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MEDIEVAL UNITY AND THE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS FOR AN INTERNATIONAL CIVILIZATION

IN a world torn with nationalistic conflicts, men's minds are naturally turning to projects of international government and to hopes for a wider acceptance of international loyalties, language, and civilization. One of the last epochs in which a measure of such international unity can be said to have actually existed was the European Middle Ages. The following study of the conditions underlying medieval unity, therefore, may offer some information on a topic of present interest.

Accounts of the rise of modern nationalism frequently begin with a picture of the spiritual, linguistic, and cultural unity of medieval Christendom. Mr. Carlton Hayes speaks of "the traditional internationalism of civilized Europe" before the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries;¹ other authors similarly use the Middle Ages as a point of departure.² New forces are then pointed out, which in their rise toward the end of the Middle Ages broke up that unity into the present multitude of nations and sovereign states.³ This useful method of exposition, however, suggests further questions. How did that "traditional internationalism" of medieval Europe come to exist? What were the conditions favouring its spread, and how durable was it likely to be under the law of its own growth? Can the medieval vision of cultural unity again be recreated on similar foundations?

Medieval unity was a transitory stage in history, destroyed by the growth of the same forces which had given it birth. All its major elements, the common Latin language of its intellectual life and written records of trade and administration, its common legal and spiritual authority in the Popes and Councils of the Church, its common political head in Emperors like Charlemagne and the Ottos, its crusades, and its common style of Romanesque and Gothic art and architecture—all these were the achievements of a long process of growth. In the evolution of society they represented an adaptation to a particular set of circumstances and they could be expected to change, in the long run, with any fundamental change in the underlying conditions.

An analysis identifying these conditions may show more clearly why the international unity of the Middle Ages failed to last. Beyond this it may help the student of nationalism to add some new tools to his equipment; not a master-key to fit all times and countries, but rather a yardstick to note and measure some similarities and differences in their development. Understood with that limitation it may bring us another

¹Carlton J. Hayes, *The Historical Evolution of Nationalism* (New York, 1931), p. 3.

²E.g. Royal Institute of International Affairs, *Nationalism* (London, New York, 1939), pp. 7-9. Cf. Hans Kohn, *Nationalism* (Cambridge, Mass., 1938), p. 13; and W. Mitscherlich, *Der Nationalismus, Die Geschichte einer Idee* (Leipzig, 1929), pp. 63-73, 112-14.

³E.g. in Carlton J. Hayes, *Essays on Nationalism* (New York, 1928), pp. 30 ff.

step forward in the development of a technique of analysis applicable to the problems of national and international unification in other times and places, including our own.

I

So far as the economic factor is concerned, much of the internationalism of the Middle Ages was rooted in a scarcity of goods and services, and in the scarcity of skilled persons. What is the connection between primitive internationalism and a certain stage in the scarcity of goods? As soon as any primitive agricultural economy has reached a minimum of labour productivity, some surplus becomes available for exchange. Owing to the primitive technical methods, the differences in regional resources play a great role; and owing to the simplicity of the local division of labour, only few goods and few varieties are available from any one place. As such economies produce few exchangeable goods, so they produce few incomes large enough to buy them.⁴ And as the few varieties of goods are so greatly determined by the resources of the region, there is little chance that there should be sufficient effective demand for them in the immediate neighbourhood. Trade, therefore, will be small in bulk, but far-flung in distance. Few persons are engaged in it professionally, but their journeys are taking them all over Europe and beyond. The bulk of each people remain close to their villages, taking little part in any direct intercourse beyond their regions; the local peculiarities in their habits and ways of speech are tending to increase rather than to disappear. At the same time the traders have to carry on their business across many regions and languages.⁵ If these few traders can agree on a common language, better still, if most of them can be drawn from the same people or region, then they will be able to conduct their business more economically. Within the thin super-national web of trading communities the common speech, script, laws, habits, traditions, and perhaps family connections will represent the most economic adaptation complementing the local seclusion and paucity of exchange in a society of primitive agricultural communities.

What are the effects of a corresponding stage in the scarcity of skills? The simple division of labour gives rise only to few specialized skills. The bearers of the simple skills like baking, weaving, or cobbling remain within the local economy of household, village, or manor, taking part only indirectly, and only with a part of their products, in the processes of exchange and circulation. These simple skills can be developed locally

⁴"It was easier to sell the high-grade broadcloth of England in the Near East or in the East Indies than to sell such goods to the peasants or shopkeepers of the country" (A. P. Usher, *An Introduction to the Industrial History of England*, Boston, New York, 1920, p. 20).

⁵"It is the life of these humbler classes in society (artisans and small farmers) that creates the appearance of intense local self-sufficiency The cosmopolitanism in the life of the upper classes is quite as characteristic, however, and the difference between modern life and the life of these remote periods really lies in the strange dualism of social organisation in ancient and mediaeval times" (*ibid.*, p. 21).

almost anywhere. Their distribution throughout the economy presents no problem; once trained, the weaving women and the rural artisans have merely to stay in their villages. But the specialized intellectual, technological, administrative, or business skills cannot be readily developed in any primitive agricultural region. They have to be produced, that is to say, persons have to acquire them by training; or else they have to be distributed from an existing supply, that is, persons who possess such skills have to be brought to those places where their services are needed. Now in the medieval economy the production of complex skills was of necessity concentrated in a few regions. Scarce and almost indivisible factors in their production, such as teachers, schools, and hand-copied manuscripts, put a premium on the concentration of most specialist training in a few great monasteries, schools, and courts.⁶ The distribution of the supply of historically accumulated skills was not less unequal. Regions with social classes with a tradition of literacy were confined mostly to the Mediterranean. Similarly confined were the traditions of law and art, the higher skills of technology like building and engineering, those of agriculture like wine culture and bee-keeping.⁷

⁶In the Carolingian period (ninth century), a "number of monasteries, which might be compared to the printing-offices of the Renaissance, provided for the increasing demand for books In addition to Tours, there were Corbie, Orleans, Saint Denis, Saint Wandrille, Fulda, Corvey, Saint Gall, Reichenau, and Lorsch. In most of them, and above all in Fulda, there were Anglo-Saxon monks" (Henri Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, New York, Norton and Co., 1939, p. 281, with reference to Dawson [sic], *Les origines de l'Europe*, French translation, p. 231). Cf. also the international spread of a new style of handwriting, the Caroline minuscule (*ibid.*).

