

FOUR VIEWS

THE CONDITION OF EUROPE

THESE FOUR ARTICLES on the state of modern Europe have in common a deep concern for the homeland of our civilization. Mr. Kirk's comments on his recent European travels, and his part in the Tenth Anniversary Meeting of the Mont Pèlerin Society and at the Conference on North Atlantic Community, are set against a background of *Romanitas* and Christendom.

Professor Röpke's criticism of the prospects for an effectual common market in Europe are the world of a political economist aware of the limitations of his chosen discipline, and thoroughly acquainted with the Platonic virtue of Prudence.

Dr. von Kuehnelt-Leddihn, a vigorous but highly unconventional Roman Catholic, defends the medieval view of crime, sin, and atonement which still struggles, in the Catholic lands of Europe, against the morality of modern times.

Counsellor Starke's moving essay on Archbishop Reinis of Latvia, in his Russian prison during 1950 and 1951, requires a brief preface. Counsellor Starke, a Lutheran, is now in the East European Section of the German Foreign Office. Before the outbreak of war between Germany and Poland, he was a member of the German diplomatic staff at the German embassy in Warsaw. Later, attached to the German Embassy in Moscow at the time German-Russian hostilities commenced, he was arrested by the Russians, who kept him imprisoned until 1955. In prison he met Archbishop Reinis of Latvia, who probably now is dead. In this portrait of a great churchman who did not fail to follow the example of the Suffering Servant, Counsellor Starke touches upon the heroic Christian spirit that has not yet passed out of Europe.

Cultural Debris: Two Conferences And the Future of Our Civilization

RUSSELL KIRK

WE LIVE IN a world that is giving at the seams. Sometimes, indeed—especially to anyone who travels a good deal—there

comes an uneasy feeling that the garment of civilization already has parted; and that if one were to tug even the least bit, a sleeve or a trouser-leg of our social fabric would come away in his hand. In half the world, the decent draperies of the old order

have been burnt altogether, and King Demos struts naked, like the Emperor with the imaginary new clothes in Hans Christian Andersen's story. When the garment of civilization is worn out, we are confronted by the ugly spectacle of naked power.

Yet cheerfulness will keep breaking in. At this hour when the Communists and other totalitarians are busy ripping to shreds the "wardrobe of a moral imagination" (Burke's phrase), certain people of a very different cast of mind have turned tailors, and are doing their best to stitch together once more the pieces of that serviceable old suit we variously call "Christian civilization" or "Western civilization" or "the North Atlantic community" or "the free world". Not by force of arms are civilizations held together; but by the subtle threads of moral and intellectual principle. In the hands of the Fates are no thunderbolts: only thread and scissors. Last Autumn, I went to two gatherings of these moral and intellectual tailors, who are bent upon restoration of our civil social order. One group met at St. Moritz, in Switzerland: the tenth anniversary meeting of the Mont Pèlerin Society, composed principally of political economists. The other met at Bruges, in Belgium: the first Conference on North Atlantic Community, an assembly of political theorists, serious journalists, political leaders, and men of business. Either group talked for a week, and stitched away at their work of restoration. Certain interesting discussions took place, and I propose to set down some brief account of these deliberations.

During the week before I got to St. Moritz in the Grisons, I tramped about England and Scotland with an American friend, an executive in a great industrial corporation. Being something of a classical scholar, my friend collects sixteenth- and seventeenth-century editions of Latin works—particularly Cicero and Seneca—and pokes happily about Roman remains. We found for his library, in the dusty caverns of British second-hand bookshops, a num-

ber of admirable things at trifling prices. There was the noble elephant-folio of Strabo, in two immense volumes, for a mere thirty-five shillings; and the Strawberry Hill edition of Lucan, beautifully bound, at five guineas; and a twelve-volume set of Cicero for a pound. In an age of progressive inflation, one commodity alone remains stable, or actually diminishes in price: good old books. At the devil's booth in Vanity Fair, every coup of dross may find its ounce of gold; but the one thing which the devil can't sell nowadays is learning. Who wants classical texts? No twentieth-century Faustus disposes of his immortal soul for mere abstract knowledge. The copies of Strabo and Lucan and Cicero for which a Schoolman would have risked his life ten times over are now a drug on the market. As my friend remarked to me, "These things are cultural debris. It's as if a great ship had sunk, but a few trifles of flotsam had bobbed up from the hulk and were drifting on the surface of the ocean. Who wants this sea-drift? Not the sharks. You and I are going about in a small boat collecting bits of debris."

