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The Eastern meeting

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15, 1966

Sheraton Hotel
1725 Pennsylvania Boulevard
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103

"WHICH WAY UNITED STATES FOREIGN POLICY?"

Friday, October 14 (Eastern Daylight Time)

8:00 — 10:00 Reception — Connie Mack Room

Saturday, October 15

9:15 — 9:45 Registration — Coffee — Pennsylvania West Room

9:45 — 11:45 **WHERE DOES THE MAJOR DANGER LIE?**

Frank J. Johnson, Former Naval Intelligence Officer

Richard V. Allen, The Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, Stanford University

12:15 — 2:00 Luncheon — Hall of Flags Room

Wm. F. Buckley, Jr., Editor, *National Review*

2:30 — 4:30 **WHAT IS THE PROPER ROLE FOR UNITED STATES FOREIGN POLICY?**

James J. Martin, Rampart College Graduate School

Fritz J. A. Kraemer, Author and Lecturer

4:30 Adjournment

(Over, please)

The Need to Maintain a Civilization

Meeting in Chicago recently, a hundred or more scholars, economists, philosophers and polemicists gave the lie to rumors that conservatism has no future in America

GUY DAVENPORT

"It has become almost impossible to communicate anything outside the stimulus and tone range of the bonging bell," Whittaker Chambers wrote twelve years ago, long before the Liberal clangor was as brassy and persistent as it is now. But he added: "The effort of individuals to understand retains, here and there, its integrity." He wrote not as a pessimist but as a diagnostician, and though his rhetoric often turned as black as the storm he contemplated ("Who says the West deserves to be saved?"), the most urgent warning in Chambers' last diaries and letters was for the West to resolve its inner confusion before it tried to fend off its enemy, indeed so that it could fend off its enemy Communism. At the end of last month a hundred and twenty-five conservatives—writers, teachers, priests, economists, historians, philosophers—met in Chicago to discuss the fate of the West, its decline, survival, or metamorphosis, for opinion flowed in many directions. Here, clearly, was "the effort of individuals to understand," and, though men of like mind, their individuality was firm, tart, and a matter for respect.

Civilization Needs Freedom

The occasion was the first national meeting of The Philadelphia Society, an organization of scholars founded only last year, that "sponsors no resolutions, political statements or corporate programs of action." Its instigator is Don Lipsett, a young Philadelphian who is also National Field Director for the lively Inter-collegiate Society of Individualists. His hand had brought these minds together, and it was in an ovation to his planning that the ten hours of intellectual exchange closed.

The talks, with vigorous discussion afterwards, came in groups of three,

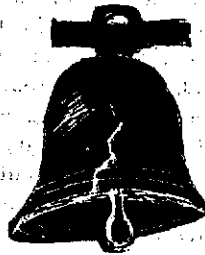
from a Friday evening to the next afternoon. Milton Friedman, a man who never ceases to smile, professor of Economics at the University of Chicago, now visiting professor at Columbia, began the first session. Although a member of the American Philosophical Society, he forswore the philosophical tag and asked to be known as "a mere working economist." Moreover, he identified himself as a "liberal," which he defined as one for whom individual freedom is the central problem in social organization. Freedom as an idea is predominant among us because we believe the individual to be the ultimate entity for which human governments exist, and because of humility. Humility, because virtue depends upon freedom of choice, and coercion is moral arrogance and tyranny. Humility is not pleading ignorance, he made clear, nor is it relativism; it is reluctance to hedge in moral decisions. But this graciousness can happen only in a civilization where cooperation is traditional and where there is a common sense of values. Freedom alone can allow such a civilization to grow, and only freedom can allow it to continue.

Thus at the outset the theme emerged for the entire program, that what the conservative is most anxious about is the preservation of the civilization that was brought to and that had grown in the Republic, so that it might last in the spirit in which it was begun, unbroken.

Father Stanley Parry, of the Department of Political Science at Notre Dame, spoke next, warning against the conservative mind's seeking a mere political stance. A philosophy

is not conservative or Liberal but true. Our search for truth is as urgent as when Plato and Augustine inspected their societies, finding them, as we do, upside down, with first values placed last. We ought to consider why the West alone became industrial, and whether our response to the God-given right to rule nature has not by now lost its sense of rule and become a lust for power instead. Are we really capitalistic; that is, does anyone truly *own* anything any more, and have we kept pure the idea of natural freedom? In short, the West once knew the metaphysical reason for its organization, and now no longer knows. The West has a true spirit, now obscured, and to find or realize anew that truth, should be the whole labor of conservative thought.

Frank Meyer, a senior editor of NATIONAL REVIEW, called for an even more detailed organization of conservative thought. For all the progress of the conservative revival in the decade past, we can still stand convicted of intellectual thinness, of carping from a fixed position, of having constructed a demonology to contemplate rather than an *avant garde* to move forward, theorize, and explore. We need historians to give an account of our time, for history now omits everything but the Liberal Revolution. We ought to study rather than give glib dismissal to such rites and touchstones of the Liberals, as the morality of war in a nuclear age, the salvation of the Negro from second-class citizenship, Freud's description of human nature. In short, the necessity for maintaining a civilization involves the relentless search for the form of civilized life, and a form must take care of all the elements within it. We therefore cannot afford to think of ourselves as conservatives with a cause to speak for, or waste



our energies in reaction, but must act within and throughout the form of our civilization, tending to its health in all things. We have struck for power and lost, without ever proving to the electorate that we deserve power.

