

THE FORGOTTEN FREEDOM

Incorporated

A Non-Profit Organization

Laurence W. Tracy
Chairman

Freedom is indivisible. It begins with the establishment of Natural Human Rights. It flourishes to the extent that those Rights are exercised. The basic Human Right is the Right to enjoy easy and equitable access to the Great Workshop of Nature. Our present system of land control denies such access by permitting monopoly of and speculation in natural resources and opportunities, and is the root cause of poverty and all its derivative evils. We propose to establish man's basic Right, i.e., to call to human service this FORGOTTEN FREEDOM — the freedom of *all men* to use Nature's Workshop on terms equitable to all, without let or hindrance by private monopolies or paternalistic governments.

*Comments, Inquiries and Contributions
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The FORGOTTEN FREEDOM

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"GOD grant that not only the love of liberty but a thorough knowledge of the Rights of Man may pervade all the Nations of the Earth so that a Philosopher may set his foot anywhere and say This is my Country."

—BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

"THE LAND belongs in usufruct to the living."

—THOMAS JEFFERSON

"THE LAND, the earth God gave to man for his home, sustenance and support; and it should never be the possession of any man, corporation, society, or unfriendly government any more than the air or water, if as much. An individual, or company, or enterprise requiring land should hold no more than is required for their home and sustenance, and never more than they have in actual use in the prudent management of their legitimate business."

—ABRAHAM LINCOLN

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By SIDNEY JASON

CONSPICUOUS by its absence in United Nations propaganda is one of the popular Allied slogans of 1914-1918: "This is a war to end all war."

Our generation is too well acquainted with the economic problems of mankind, too enlightened in the ways of world politics to believe that *war* can end war. We have come to realize that some other instrument far more powerful than the force of arms is indispensable for the purpose of establishing an enduring peace.

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What is this other instrument?

A religious renaissance? "Policing" of aggressor nations? "Re-education" of the world's children in the love of peace? Complete unionization of "labor"? A world-wide "Beveridge Plan"?

It takes but a moment's reflection to realize that whatever merit there may be in any of these or similar proposals, none of them reaches down to the root causes of war. None of them reveals a way for releasing the productive energies of man so that each human being can satisfy his economic desires in his own most effective way. None of them provides a means for increasing the production of those worldly goods so sorely needed to relieve poverty — though poverty, the basic evil which nourishes all other evils, war above all, can be relieved only if there is vastly increased production.

For example: Unions, Beveridge plans and Social Security systems merely propose to accomplish a more equitable distribution of goods already produced or in current production. Important as is the question of equitable distribution, more urgent is that of increased production. The most equitable system of wealth distribution cannot distribute more goods than

are available. Thus, it is well to remember that at the very highest point of peaceful endeavor, production fell far short of satisfying minimum human needs (not to speak of those desires for comforts and luxuries which go far beyond "needs") *even in the United States!* Social Security, in whatever shape, is a futile gesture if there is not enough to secure.

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Isn't this all perfectly obvious? Isn't it true that all post war planners advocate some proposal for increasing production so that there shall be "freedom from want" in the world order to come?

The answer is, "Yes and No." If "proposal" means "hope," then most surely the answer is, "Yes." Every post war planner includes some *such* proposal in his scheme for establishing peace and prosperity after the war. If "proposal" means a definite *method* that varies in any practical respect from methods that have failed dismally in the pre-war world, then the answer is most definitely, "No."

Those who are inclined to feel that this is too-harsh a judgment can examine for themselves any plan or proposal thus far popularly offered. They will find, at best, generous quantities of good intentions; an abundance of naive faith that "somehow we'll discover a way out"; unlimited confidence that sheer will and energy, expended at the proper time, are sure to triumph over problems that arise; but nowhere will they come across a specific suggestion that for practical purposes differs from all the economic and political doctrines that up to now have failed to eliminate poverty and war.

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As each day brings forth additional post war plans for eliminating poverty the influence of the Atlantic Charter becomes increasingly evident. Unlike the Declaration of Independence (for example) the Atlantic Charter circumscribes thinking instead of freeing it. The Declaration crystallized the ideas of human rights which were being widely discussed at the time and brought those ideas into consonance with practical human

needs, or at least with the needs of the American people. Moreover, the Declaration provided a departure in popular thinking which stimulated further thought and opened the way for the expansion of ideas. The Atlantic Charter, on the other hand, evades fundamentals in human thought, parries every basic problem of our day, minces words in the best tradition of "old-fashioned diplomacy"—and leaves thinking on the subject of radical social reform exactly where it was prior to August 14, 1941.

