

European Community
In Seattle : Ted Van Dyk AT 4-7390

EUROPE IN THE MAKING

ADDRESS BY PIERRE WIGNY
FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER OF BELGIUM

EUROPEAN DAYS, SEATTLE WORLD'S FAIR
SEPTEMBER 24, 1962

HOLD FOR RELEASE UNTIL 1200 (NOON)

24 SEPTEMBER 1962

Here in Seattle, on the shores of the Pacific, I have to attempt to get you to understand Community Europe in the space of a few minutes - a very difficult task ! I could do it in scientific terms, with a welter of facts and figures and subtle legal analyses. However, I prefer to do so by telling you something of the great human experience which we Europeans have gone through. For if Community Europe is a revolution, this is because it has first come to pass in our hearts.

*

* *

In the first place why did we have to unite ? Belgium, where I live, is a small country which was always a battlefield for its neighbours. During my lifetime alone my country has suffered military occupation for a total of nine years. And what a tale of destruction ! I will give you one example. The library of Louvain University, an international center of learning, has been twice burned down and twice rebuilt. It was partly the contribution of American school-children that paid for the rebuilding, and the names of hundreds of schools are inscribed on the walls of the hall.

War was hard, but do not imagine that peace was easy either. In Europe we exported a great deal when things were going well, but when bad times came everybody shut himself up in a national market which was much too small.

The consequences are easy to guess: the standard of living was too low because production was on too small a scale; equipment was too old because it took too long to pay for itself; we produced under licence from foreign firms because our research departments were inadequate.

What I am saying about Belgium was true of all her neighbours. There were no longer any great powers in Europe. Such was the result of technical progress. To recover our place in the world, our security and our prosperity, we had to unite.

*

* *

It was the Frenchman, M. Robert Schuman and his adviser, M. Jean Monnet, who first had the idea. It was an act of courage, for less than five years earlier the Europeans had been fighting each other furiously as they had done for centuries. Let us pool in a Common Market, said Schuman and Monnet, the basic industries of coal and steel. First, in this European market these industries will modernize themselves. And, secondly, war will become impossible since the armies will have the same sources for their equipment. You may note that from the outset the political aim was intermingled with the economic aim.

Community Europe was born, and it had a flag - an unofficial one - which was devised for the Brussels Exhibition : black to represent coal, blue for steel and six golden stars to symbolize the six founder States - Germany, France and Italy and the three Benelux countries, Belgium, the Netherlands and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

But why only six countries ? If Europe was so necessary, why did so many free nations - in particular Great Britain - hesitate ? The reasons are many and not always easy for Americans to understand.

First, there is the diversity of the European nations. To you it seems quite simple to unite the State of Washington with Maine and Texas. This is because the pioneers who come to create this admirable country were everywhere the same. Although their pasts were different they had definitely broken with

them and all were borne up by the aspiration to create the same future. In Europe our nations have lived a thousand years on the same soil and this is not easily forgotten.

French is spoken here, English or German there. It is not only a question of language, for the civilizations are different. American tourists like to visit London and then Paris or Rome. At each trip they find another world. We Europeans are proud of these human riches which we would not want to abandon. And this diversity is useful where it does not stand in the way of collaboration when the same problem is tackled from several angles by minds with different backgrounds the chances are that the right answer will be found more rapidly.

Now comes the second difficulty. No state was prepared to sacrifice its own people to the welfare of Europe in general. Each had to have the conviction that it would itself advance further and faster in the European framework than in isolation. A State which was weak and badly equipped had to be temporarily protected and even given effective aid. To go even further, the means chosen had to benefit not only each State but also the greatest possible number of individuals. We would not permit "social" dumping, i.e. allow any State in a unified market to engage in unfair competition by under-paying its labour.

Now we come to the third and most important difficulty. In the Common Market competition is therefore subject to rules; there is an economic and social policy. This being so, authorities are needed with power to lay down this policy. Hence supranationality. Would-be member States take fright. Are they not going to lose their independence and sovereignty ?

It is for these various reasons that only six States first set up the European Coal and Steel Community, followed by the Common Market and Euratom.

*

* ~ *

Naturally they did not do so without taking precautions. They first endeavoured to draw up a good Treaty, but in particular they aimed at an effective organization of the European authorities which will be the policy-making bodies in the future.