⁷The collection of wild honey and primitive forms of bee-keeping were practised early among some Germanic and Slavic tribes, but more intensive forms of bee-farming, while known to the Romans, were introduced over wide parts of Europe by the monks, either directly or with the help of the princes whom they advised. Cf. James Westfall Thompson, *Economic and Social History of the Middle Ages, 300-1300* (New York, Century Co., 1928), p. 528; Charles Parain, "The Evolution of Agricultural Technique" in *The Cambridge Economic History*, vol. I, *The Agrarian Life of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, Eng., University Press, 1941), p. 167; and particularly Walter Brinkmann, *Bienenstock und Bienenstand in den romanischen Ländern* (Hamburg, Hansischer Gildenverlag, 1938), p. 12. "It must be assumed that the Germanic tribes became acquainted only late with regular bee-keeping in containers of wood, wickerwork, or straw. They knew probably for a relatively long time only the keeping of wild bees and the taking of honey from hollow trees. . . . An important advance was made by bee-farming with the introduction of Christianity The monks . . . engaged . . . particularly in bee-farming, in order to be able to supply the Church always liberally with wax for worship" (*ibid.*, in German). In addition to the monasteries, German princes endeavoured to advance bee-farming, like Charlemagne in some detail in the *capitulare de villis*. "In order to force the rural population to take up bee-farming, [Charlemagne] gave the clergy the right to collect a honey tithe ["Honigzins"] from the peasants" (*ibid.*, p. 60). Typical for the new, intensive bee-farming on the demesnes was the use of bee-hives made of straw, which "spread more and more, according to all appearances, only since Charlemagne, for its extension coincides nearly with the frontiers of the then Frankish-Germanic Empire" (*ibid.*, p. 69).

I am indebted to Dr. Karl Helleiner of the University of Toronto for having called to my attention the point covered in this note, as well as the subjects of notes 8, 9, and 22. The responsibility for their treatment and choice of documentation is, of course, my own.

and again the specific skills of business rationality, arithmetics, and the tradition of honouring contracts. All these were traditional mainly in Greece, Italy, the Mediterranean cities which had become merged in their civilization, and among some nations of the Near East, such as Syrians, Jews, Arabs, and others.⁸

A similar limitation prevailed as to the skills of transportation. Almost anyone could be taught to ride a horse or to row a boat. But only a few peoples of nomadic stock raisers like the Bedouins produced animals and men able to overcome the deserts of the Near East and Africa. Only few peoples of fishermen on the shores of the North Sea produced boats and men capable of sailing its waves and of floating down untamed rivers across Europe to keep up contact between the Baltic and Byzantium.

Military skills were naturally abundant on certain levels of economic life, such as pasturage and fishing, persisting in certain regions like steppes, mountains, and the rough sea-coast. From there their men would go forth to distribute themselves over societies less well supplied with the skills of war, which would either employ them or bow down to their conquest. With the early feudal division of labour between peasant and horseman, the tiller of the soil and its defender, the production of military skills became to some extent decentralized over wide parts of Europe. Nevertheless, the comparative differences in military efficiency were still considerable enough to allow a skilled warrior people like the Normans to spread by service and conquest over large parts of Europe, contributing a great deal to the spread of the institutions of chivalry and to their international character.

So long as most of Europe remained on the level of scarcity which we described, the effects of any local advances in a few countries had to be distributed at first by the same process of international stratification. At one time or another during these centuries Ireland came to abound in learned monks and manuscripts, Germany in armed knights, Lombardy in skilled traders. For the more backward countries in the rest of Europe where these skills were scarce, these regions became so many more new sources of foreign supply. Irish monks carried their learning far and wide over the continent; German knights went forth, more often bidden than unbidden, into Bohemia, Hungary, Poland; Lombard traders came in many cities to rival or replace the Jews; French and German master builders designed Gothic cathedrals far from the countries of their birth; Flemish and German peasants and *locatores* brought more

⁸The making of cloth in the Flemish countryside, possibly indigenous since Roman times, might perhaps be added to this list. In the early Middle Ages it, too, was a scarce, localized skill, with international distribution of its products. The industry "was nowhere else in operation at so early a date and with such remarkable results Until the . . . 9th century, Frisian boatmen regularly carried cloths woven in Flanders along the rivers of the Low Countries; . . . [they were sent] . . . as a gift to the Caliph Haroun-al-Raschid [From] the 10th century . . . [the] fineness of the cloths . . . caused a demand for them along all the coasts frequented by the Northern seamen" (Henri Pirenne, *Economic and Social History of Medieval Europe*, London, Kegan Paul, 1936, pp. 36-7).

advanced techniques of agriculture and land reclamation into the Slavic regions north and east of eleventh-century Germany.⁹ The spread of new ideas likewise had to follow the scant and wide-stretched network of intellectual centres, so long as there were only few persons in Europe able to read or interested in abstract thought, and even these few had little contact with the rest of the people. "The spread of ideas in the Middle Ages . . . is mainly concerned with the relation of scattered centres . . . with comparatively little reference to distance or the nature of the intervening space."¹⁰

In sum, there was from the end of the migration of nations through most of the Middle Ages very little mobility among the peasants and, for the earlier part of the period, among the domestic and manorial artisans. There was wider mobility among the noble bearers of military skills, especially when they possessed an important advantage against competing types of warfare, as in the tenth century when the Varangs ruled in Kiev and Novgorod, and in the middle of the twelfth when the ironclad Norman knights "ruled over one-half of Italy, two-thirds of France, the whole of England, and had already made a beginning on Ireland and Scotland."¹¹ The highest horizontal mobility and interchange prevailed in the tenuous network of traders, often appearing as far-flung trading castes, religious sects, or peoples of their own; and to some degree among the sparse layer of specialists, monks, scholars, and administrators, most of them part of the international organizations of monastery and church. It was this state of affairs which profoundly influenced the production and distribution of languages throughout early medieval Europe.

