaving the EU could be a measured process that could occur over the lifetime of a Parliament.

"The EU improves working conditions for employees"

Firstly, to the extent this may be the case in some instances, it doesn't change the fact that we don't need the EU to do it. Our own government could do it just as easily. Moreover, leaving the EU will not see the improved conditions disappear.

Secondly, being in the EU creates considerable problems in regard to red tape, for the other side of the equation; employers, especially those with small and medium-sized businesses – leading to unemployment.

Thirdly, is the de-industrialisation of Britain – on-going since 1973 – really a price worth paying for "improved working conditions" for a minority, in some cases?

"The EU is not a superstate because only 2,000 work for the EU Commission while 50,000 work for one English county council alone, and look how many work for Britain's entire Civil Service!"

According to **Lindsay Jenkins**, author of *The Last Days of Britain*, and *Britain held Hostage* www.lindsayjenkins.com *"The civil service argument is false. It is as false as the peace argument. Approximately 30,000 work for the EU Commission. The Commission has also deliberately taken over the civil services of all Member States in part. This is a long standing policy first devised in the late 1940s so that the huge Empire could be run without having a commensurate number of civil servants in one place, unwieldy and highly visible. From the outset in 1957, Brussels arranged for tours of Brussels for civil servants followed by joint committees to encourage the Brussels mind set. There are now over 300 such committees, described as comitology, and they were the subject of a House Of Lords Select Committee report in February 1999. Indeed you can crudely measure the erosion of national sovereignty by the number of joint committees within each British government ministry. Those ministries which are to all intents and purposes totally within Brussels control have the most committees."*

Furthermore, we need to consider the amount of extra work to which our own local government is subjected by the EU. English regional government would increase that workload even more. **Maybe the number of British civil servants wouldn't be so great if they didn't have so many petty EU Directives and Regulations to implement!**

OVER 100,000 UNDEMOCRATIC REGULATIONS BIND US

In January 2003, **Lord Stoddart of Swindon** asked the Government how many **Regulations** Brussels had issued since Britain joined the European Community in 1973. Unlike **Directives**, the Regulations are immediately binding.

Lady Symons, deputy leader of the Lords, gave year-by-year figures showing the total as **101,811** up to August 2002.

Over 100,000 automatic Regulations from Brussels, all legally binding and none of them subject to Parliamentary scrutiny. So much for democracy! (13 January 2003, Lords Written Answers, "EC Regulations", *Hansard*, Volume No. 643)

THE COST OF BRITAIN'S EU MEMBERSHIP

Most of the UK's official statistics are compiled by the ONS, the Office for National Statistics, which is an agency of HM Treasury. Each year, the ONS publishes *The Pink Book: United Kingdom Balance of Payments*.

The 2003 edition, with data for the whole of 2002, was published on the ONS website at www.statistics.gov in mid-October 2003, the paper version came out in mid-November 2003 and can sometimes be found in larger city libraries. The 2003 edition, which can also be downloaded free from the website, contains as usual, at Chapter 9 on page 114 of *The Pink Book*, a "Geographical Breakdown of Current Account".

This shows British exports ("credits" in the jargon), imports ("debits") and the resulting balances for the eleven years 1992-2002, analysed by country and by type of transaction: goods, services, income and transfers.

Separate lines, for "EU Institutions", show UK payments to (debits) and receipts from (credits) EU Institutions, and the resulting balances. "EU Institutions" comprise not just the "EU Budget" administered by the Commission, but in addition, a mish-mash of institutions, bodies and quangos like the European Parliament, the Court of Justice, the Central Bank, the Army-which-isn't-an-Army, the European Investment Bank and so on.

The latest figures show that, over the ten-year period 1993-2002 inclusive, the UK paid over to EU Institutions, gross, cumulatively, £104 billion.

In those same ten years the UK received back, cumulatively: £64 billion.

So the UK's net contribution over that ten-year period was £40 billion, or an average of £4 billion per year. The 2002 net contribution was £4.3 billion.

Assuming an average UK population over those ten years of 59 million, that works out at £678 as the average net contribution that every man, woman and child in the UK has paid over to "Brussels" in the last decade.

Putting it another way, the UK has paid over to Brussels, net, in every single one of the 3,652 days (including two leap years) of the last ten years, £11 million. Or, £77 million per week.