In the second session of speeches, Robert Strausz-Hupé, director of the University of Pennsylvania's Foreign Policy Research Institute, read a clearly styled, crisp paper in which he argued that the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations' hope of stopping the proliferation of nuclear power and of cooperation with Communism is hollow and unrealistic.

"This side of surrender," he said, "cooperation with Communism is impossible." The Communist hierarchy is a priestly class, administering mysteries, and knows nothing of anybody else's right to exist. Khrushchev fell because he was beginning to secularize. For forty years they have succeeded in tyranny and imperialism as no nation in history. Against this force, the United States has been ambiguous and suicidally charismatic, causing "an isolationism by inadvertence more terrible than that of its traditional isolationism." Our attention span is short with realities, but permanently hallucinated by the phantom of Soviet-American cooperation, and it is doubtful if we will be as lucky as we were in Cuba when next we meet the enemy.

Ecumenism Allow Dishonor?

Brent Bozell, former senior editor of NATIONAL REVIEW and author of the forthcoming *The Warren Revolution*, addressed himself to the inner weaknesses of the West that will let Communism in. He fears that the West as a self-conscious embodiment of Christian truth has forgotten its identity, that ecumenicism (in its broadest sense) will allow "dishonor to unfurl the banner of hell within our walls."

Stefan Possony, of the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace of Stanford University, spoke from the difficult position of asking that all morality and technology be "focused on preventing war." At the same time, "the world revolution must be stopped here and now." Prof. Possony sees Communism as "the whip of God" under which we will

either "overhaul our state structure" so that the inner meaning of our civilization can be preserved, or else perish.

In the third session, LeBaron R. Foster, of the Opinion Research Corporation, who described himself as "a business philosopher," faced the Goldwater defeat as an irony of political propaganda. Senator Goldwater, he maintained, was not rejected because he was a conservative but because Liberals constructed an image of him as a man who acts without thinking. Polls—and he quoted a generous and convincing sampling—show that the people are basically conservative in their opinions, both Democrats and Republicans. The ground, therefore, is still solid under our feet; our task is clarification and persuasion.

Political Propaganda Abounds

Mr. Foster's colleague, Gerald J. Skibbins, shared his speaking time, and deplored the conservatives' commitment to a fundamentalist point of view. It was argued from the floor, afterward, that Mr. Skibbins seemed to be asking that we change radically, now, at an unstable and therefore propitious time, for the sake of change alone. The objections were lively and loud, and came from the South American Eliseo Vivas, who knows something of the futility of habitual revolutions; from Brent Bozell, who distrusts a hankering for novelty in governments; and from Frank Meyer, who insisted that we don't want to change our civilization so much as to save it from deterioration and from obliteration by an enemy.

Prof. Warren Nutter, chairman of the Department of Economics at the University of Virginia, made a plea for scholars to cease being impartial, and to speak their minds, in and out of class. The political propaganda of the reigning party is everywhere; therefore the opposition must be clear and sharp wherever it can. Campaign speeches are inadequate; persuasion must happen between elections. Prof. Nutter called for "a new *Federalist Papers*," and for greater courage in speaking out by informed conservatives. "There are very few of us."

Richard Corquelle, director of the Foundation for Voluntary Welfare, explained several programs now op-

erating (e.g., loans to college students) that demonstrate the efficiency of private business' handling of what is normally thought of as government welfare and financing.

Not 'Entertaining Minority'

The fourth and closing batch of talks was reserved for what the random observer of conservative thought might well consider the Brass: the philosopher Eliseo Vivas, the historian Russell Kirk, and George Stigler, Professor of American Institutions at the University of Chicago. All three chose to ask for an end to rallying around the flag as the primal conservative gesture. "In conservative philosophy," Prof. Vivas said, "we have everything to do." Furthermore, the phrase "conservative philosophy" is as silly as "Marxist biology." Philosophy is philosophy as truth is truth; there are no brand names. The spirit of partisanship must relent, so that we can break the Liberal monopoly on humanitarianism with original contributions of our own. And, he added, it is high time that we demonstrated their cynical use of humanitarianism; "their thought is instinct with a hatred of man." Russell Kirk elaborated this perception by noting that the war against poverty is motivated by embarrassment; the poor must be made to conform to the Liberals' tidy notion of a lockstep society. Prof. Stigler's sharpest point was that conservatives are no longer "an entertaining minority" and can be heard when they question the Establishment.

These closing talks and the response to them from the floor kept coming back to one theme that, for its clarity and urgency, identified itself as the measure of the sincerity of these men who were speaking not to hold power or to grasp power, but for the common good. This theme was that they feared ideologies and fanaticism, and that against the Liberal ideology, in which they see reflected the obsessions and iron dogma of socialist totalitarianism, they can proceed with reason alone. They themselves spoke in quiet English, not party jargon, and they spoke without incitement, guile, or slogans. There were no perorations, no cheerings up, no fire except that of persistent sincerity.