However, by virtue of its official derivation and its dramatic origins, the Charter has been a virtual strait-jacket of post war planning. It is serving to "freeze" our thinking on the subject; whereas its historic role (like that of the Declaration of Independence) should have been to free our thought from the lag of discredited ancient doctrines. The Atlantic Charter, instead of breaking with the past—as did the Declaration—merely temporizes with it.

While it is true that there has been much criticism of the Charter, this criticism has stayed within the general over-all pattern of basic ideas which give body to Mr. Roosevelt's and Mr. Churchill's compact. How true this is will become clear as we examine one or two of these basic Atlantic Charter ideas while keeping in mind plans which either claim to follow it or supposedly oppose it.

The Charter and all its satellite plans seek to expand production by controlling it—a "horse and buggy" idea if ever there was one! All human experience teaches that production rises most rapidly when controls are relaxed; men work hardest, produce most efficiently when they are the most free to follow the incentives of their desires and ambitions.

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The Atlantic Charter offers this proposition: after the war the United States of America and the United Kingdom together "will endeavor, with respect for their existing obligations, to further the enjoyment by all States, great or small, victor or vanquished, of access, on equal terms, to the trade and to the raw materials of the world which are needed for their economic prosperity."

Such expressions as "existing obligations" and "equal terms," however well meant, are bound to bedevil the practical instrumentation of any contract among nations of unequal strength. For example, what are these "existing obligations?" Are these "existing obligations" based, in the first place, upon justice, or do they represent the advanced or entrenched positions of privileged groups? If any "existing obligation" were found to conflict with a right of mankind upon which a solution of our problems depended, would the obligation take precedence over the right? Is the established cartel system an "existing obligation" with respect to which the "rights" of "States," not to speak of the rights of man, would have to be measured before the raw materials problem could be worked out?

And further, what are "equal terms" among States? And how are they to be determined? *Who* is to decide which raw materials are needed for "economic prosperity?" (What is prosperity in India, for example? In China? In the United States?) *How* is this need to be determined? *Which sources* of raw materials—there are many under many different sovereignties—are to be appropriated for the purpose?

These questions are intriguing enough, and yet a more fundamental question far overshadows them in importance: *Does enjoyment of access to raw materials begin, rightfully and logically, with States as such or with individuals as such?*

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The idea that "States" as such can guarantee prosperity to their inhabitants is, of course, not new. This is the Mercantilist doctrine most openly advocated in the 17th and 18th centuries, and otherwise known as Statism or Protectionism. History records it as an inglorious failure. Every effort of a State to regulate industry and economic life for the good of its citizens has resulted in innumerable evils, foremost among which are the deeper impoverishment of the poor, the further entrenchment of established monopolies, the enhancement of despotic political and economic power and, of course, war—which, in its ultimate sense is nothing more than a virulent expression of the disease of economic and accompanying spiritual poverty.

It is not a matter of conjecture, but one of simple recorded fact, that in the field of economic activity the most a State can do is supervise and protect the prosperity of a privileged class, or else assure a low level of prison-like security for its total population.

Hitler's and Stalin's efficiency in eliminating unemployment (*not poverty*) may impress some as contradicting these conclusions, but on the contrary, they bear them out. Both the Hitler and the Stalin schemes have proved efficient in inaugurating and prosecuting war; neither has proved efficient in providing opportunities for the gratification of *free* human desires.

If we apply the term prosperity to the whole population, and if we mean by it a generous, widening, continuing and ascending scale of living, *this is a phenomenon which appears only in an atmosphere of freedom*, as a result of individual enterprise and free economic opportunities for at least a wide section of the people. Such a prosperity is the reward of work carried on with a minimum of restraint by the State. The degree to which this phenomenon manifests itself depends entirely upon the measure of freedom enjoyed by the people as individuals, and of course, upon the percentage of people who really are free to pursue the normal incentive of economic activity.