⁹A *locator* "was rarely a mere peasant The locators of Wichmann of Magdeburg . . . know Latin. . . . Generally speaking, we may assign these men to the class which, in other places, directed the trade and self-government of the rising towns. Often this classification is demonstrable Locators had to cooperate on journeys into distant places; to deal with foreigners; have property to be risked in a venture; and some knowledge of law" (R. Koebner, "The Settlement and Colonisation of Europe," in the *Cambridge Economic History*, vol. I, pp. 83-4). As to the members of the new colonies, "Flemings and Hollanders were the pioneers . . . always specially entrusted with the cultivation of marshy land West German groups soon followed and imitated them . . ." (*ibid.*, p. 85). Once the new villagers had settled as peasants, intercourse within the settlements sufficed to amalgamate Flemings and Germans, but usually there was only slow and limited assimilation with the neighbouring non-German villages. Where the German settlers were reinforced by a large and sustained volume of new arrivals as well as by a German or Germanized nobility, there it still took centuries to make the new rural regions German; and where those conditions were not fulfilled, the medieval practice of importing relatively many men to supply a skill (instead of relying on a few men to teach it quickly to many of the native population) has scattered unassimilated German colonies, like raisins in a cake, over many of the key sites of non-German Eastern Europe.

¹⁰C. H. Haskins, *Studies in Mediaeval Culture* (Oxford, 1929), p. 94.

¹¹C. H. Haskins, *The Normans in European History* (Boston, New York, 1915), p. 22.

II

The primary distribution of spoken languages among the peasants of Europe was determined by the distribution of agricultural settlements at the transition from nomadic to sedentary agriculture. This transition took place at very different times in the different regions of Europe; and even where farming had already become fixed on the soil, the distribution of peoples and languages on the land was still liable to sudden change so long as new tribes of nomadic agriculturists were still coming into Europe, such as the Magyars in the tenth century, and clearing the land for their own settlement by driving out most of the earlier population. These invasions of farmers who drove out the former settlers in order to farm in their stead were different in their effects from the invasions of traders who settled in the midst of a people in order to trade with them, or from the conquest of warriors who spared the conquered in order to lord it over them. They brought immediate changes in the settlement of the land and with them sharp boundaries between very different, mutually unintelligible languages, such as between German and Magyar, English and Welsh, French and Breton, Spanish and Basque, and others.

In the beginning class differences were not sufficiently developed to prevent daily intercourse among practically all of the inhabitants in these communities which had just settled down to stable farming. Within each village the close community of life, the common dispositions regarding seed and harvest, tillage and fallow land, and the use of the common tended all to assimilate the language of any newcomers who did not deviate too far from the social level of the rest of the villagers; thus lower-class Magyars became Slovaks in the Slovak villages.¹² At the same time there was after the settlement very little intercourse between the bulk of the population from one peasant region to another. On the peasant level, therefore, the language frontiers soon hardened into stability with scarcely a change for centuries, winning for the peasants a reputation of being the most faithful preservers of nationality. The effects of rural immobility and seclusion went further, however. Originally common forms of speech became mutually unintelligible in widely separated regions, as in the classical case of the Romance languages. The peasant life preserved the Basque and Breton languages, but at the price of destroying their unity, breaking up each of them into a number of mutually unintelligible dialects.¹³ Descendants of the same stock of Germanic settlers eventually found themselves speaking different dialects in the different valleys of the Austrian Tyrol.¹⁴

Neighbouring peasant languages might be mutually unintelligible from the beginning, coming from greatly different stocks, so that they would

¹²Otto Zarek, *The History of Hungary* (London, 1939), p. 98.

¹³W. J. Entwistle, *The Spanish Language together with Portuguese, Catalan and Basque* (London, 1936), p. 15.

¹⁴Cf. Otto Bauer, *Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie*, (ed. 2, Vienna, 1924), p. 134.

appear automatically as independent languages; or their differences might slowly develop from a former common speech, so that they would appear for some time as mere dialects. Both dialects and "automatic languages" remained incomplete, however, so long as they lacked the words and concepts of urban life, that sociological development into all walks of life, carried on by several major social classes, which alone can elevate a spoken vernacular to the status of a full-fledged language.¹⁵ In the absence of that sociological completeness the speech of the peasantry remained passively vegetating and slowly disintegrating from region to region, hidden below the international speech and civilization of their betters.

III

International languages of commerce, intellectual life, and, in many cases, administration represent an adaptation to a specific stage of economic and social development. This stage can now be defined. It is the stage where markets and long distance intercourse have already begun while no greater masses of the underlying population have yet been drawn into intensive personal participation in the exchange process. As this development was to some extent general in operation, we find in early medieval Europe the elements not only of one but of as many as five different international civilizations. Can we gain any indication from these five cases as to what are some of the factors underlying the aggressive strength and the long-run staying power of super-national civilizations of this kind?

In addition to the favourable stage in the economic development of the countries to be overlaid, the evidence points to a combination of several essential factors. A supply of manpower with a superior skill in transportation and warfare must be combined with a developed interest in long-distance trade and with adequate contact with an established centre of superior skills of production. And these material elements must be welded together by a subjective effort. The opportunity must be utilized by the acts of men united by an idea, a myth, or a religion, calling them to action for a new way of life realizing the new potentialities.