Whether our civilization really retains coherence enough for restoration to be possible may be made clear to all thinking men within a few years. If the fabric of our ancient society has declined to the condition of a mere heap of debris, all the tailors in the world cannot put it aright. The totalitarians say that the old order is a corpse, and that man and society must be fashioned afresh, in a grim fashion, upon a grim plan. Yet there are among us some men of intellectual power who hold that the wardrobe of our moral imagination is not yet altogether depleted. Some such met in St. Moritz and in Bruges.

The common bond among the members of the Mont Pèlerin Society is a belief in the enduring relevance of the "classical" political economy: classical not in the sense of Greek and Roman learning, of course, but the fundamental doctrines of the champions of a free economy, enunciated prin-

cially in the last three decades of the eighteenth century and the first three decades of the nineteenth. The Society's president, and principal founder, is Professor F. A. Hayek, of the University of Chicago; and it is a mark of his influence that he is able to bring together, annually, some two hundred men seriously interested in the problems of economic and social order. The United States and Britain furnish most of the members of this international association; then France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, and the Netherlands, with a sprinkling from other countries. The Society's purpose is summarized in the final article of its "Statement of Aims": "The group does not aspire to conduct propaganda. It seeks to establish no meticulous and hampering orthodoxy. It aligns itself with no particular party. Its object is solely, by facilitating the exchange of views among minds inspired by certain ideas and broad conceptions held in common, to contribute to the preservation and improvement of the free society." An able secretary, Dr. Albert Hunold of Zurich, keeps the Society lively, and its papers are published in Switzerland annually.

As the word "conservative" is used in the popular press, the Mont Pèlerin Society is a conservative body; and certainly its intention is to conserve the body of liberties which the Western world has known a long while—especially economic liberties. So far as social first principles are concerned, however, most of the members have their intellectual roots in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century liberalism. A considerable diversity of view exists, nevertheless: Professor Wilhelm Röpke of Geneva, for instance, is what Walter Bagehot would have called a "liberal conservative", a believing Christian, an opponent of the "cult of the colossal"; while Professor Ludwig von Mises is the complete disciple of Jeremy Bentham, contemptuous of religious belief and social tradition, dedicated to pure efficiency—what he called himself at this meeting (though with

a degree of irony), an "entrepreneurial Marxist."

The Society's Tenth Anniversary Meeting took up several important questions. State aid to "underdeveloped" countries was among them; and the majority of the members were opposed to such programs, at least in the form they take at present. The European common market was the subject of another lively exchange: in general, the opinion of the Society on this topic seemed moderate and prudent, not given to expectations of economic miracle-working, though very friendly toward the diminishing of economic barriers. All in all, the members of the Society seemed to be moving away from the more extreme doctrines of nineteenth-century Benthamite liberalism, although remaining attached to liberal concepts of the free market and individual political freedom. Bentham's "greatest happiness principle" and pleasure-and-pain calculus were rejected by several speakers, notably Frenchmen.

Near the end of the week's conference, nevertheless, the presidential address by Mr. Hayek went counter to the trend of much of the meeting. Professor Hayek, in a paper called "Why I am not a Conservative", called upon all faithful liberals to reject alliances with conservatives. For conservatives, he declared, are timid, authoritarian, paternalistic, anti-democratic, anti-intellectual, illogical, mystical, and many other distressing things. Yet he confessed that most liberals, old-style or new-style, are no more to his taste, and approved only two political thinkers, Tocqueville and Acton. The choice of these mentors—both of whom were Catholics—seemed a little odd in the light of Mr. Hayek's strong prejudice in favor of nineteenth-century rationalism. For his part, Professor Hayek declared, he was not a liberal in the popular twentieth-century sense, nor yet a "libertarian", but an Old Whig. Now the original Old Whig was Edmund Burke, the founder of conservatism: Burke's *Appeal from the New Whigs to the Old*, even more than his *Reflections on the*

Revolution in France, is the touchstone for conservatives. That fact left Mr. Hayek's stand not altogether clear.

