

Austrians Push for Referendum on Treaty

by Alexander Pusch

The independent citizens' initiative Save Austria convened a first-rate symposium of experts in Vienna on Feb. 27, on whether the European Union Reform Treaty—which Helga Zepp-LaRouche has called the “Monster of Lisbon”—should be submitted to a national referendum in Austria, from a constitutional point of view. The ballroom at the Justice Palace was bursting at the seams: The question of the far-reaching changes in the legal system, which the EU Treaty would signify for all of Europe, is a burning issue for Austrians.

The invited experts were former Austrian justice minister Prof. Hans R. Klecatsky, one of the authors of the Austrian Constitution; university instructor Dr. Adrian Hollaender; former Austrian foreign minister Dr. Willibald Pahr; and Dr. Theo Öhlinger, former university professor and author of an expert opinion for the government concerning the EU Treaty. Two representatives of the Schiller Institute attended, to help coordinate Europeanwide resistance to the further empowerment of the EU bureaucracy, and to promote a strategic understanding of where the danger to our free constitutional order comes from, during this economic crisis.

The first theme discussed from the podium, was the elimination of Austria's perpetual neutrality, through its incorporation into the EU. The EU's Solidarity Clause, which obliges member-states to support one another in “the common battle against terrorism,” de facto means that soldiers of the member-states could be deployed into battle without their own governments having veto power over it. For Austria, this contradicts, without doubt, one of the fundamental principles of the Constitution.

This point was argued by Dr. Hollaender, a brilliant young expert in constitutional law, who is vigorously engaged in resisting the European Treaty's obliteration of the national sovereignty of the European member-states. He made eloquent reference to the history of the Austrian Constitution. If anyone still doubts the necessity for a referendum, he urged them to apply the well-known principle of criminal law, to constitutional law: *In Dubio pro Reo* (when in doubt, favor the accused), by invoking the principle, *In Dubio pro Democracia* (when in doubt, favor democracy).

Professor Klecatsky made an impassioned plea for the

fundamental character of the principle of neutrality in the Austrian constitutional system. In the discussion with the audience that followed, the esteem in which he is held, and his moral authority, were abundantly clear. He received repeated standing ovations and thunderous applause, particularly for his impassioned refutation of the sophistical argument of Professor Ölinger, that by entering the EU, which was done by Austria through a referendum, the country already gave up its neutrality to a large degree, and that therefore the Reform Treaty is no big change.

The discussion then turned to the character of the Reform Treaty as an enabling act or a “blank check.” In this connection, the lawyers also raised the question of the lack of veto power for the individual member-states. Dr. Pahr seconded Dr. Ölinger sophistry that Austria had already given up its sovereignty, by joining the European Community. They could not understand why the EU Treaty and the opposition’s demand for referenda should be creating such an uproar today. Ölinger further attempted to argue that the four pillars of Austrian constitutional law—namely, the republican principle, the democratic principle, the legal principle, and the federal principle—would not be affected by ratification of the Treaty.

Building a Europeanwide Resistance

Hollaender and Klecatsky replied, that the danger is that the nations of Europe no longer have any power over how far the changes in the legal system will go. Klecatsky, who lived through and actively shaped the founding of the Austrian Republic at the end of the post-war occupation, in 1955, made the point that it is precisely democracy and all democratic legitimacy that would be destroyed by the treaty. Hollaender then went into the question of *who decides*, how far the changes in the legal system would be allowed to go. In a heated discussion, the audience expressed its displeasure at the attempt by the media and the politicians to head off debate, as for example, in the Federal Republic of Germany, where no public debate is being allowed.

We of the Schiller Institute intervened at this point, to indicate some of the strategic background to this Monster of Lisbon. Many people are particularly perplexed by the haste and furtiveness with which this Treaty is supposed to be ratified, behind the backs of the population.

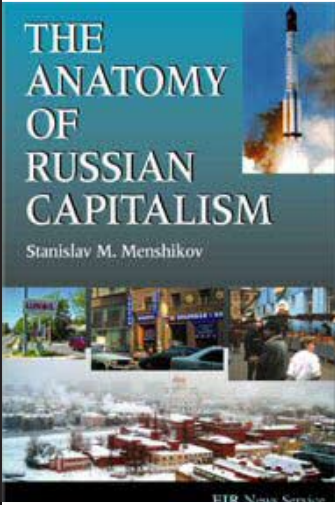
As Lyndon LaRouche and Helga Zepp-LaRouche have frequently pointed out, it is vital to understand that the Lisbon Treaty is a project of the London financial oligarchy, to consolidate dictatorial structures in parallel in the U.S.A. and Europe, because of the breakdown of the financial system. In the U.S.A., this is expressed in the candidacy of New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg; in Europe, it is the EU Reform Treaty. Thus it is important to coordinate Europeanwide resistance to it. It was pointed out that, in Ireland, the only country so far, where a referendum on the Lisbon Treaty has been announced, only 26% of the population

supports the Treaty. In Denmark, there is an intense discussion of the need for a referendum; in Slovakia and the Czech Republic, there is resistance in parliament, and in England itself, Parliament will vote on whether to have a referendum.

The movement in Austria is an important component of such Europeanwide resistance, to overturn the consolidation of power by the financial oligarchy in the EU bureaucracy. Demonstrations will be organized, educational efforts will be carried out, and legal documents will be introduced, to at least slow down ratification by the National Assembly.

Individuals and organizations in the various member-states, which are organizing resistance, can draw strength and inspiration from the fact that they are not alone in their struggle with the EU in their own country, but that together, we are striving for a Europe of the Fatherlands,¹ for the common good, and for freedom. Those who are committed to these ideals, can build upon the resistance that exists in Austria.

1. This phrase of Gen. Charles de Gaulle served to emphasize the alliance of sovereign nation-states, as opposed to the concept of the supranationalists, who wanted to eliminate national sovereignty in a united Europe.



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