With the ideas of state patriotism and Caesarism Greek and Roman civilization spread by road and galley around the Mediterranean; with the idea of monastic Christianity they penetrated along the trails and forest-paths of Europe. In Western and Central Europe it was the civilization of Latin Christianity with its script and language Latin, its centre Rome, its laws and ethics those of the Roman Church, its routes of pilgrimage and trade centring in Italy. Next to it, in South-eastern Europe, we find the civilization of Byzantium, its script and language Greek, supplemented for purposes of missionary expansion by Church Slavonic, i.e. standardized Old Bulgarian; its centre Constantinople,

¹⁵The concepts of "automatic language" and the criterion of sociological completeness for a full-fledged language are developed in H. Kloss, "Sprachtabellen" in *Vierteljahresschrift für Politik und Geschichte* (Berlin, 1929, vol. I, no. 2), pp. 107-8.

from whence it drew its architecture, art, and learning, and where its trade routes centred; and its Greek Orthodox Church, headed by the Emperor, reaching out into lands beyond the sway of the imperial administration. Caravans and horsemen, inspired by the faith of Islam, carried some of the high civilization of the towns of the Near East as far as central Africa, southern France, and the borders of China. Thus side by side with the blanket of Greek over the south-east, and of Latin over the north and the centre of Europe, there lay a blanket of Arabic speech and script, and of Moslem religion, civilization, trade, and upper classes over the peasants and townspeople whose descendants were to become the later Spaniards, Portuguese, and Catalans of the Iberian Peninsula.

Besides these three full-grown civilizations there were in Europe the elements of two others, carried by two other trading peoples, the Jews and the Vikings. The Jews had formed already before the Christian era a network of trading communities around the eastern Mediterranean; and now they were carrying on much of the commercial and financial life of Western Europe. The Jewish trading communities were further held together by a strongly unifying religion; by their Hebrew script and sacred language, supplemented by other special languages of their own like Judaeo-Spanish and Judaeo-German; and by their highly developed law laid down in the Talmud and its commentaries. They were rich in intellectual and trading skills, but they lacked man-power and, in spite of significant exceptions, military and productive skills. Since the destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem they had had no single spiritual or economic centre. At one time there might have been a possibility of Judaism becoming the dominant faith in the network of Romance towns left abandoned with the remnants of their populations in the barbarian countries after the fall of Rome. That possibility was cut off not only by the early prohibitions of the Church and the new rulers against conversions to the Jewish faith,¹⁶ but also by the reluctance of the then prosperous Jewish trading communities to make mass conversions among the impecunious or the improvident, or to surrender to any large number of new converts their own valuable separate cohesion and identity so laboriously preserved through the centuries by the rigid prescriptions of their religion. Jewish civilization thus remained sociologically incomplete, although in a different way from that of the underlying peasant peoples. It was not restricted to a local group, but it remained restricted to a single trading caste.¹⁷ As such it maintained its inter-regional cohesion and contributed to the international character of the Middle Ages until its destruction, in the greatest part of Western Europe, by the new urban middle classes at the time of the Crusades.

The Vikings had seamanship, trading interests, fighting skill, and the fierce warrior's faith preserved in the Eddic poems. "A close cultural

¹⁶An Appendix documenting this point has been omitted for reasons of space.

¹⁷For a comparison between the Jews and certain Indian trading castes, see Max Weber, *General Economic History* (London, 1927), pp. 195-6.

unity prevailed over the whole North. . . . Dane, Norwegian, and Swede was so nearly identical that the Scandinavian tongue carried a man where he willed Denmark, Sweden, Norway, England, Northern France, the 'kingdom' of Dublin, Iceland, the Orkneys, Shetlands, and Faroes, Kurland, Russia—even Greenland—were as provinces in one vague and vast Norse empire in the 10th and 11th centuries . . ."¹⁸ But the Vikings, too, lacked adequate contact with advanced skills and centres of production. In technology, agriculture, literacy, higher business skills and written law they had little to offer. "The most concrete unity was probably that of commerce. No international exchange of wares comparable to it had been seen since the decline of the Roman Empire [A] gigantic quantity of the oriental trade passed . . . across the Caspian and Black seas . . . into Russia, whence it was distributed over the Baltic and northern lands. Until the end of the 11th century . . . this Russ-Norse commerce is the cardinal commercial fact of mediaeval history."¹⁹ In Wales we find the Viking as "trader-raider"; in Russia an outstanding historian calls him an "armed merchant."²⁰ But while we find a Viking chieftain buried in the Hebrides with the

¹⁸Thompson, *An Economic and Social History of the Middle Ages*, pp. 281-2.

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰Erik I. Bromberg, "Wales and the Mediaeval Slave Trade" (*Speculum*, vol. XVII, 1942, p. 263). The imposts levied by the Prince of Kiev were at the same time the articles of his trade. "When he became a ruler as a *konung*, he as a Varangian (*Varyag*) did not cease to be an armed merchant. He shared the taxes with his retinue, which served him as the organ of administration and was the ruling class. This class governed in winter, visiting the country and levying taxes, and in summer trafficked in what was gathered during the winter" (Professor V. Klyuchevski, quoted in *Cambridge Mediaeval History*, vol. IV, Cambridge, 1923, p. 206). The commercial element in Viking civilization has frequently been underrated. The late Professor Haskins still assumed that the great emigration from the north in the ninth and tenth centuries had for its "chief cause . . . doubtless that which lies back of colonizing movements in all ages, the growth of population and the need of more room. Five centuries earlier this land-hunger had pushed the Germanic tribes across the Rhine . . . , and the Viking raids were simply a later aspect of this same *Völkerwanderung* . . ." (Haskins, *The Normans in European History*, p. 29). This view represents a somewhat one-sided picture of the facts. The Viking raids were not a migration of land-hungry peasants. "Indeed archaeologists are now agreed that in the 8th century there were a good number of Scandinavian merchants settled in Western Europe. Their influence on the trade of the West was only exceeded by that of the Frisians . . . and it is most probable that it was the crushing of Frisian power by Charles Martel in 734 and their final subjection by Charles the Great towards the close of the 8th century which helped to prepare the way for the great Viking advance" (*Cambridge Mediaeval History*, vol. III, p. 310).