When Benthamite Liberalism was at the height of its influence, Sir Walter Scott observed, "The Whigs will live and die in the belief that the world is governed by little tracts and pamphlets." Scott meant, among other things, that the New Whigs—and their Liberal successors—tended to leave out of their reckoning some of the deeper longings and instincts of the human heart, relying wholly upon private rationality and appeals to enlightened self-interest. But the world really is governed, in any age, not by rationality, but by emotion: by love, loyalty, faith, and imagination. One of the reasons for the decline of the liberals in this century has been the doctrinaire view of human nature and society taken by the leading lights of liberalism. An intense preoccupation with practical economic questions, to the exclusion of theology, morals, and the works of the higher imagination, has afflicted the liberals from the middle of the eighteenth century to the middle of the twentieth. Dr. Hayek himself suggested that he is not unaware of such shortcomings in liberalism; yet he brushed aside the question of the religious origins of our social order.

Behind Mr. Hayek's chain of reasoning—and, to an extent still greater, behind the arguments of other members of the Society, among them Mr. von Mises and Mr. Alexander Rüstow of Heidelberg—seemed to lie the assumption that if only a perfectly free market economy could be established, all social problems would solve themselves in short order. But this is very like saying that if only the Sermon on the Mount were universally obeyed, sin would vanish from among men. No doubt; but the Sermon on the Mount will not be universally obeyed until the end of all things earthly. There are reasons for believing that the ideal universal free market is nearly as difficult of attainment.

The world, in short, never is governed merely by little tracts and pamphlets; nor

can an economic order arise or endure apart from a moral and political order. That many members of the Mont Pèlerin Society seemed to recognize this ineluctable condition of political economy was an encouraging symptom of the altered climate of liberal opinion. As an assembly of scholars, writers, and men of business generally prudent in their views, and devoted to the conserving of social freedom, the Mont Pèlerin Society is one body for stitching together the rent garment of our civilization. Its Tenth Anniversary Meeting was held high among the Alps, in the Romansch-speaking district of Switzerland, where an ancient tongue and ancient ways of life have persisted little altered to our day. The Grisons are governed not by little tracts and pamphlets, but by living traditions. If the better features of old-fashioned liberalism—or Old Whiggery—can be joined to an intelligent defense of continuity and stability in society, much may be done to resist the fell spirit of collectivism, which detests equally the conservative and the liberal of life.

Among the ancient canals and towers of Bruges, the first Conference on North Atlantic Community was held to seek means for resisting the totalitarian assault on our civilization. The College of Europe (situated at Bruges) and the University of Pennsylvania were the sponsors; and the Conference was intended to provide a moral and intellectual equivalent for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. More than a hundred scholars, serious journalists, and political leaders took part, including representatives of all the countries in the NATO except Portugal, Turkey, and Greece. Several Germans and Swiss took an active part, and a small number of émigrés from Eastern Europe were present. Among the moving spirits of the Conference, in addition to Dr. Henri Brugmans (rector of the College of Europe) and Dr. Gaylord P. Harnwell (president of the University of Pennsylvania) were Dr. Hans Kohn and Dr. Robert Strasz-Hupé, American professors who were born and edu-

cated in Europe.