In this respect, it is essential to remember that the measure of economic freedom enjoyed by individuals in a given community is not always a matter of direct State control or absence of such control. Too often, particularly in democratic countries, when direct State interference is lacking, private monopolies provide the restricting conditions; and underlying the failure of all States, democratic and despotic alike, to maintain economic stability is the basic restriction of all—the monopoly which makes all other monopolies possible. The Atlantic Charter is right in its ambition to break this monopoly, *the monopoly by the few of the materials of nature*: it is wrong in seeking to break this monopoly by means of another monopoly, State power.

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Thus, the Atlantic Charter proposes to repeat, in what it intends shall be a more enlightened and more effective manner,

the methods of social reform which time and again have failed to provide domestic security or international peace. It offers to mankind a promise vague enough in itself and utterly meaningless without the application of dictatorial force—a promise that somehow or other Great Britain and the United States, after winning the war, will keep the peace of the world, and through their respective good offices will seek to assure political freedom and economic abundance to all the peoples of the earth. Nowhere does it suggest a concrete method for achieving these objectives.

With amorphous logic the Atlantic Charter proclaims the "wish" of the United Kingdom and the United States of America to see sovereign rights restored; their proposed "endeavor" to establish equality of access to raw materials; their "desire" to affect collaboration among nations; their "hope" of seeing an enduring peace secured—all tentative propositions of the good intentions category, and bearing within themselves nothing of the purposefulness, the determination, the concreteness that are indispensable for a successful reconstruction of our social and economic order.

Throughout the ages the State has been an actual or potential instrument of oppression. Almost always it has served as an apparatus for securing privileges to the unscrupulous, the wealthy, the strong.

Every struggle for freedom has been basically a struggle to take power from the State and deliver it to the individual. Mankind's progress can be measured largely in terms of the growth of individual freedom.

Freedom of the individual is a vital condition of progress, and not merely a politico-cultural luxury. Yet the Atlantic Charter, in its efforts to temporize with our latter-day Mercantilism and with the powerful inroads Marxist ideas have made into our ways of thinking, ignores this fundamental condition, reverses the trend of liberty-loving nations, and proposes once more to seek solution of our problems through the aggrandizement of State powers. It forgets or overlooks the one great lesson learned in freedom's struggle, viz., no State can make a free people; but a free people can make a free State.

It is in this profound sense, then, that the Atlantic Charter fails. *Instead of providing for freer peoples, it seeks to provide more powerful States.* It attempts to replace the ignominiously unsuccessful "benign despots" of the 18th century with "benign" States in this 20th century.

The Atlantic Charter very properly recognizes the vital role that access to raw materials plays in developing freedom and prosperity. However, it seeks to substitute for the current private cartel system of monopolizing raw materials, a government-controlled monopoly of even greater international proportions.

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But where does the right of access to raw materials begin? Where does freedom, the basic correlative of such access, begin? This right originates, not with freedom of the State (whatever that may be) or with "collective freedom" (if such a thing could be,) but with the freedom of the individual—the freedom of each person to enjoy equal rights with all other persons. The "rights" of States have no practical significance to the mass of mankind; the economic welfare, the happiness of human beings depends rather on the rights they enjoy as single human entities.

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It is in this sphere of attempting to apportion the materials of nature that States have found the most fruitful source of war. Time and again "balance of power" pacts and "collective security" arrangements have thwarted the common man in his search for this simple justice which is due him as a natural right: the opportunity to use the earth on terms of equality with his fellow men.

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The earth is the only universal and perpetually available workshop. It is nature's guarantee that man need never starve as long as he is willing to work. Nature does not thwart man's willingness to work: only man himself, through perversion of his natural rights, defeats his chances for a life of peace and prosperity.

Why, for example, did men lack employment during the depression? In great cities, in the midst of miserable, overcrowded slums, stood empty building lots. Were these lots unimproved because no contractors were ready to save themselves from bankruptcy or from the threat of it by undertaking new enterprises? Were bricklayers, electricians, plumbers, carpenters idle because they were not willing to work on this land? Was there no demand for cleaner, cheaper living quarters—or do people live in misery by choice?

Not lack of willingness to work, but a strictly man-made fencing off of nature's workshop lay then, and after the war may again lie at the root of unemployment.