Like other men in the Middle Ages, the Vikings desired to rule the land, not to till it. "The primary purpose of the participants was not to settle down permanently in the region to which they came, nor to establish colonies [The] aim was to secure immediate material gain, either by piracy, trade and raids on foreign shores, by exacting taxes or tributes, or by serving as mercenaries in the employ of foreign potentates Both warrior and merchant Vikings generally retained their headquarters in the North With increasingly stronger opposition abroad, consolidations and mergers within the ranks of the Viking leaders became more frequent . . . [The] promoters . . . were forced to take a hand in the administration of the various regions that constituted their 'markets' in order . . . that they might retain their power of collecting tributes.

complete equipment of his civilization—sword, spear, battle-axe, and a pair of scales²¹—these scales and the business they were used for can hardly be compared with the laws and the bookkeeping of the contemporary Arabs, Greeks, and Latins. Of economic goods the Vikings produced little more than transport services and raw materials. Most of their centres failed to last; those which survived soon lost their Viking character.²² Their common polytheistic religion and Runic script died away before the competition of Latin faith and letters. Their common Nordic speech, instead of becoming more firmly unified into a standard language as in the other civilizations, disintegrated into regional differences. In their unifying mission they had been themselves successors to an earlier trading empire in the North Sea, that of the Frisians. Now, in the tenth and eleventh centuries, they gave up their old civilization for that of Latin Christianity. Those of them who had settled in Normandy accepted almost at once the French form of Romance language and civi-

This entailed . . . problems which only a king or a leader possessing a military organization could cope with successfully. In this new order, the 'little fellow' had no place. On the surface, the ceding of Normandy to the Northmen may seem to be somewhat different from the conquests in England and Ireland, but fundamentally the development was very much the same" (Sven Axel Anderson, *Viking Enterprise*, New York, 1936, pp. 142-3).

The importance of commercialism and oppression in Viking life has been obscured by the heroic poetry of the Eddas. There is a distance between what men do and what they dream. Eddic poems may not be telling us more of the daily realities of Viking trade than Kipling's "White Man's Burden" told of everyday activities of white nineteenth-century traders in Asia. Today we are indebted to Viking thought for the strengthening of the values of individualism, independence, restlessness, and daring in our heritage. But we are endangered by the results of an uncritical glorification of the Viking way of life. In Hitler's Germany a stream of publications is proclaiming to German youth the return of the Viking age. Commerce and piracy are to be reunited in our day, and the "retinue of armed merchants" of the tenth century becomes as *Gefolgschaft* the hallowed pattern of Nazi education in the twentieth. The Vikings won a free life for themselves in an age which often knew but little distinction between the freedom of the pirate and the freedom of the pioneer. In the thousand years since then that distinction has deepened, and it is vital today.

²¹Haskins, *The Normans in European History*, pp. 36-7.

²²The late Professor Henri Pirenne ascribed the decline of Kievan Russia and the shift of the centre of the Russian state northward to Moscow in the main to a single, external cause, the invasion of the "Pechenegs" in the eleventh century, which "cut the communications between Russia and her foreign markets" (H. Pirenne, *Medieval Cities*, Princeton, 1925, pp. 53-4).

This emphasis is not shared by a number of other historians. That the same nomads who had been defeated in the tenth and eleventh centuries should begin to triumph themselves in the twelfth, is explained by them by important internal factors in the decline of Kiev and, by some, by the reopening of direct trade between the West and the Orient in the Mediterranean and the resulting decline of the Byzantine Empire. The most frequently stressed internal causes seem to have been the large-scale practice of slavery and the slave trade, which tended to turn the recurrent feuds of the princes into slave raids for captives, exploitable at home and salable abroad. To the depopulation caused by the slave trade was added, it seems, the growth of agriculture in the regions to the north, north-east, and west, with increasing independence from the old central authority, and with a considerable peasant exodus from the Kiev state to

lization,²³ while most of the trade in the North was taken over by German merchants who had closer contacts with the new centres of production which had arisen in the German towns.²⁴

The pattern of primitive internationalism was not limited to early medieval Europe alone. The Mongol horsemen of Genghis Khan and Kublai Khan spread for a short time the contacts with the civilization of China over central Asia toward eastern Europe, but no lasting economic advance was achieved nor was any idea or religion developed able to maintain the new contacts and the new way of life. Unlike Christianity and Islam, it seems that the state philosophy of imperial China has left as little of a lasting impression along the caravan trails as did the state philosophy of imperial Rome. On the other hand, the Ottoman Turks, combining Moslem zeal with Turcoman horsemanship in their advance along the caravan trails and roads over Asia Minor toward the Balkans, seem to have brought with them a greater increase in trade and civilization than they have been usually credited with.²⁵ In all these

these new regions of lesser oppression and greater opportunity. Cf. V. O. Kluchevsky [sic], *A History of Russia* (New York, Dutton, 1911), vol. I, pp. 185-94; J. Mavor, *An Economic History of Russia* (ed. 2, New York, Dutton, 1925), pp. 18-21; Thompson, *An Economic and Social History of the Middle Ages*, p. 282; M. N. Pokrovsky, *History of Russia* (New York, 1931), pp. 37, 63-4; D. S. Mirsky, *Russia, A Social History* (London, Cresset Press, 1931), pp. 44-5, 49-55; Michael M. Karpovich in *An Encyclopedia of World History* (ed. William L. Langer, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1940), p. 246; Robert J. Kerner, *The Urge to the Sea—The Course of Russian History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1942), pp. 19-20. For the similar emphasis in recent Russian textbooks see A. V. Shestakov, *A Short History of the USSR* (Moscow, Coop. Publ. Society of Foreign Workers, 1938), pp. 26-7; A. M. Pankratova, *Istoria USSR* (Moscow, Izdatelstvo Narkomprosa RSFSR, 1940), pp. 53, 55-6 (in Russian).

Pirenne's theory about the Pechenegs was advanced in 1925 in order "to have proved, by the example of Russia, that the economy of the Carolingian era was . . . the result of . . . the closing of the Mediterranean by Islam," but it is no longer found in his *Economic and Social History of Medieval Europe* (London, 1936; New York, 1937), nor in his last work, *Mohammed and Charlemagne* (New York, 1939).

²³Haskins, *The Normans in European History*, pp. 44-6, 49.

