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The most important redistribution of power in Europe since World War II is now being discussed under the auspices of the Convention for the Future of Europe. It will take the form of a new constitution for the European Union, which could be adopted as early as December this year in Rome. The goal, in accordance with the desire of the all-European political parties, is to make the EU a federal state, a state of nation states.

The preparations are formally taking place in the Convention, in which the governments and parliaments of Member States and candidate countries, the European Parliament and the Commission are represented.

The Convention is, however, non-representative, as the vast majority of its members want the EU to become a federal state.

EU critics, sceptics and realists have established a "Forum for Democracy" that transcends national and party boundaries. The forum is preparing an initiative to keep the EU as a federation of independent states and not to create a federal state as such. Of the 105 members of the Convention only 6, and a slightly larger number of alternate members, are participating in this work.

There is no other opposition against the federalisation and militarisation of the union. Although outwardly it may look as though the Convention is preparing a draft constitution and that its members are free to mould it as they please, this is actually an illusion.

Given that EU decisions are rarely prepared where they are claimed to have been prepared, it is hard to believe that a constitutional convention could be free to propose a more democratic distribution of power in the EU. It is inconceivable that the large countries will give up what they gained at Nice. The Nice Treaty was their Coup d'Etat.

The constitution under preparation concerns the EU's jurisdiction and its tasks. On the one hand there is the jurisdiction of the central power and, on the other, the jurisdiction of the Member States.

When the Member States and their democratic decision-making bodies no longer have the power within the Community, a decision will have to be made on whether the distribution of power within the Union will be developed according to the Community method or the intergovernmental method.

The *Community method* means that decisions on the future of the EU are made within the EU institutions. This is the federal state method.

According to the Commission, the Community method involves 1) the exclusive right to initiate legislation, 2) codecision procedure for all legislation, 3) qualified majority decisions in all matters and 4) monitoring and interpretation powers for the European Court of Justice. The Member States' right of veto in legislation and important decisions is in complete contradiction with the Community method.

The Commission wants its own position strengthened. If it obtained extra powers they would come from the Council and from national parliaments.

The Community method is essentially the power of the civil servants, the eurocracy. However, in this kind of supranational decision-making, the biggest loser is national democracy.

We have to ask if the EU, in becoming the second largest federal state in the world and potentially having 27-28 member countries, is too big to be democratically governed. Is democracy as we know it only possible in national states, and where there is no supra-national decision-making?

Previously, it was thought that the EU would become a federal state only by the Community method, which is why the federalists support this way of doing things.

The *Intergovernmental method* means that decisions are ultimately made within member countries.

Clearly, the EU will not develop into a federal state in the short term through one method or the other, but through both methods. It is, however, certain that a small country will not be able to stop the large countries from doing as they please. This was illustrated by the case of Ireland where the other countries dismissed the “wrong” result of the Irish national referendum.

Development towards a federal state is also taking place via the formation of groups of states which are taking the Union in a particular direction even though not all the countries are involved. Proof of this is the introduction of the federal state currency. Not all countries have the euro, and neither are all countries part of the common monetary policy of Euroland.

There is *constructive abstention* whereby decisions are made in the EU but those in disagreement do not exercise their right of veto.

There is *enhanced cooperation* whereby a particular country group creates its own insider group; i.e. a kind of avant-garde group with its own decision-making bodies. EMU is an example of this, and this approach to cooperation has also infiltrated defence questions.

The federalisation of the EU through the Franco-German inter-governmental method is the new dimension in the discussion of the future EU.

The alternative to this proposal to create the skeleton of a new type of federal state is not the Community method, but the democratisation of the intergovernmental method, which is based on parliamentarianism: the right of parliaments to exert control over their own governments.

The Convention represents the power of large countries and their ability to dictate. Its working method is from the top down.

Who is at the top?

Formally speaking, the Presidium is at the top, and it has not representatives from all member countries. It holds closed meetings which can have a major influence on policy.

Subordinate to the Presidium is the Secretariat, which has not representatives from all countries, and which is said to be the place where the drafts of the constitution are written.

It is also possible that the draft constitution will be prepared within pro-Europe conservative and social democratic parties and presented to the Convention in the name of the representatives of those parties. This would mean that the final result of the Convention would be a compromise between these stances, and there would be no ambiguity about the direction of the draft constitution; i.e., the conservatives have openly stated their aim of a federal state with its own constitution, whereas the European social democrats are – less openly – the most federal party group in the EU, with tight European party discipline.

If the Convention is able to reach any conclusions, one of the most likely is that foreign policy will be communautarised. The process is, however, complicated. Not a single one of the large countries that want to speak on behalf of the EU as a whole seems ready to relinquish control of its own foreign policy. Instead, these large countries want to coordinate EU foreign policy amongst themselves, without the smaller countries.

The draft constitution of the Convention is unlikely to be able to specify clear lists of tasks for the central power, or to categorise the tasks that will remain under the jurisdiction of Member States. The EU will still be governed by diversity for a long time to come, and this Convention is unlikely to convert it into the United States of Europe just yet.

The new constitution under discussion appears to leave little room for military non-alignment.

Germany and France have proposed to militarise the Union. A request that the 5th article (the mutual security clause) of the Western European Union Treaty be written into the constitution has been made in the Convention working group on defence. The EU is being made a “solidarity union” in the military sense. It endangers the identity of non-aligned countries. A non-aligned country can neither accept militarisation of the Union nor the fact that this would be written into the constitution.