A brand-new, fully-equipped, state-of-the-art, 800-bed city-centre general hospital in the UK costs around £250 million. If, instead of paying that cumulative net contribution of £40 billion (ie £40,000 million) over to Brussels, the government had spent it on brand-new hospitals, we would now be enjoying the facilities of 160 of them, having in total 128,000 beds.

(Excerpted from eurofacts, 5 December 2003. Available for £28 payable to eurofacts, PO Box 119, Totnes, Devon, TQ9 7WA)

Sovereignty points out that it could well be argued with justification that the gross contribution of £104 billion should be considered the total cost to the UK over this 10-year period.

This is because, although a proportion came back to us, it was not necessarily spent in ways we would approve, if we were outside the EU – and often it was spent on sustaining EU projects which have damaging effects.

In which case, over this 10-year period, our gross contributions work out at £28.5million every day, £1.2million every hour and £1,763 for every man, woman and child in Britain!

COUNTERING FIVE MYTHS ABOUT THE EU

By Save Britain's Fish

www.savebritfish.org.uk

1. We will "reform" this or that institution of the EU

To carry out any meaningful reform beneficial to the UK, means obtaining a Treaty change. That requires unanimity.

How do you get that, when a benefit to the UK means a disadvantage to another Member.

The only reform possible is tinkering on the edges that does not cause any form of discrimination, or change to the EU rules. Politicians use the word "reform" to cover the fact nothing will be done.

2. The EU Treaties are untouchable and are forever

The EU Treaties work through a British Act of Parliament. The Treaties are only valid as long as the Westminster Parliament allows. Britain's obedience to the Treaties rests solely with the Westminster Members of Parliament.

As no Parliament can bind its successor, neither a new Parliament, nor its Members, are bound to the Act through which the Treaties work. Any public annoyance concerning EU legislation should be directed to your MP. It is not the fault of the other Member States or the Commission.

Do not be put off by your MP saying it is beyond his/her responsibility. They use this as an excuse so as to get out of stating where they really stand.

3. To reverse any existing European Union legislation means leaving the EU

As EU legislation works through a British Act of Parliament, it is possible to amend that section of the Act, within domestic legislation, to close the drawbridge to that relevant section of the EU legislation, making it null and void in the UK.

For example, Westminster control of the UK fishing zone of 200 miles, or to the median line, does not necessitate leaving the EU. Some other Member States might not like it, but there is no mechanism within the EU rules for those States to force the UK out of the EU.

The UK Parliament can take back control (competency) of any area it likes. The legal and constitutional position is very clear. The decision rests in Westminster.

Some Westminster politicians shy away from that responsibility, stating that is not the case. If that happens you can be sure they support the creation of the European superstate, to which they are helping to deliver the United Kingdom in regional bite-size pieces.

4. To withdraw from the Common Fisheries Policies (CFP) requires the unanimous agreement of the EU Member States

No. It requires a majority vote in our Westminster Parliament, to create new legislation to amend the 1972 Act.

5. Even if we used domestic legislation to reverse EU legislation, we would be taken to the European Court of Justice (ECJ), and overruled

The jurisdiction of the ECJ in the UK is subject to the approval of the British Parliament, and therefore an appropriate clause excluding such jurisdiction could be inserted in the Act dis-applying the particular area of EU legislation, eg the CFP.

GHOST TOWN BRITAIN

A new report released by the **New Economics Foundation** on 15 December 2003, entitled *Ghost Town Britain II: Death on the High Street*, by **Julian Oram, Molly Conisbee, and Andrew Simms** shows that the loss of local banks, pubs, pharmacies, shops and post offices in the UK is continuing apace, leaving more communities than ever without access to essential local services.

The report, a follow up to *Ghost Town Britain* released in 2002 emphasises **the decline of local economies in the face of wider economic forces and shows that:**

- There has been massive loss of open space, community buildings and meeting spaces. Since 1989, **London alone has lost the equivalent of 1,428 football pitches, or seven Hyde Parks.** Despite Labour assurances that the Conservative Party policy of selling off school playing fields would be reversed, **at the end of 2002 school fields were being sold at a rate of 1 per week.** 40 per cent of urban parks are in decline and only 18 per cent are in good condition.
- In spite of a government commitment to keep post offices open, branch closures increased in the year to March 2003.
- Wholesalers, the lifeblood of small local shops, have closed at a rate of six per week. New registrations of small-scale food manufacturers have fallen by 12%.
- 800 communities in Britain have no bank left, and over a thousand have only one. In the decade to 2002, Britain lost one third of its bank network.
- 20 traditional pubs close per month.
- In the five years to 2002, 50 specialised stores like butchers, bakers, fishmongers and newsagents closed every week.
- The average person now travels 893 miles per year to shop for food, 60% of that by car. Food shopping now accounts for 5% of all car mileage.

