

EUROPE AND THE WORLD



**Address for the
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and the
Danish Council for the European Movement
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by

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PAPER READ BY S.L. MANSHOLT, NETHERLANDS MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD TO THE DANISH SOCIETY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND THE DANISH COUNCIL FOR THE EUROPEAN MOVEMENT, COPENHAGEN, MARCH 29, 1955.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great privilege to me to be your guest speaker tonight and I am indeed both honoured and flattered by the invitation you have so kindly extended to me. To a Dutchman and in particular to a citizen of the province of Groningen like I am myself, a visit to Denmark is like going from your own house into the house of a friendly neighbour. For many centuries the fates of our two countries have been closely linked and now they are more similar than they have ever been before. Not only do many ties of history link us together, but both our countries, Denmark and the Netherlands, have now become even more closely tied by the second World War and the subsequent events which have very ostentatiously demonstrated our common fate: we are neighbours in that small part of the world that is called Europe. Therefore too I find it particularly gratifying that Mr. Federspiel who is so extremely well known all over Europe as a man devoted to its cause, is here tonight and that he has been kind enough to take it upon himself to introduce me to you.

I have been asked to speak to you tonight on the subject "Europe and the World". But what I would rather do, is to think aloud and to throw out for your consideration some of the ideas that have been besetting my mind for a long time.

It is often said that we in Europe are responsible for the continuation of the great traditions of civility, traditions which blend together the best elements of Greek and Roman culture, of the Christian civilisation and of the humanist tradition as it blossomed during the Renaissance. A very precious treasure indeed. A treasure, which Europe did not keep to itself, but of which many parts of the world beyond the seas have partaken.

Yet it often seems to me that this proud inheritance of the past has ever since the turn of the century tended to function as a drug instead of functioning as a stimulating factor in Western thinking. And the first suggestion I would like to throw out is that there is a mounting disorder in Western society with which so far we have not been able to cope adequately. And if this is true I would like to throw out a second suggestion, which is, that during the last five or six decades the Western world has not been governing events, but has only been reacting to them.

In particular during the latter half of the last century the Western world strongly believed that the form of government which by culture and tradition it had invented

for itself would spread all over the world. Before the outbreak of the first World War many a European believed that liberal democracy would be the form of government that would finally become the pattern of the whole globe.

By determining liberal democracy I am not so much using the word liberal in its purely political sense, but rather in its philosophical significance. The word liberal as I use it tonight does indicate the principles of freedom in a democracy where a freely elected representative body does represent the opinion of the electorate and where the members of the government may be sent into temporary or permanent political exile if they go against the will of such a body. But I do feel that the democracies of the Western world as a whole, and I would stress that I am speaking of them as a whole, as a body total, do present an alarming picture of being unable to cope with the realities of this century.

Nowadays it is almost a truism to say that Europe's influence on world affairs has dwindled and that political power has shifted on the one hand to the other side of the Atlantic Ocean and on the other hand towards Russia. That is a truism, but nevertheless as a phenomenon it is almost unbelievable that this could happen in fifty years' time.

One only has to glance through the works of philosophers and statesmen which were published at the end of the last century to find that they all firmly believed in the primacy of the Western world. It is only during the first decade of the new century that some of them began to worry about the future of democracy as it was familiar to them and it was only after 1917 that some of them did in fact realise that a fundamental change in the prospects of democracy had been announced.

Now let us look for a moment at the decisions the liberal democracies had to face during the latter half of the last century, that age of progress and evolution. This was the happy period when governments were not really faced with troubling problems. Statesmen became habituated to the notion that in a free and progressive society it is a good thing that the government should be weak. The expression is not my own. I have borrowed it from Walter Lippmann who has expounded this theory in his recent book "The Public Philosophy". But I do wholeheartedly agree with him. It was a common belief that the public good was immanent in the aggregate of private transactions.

