

CHAPTER 13

Time for an Heroic Step Ahead

Courage grows
As a rose.
Thorn on thorn
It is born.
-- C.K.S.

I will lift up mine eyes -- *Psalms 121:1*

Now, risking a little repetition for its unique advantages, let us try to compress the essence of this book into something as small as a cherry, compared to its tree -- yet containing all the tree, and something more, something fresh and nourishing, a thing in-itself.

Many find the human race never so divided as today. Yet never before has all our planet been governed by so many ideas, ideals and institutions held in common, not by force, but by free acceptance -- by the power of proved virtue. Nearly all of them originated in the relatively free peoples living round the North Atlantic. Here they were first advanced in modern times. Here they were first put to the test of experience -- always at painful sacrifice. When they proved their merit here, they spread round the globe.

The glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome rose, like their successor now, not on a single continent but around that ancient and modern means of communication, a common sea. The ideas, ideals and institutions of individual liberty, equality and fraternal union have made the North Atlantic ocean the modern Mediterranean. Together, the people dwelling on its eastern and western shores have created a civilization which, with all its shortcomings, has given more freedom, greater dignity and a higher standard of life, both moral and material, to more myriads of men through more generations than any men ever enjoyed before.

Growing out of the higher reaches of the mind and spirit that were attained by the civilizations of the ancient Mediterranean, our new Atlantis has risen where sank the fabled Republic. From it, be it repeated, have come practically all the basic ideas -- sound, unsound, and in between -- that rule the world today.

From it have spread around the world the concepts and institutions of national sovereignty (in the diplomatic sense) and of the sovereignty of the people (or "citizen sovereignty" in the domestic sense), federal union, universal suffrage, liberty of conscience, speech, press, and all the other Rights of Man, the Rule of Law, equality before the Law, international law, and world-wide organization for peace, justice, disarmament, social improvement and better living standards.

True, interpretations differ, and lip service only is paid to some of these in some major countries. The point is that they are now recognized, at least, as ideals almost everywhere.

So, too, have risen and spread the emancipation of woman, protective measures for women and children, compulsory free education, the abolition of slavery, labor unions, Red Cross. "Mass production" is but the most striking of the economic concepts of Atlantica that have circled the globe, as have also its basic approach to science and technology. From it have come every one of the ever more prodigious new sources of power that the human race has gained in the past 200 years -- steam, electricity, petroleum, atomic energy. Here originated the "miracle" fabrics that have captivated mankind, all its means of swift communication -- telegraph, cable, telephone, wireless, radio, television, railway, steamship, automobile, airplane, rocket -- and how many conquests of disease ...

All along this vast front the people of the North Atlantic have led in the world-wide war against the true enemies of man -- ignorance, poverty, disease, premature death.

They gained this leadership by leading first in certain moral and spiritual principles. At least one of these is now universally accepted (in principle though not in practice) -- the principle of the equal importance and dignity of each human being. But this is only part of the banner under which the Atlanticans have gained their victories for all mankind against so many of its enemies. That banner is formed too, of the common Atlantic concept of man as being above all a moral being with a God-given right to equal freedom and equal opportunity, and a God-given duty to recognize this right in all other men, to love his neighbors as himself and unite with them for the common good. With this concept goes the ideal of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man; with it also goes the idea that the State is made for Man, not Man for the State.

These concepts and ideals are not yet universal, though they are world-wide. Nor did they originate in the Atlantic community. They are older than it. They had to be -- for the new Atlantis was created by them, and by the common devotion of its people to them.

Even the ideas that now divide humanity most -- Communism vs. capitalism, economic determinism vs. moral determinism, trade barriers vs. free trade, nationalism vs. federation -- all these conflicting concepts originated in our Atlantic civilization. The fact that they are now struggling to govern the minds of men as fully as do the ideas of representative government, equal rights for women, mass production, Cartesian reasoning and the scientific method -- this should not blind us to the fact that this struggle is itself but further proof that Atlantica is the leading creator of the modern world.

I say this in no vainglorious spirit. Nor do I mean to imply that only the Atlantic people are capable of such leadership. Earlier civilizations have made immense contributions. People everywhere and of every race and color are contributing increasingly today. Some have already surpassed us in their applications of our scientific principles and technical methods. We Atlanticans claim no superiority in the people of the Atlantic community. We must assert, however, the superiority of our basic principles, since they are so widely acclaimed by mankind now as the key to the future, the way to a better life for every man, woman and child, living and to be born.