The report recommends regulatory changes that could support locally led and driven regeneration in the areas of Britain where it's needed most. Policy options include:

Pro-local competition policy: Designed to curb the development of large out-of-town superstores that destroy local businesses. Local communities to have the final say in any decision on whether to allow the construction of a large shopping centre exceeding a certain size.

Support for local procurement: Money spent on local goods and services is retained in the locality to its benefit. Local authorities' procurement processes should be made more accessible to small business.

Mandatory Code of Conduct for supermarkets: A food retail regulator should be instituted to monitor supermarkets' relationship with suppliers and effect on local competition.

Local money flows analyses to be used: As mentioned in the initial *Ghost Town Britain* report, there is a need for local authorities, planning agencies, regeneration bodies and regional development agencies to use a local money flows analysis to help guide local retail development.

Rate relief for small retailers: Rate relief should be extended to independent newsagents and food, beverage and tobacco retailers, particularly those in villages, town centres and urban deprived neighbourhoods. Priority assistance should be given to high-street shops contending with out-of-town and edge-of-town superstores. This could mean establishing local business rates by taking into account things like the wider benefits accrued to the local community. It

might also mean connecting rates to the amount of local employment created, or amount of goods sourced locally.

Develop local retail plans: The loss of local shops, decay of high street shopping and development of edge-of-town shopping centres has been allowed to happen in haphazard fashion, lacking a coherent vision that would allow planners working at national, regional or local levels to make interventions based on a clear set of policy guidelines. If **Ghost Town Britain** is to be reversed, there is a need for the country to adopt retail planning guidelines, which would provide greater power to control and cap the size of supermarkets, ensure that the town centre is the primary focus for development, and require local authorities to develop retail plans for their area.

Greater support to local authorities to maintain public open spaces: There seems to have been little thinking about longer-term solutions needed to address the lack of local authority finance to preserve and improve parks, village greens, town squares, and open common land. The Government needs to support local authorities to protect and maintain these spaces, and to help them instigate enforcement against illegal encroachment on common land.

National inventory of community buildings: The role of community buildings in maintaining community services is recognised within government. There is a need to establish a mechanism to undertake an inventory of community buildings which would enable the Government to look more closely at the funding structures in place, and at ways of providing financial, administrative and other support for local organisations in danger of losing their community buildings.

Encourage Community Banking: The idea of the Community Bank plc, advocated by the Campaign for Community Banking, deserves attention by both financial sector and Government.

Encourage Community Pharmacies: The Government should further enhance the role of community pharmacists to take on a broader public health role and some of the prescribing powers of doctors. Developing the role of community pharmacists will only happen if they feel secure in their businesses and therefore able to locate in deprived areas. The current arrangements – which will encourage further supermarket encroachment into pharmacy business – will only serve to undermine existing community pharmacies.

Support for Community Development Finance Initiatives (CDFIs): The DTI's Phoenix Fund has made £20 million available to CDFIs, which provide finance and business support to small enterprises in disadvantaged communities that are unable to access part or all of the finance they require from conventional sources.

Support for the Local Communities Sustainability Bill: The authors argue that one avenue that could allow many of the strategies outlined above to be pursued more easily would be the adoption of the proposed **Local Communities Sustainability Bill**. This Bill is intended to create a coherent framework for pro-local policies, and give local authorities and citizens the power to guarantee the future and environmental sustainability of their community. So far, the proposed Bill has won the support of nearly 200 MPs. **www.localworks.org**

The report is spoiled by the authors' obsession with immigrants and asylum seekers. It should be noted that Conisbee and Simms are the brains behind the concept of "environmental refugees" which we addressed in the August 2003 issue of **Sovereignty**. For Conisbee and Simms, it seems, there is not a problem existing in the whole of Britain to which the answer is not more immigrants and asylum seekers.

Nevertheless, it contains valuable info and is free by download at **www.neweconomics.org** or for £10 to the New Economics Foundation, 3 Jonathan Street, London, SE11 5NH.