But the situation was rapidly changing. And whereas nationalism was rampant the masses of the enormously increasing population of Europe began to make their demands. And though socialism at the beginning of this century had become strong enough to forcefully demand that the common man be enfranchised, the new rulers were yet too inexperienced and had too little influence on the conduct of foreign affairs to avoid the impending disaster. The conduct of foreign affairs in the democracies was until the First World War not even a Cabinet affair; it was the strict domain of the Head of the State and the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

After the first World War it was apparent that in the countries of Eastern Europe democracy had not sufficiently taken root, as a consequence of which the leaders in those countries were not sufficiently strong to translate the desires of the revolting population into that form of government which would indeed have responded to their unconscious dreams of peace and prosperity and freedom. In Western Europe and in the North-West of that continent where all through the centuries changes had always been more evolutionary than revolutionary, liberal democracy evolved into a form of social democracy or a mixture of what I would like to call for the occasion Christian-social-democracy. But even in those fortunate countries of North-Western Europe and Western Europe, in countries like our own, democratic politicians did only seldom try to look into the more distant future of Europe and of the form of government they were serving. Why is this? The answer does not only lie in the fact that even under the auspices of an organisation like the League of Nations the smaller countries of Europe could exercise relatively little influence. It also lies, I think, in the fact that the liberal notion that a government should rather administer a country than govern it, still was very much alive. It was not sufficiently realised that the disaster of which Europe had just victoriously emerged, had also been demonstrating the need for a more active relationship between a democratic government and parliament. Because soon after the end of the first world war it became very apparent indeed that the machinery of government as it had existed in the democracies before the war, was no longer sufficient to cope with the demands of the times.

Social welfare systems had to be established, a full employment policy became a very necessary thing, and in the thirties there was no country in Western Europe that was not applying government controls to regulate the economic life of the country.

I often wonder what in a hundred years' time the historian will say of the situation that prevailed in Europe between the two wars and again it must be acknowledged that in the, what I would like to call, evolutionary democracies of Western Europe, order prevailed. But it must also be acknowledged that the new leaders of these countries, of our countries, whether they were socialists or Christian socialists or liberals, did with very few exceptions lack in international foresight. Of course some of them did realise that a new disaster was impending, but they either did shun their foresight about these troublesome changes for fear of being sent into the political wilderness or of bringing public disfavour to their party, which had to stand for peace and prosperity, or they did concentrate so much on home affairs that they forgot that in modern society no country is any longer an entity in itself. The general rule was that a democratic politician had better not be right too soon. I have always greatly admired a man like Duff Cooper who as a member of Chamberlain's government that negotiated the false peace of Munich in 1938, had the moral courage to speak up

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against Chamberlain in a House of Commons, which stood cheering Chamberlain. It is this pressure of public opinion that has made many a statesman falter when his foresight told him that he would have to make a decision that would go against the wishes of popular opinion. For public opinion tends to say "no" whenever the demand that is made upon the electorate for the common good, is a disagreeable one. Higher taxes? No, of course not. Peace by settlement, instead of dictated peace? No, of course not, we are the victors. Less protection for the common good of the consumers? No, of course not, but this, I must confess, is not so much an answer given by public opinion, as it is an answer given by the vested interests, as all of us, who have been working for a freer European economy know.

You may well be thinking that I am painting a picture of doom and I would not be surprised if some of you might think: "Well now he is going to speak of the atomic age and demonstrate that any attempt to salvage the European vessel is futile, and then it will all be over and we may all go home." But if such had been my intention, it would have been better for me not to come here at all. And indeed, I do still firmly believe that though Europe's influence as a political center of the world had dwindled, Europe can have a future, both in itself and in the world. But I also believe that the task and duties which evolve from the belief in such a European renaissance, can only be understood if they are placed against the background of the developments that have taken place during the last 70 years.