Given easy and equitable access to the land, contractors would have built houses. Bricklayers, electricians, plumbers, carpenters and a score or more of other types of craftsmen would have found ready employment. The demand for better living quarters would have been satisfied. *Employment begets employment.* But employment starts, and always must start, somewhere on the land, for we can live only on the land and only by the things taken from it.

Not only in the city, but on the farm and in the forest, in the mine and in the jungle, wherever man by growing things utilizes the reproductive forces of nature for his good; or by extracting things from the earth, avails himself of nature's free gifts—all over the world men have been cut off from employment not because nature is niggardly or reluctant, *but because man himself has by some inexplicable perversity restricted his own use of the land.* A vicious system of land control—world-wide and age-long in its acceptance—has permitted a comparatively few men to check the access of the great masses of mankind to their basic workshop—the land.

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It is fashionable these days for large industrial organizations to speak about the jobs they can provide after the war. Yet all the industrialists of the world, straining their utmost to put men to work, could achieve but microscopic success compared

with the infinite potentialities of nature, of land. And even this microscopic quantity of jobs depends entirely upon those jobs provided in the first place by nature. Industry is nothing more than an extension of the primary occupations of growing and extracting; and industry can flourish only to the extent that these primary occupations flourish. Industrial production can increase only as it increases its use of "raw materials." The higher we build our skyscrapers, the more we must resort to the use of the land—the forest, the farm, the mine.

If in the political sphere it can be truthfully said that if you "give light the people will find their own way," so in the economic sphere it is true that if you give easy and equitable access to the land (in city and country)—eliminating speculative and monopolistic restrictions on the use of nature's workshop—the people will make their own jobs.

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This, then, is The Forgotten Freedom: the freedom of men—all men—to use the heritage nature has given them on terms of equality with all other men. There is no mention of this freedom in the Atlantic Charter; there is no mention of it in the "Four Freedoms" nor in any other document expressing the war aims of the United Nations. Without this freedom, all the aspirations of the Atlantic Charter and its innumerable satellite plans for providing justice and eliminating poverty and war are doomed to failure:

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Some will contend that this freedom, this equal right of all men to the bounty of nature, is implicit in the general purpose of the Atlantic Charter. Let us see if this is so.

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Man's equal right to use the earth exists, not by grace of the State, but by the mere fact of human existence. This right accompanies the birth of each individual. It is a right which exists over and above any State, and one which existed before any State came into being. It exists regardless of race, creed, color, or nationality.

To deny the existence of this right is to impute to nature a gross contradiction—the creation of life without the provision of means for sustaining it. Nature commits no such error. Man and man alone, through the exercise of ignorance, arrogance and greed, obscures nature's harmonies and destroys his own opportunities for a life of abundance.

Yet the Atlantic Charter, repeating the erroneous and ineffectual approach of all the unsuccessful State-managed efforts to provide justice, proposes to make the State (in this case, represented by the United Kingdom and the United States of America) custodian of this right and executor of it for the benefit of mankind.

This assumption of guardianship is based on one of the most unfortunate intellectual pitfalls into which man has been betrayed, viz., the joint right doctrine—the collectivistic theory which is a major source of all modern social and political evils: Communism, Fascism, Nazism, and the unhappy trend toward a benign "State socialism" in England and the United States. This doctrine interprets the rights of man as being of a joint nature, i.e., to be shared or administered collectively by an arbitrarily established political apparatus; whereas, the rights of man are *equal rights*, to be enjoyed by them as individuals according to the lights of each, as long as there is due respect for the equivalent rights of others. The function of the State is to *secure* and *guarantee* these equal rights not to assume guardianship or custodianship over them.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed, by their Creator, with certain *unalienable* rights . . . that to *secure* these rights governments are instituted among men . . ."

Here, expressed with axiomatic pith and vigor, are the central truths upon which the "American way" was founded and upon which it must continue to build if it is to remain the "American way." Equality (of opportunity, of course); the unalienability of equal natural rights; the limited function of government—to *secure* these rights: there cannot be argument against these foundations of freedom except on the basis of an

evil lust for power. We have travelled far toward establishment of political rights; but in the economic sphere we have ignored the basic right upon which equality of opportunity ultimately depends.