We have a European Parliament, a European Government and a Court of Justice. I am not going to give you a lecture on law, for basically there is only one point of any great political importance. How will decisions be taken? Here the founders of Europe showed great ingenuity.

You Americans have a Federal Government which takes the major decisions for the fifty States of the Union. In Europe we cannot adopt such a simple formula. I have already explained how different our countries were from one another, still covered with the ruins of the last war and with no experience of close collaboration.

It was possible also to imagine a Council composed of the Foreign Ministers of each Member State and making its decisions unanimously. In this case there would be every safeguard, since each would practically have a right of veto. But the danger of this formula is that there will be no policy. The most hesitant member can block a decision on any point unless the others accept his objection. Paradoxically, the unanimity rule in fact establishes a dictatorship of the minority.

In order to avoid this risk the Council of Ministers, under a third formula, could take its decisions by majority vote. In this case there is no longer any safeguard, since a State which is in the minority may be forced to accept a course of policy which is counter to its vital interests.

The system finally adopted is novel and very original for it combines all the foregoing. In Community Europe we have a Commission or High Authority; it is not a Federal Government, but is at any rate a supra-national body quite independent of the States.

Alongside it there is a Council of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of each country. These Ministers take their decisions by majority vote in more and more numerous cases, but they can only do so in one way or another, the solution has the backing of the High Authority or Commission.

It is a bold structure. For the first time in history an "empire" is founded not upon conquest, not upon force, but in peace and with the consent of all parties. It is also the first time that such an association has been set up amongst nations which short years before were locked in mortal struggle.

Has it proved a success? Without doubt, it has. Here one is tempted to quote figures. At one stroke, the old continent has become the continent of the future. You can read all about this in the documents which have been distributed.

But there is something more important than statistics and that is psychology, the human factor. There has been a veritable revolution in the minds of men.

I promised to tell you a story. Well then, this is what I have experienced. When the deputies from the six member countries met for the first time in the European Parliament at Strasbourg, they were quite surprised to find who were their neighbours. By an accident of the alphabet, I found myself between a German and an Italian. Suddenly we realized that we were part of a team. Instead of sitting together as national delegations, we were grouped according to party affiliation, as in a national Parliament. From then on we thought of nothing but the building of Europe.

Experience in the Council of Ministers was the same. It meets more than once a month. This has become a routine and is no longer thought of as an extraordinary diplomatic meeting.

We are ahead of schedule in all fields. The authors of the Treaty planned various stages, or periods of adaptation. These have been shortened. The most extraordinary thing is that despite this quickened pace developments in the pri-

vate sector are moving faster than in the governmental. All the businessmen, merchants, and trade unionists are acting as if the Common Market were already achieved. They have radically changed their outlook. They are no longer thinking on the country level, but on the continental; they are discovering the secret of American dynamism. To all the tangible achievements we must add all that is in preparation, all that is still on the drawing board.

Agriculture offers an astonishing example. Farmers are so much at the mercy of nature that they mistrust inventions of man. The founders of the European Community had planned that an agricultural policy would begin after twelve years. Only four years have elapsed, and the principles of a common agricultural policy have been established and will be gradually applied.

Above all, the young people have been won over. In the victorious but previously occupied countries, as well as in the vanquished and bombed, they had been humiliated and discouraged. They felt that they had been born too late in a continent that was too old. Their bitterness was increased by the abandonment of possessions in Africa and Asia (freely agreed to almost everywhere but nevertheless accompanied by ingratitude on one side and suffering on the other, and even by a lack of understanding on the part of allies). But in the European Community, on this continent replete with ties deriving from our ancient civilization, youth found in unification the chance of achieving a future previously beyond hope.

This, then, is the meaning of the European Community. It represents a real revolution. This is to say that it implies a new political organization, that this in turn will make possible a complete change in methods of production, and that all this is brought about by a radical change of outlook.

The best proof of the European Community's vitality is that its people are not content with what is now unfolding. They want to go further. This brings me to certain problems of the future, of which two are preeminent.

One of them lies in the fact that after establishing the economic Europe of the Common Market we must set up a political Europe. This means a development in depth. The other problem is, if I may so express myself, more on the horizontal plane. The Community, which is already the leading trading power, cannot remain isolated. What part is it going to play, what will be its place in the world ?