²⁴"[The] traffic . . . was discontinued when it ceased to be profitable. The rulers across the seas obtained a firmer hold on their respective regions . . . All along the western front of Viking operation, the traditional victims overcame the technological advantages of the Northmen by securing fleets with which they successfully resisted the attacks of the Vikings . . . Since no honor was attached to being repelled and returning empty-handed, marauding as an occupation lost its appeal . . . and the warrior Viking lost caste also in the North . . . The changed conditions . . . caused trade to be pursued on a new basis. Fighting prowess became less important. Under the conditions that the new order imposed, most Northmen apparently lacked the qualifications for successful traders and faded out of the picture . . . North German and Frisian merchants came to the North in increasing numbers, and . . . they soon gained virtual control of the commercial life of Northern Europe. They became the predominant element of the population in practically all the commercial centers of the North; Visby . . . reached its height under the influence of German traders chiefly . . ." (Anderson, *Viking Enterprise*, pp. 144-5).

²⁵William L. Langer and Robert P. Blake, *The Rise of the Ottoman Turks and its Historical Background* (New York, 1932). Reprinted from the *American Historical Review*, vol. XXXVII, 1932, pp. 468-505.

cases the fundamental pattern seems to be the same: an international blanket spread over a host of primitive local economies. Let us conclude this section with a passage from a British government publication of 1934: "Through the active character of Hausa traders and colonizers their language has undergone an immense expansion in the West Central Sudan and beyond Next to Swahili it is the most widespread African language *The need of dominating languages or linguae francae, as media of intercourse and as bearers of modern ideas, is keenly felt throughout Africa*, and there is no reason why Hausa should not be this medium for a very large part of the West Central Sudan and West Africa."²⁶ It seems that in some parts of the world today the pattern of primitive internationalism has not yet become wholly a thing of the past.

IV

By the time of the thirteenth century the five international civilizations of Europe seemed to have given way to the single one of Western Christendom. The Vikings had become its Norman crusaders; the Jews were being driven from many of its main cities; the Arabs were being slowly pushed out of Spain; Constantinople herself had been sacked by the Crusaders and Venetians in 1204. As in other aspects, so also on the score of unity the Thirteenth appeared as "the greatest of all centuries."²⁷

But the writers who drew this picture of solid unity must have found it difficult to persuade that age to hold still long enough for its portrait. Latin Christendom had triumphed. Its broad cultural base of Romance-

²⁶Professor Diedrich Westermann, "Some Notes on the Hausa People and their Language," in G. P. Bargery, *A Hausa-English Dictionary and English-Hausa Vocabulary, Compiled for the Government of Nigeria* (London, 1934), p. xiv. Italics mine.

²⁷Cf. J. J. Walsh, *The Thirteenth, Greatest of Centuries* (Georgetown University Edition, New York, 1910). The deceptive picture of medieval homogeneity has lured respectable scientists to strange conclusions. In A. V. Martin's article, "Kultursoziologie des Mittelalters" in Vierkandt's *Handwörterbuch de Soziologie* (Stuttgart, 1931) we read: "The whole Germanic-Romanic family of peoples felt themselves—in view of the far-reaching mixture of blood—as blood-kinmen of each other The root of this sense of community . . . was a direct blood-bound feeling of the western peoples; it was only in their *consciousness* that the ecclesiastical bond obtruded itself into the foreground The cultural unity reached only as far and could reach only as far as one felt oneself somehow belonging together by kinship" (p. 373). With such a theory the author is forced to disregard the fact that Celtic and Slavic countries formed a significant part of western medieval civilization. The contributions of the Irish, the Czechs, the Poles, the Croats, and the Magyars to the spread and development of Latin Christianity cannot be reconciled with the theory of "blood-kinship."

Can such a theory explain satisfactorily why medieval unity was so much weaker in the seventh and eighth centuries than it was in the twelfth and thirteenth? Most of the intermingling took place during the migration of nations, and the earlier period was much closer to that than the later. Again, there was more intermarriage between Arab and Spaniard than between Spaniard and Pole, yet Pole and Spaniard belonged to a common civilization and Spaniard and Arab did not. If A. V. Martin's theory of "blood-kinship" thus fails to explain the unity of medieval culture, it furnishes at least a significant example of the trend toward racial mythology during the last years of the German Republic.

speaking peoples and Roman productive skills; its growing towns, multiplied by new ones springing up everywhere; the increase in its division of labour and the new intensity with which masses of people were drawn into its markets and movements, its towns and its crusades; the tightening and strengthening of the vertical contacts from village to manor to town; the increasingly dense and rich and varied life within each region—all these contributed to its victory. But all these selfsame factors were bound to break up eventually the thin shell of international Latin-speaking and writing unity which had rested on their absence.

Early examples of medieval nationalism bear out the point. Out of nearly sixty cases given in Mr. G. G. Coulton's article on "Nationalism in the Middle Ages,"²⁸ only twelve refer to events before 1200 A.D., while as many as twenty fall in the single century from 1200 to 1300, more than in any of the following centuries before 1500. While some of Mr. Coulton's examples refer to cases of regional or city patriotism rather than of allegiance to any nation, most of the remaining ones refer to situations where large numbers of newcomers or of members of rapidly growing groups such as Crusaders, monks, or townsmen entered into contact and some competition with each other or with established groups. It is from this pattern of the beginning break-up of an international civilization in times of intensified intercourse, as well as from its original rise in times of scant and extensive contacts, that a more general statement of the conditions of cultural assimilation and linguistic unity can be developed.

V

The following generalizations do not pretend to state inflexible laws. They seek to describe some fundamental quantitative relationships which seem to underlie the process of assimilation of men's speech habits, and possibly other slow-changing habits, to the established standards of another or wider community. These relationships seem to be present to some extent in all such situations of assimilation. In each individual situation, of course, peculiar factors may modify or even override the general pattern. After all, social sciences, like the medical ones, deal with people of flesh and blood, not with formulae. A general knowledge of the quantitative conditions for the balanced growth of individuals or communities should aid our diagnosis of each single case; it can never replace it.

Within these limitations, these seem to be the conditions of linguistic unity: 1. *The rate of assimilation must exceed the rate of entry.* That is to say, the rate at which persons acquire a common language must be greater than the rate at which persons habitually speaking other languages enter the zone of intensive intercourse in the community. "Entry" in this sense is brought about not only by immigration, but also, more often, by the extension of intensive intercourse to persons

²⁸In the *Cambridge Historical Journal*, vol. V, Cambridge, 1935, pp. 15-40.

previously largely isolated.²⁹ The condition applies therefore to the relationship of assimilation to immigration as well as to that of assimilation to the growth of intercourse accompanying economic expansion and progress. In the long run it is mainly with the effect of economic development on the rate of entry that assimilation has to keep step.