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The most liberal, even the most far-fetched interpretation of the Atlantic Charter will reveal no recognition of this Forgotten Freedom, this basic right of men, as individuals, to use the earth on terms of equality. On the contrary, the Atlantic Charter definitely commits itself to maintain "existing obligations" though many of these "existing obligations" flout the individual rights of man. The Charter asserts as "common principles in the national policies of their respective countries" a program of State control of all mankind's social problems and of nature's resources, in spite of the fact that every scheme for State management of these problems has only served to restrict the exercise of individual rights and personal freedom.

It proposes to exercise power on behalf of the alleged joint rights of mankind, and thereby not only jeopardizes the equal rights of man, but at the same time deprives man of that responsibility toward himself, as an individual, which is also a design of nature.

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We know this much from common experience: The United States grew to greatness in an atmosphere of freedom, an environment in which there was a large measure of individual freedom as distinguished from (and opposed to) State direction. But the original condition of independence and widespread individual initiative and competition was superseded by monopoly controls; the insidious land monopoly at first, and then a long train of added monopolies, all of which ultimately depend for their privileges upon the land monopoly backed by State sanctions.

In attempting to leech out the evils of monopoly, the State intervened, with the best intentions of course, but with similarly destructive effects; for in the nature of things, it makes no difference whether a concealed private monopoly or a benevolent State bureau restricts production and controls the opportunity

to labor in nature's great workshop. In both cases, the result is to choke the natural incentives of mankind, to check the employment of labor, and to propagate poverty.

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The super-State inherent in the Atlantic Charter ideology could only repeat on a larger scale the same mistakes made previously by smaller States or combinations of States. If there is to be lasting peace and prosperity after this war we must reverse the contemporary trend toward collectivism, i.e., the management of society through the exercise of supposed *joint* rights, and establish as basic policy in human relations the doctrine of *equal* rights.

We must come to realize that freedom is more than an abstract "ideal"; it is a functioning apparatus, and an indispensable one at that, in the achievement of a progressive society.

We will have to understand that the basic equal right is that of access to the great Workshop of Nature, and that such access, *in all justice and in the logic of economic efficiency*, must begin with individual free enterprise—exactly where freedom begins—and not with State ownership or management.

The Atlantic Charter is seeking the right goal with the wrong method: it hopes to achieve equality of opportunity through a system of diplomatically or politically maneuvered State privileges and controls—an altogether forlorn aspiration.

Man was made to be free, and only through freedom—individual freedom—can he realize his hopes for a full and secure life. The "Four Freedoms," of course! But to make them a real possibility we must first call to human service The Forgotten Freedom of equality in the use of the earth, the indispensable basic foundation upon which all other freedoms can build.

By what method can man be given The Forgotten Freedom—the easy and equitable access to nature's workshop— to which he is entitled by the mere fact of his birth? Simply by eliminating all monopolistic or speculative withholding of land from use, so that at all times every unused or under-used city lot or country acre, every unworked or inadequately worked

mine, forest or fishery will be available for use when it is desired for use by those who are able and willing to use it.

This objective can be achieved through government collection of the full economic rent of all land. In practice this means merely an extension of the present policy by which the government, through land taxes, collects a part of this annual land value.

If the unearned increment that by and large attaches to land no longer accrued, monopolistic, absentee or speculative ownership would be unprofitable. Land would come into use when it was needed, not when a speculator found it to his personal profit to permit it to come into use through sale or rental.

This wholly practical and proven technique of stimulating production through establishing justice in man's right to use the earth will be discussed in detail in a forthcoming pamphlet entitled "Freedom Is as Freedom Does."

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What about war? How would establishment of The Forgotten Freedom prevent or tend to prevent international conflicts?

With all of nature's workshop perpetually open to use by all men, there could be no such thing as involuntary unemployment.

Every city lot and every country acre would be, in effect, a new and constantly available frontier beckoning to the venturesome, the ambitious, the talented. Since man's desires are unlimited, since his ingenuity knows no bounds and his energies are capable of performing miracles, this unlimited opportunity (nature *does* offer unlimited opportunities!) could only mean a continuous upward spiral of production. Under such circumstances the dread disease of poverty would hardly linger for long in any large area of the earth. The main festering spot of war—the "have not" nation—would be effectively sterilized. The Forgotten Freedom—the instrument which will cure poverty—is also the instrument which will end war.