I would think that there are two problems which are now facing Europe and unless these two problems can be solved adequately I have little hope for the future of the Old World. The first one is the problem of rebuilding the European political framework and the second one is the relationship between Europe and the young independent nations of in particular the Asian world. That is the problem of the relationship between the Western world and the so-called less-developed countries.

First I would like to dwell for a few moments on the problem of European integration and European unity. Earlier this evening I have already spoken of the shift of political power from Europe to the new capitals of the world, Washington and Moscow. But what has most contributed to strengthening the growing sense of the need for unity in Europe amongst its peoples was the growing tension between East and West. This tension, of course, went against the hopes and desires of all of us who had so much wanted the United Nations to become the instrument for effectively maintaining peace and lawfulness in the world. Nevertheless as a beneficial result of this growing divergence between East and West the idea of coherence in the Atlantic community and in Europe itself became much stronger. Europe however, was also faced with the necessity of bringing back into its family again the country which had caused so many wrongs

over now almost a century, Germany.

And here it must be said over and again that the vision of men like Schuman and Monnet is almost unparalleled in modern European history. We should, I think, constantly keep in mind that the significance of the Coal and Steel Community is not so much its economic importance as it is its political impact. The Coal and Steel Community was created to kill forever the political divergencies between France and Germany. That, Mr. Chairman, is the importance of the Coal and Steel Community. And further an entirely new thing was devised in this attempt to discard forever the French-German divergence, and that is the supranational principle. It was demanded and accepted that each of the participating states gave up part of its national sovereignty for the benefit of the community of the six nations. This is a new fruit Western political and constitutional thinking has borne, and it is a highly important point to note.

Schuman did indeed possess the moral courage to tackle this problem that had been burning up Europe for such a long time: the hatred and distrust between two of its major countries. As a phenomenon this is interesting enough in itself: here was a statesman who had the courage to answer the question peace by settlement or peace by dictate in a positive way.

But there is another very important point to which I must now draw your attention: the Marshall Plan too has been an element in modern Western history, the importance of which may not be underestimated. The Marshall Plan is the positive acknowledgement of the principle of common responsibility for the welfare of the Western world; it is the expression of common responsibility for the common good.

Here in Europe we do often strongly criticize the United States of America. We tend to say, or at least to think, that America really is a very young nation and that it lacks the experience, the very precious experience which we here have gained and acquired through the centuries. We are benevolent enough to hold out some hope for the future: America will learn, if it only would listen to us. I must say that I do very definitely disagree with this kind of attitude. The Marshall Plan, I think, is almost unprecedented in history. Here was a nation which was willing to carry an enormous burden of taxation for the benefit of the moral and economic reconstruction of a group of countries on the other side of the Atlantic, including the enemies who had been slain.

We may therefore note two positive and encouraging events in Western history: the birth of the supranational principle and the acceptance by a non-European but yet Western country, of the principle of common responsibility for the common good. There are other elements as well. There is the recognition, at least by some of the European countries, of the fact that colonialism can no longer be valid in the modern system of states. Some of us, like for instance the United Kingdom, were quick to acknowledge this, some of us - and I regret to say that the Netherlands are among these - were slower in accepting this truth, others have unfortu-

nately not yet fully acknowledged it.

It is not surprising at all, I think, that the supranational principle for the government of European affairs has had to suffer severe criticism and strong attacks. The fate of the European Defense Community in the French Assembly did indeed demonstrate that this body was as yet unable to positively answer the question of European unity. And it was unfortunate that the whole problem of European integration had become dependent on the acceptance of the Treaty for the European Defense Community by the French Assembly.