The Conference was divided into several working-groups: religion and spiritual values; education and language; scientific and technological advance and economical problems of Western civilization; causes of tensions; the North Atlantic and totalitarianism; the North Atlantic and the underdeveloped world; institutional framework. At the end of a week, these several groups presented reports, and some general resolutions were adopted, recommending in particular the establishment of an Atlantic Institute (with a branch on either side of the ocean) and the further organized study of the many questions raised at this Conference. As an Irish participant, the writer Mr. Monk Gibbon, remarked to a plenary session, the conclusions of the working-groups were platitudes; but, as he added, platitudes are true. By and large, the Conference was a successful exploration of the foundations of our common civilization, and it was remarkably free from extreme views. The stand taken by the Conference against the Communist power was forthright and intelligently expressed.

Among the participants were conservatives, liberals, socialists, and Christian humanitarians (the last group led by Mr. Adriano Olivetti, the Italian industrialist); there were no Communists or fellow-travellers, though some of the social democrats present still called themselves Marxists. This being so, the considerable degree of agreement which was attained is worth remark. Some subjects, naturally, were slipped over somewhat uneasily, and upon others there were rather ineffectual compromises. In the group concerned with economical problems, Mr. John Davenport, of *Fortune*, endeavored vainly to have inserted a recommendation favoring the institution of private property; the phrase itself was anathema to the socialists. Yet when this group's recommendations were presented in plenary session by their *rapporteur* (an English socialist, Mr. Arthur Gaitskell, brother of Mr. Hugh Gaitskell), the original stand of the socialist members

had been much moderated by the discussions, so that Mr. Gaitskell spoke of capital as a scarce thing, not to be lavished recklessly upon every "underdeveloped" country, and of "trade, not aid." In the group concerned with totalitarianism, some of the socialist members were bent upon including some sort of reproof of the Spanish and Portuguese regimes; but no one doubted that the real menace to the North Atlantic community comes from Communism, and "national" Communism had no sympathizers; the group's condemnation of "national" and "decentralized" communism were drawn up; indeed, by a Belgian socialist, Mr. Arther Wauters, formerly ambassador to Moscow. In the group's final report, there was no reference to Portugal, and the censure of Spain was moderate.

When so much concurrence upon first principles is possible, among a congeries of anti-totalitarians, the North Atlantic community seems to have come a good way toward moral and intellectual harmony. The Conference did not attempt to define precisely the common patrimony of Europe and America. There would have been squabbling at the outset, had such an attempt been made; and it seemed to be well enough understood that a common heritage of religious and moral principle, of culture, and of social institutions does exist. Very prudently, the Conference refrained from drawing up any such abstract document as the United Nations' Declaration of Human Rights. This deliberate lack of precision, however, had the disadvantage of leaving unuttered the great principles which command the loyalty of most people in our trans-Atlantic society. In his closing address to the Conference, Mr. Paul-Henri Spaak got briefly to the root of the matter when he declared that the unifying element in the North Atlantic community is Christianity. He hastily qualified this doctrine, nevertheless, by adding "as enriched by humanism and the French Revolution". Now though humanism (properly understood) did enrich Christianity, the French

Revolution did nothing to the Christian faith except to kick it downstairs. This equivocation from a gentleman usually unequivocal doubtless was a concession to the rationalist and equalitarian persons present, but it suggests a certain ambiguity which must afflict any preliminary attempt among anti-collectivists to find common ground in this divided world.

It seems to me that, cant and equivocation dismissed, there are three great bodies of principle and conviction that unite what is called the North Atlantic community. The first of these is the Christian faith: the theological and moral doctrines which inform us, either side of the Atlantic, of the nature of God and man, the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, human dignity, the rights and duties of human persons, the nature of charity, and the meaning of hope and resignation. The second of these is the corpus of imaginative literature, humane letters, which is the essence of our high culture: humanism, which, with Christian faith, teaches us our nobility and our limitations—the work of Plato, Virgil, Cicero, Dante, Shakespeare, and so many others. The third is a complex of social and political institutions which we may call the reign of law, or ordered liberty: prescription, precedent, impartial justice, private rights, private property, the primacy of the individual person, the nature of genuine community, the rights of the family and of voluntary association. However much these three bodies of conviction have been injured by internecine disputes, nihilism, Benthamism, the cult of Rationalism, Marxism, and other modern afflictions, they remain the rocks upon which our civilization is built.