2. *The rate of assimilation increases* with (a) the similarity of the common language to the previous language of the new entrants; (b) the intensity of their contacts with the common language; (c) the willingness of persons to acquire the common language, and hence with the material rewards and opportunities gained by its acquisition, as well as (d) the strength of the assimilating and unifying emotional and spiritual incentives, faiths, beliefs, and symbols current in the community; (e) the extent of the available educational facilities and existing skills and aptitudes for the teaching and learning of the common language, and hence with the smallness of cost, time, and effort needed for its acquisition; (f) the absence of social, political, or religious group emotions among the newcomers against the common language, as well as (g) the absence of any appreciable material advantage or privilege for them contingent upon their retention of a separate language and cohesion of their own; (h) the newcomers' lack of contacts with their previous language, and therefore also with their distance from its other speakers and with the fewness in numbers of the latter; and finally (i) the absence of institutional or emotional obstacles against the full assimilation and acceptance of the newcomers by the speakers of the predominating language.

3. *The rate of entry* of persons speaking other languages into the zone of intensive intercourse within the community *increases* with: (a) the growth of the zone of intensive intercourse itself, that is with the degree of the division of labour and the consequent amount of intercourse and contacts necessitated by the prevailing forms of production, technology, and economic life. It increases in particular *with the numbers of opportunities or positions* open in those social strata or professions where maintenance of contacts by speaking or writing make up a large part of the work, such as the organization of production, the recruitment and supervision of labour, the activities of commerce, the professions, administration, education, etc., and with the growth in the numbers of persons reached directly by any or all of these agencies. The rate of entry grows, in other words, with the growth in the social and economic demand for personnel in these contact services and for the forms of labour served by them, *constituting together the gross demand for new*

²⁹The rate of entry discussed in this study should not be confused with Professor Sorokin's concept of "vertical mobility." Professor Sorokin deals with the entry of individuals into the ranks of the élite; our study deals with the entry of large numbers of people into more frequent contacts within a larger community. A farmer's son becoming an apprentice in a town may not have risen "vertically" according to Professor Sorokin, but he has entered into more intensive intercourse with a larger number of other people. Cf. P. Sorokin, *Social Mobility* (New York, 1927).

entrants. The rate of entry grows also with (b) *the scarcity of available entrants from the predominant language group* at the level of rewards offered at this stage of economic development. The fewness of entrants from that group is determined among others by the smallness of its numbers, the lack of mobility between its occupations and social strata, and the extent of preferable alternative occupations open to its members. The gross demand together with the scarcity of available "fellow-speakers" determines the remaining *net demand for entrants from other language groups*. And finally the rate of entry increases with (c) the numbers and mobility of qualified members of other language groups, and with their lack of preferable alternatives, resulting in the *net supply of entrants from other language groups*. This supply may come both from outside or from within the country, but in either case from outside—and usually from below—the social classes of the dominant language group, which were making up, till then, the zone of intensive intercourse.

VI

The general method of analysing the conditions of linguistic unity in a changing society has here been developed from the observation of international integration in the relatively primitive economies of the European early and high Middle Ages. It can be applied to similar problems in other times and places. What services are to be expected from its application?

First of all, it can be used to isolate the economic factor more carefully from the political and emotional forces which interact with it in the making of national diversity and national conflict. Of the nine main factors listed as important for the rate of assimilation, three are economic: the intensity of the new contacts (2b), and the economic advantages and disadvantages of assimilation (2c and 2g). One factor is strictly linguistic: the similarity between the old language and the new (2a). Another one is largely dealing with given facts of history: the distance, dispersion, and fewness in numbers of the remaining unassimilated speakers of the previous language under consideration (2h). The remaining four points deal with emotional, political, and institutional factors which can be changed, in time and within limits, by political, propagandistic, or educational action (2d, 2e, 2f, and 2i). One factor operating on the rate of entry is largely economical: the gross demand for new entrants (3a). The two others, covering the mobility and availability of new entrants from both the dominant and the other language groups are determined partly also by political and emotional factors within the framework of economic conditions (3b and 3c); if desired they can be broken down into their component elements. All factors, of course, can be influenced to some limited extent by organized and sustained efforts of the political will. The vocabularies and grammars of kindred languages can be brought closer together or farther apart. The intensity of contacts with either the old or the new language, and

even the economic rewards and opportunities for entry and assimilation can be influenced by deliberate statesmanship or the strength of aroused mass emotion. Applied to actual problems of nationalism the type of analysis outlined here may help to clarify the conditions under which statesmanship in each individual case would have to seek for a solution.

Secondly, our analysis can be applied to other not physically inheritable national characteristics³⁰ besides language, such as accents, habits, traditions, peculiarities of character, and others. In most cases our information, if enough of it can be collected and organized, will show first of all the *latent national diversity* determined by the original settlement and later changes in the composition and speech of the agricultural population in and near the territory under observation. It will then show what effect historical and economic factors were having on the development of the rates of entry and of assimilation, and thus on the resulting *effective national diversity* visible in the zone of intensive intercourse.