We should however not be mistaken. The arguments in favour of European integration and unification are as strong as they have ever been before, both politically and economically. Politically the set-back European integration has suffered has deeply shaken the confidence of in particular the younger generation. For it is above all they, who do realise that the national state has outlived its existence in our part of the world. Unless new initiatives will succeed in bringing European integration back into perspective, the position of Western Europe may well have suffered a great deal, both in the conduct of world affairs and in Europe's influence thereupon and internally. Still I am very confident indeed that within six months from now the subject of European integration will again be as topical as it was before the downfall of E.D.C. But I am also convinced that European integration will have to suffer some new attacks, that new attempts to frustrate it, like the rejection of E.D.C., will appear. Great ideas do only slowly gain ground in the international democratic world. European integration will take a long time. Perhaps only our grandchildren will see it achieved. But let us not forget that there is "periculum in mora". Unless Europe unite it will perish.

Political integration has no sense unless it goes together with economic integration. A national state is an integrated community, both politically and economically. Likewise the European Political Community must gradually become economically integrated as well. Economic integration is a vital necessity, though this often is not sufficiently acknowledged. In general the European economic situation now is one of prosperity. But developments since 1945 have not at all gone into the direction of safeguarding us against a revival of the beggar-your-neighbour policy of the inter-war period. Protectionism still nationally is the thing to live for. And in particular in the field of trade in agricultural commodities quantitative restrictions have been maintained. In the field of lowering tariffs little has been achieved and convertibility still seems to be clouded by the future.

We all are aware of the necessity for a government to maintain an active social and economic policy. This is a social and political necessity and it is indeed fortunate that we now are able to conduct government policy in such a way that in case of a depression the consequences will at least on a short term basis not be so severe as they were in the thirties. But we should also fully bear in mind that

in case of such a depression the loose system of international consultations on an intergovernmental basis as we have them in O.E.E.C. and the G.A.T.T., will not sustain the strain. Governments will necessarily have to go back to the system of beggar-your-neighbour. There is no evidence whatsoever that the old system of international co-operation between fully sovereign states could provide in times of depression the necessary solution. This system has utterly failed in solving the economic and social problem of the inter-war period, and the experience with this system since 1945 is that as soon as a decision is required that would be beneficial for the common good, but which goes against the interest of one of the nations, it is vetoed. The supranational formula must remedy this malady in such a way that gradually and effectively a European social and economic policy as it now exists in the highly developed nations of North-Western and Western Europe will be established. Otherwise a recession will inevitably bring back the beggar-your-neighbour system, and further we should also bear in mind that even now tendencies of disintegration as for instance a close co-operation between France and Germany, European commodity arrangements for agricultural commodities, international kartellisation, do in particular place the smaller nations of Europe in a very weak position.

I do very well understand that so far the Scandinavian countries have been hesitating as far as European integration is concerned. It is very true indeed that the picture of progress in this field is not a very bright one. Geographical conditions too do certainly play a role in these considerations. What also does certainly play a very important part is the position of the United Kingdom. But here we should not be mistaken. The Treaty of Association between the United Kingdom and the Coal and Steel Community that now has been established is sufficient evidence of once European integration is taking a more definite shape the United Kingdom will not stay away from it. I feel quite convinced that once the six nations of the Schuman Plan are again engaged in trying to set up the European Political Community, the United Kingdom will seek to stimulate this development and will also associate herself to such a community. Yet I cannot but deeply regret that the United Kingdom has not from the very beginning on played an active role in the efforts towards European integration. Duff Cooper tells us in his Memoirs how he thought when working for the Treaty of Dunkirk, which later became the nucleus of the Treaty of Brussels, that this could be the beginning of a European federation. It is regrettable that no heed was taken of his suggestions, for Western European union as it is now being established under the London Agreements is nothing but a military alliance, the necessary alternative for E.D.C.