In the short term the militarisation of the EU will take place in cooperation with NATO. If the EU were to become a European super state at some later stage, the Americans would then have to be driven out of Europe. Europe and America nonetheless share a common concern of ensuring the sufficiency and availability of the world's raw materials. This is the military fate that binds them together.

In the Helsinki Summit in 1999 the EU Member States committed themselves to being able to assemble by 2003 a military force of 50,000-60,000 within 60 days and to maintain it for a minimum of a year. Where did the figure of 50,000-60,000 come from?

EU Member States have around two million soldiers at arms. Of these, however, only one tenth are trained and equipped so that they can be used in international (crisis management) tasks. Of these 200,000 qualified troops, only around 60,000 can be deployed at short notice. Thus the number of Eurotroops available for crisis management tasks was dictated by the total number of troops available.

There is also ongoing process to restructure the European defence industry as “strengthening the European industrial and technological defence base”. It means: more arms, more precision arms, more arms electronics and more military communications.

Does any attack of the European army on another country require a mandate from the international community, i.e. the UN? The official interpretation is that the UN mandate is not needed. And the EU's crisis management troops are not restricted by geographical limitations: larger numbers of heavily armed troops could be sent to incidents close by, whereas for more distant operations fewer troops would be sent and for less demanding tasks.

The documents of the Convention's defence working party state that the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) makes it possible for the first time in the existence of the European Union “to deploy military forces to promote and defend its interests”. In other words the idea of the Euroarmy is to defend the EU's interests outside the EU' borders.

It is possible that a national referendum will be the desired way to decide on the EU constitution during the final stages.

The possibilities are as follows: 1) EU-wide national referendum and 2) national referendum in each Member State.

Federalists want a single vote because this would favour the countries with large populations. Eurosceptics, however, want a national referendum separately in each country as this enables small countries to mobilise the people to defend their interests by opposing a draft constitution approved by the elite.

Democracy is the language and terminology of the time when nation states were born. The nation state has nurtured democracy, which was born of the rebellion of the oppressed and developed into participation orchestrated from above. Nation states can also subjugate and be undemocratic, and in such cases there should be the freedom to act against domination by the state.

Democracy is not a system, and is certainly not a system of capitalist control. Political or economic democracy are not the trademarks of capitalism.

The economy is a realm of freedom, with no restrictions on the wielding or flaunting of power. The most undemocratic feature of the markets is that rights are owned in the markets which close them off to others. There is a need for anti-trust legislation to ensure that new entrepreneurs can enter the market. This is inhibited by supranational corporations obtaining monopoly positions, backed up by all sorts of patents. A monopoly is not democracy. Therefore small companies require market protection against large corporations.

Democracy cannot be created out of thin air; it is rooted in history. It is freedom from rule by one doctrine, and it is not ordained from on high or by the almighty. There is no absolute (single, correct) democracy, nor is there any standard format. It is interaction and roleplay by people: there are subjects and objects of power. It is a struggle for power and it is self-sustaining decision-making. It is contracts and the peaceful resolution of disputes.

Lasting democracy cannot be produced from the top down, nor does imported democracy work: imported democracy violates historically rooted institutions and may erode the sovereignty of its recipients. If order is based on compulsion and violence, world democracy is non-democracy. Force-fed democracy must not be used to break up tried and trusted patterns of existence and

social bonds.

Democracy is national sovereignty. It is freedom from external control and it is autonomy. It is the right to restrict the wielding of power by others in one's own affairs.

There is no supranational state democracy. The greatest obstacle to this is the lack of a common language and culture. There are other obstacles too. If the EU becomes a federal state, it will be a state without a people.

An essential feature of national independence is an identity, the distinguishing features of which have been biological blood ties, tenancy of a regional area, linguistic community and a shared history and culture. A separate currency is another aspect of sovereignty, as are military forces under independent control, unlike NATO troops or a Euroarmy. National legal systems also embody important collective historical experience. Membership of a nation does not, however, require common ethnicity. It can also be based on a common desire by individuals for freedom, fraternity and equal opportunities for all.

If the power of nation states is run down, it will be supplanted by a new international order and a world without frontiers for capital: globalisation. This is unipolar rule. The USA will control – if necessary by violence and illegally – all realms: the earth, the sea, space and information.

Democracy is voluntary participation by the people in power. It is self-government by the members of a community, but mere autonomy is not democracy. Democracy means autonomy with its own set of rules and conflict-resolution procedures.

Full autonomy is not possible in a federal state that imposes shackles on national democracy by transferring legislative and/or executive power to the centre. Since the EU – or Europe – is not a nation, it cannot be governed with people's power but supranationally. The EU, therefore, is not democratic, and power ought not to be handed over to this supranational federation in the hope that once it has power it will become democratic. A superpower is being created whose power is based on taking diversity and forcing it into a standardised mould. This will require powerful rule from the centre, and will mean a departure from self-government by nations and citizens. The EU's central power is the ethos of a new political elite: federalist hegemony.

By its nature, socialism is democracy: political liberalism for all and markets that are free of the

power of monopolies. Socialism is also communality: the obligation to care for one's fellow human beings.