At this point we reach one of the limits of our analysis of linguistic and cultural diversity. Whether any distribution of unassimilated people from different stocks in the fields of intensive intercourse will lead to national conflicts, seems to depend to a large extent on the relations, harmonious or antagonistic, prevailing among the different occupational groups, and on the degree of competition among persons within any of these groups. If economic and social conflicts between different classes, or competition within one or several of them, are intense—and would be intense also in the absence of national or language differences—then national diversity is likely to become one way of accentuating and dramatizing them. Under such conditions national differences will appear as a secondary factor in influencing the course of social conflicts and in contributing to their further intensification.³¹ Where such a development has been going on for some time, there the conspicuous and durable marks of language and nationality often eventually supplant

³⁰What national characteristics are physically inheritable? Certain bodily characteristics like colour of skin, curliness of hair, shape of lips or nose are transmitted by heredity. Under certain circumstances such bodily marks may be made to serve as national characteristics. The olive colour of the light Mulatto is not a mark of separate nationality in Egypt, which would set off its bearer from the other Egyptians. But it may function as a national characteristic in important parts of the United States where it often has set off its bearers from their white fellow-citizens, exposing many of them to discriminatory treatment and aligning thousands of them with various movements of Negro nationalism. Whether the bodily marks themselves are likely to be preserved by heredity, or to be wiped out by intermixture or assimilation is a problem in the science of biology. The social scientist can only try to investigate why political emotions have become attached to bodily marks in certain cases, and the chances for the future strengthening or weakening of these emotions. No such attempt is made in the present paper. The analysis developed in its main text is applicable to acquired, i.e. physically *not* inheritable characteristics only.

³¹National differences would have to be considered a *primary* factor of conflict if their presence could be shown to lead to important clashes in situations where no significant social conflicts were found in similar, but nationally uniform, societies.

earlier symbols and alignments of group conflict, until conflict in terms of religious or territorial allegiance gives way to conflict in terms of language and descent. In many countries modern nationalism has taken today the place of the religious communalism and territorial patriotism of earlier stages. A study of nationality can tell us here why men came to adopt the battle-cry of nationalism instead of the older ones for their conflicts; but we have to call on all the social sciences in asking for an explanation of the growth of the conflicts themselves.

VII

A specific study of the factors which have brought about till now such a development of growing national diversity and conflict may also indicate those factors, the strengthening of which would tend to weight the balance over to the side of decreasing conflicts and quickening unity. It may reveal in the interplay of largely impersonal forces at each stage the limiting or broadening of opportunities for statesmanlike action in favour of economic, political, and educational adjustment.

Such adjustments may be sought for the purposes of short-range politics, domestic or international. Political leaders may seek that balance of assimilation against expansion and entry which will prevent the accumulation of serious tension,³² while at the same time seeking the path of least resistance among the pressure groups. On the other hand, such adjustments may be pursued with a view to their long-range effects; in this case we are likely to find ourselves asking for a long-range perspective. Our analysis seems to lead to two such perspectives.

Looking at medieval unity, we found it based on a low rate of entry, on the scarcity of intercourse, the slowness of economic growth. Yet there are those who would recommend to us again that medieval unity as a model for today and tomorrow. If we are willing to pay the price, we may try to have it again. We may attempt to abolish ultimately national conflicts by erecting again international continent-wide or world-wide super-civilizations, based on the throttling down of the entry of the diversified and unassimilated majority of mankind into the world of intensive intercourse. This would have to be accomplished by the slowing down of economic progress and expansion to the limits set by the pace of gradual assimilation. Stretched above such a stagnating or extremely slowly growing world we then could again have a wide-flung

³²In the discussion of short term policies the demand for skilled persons in a given economy has been sometimes treated as stable, such as in the case of Professor Sorokin's warnings about the increase in American college graduates during the 1920's: "for any prosperous society there is an optimal proportion of the upper strata in relation to its population . . . Hence, the possibility of an overproduction or underproduction of candidates for the upper strata . . ." (Sorokin, *Social Mobility*, pp. 197 ff.) For a long-term policy, however, the changes in the demand for skilled persons and intercommunications must be taken into account and, indeed, become the most significant. The development of that demand with economic and technological progress is cardinal to the present analysis.

shell of one or more international civilizations, based on a secluded upper caste of uniform language, traditions, and possibly ethnic or "racial" descent. A good deal of the enthusiasm of some German writers for the "Hochkulturen" of the past would fit in with such a perspective.

Or, on the other hand, we may realize that we will not return to the internationalism of scarcity of the early Middle Ages.³³ Rather we may hope to abolish finally national conflict by speeding up economic growth and intercommunication everywhere until all mankind with all its secluded peasant masses will have entered the field of intensive intercourse. This would mean that *the unity of mankind will have to be sought through an intermediate period of still more increased diversity*. Instead of viewing the cultural aspirations of small or hitherto submerged nations with impatience or alarm, we should greet their languages as vehicles of progress. We might find it even worth while to "lend-lease" philologists, grammarians, teachers, and printers to some of the world's backward peoples who have not yet developed a written language from their daily speech. Only in their own countries, only in their own languages can the heritage of modern technological and scientific civilization be brought with any speed to the countless villages and peasant families who still comprise the majority of mankind. But having learned to read and write, having entered into frequent communication with the rest of the world, these diverse multitudes will be exposed to the forces of assimilation as never before. If at that time all obstacles to assimilation will be reduced and all aids and incentives, spiritual symbols as well as material opportunities, for world-wide unification will be increased, then we may hope for the eventual cultural and ultimately even linguistic unification of mankind in its entirety, from top to bottom and from land to land—a task so long in range and so wide in scope that it is barely beginning in our own time to become at all seriously conceivable.³⁴

Both these perspectives can be derived from a study of the great international civilization of the Middle Ages. Both are real with us today; and the decision between them may be one of the issues at stake on the battlefields of the present world war.

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³³Recent political thought stresses increasingly the importance of a solution for all people rather than for a minority. "Our insistence upon tolerance is being broadened into respect and appreciation for peoples with a different culture from our own. But to date, we have thought too much in terms of minorities, racial, cultural, and religious. In the emerging world order it is not merely a matter of minorities, but of the majority of mankind" (Carl J. Friedrich, *The New Belief in the Common Man*, Boston, 1942, p. 308).

³⁴Much of this long-range task seems implicit in the public statements of the Vice-President of the United States: "From a long-term and fundamental point of view there are no backward peoples which are lacking in mechanical sense. Russians, Chinese, and the Indians both of India and the Americas all learn to read and write and operate machines . . . Everywhere the common man must learn to build his own industries with his own hands in a practical fashion. Everywhere the common man must learn to increase his productivity . . ." (Henry A. Wallace, *The Price of Free World Victory, An Address before the Free World Association, New York City, May 8, 1942*, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1942, p. 3).