Mr. Chairman, I must now come to my second point, the relationship between the Western world and Asia. Let us however first again try to look at the framework. The Western community - Atlantic Union - in my mind has three components. They are the North American continent, the United Kingdom -

and through her the members of the Commonwealth are related to the Atlantic Community, - and thirdly Western Europe. I do not think that time is yet ripe for political not to speak of economic integration of the Atlantic Community as a whole, but I do very firmly believe that the Western world can only be strong if the three components which together form it, are strong and stable and as closely co-ordinate their policies as is humanly possible. Atlantic Union does embrace those Western countries which by culture and tradition are democratic. The political and institutional background of these countries is different and will remain different from the Soviet world. This is a fact we have to accept and we should be well aware that whenever we discuss with a communist principles like freedom, democracy, peace, we speak of different notions. There is no compromise possible: democracy has an entirely different meaning to a communist from what it has to us. We have to accept that fact. The road Soviet Russia has gone since 1917 and the method and systems it has used in trying to improve the fate of its peoples can never be ours. It cannot be ours because it is fundamentally opposed to the principles of human dignity, justice, righteousness and lawfulness as we accept them and wish to maintain them. But it cannot be denied that the vast populations of the Asian world cannot possibly be attached to our Western principles as we understand them. To them they are a theory which does not improve their fate and it may very well be that they would much prefer the hardships of a communist regime if this would at least give them some reasonable degree of certainty as to the improvement of their fate and their standard of living.

This is one fundamental reason why the problem of the underdeveloped areas now politically is one of the most important problems that is facing the Western world. Its importance is only second to the problem of war and peace and it is closely related to it. I would therefore like to throw out the suggestion that unless the Western world is willing to actively contribute to improving the standard of living in these vast areas, the younger nations of the Asian world will gradually be drawn into the Russian sphere of influence. Extensive aid to the lesser developed countries is, I would venture to say, as much a matter of self defense of the West as the military defense measures we are taking in Nato.

I would like to maintain that technical and economic aid to the non-Western non-communist world is a duty incumbent on the West. It is not only a duty that falls upon us because of our very principles but it also is a matter of self-defense. We have learned by now that it was a fallacy to think that our form of government would fit each nation of the world and we are now accepting this as a fact. The action we have taken so far in particular under the auspices of the United Nations and its Technical Assistance Program, has certainly yielded some results. There are signs too of a growing solidarity whenever there is an emergency in the world. The sympathy and assistance

that came to my own country when the flood disaster of 1953 occurred, has been a moving example which has filled us with deep gratitude. And we fortunately can point to many more examples of humanitarian actions. But neither the technical assistance programs as established either multilaterally or bilaterally under the United Nations, the Colombo Plan or the Foreign Operations Administration of the United States are commensurate to the magnitude of the problem. There annually is an investment deficit of about 10 million pounds. If the Western world acknowledges its responsibilities it must be able to increase the standard of living in the underdeveloped areas to such an extent that those nations realise that this is a good alternative to what the Communist world has to offer. This, Mr. Chairman, is not only a long-term problem. The situation is such that this now also has become a matter of high expediency.

It is unfortunate that the General Assembly of the United Nations when discussing the proposals for a Special United Nations Fund for Economic Development (Sunfed) last autumn, did not reach final agreement. We should not forget that the young independent nations of the world do much prefer the United Nations to any organisation that is purely Western in its conception and which to them might still smell of neo-colonialism or neo-imperialism. It is gratifying that countries like Denmark and the Netherlands did indeed support these proposals for a Sunfed and we must most certainly continue to do so. The responsibility of the Western world and of Europe in particular with regard to the problem of the lesser developed areas as I see it is to promote the establishment of a large-scale multilateral program and to contribute to it even at the expense of the Western standard of living. This again, is one of these questions, to which the emotional answer is "no", because the short-term benefit to the European taxpayer does not exist, but foresight must warn us that this is a duty we cannot escape if we want to survive ourselves.

Mr. Chairman, I have tried to demonstrate my belief in the future of democracy, of Europe and of the Western world. I believe that we still may master the mounting disorder that now prevails, but this is not possible unless we are prepared to make sacrifices for the common good, both on our own continent and beyond the seas. It does fill me with hope that in particular the younger generation is not averse to this task. May I now then end on this note of optimism and thank you all for the patience with which you have borne my thinking aloud.

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