Let us begin with political Europe. The newspapers have been full of this expression for some time. What exactly does it mean ? In a certain sense, the existing Communities of the European Coal and Steel Community, the European Economic Community and Euratom are already policy-making entities. The authorities of the European Communities are already called upon by the Treaties to develop a transport policy, an agricultural policy, an energy policy, and so on. But we must go further than that. Even in the field of foreign affairs the Communities have a certain say. Since they have a common tariff, they negotiate with the GATT and the OECD; they conclude commercial agreements. In Brussels there are two distinct diplomatic corps: the ambassadors accredited to His Majesty the King of the Belgians, and the ambassadors who represent the same countries to the European Communities. There one of the most important diplomatic conferences for the future of the world is being held, the conference which is studying the terms for British membership in the Community.

When we speak of political Europe we are thinking of something new, something additional to what we have done so far and something with a precise meaning. To avoid technicalities and to convey only the idea, I should say that for those who support political Europe this part of the continent must not only be organized as an economic bloc but must also become a Power - capable in the first place of working out its own destiny, but also capable of co-operating effectively with others. Is this not what the United States and the USSR are doing themselves ? Can one blame the European nations for having the same ambition ?

This ambition has been there from the beginning. I have already said that Mr. Schumann wished to pool the coal and steel industries in a common market not only for economic reasons but also in order to prevent France and Germany once and for all from going to war with each other.

Later, an attempt was made to extend this idea by setting up a European Defense Community in which even the armies of the member states were to be merged. The Treaty for this Community was approved by five out of the six Parliaments and only failed at the last moment through the refusal of the French Government under Mr. Mendes-France. Then came the failure of another plan for a political community, which had been drawn up by the ad hoc Assembly. I was personally associated with this effort. You can hardly have any conception of the enthusiasm of all those politicians and lawyers who felt they were the builders of a new European edifice, nor of their disappointment, their anger and their tears, when the edifice crumbled before it had been completed.

They were disappointed, but they did not lose heart or abandon the struggle. The plans for a political Europe are again under discussion today.

If it is only natural that the people of Western Europe should wish to unite to restore their dignity and influence, what is stopping them? Why are there such difficulties in building a political Europe?

The first hurdle is that they are not yet agreed on the substance. What policy should this Europe pursue, once it has materialized? One basic idea is certainly accepted by all: NATO remains the organization which the free world needs while it is threatened by communism. Political Europe, if it comes about, can never be a third force standing between the United States and Russia. There can be no question of neutrality; on the contrary what we want is to make a more effective contribution to common defense. But on many other problems the European States are not in agreement. How should we resolve the Berlin question?

What should be our African policy ? Should we recognize Communist China ? On all these points the Governments have taken varying positions.

Of course, it may be argued that we need not have identical views on everything to make political Europe, that a European organization, once it begins to function, will reconcile conflicting views and finally work out a common solution. But this is where the second difficulty arises. What should this organization be like ? There are two different concepts : the "Europe of the nations" and the "Europe of the Communities."

The convinced Europeans would like political Europe to be built on the same lines as economic Europe, with a Council of Ministers, a European Commission, and decisions by majority. The others feel that this is premature. They propose that the Heads of State or Government should meet periodically to discuss major problems and take decisions, if any, by unanimous vote. To this the former object that such a Europe would not be worthwhile. Meeting once every three months the Heads of State or Government can do little more than take note of, and perhaps approve, what their ambassadors and civil servants have decided and worked out. It would not be worthwhile going to so much trouble to create a European facade.

The great anxiety is that political Europe, which has yet to be built should not undo economic Europe, which is already a success. It is feared that if the Heads of State meet, these demi-gods cannot be prevented from busying themselves with everything, even matters which are the province of the existing Communities - thereby robbing them of their substance.

I should like to illustrate this by an example. At the end of 1961 the Common Market Community was to pass from its first to its second stage. Was the experiment sufficiently encouraging to be continued, or was it to be halted at any rate for a year ? The Ministers could not agree. As the decision had to be taken by the 31st of December, under the terms of the Treaty, the first thing to do was to stop the clocks - which enabled the Ministers to sit until the 14th of January. The

Commission made a succession of proposals for a solution. The Ministers slowly moved closer together. The last session went on for a day and a night, and at 6 o'clock in the morning the deed was done. You realize, of course, that the Ministers would not have made such an effort, that the Community would not have wielded such influence, if they had known that their decision would be subject to review by the Heads of State three months later. They would all have gone home to celebrate New Year's Eve... and we would not have entered the second stage. There you see the controversy in a nutshell.