Dear **Sovereignty**,
Readers ought to be aware of a new EU Directive which came into force on 1st January 2004. For their benefit, I include a copy here ...

TO BE KNOWN AS "THE FRESH AIR" DIRECTIVE

(Acts whose publication is not obligatory)

*Directive of the 1st January 2004
AN/UTH/R1*

Preamble: This Directive aims at reducing disparities between the levels of density of air in the various Regions, and levelling the flow of said air, especially over the least favoured Regions or Islands, including urban and rural areas, with special attention to flows of air, underground.

There will be free movement of air at all times, provided that the EU certificate for 'airworthiness' has been granted.

It may be necessary to apply the 'closer co-operation' idea by building a 'fourth pillar' thus enabling the 'Fresh Air' Directive to develop into an area of freedom and security and justice.

The said 'air' shall enjoy 'transparency' at all times. The decision to use it shall be taken as closely to the 'citizen' as possible.

Only in 'exceptional circumstances' will citizens breathe without special documentation, and Single Market rules shall apply at all times.

Countries applying Schengen shall stamp the 'fresh air' as it travels through their borderless controls.

Our citizens shall enjoy 'pooling' their Nation State's 'fresh air' by working in close co-operation until this exciting integration process is complete.

Article 1. Each adult citizen may take a maximum of 45 breaths per minute, at the same time enjoying the freedom of exhaling freely; and

at will; providing the exhaled air is kept separate from the allocation of 'fresh' air.

Article 2. Should there be any reason for requiring a quicker

intake of air, e.g., exercising, running, jogging, dancing, a notice may be placed in the Official Journal of the European Union. The lowest tender must be accepted even if this extra fresh air is to be collected from Finland; it must be collected personally.

Article 3. Should a weekend break in the Member State's own country be taken, there will be a need for a document for the transfer of fresh air from the applicants town, and the said air to be bottled up and transferred to the Region of his/her choice with the usual air passports which must be affixed to the left hand side of the round container.

Article 4. Should a longer break be required for example, in Spain for a two-week period, provisions must be made to stop a glut of air collecting in the gap made by the body of the Member's temporary absence, by allowing the member's family to take two breaths instead of the obligatory 'one' while the Member is away.

Article 5. Should Article 4 create a problem with a shortage of air in the chosen holiday resort, which left unattended, causes an added altercation of some 'hot air' being created, see Article 6.

Article 6. There will be a monitoring Centre set up on the Isle of Sorrento, its task to combat the 'heating up and misuse of fresh air'. An amount of 700 million euros will be set aside for this project. The Centre will be known as the 'Hot and Cold In-depth Treatment Centre'. (HACIT)

Article 7. Special training for persons running this Centre will take place each year in Florida, where they will be taught how to 'hold their breath' which will be an essential requirement after all the gasps of air

wasted when learning of the fantastic salaries offered for this important 'redistribution of air' job.

Article 8. A new spy satellite system will be used to combat against the 'smuggling' of air.

Article 9. Should anyone have the misfortune to come across 'pockets of air' (air pockets), which are strictly illegal, these must be reported to the authorities at once. On inspection in the past, these air pockets have usually been found to contain absolutely nothing. This unfair competition will not be tolerated.

Article 10. 'Aero Bars of Chocolate', the eating of these aero-bars may have to be stopped until a way can be found in which the chocolate can be eaten without swallowing of the air contained in the 'bubble'. Air is for breathing purposes only – not for eating. Heavy fines will be imposed on any person found surreptitiously nibbling one of these bubbles of air, surrounded by chocolate.

Article 11. Should air turn 'blue' at any time, it should be discarded immediately along with this Directive.

Article 12. The expression 'As free as the air we breath' will be banned as from the date this Directive is applicable.

Article 13. Whereas the Kyoto Protocol has been accepted by Member States, the 'Fresh Air' Directive will be included in the polluter pays procedure and for the very first time it is suggested that a payment for the total number of breaths of air, taken over a twelve month period, for each person will be deducted from a person's pay-package, direct to Brussels. There will be a small addition, to account for those who are not in work. Whereas it may be difficult to work out the correct sum for each person, the first payment will be in the year 2010.

Article 14. Hot Air, emanating from the European Union Commission will qualify for special exemption.

Article 15. This Directive is applicable to all Member States and will come into force 1st January 2004. There is no 'Hidden Agenda' in this Directive. [Well, only a little one.]

**Anne Palmer,
Wolverhampton**

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