This Conference on North Atlantic Community did a pious work in moving so far as it did toward a recognition of this common inheritance. If its endeavors are continued, the military alliance of America and the free European states may be sustained by something more important than guided missiles and atomic bombs: by a

common and coherent faith.

Shortly before I flew to Switzerland, my classics-collecting friend and I walked some miles of Hadrian's Wall, away at the back of beyond in Northumberland. Here for centuries, *Romanitas* and *humanitas* looked northward into barbarism. It is an empty country still, much of it; Pictish hill-forts still scowl almost within bow-shot of the Roman masonry. To the men of the legions, garrisoned here generation upon generation, it must have seemed—even toward the end—that Rome was indeed immortal; and that the barbarian, however vexatious he might be in one year or another, never could put an end to a civilization that extended from Mesopotamia to the land of the Picts, from Africa to Germany. Yet in the fullness of time, when the common faith of the Roman world had lost its virtue, the Picts came over the wall. The end of Roman civilization was as sudden as its beginning had been slow.

In material accomplishments, the barbarians never equalled the Romans; nor did they need to. They had the will to endure, and in the end the Romans had not. So all that remains of the material achievement of Roman civilization is some fragments of cultural debris: a few coins, a smashed helmet, scattered beads, a ruined wall, a battered stone head. And as for the Roman moral and intellectual accomplishment, it is sold nowadays for a price not much better than that of wastepaper. We used to put some value on our Roman heritage, and I hope we may do so again. There still are men and women enough among us who know what makes life worth living—enough of them to keep out the modern barbarian, if they are resolute. If they are not resolute, and if they cannot make common cause, the garment of our civilization will go to the rag-bin, and the cultural debris of the twentieth century will drift down the rubbish-heaps of the future. As the participants in these international conferences knew, not many years of drifting are left to us.

POLITICAL ENTHUSIASM AND ECONOMIC SENSE:

Some Comments on European Economic Integration

WILHELM ROEPKE

A GENERATION ago, Alfred Marshall said that it is difficult for an economist to be at once a good patriot and to have the reputation of a good patriot. Economic sense urges the trained mind to seek national welfare in measures that are sure to be rejected by superficial patriots; enlightened patriotism, for instance, often calls for free trade rather than national barriers. What Marshall said is true still; and more, it is not easy for an economist both to be a good European and to have a reputation as a good European.

Mere enthusiasm will not suffice to accomplish the desired European unity. Enthusiasm, true enough, is indispensable for overcoming the obstacles that still are in the way of a united Europe, but here patriotism alone is not enough. European patriotism—if it is not too soon to use this phrase—needs to be guided by good sense, lest damage be wrought by a well-intentioned but misguided impatience to see things done. This applies especially to the economic realm; and this is why the present writer, an economist who has sympathy and understanding for the efforts toward European economic integration, feels impelled to put the case of economic sense without a sugar coating. In doing so, I do not intend to discourage the political enthusiasm at work in the European endeavor; but I indulge the hope of serving the best interest of Europe by contending against errors and illusions.

Regional Free Trade: a Two-Faced Proposition

Several questions arise, and are put here in order of their importance. The most important is this: In what circumstances will the contemplated common market—whether it be the economic and tariff union of “Little Europe” (the six Messina countries) that is meant by the phrase, or the looser “Free Trade Zone” of all OEFC countries—bring about the expected benefits from a more advantageous trade, a more advanced division of labor, and a general European increase in wealth? To ask this question is to correct the widely-held unqualified view that these benefits are to be expected in any event; and that any *regional* removal of tariff barriers, in liberating trade and increasing wealth, would differ only in quantity (not in quality) from a *general* abolition of trade barriers. In point of fact, this view is quite erroneous, and it is of the greatest importance that this should be recognized.

For one thing, it is quite clear that the expected benefits will be the greater the more countries join in the contemplated exercise. Since the more ambitious proposition, that of an economic and customs union, is even in the most favourable circumstances not likely to be achieved over the whole geographical area, a Free Trade Zone could well cover it (being a mere