In these few remarks I cannot suggest solutions. I shall limit myself to a forecast. Political Europe will come to be, because it is a necessity. We must proceed by stages to gain experience and make transitions. There will be no European political entity until the day when it can take, by a majority vote, decisions impartially prepared by an unbiased administration. We now come to the other question. What place is the Community to take in the world? It is a young giant. When it stirs, the whole world feels the repercussions and many States fear that they may be crushed under its weight.

The Europeans play a very important role in world trade. They have long been the great importers, exporters, investors and providers of experts, whereas the eyes of the United States or Russia have rather been turned on their internal markets.

Certain near neighbours of the Community have such close economic ties with it that they wish to become members. As you know, the entry of Great Britain into the Communities is under discussion in Brussels at this moment. And there are quite a few other European countries awaiting their turn. Negotiations are also going on with the newly-independent French-speaking African States. This is a complex diplomatic conference of vital importance to the future of the world. What is the position of the Europeans in all this ?

We must be quite frank. Technically, the Community does not need to grow any bigger. In its present boundaries, it already has about 170 million inhabitants, and these are amongst the most highly skilled people in the world. The community therefore compares well with the United States or the USSR; it is already big enough to draw the maximum benefit from all modern technology. But politically, the problem looks different. The Europeans cannot make themselves prosperous by withdrawing within themselves and plunging all those around them into a terrible crisis. Such egoism would be bad business because crises are always contagious.

Naturally the difficulties are great. There is much discussion of Danish agriculture, of the Commonwealth, of industries that need protection.

All these are technical matters which specialists can always settle. But at bottom problem is a political and even a psychological one. The Europeans say to the would-be members : "If you want to join the club, you must accept the rules and pay your subscription. We are not going to change the supranational formula which has been the source of our success. You must understand also that Europe is not made, but in the making. The Economic Community is not yet consummated and we are working hard to cap it with a political Community. We don't need people to climb on to the bandwagon of victory, but people ready to take up battle positions." That is the real issue. Certain countries are only thinking of a vast European market where workers, goods and capital can move without hindrance. Europe is more than that. It has an economic policy and authorities to put it into effect. It is an economic bloc, but aspires to become a power: It must be accepted as a whole.

It is true that certain countries cannot, or quite simply do not wish to, enter a European political unit. It would be foolish to beg them because instead of helping us to advance, they would put on the brake. An associate status must be devised for them, which will confer upon them economic advantages - and

responsibilities - but no share in control or powers of decision. They can benefit from the wide market, but as they do not fully subscribe to our ideals, they must not be able to halt us in our march forward.

Other countries are not thinking of associating with the Common Market, but want to have fruitful relations with it. On this side of the Atlantic, your country itself is an economic bloc of such dimensions that no further integration is called for. But co-operation with Europe is desirable.

Naturally, one's first thought is of negotiations to reduce customs duties between the United States and the European Community and to increase the volume of trade for the benefit of both partners. But we must go further than that. There are enormous economic problems which cannot be solved unless there is understanding between the major groups of countries. In the past, any economic crisis in one bloc was likely to propagate itself throughout the world, bringing bankruptcy and unemployment in its wake. Can we not pursue an economic policy together? "Hot money" travelling across monetary systems, choking one and draining the lifeblood out of the other, is threatening the stability of exchange rate. Could this not be better safeguarded by agreements? The underdeveloped countries need stable resources to work out and to finance long-term plans. Should not the great industrial powers come to an understanding to stabilize raw material prices? East-West trade is made difficult because the two economic systems do not calculate cost prices in the same way. Should we not create conditions for mutually profitable trade? The Europe of the Communities makes such world-wide agreements possible.

In conclusion, I must express the gratitude of Europeans to the United States. You prefer a powerful ally to poor and feeble satellites. In the beginning, you had to save nations ravaged and disorganized by war. You made Marshall aid subject to one condition, which was that it should lead to liberalized trade amongst

European States. Later, when six of the bolder States went ahead to integration amongst themselves, they had the support of American diplomacy. There is greatness and generosity in that policy. We have understood it with heart and mind, and we shall not forget it.

#####