The leadership that Atlantica has been privileged to give faces us with two tremendous responsibilities today. One is negative: To lead now in saving mankind from the economic disaster and atomic war which threaten to result from the conflicting concepts that came out of Atlantica and are now struggling for world acceptance. The other responsibility is positive: To lead in making now the heroic step ahead which our other concepts, already world-accepted, make possible today -- and imperative, if man's war against ignorance, poverty, disease and premature death is to be won. These two responsibilities, preservative and creative, are closely interrelated. Both require Atlantica to choose rightly between its own conflicting ideas -- and to provide once more the pilot plant which alone can prove to all the world that the concepts we choose are indeed right.

Too often the conflicts between the ideological children of Atlantica have led in the past to wars within the Atlantic community itself. In our time these wars have twice engulfed all the world. The devastation already suffered must not be repeated now in a war to determine whether free government or dictatorship, individual initiative or Communism, shall rule the future. This time Atlantica, which fathered these ideological Cains and Abels, must make sure that their struggle for the mind of man will be determined -- as was the struggle between the scientific vs. the authoritarian method -- by the proofs that peace alone can safely give.

There is this sharp difference between the present conflict and the previous ones: This time the struggle is not within the Atlantic community itself, but between it and the Communist empire, whose armed and industrial power lies entirely outside the Atlantic world. This is both a great difficulty and a great advantage. A difficulty, because the armed power of one camp is for the first time in our era controlled outside the Atlantic area -- controlled by men whose people have never learned the language of liberty and in all their history have never known any regime save tyranny. An advantage, because -- also for the first time -- the people of Atlantica are not themselves divided on the basic issue. All their power is on the side of freedom; Communist dictatorship rules none of them.

True, the Atlantic democracies are still divided by another of their children -- the prevailing theory and practice of national sovereignty. It originated among them as a liberating and uniting principle. It brought smaller states together in such nations as Italy and Germany, removing barriers to trade and consolidating currencies. But in our century when the airplane, mass production and atomic power demanded still broader governments and markets, unlimited national sovereignty turned into a divisive force, creating several currencies where one served before, criss-crossing common markets with trade barriers, "balkanizing" the world ever more dangerously.

Thus national sovereignty, in its unlimited, diplomatic sense, has outlived its usefulness as a uniting force for peace, and turned against the individual liberty that inspired it. And so the time has come when the safety of all mankind, and its hopes of being benefited, instead of buried, by the prodigious power now at its disposal, depend on our making a truly heroic step forward -- uniting nations today as nationalism united smaller principalities, and doing this by peaceful, free agreement.

Happily, as this need arose there also rose a better way to unite states peacefully. It safeguarded each of them from domination, preserved their diversity in culture, language and liberty, but removed their barriers to the free movement of goods, money and men -- and proved that what leads nations to war for a better market is not free enterprise, as Communists assert, but unlimited national sovereignty. This federal way has already proved its merits on both sides of the Atlantic, and on every continent. But it still remains to be shown that historic nations on opposite shores of an ocean can unite peacefully by federal union, or any other common government.

Mankind awaits the establishment of this new pilot plant. If we the nations of the new Atlantis do not provide it, who can? If we dare not pioneer in this human venture, who will? With the courage of our fathers and the faith in God's help their triumphs justify, let us now take this heroic step in man's millenary march ahead.

A Declaration of Liberty-and-Union

Let us conclude -- and begin -- with a fresh Declaration of the principle of Liberty-and-Union that we of Atlantica live by and keep alive:

Liberty is man's high goal, and Federal Union of the Free is his best means to advance it.

Liberty without Union is no longer Liberty but anarchy, just as Union without Liberty turns Union into tyranny.

Without Union, Liberty is an end with no means to secure it in human society; without Liberty, Union is a means turned against its rightful end.

Too long Liberty and Union have been seen separately, and as irreconcilables; these two vital truths must be always seen and always kept together, as forming a creative unit; to bear their finest fruit we must unite them lovingly, realistically, enduringly, dynamically.

Man's password to a better world can not be Liberty alone or Union alone -- neither the individual nor the collectivity alone -- but Liberty-and-Union as "one and inseparable, now and forever."

Words without action are a mockery. The preservation and advancement of life depend on keeping Liberty-and-Union not merely together but in dynamic balance. This is a practical problem which every generation in our rapidly widening world must ponder and solve afresh. Ours has too long neglected it.

And so we now solemnly affirm that:

Our common supreme unit of government is the individual free person.

Our common supreme purpose of government is the life, liberty, happiness and advancement, in the broadest sense of these words, of each person equally.

Our common means to our common purpose is the Union of free persons as equals under a commonly instituted and accepted Rule of Law, guaranteeing the liberties of each minority, even of one, as well as the means of assuring timely practical action on common affairs by the whole community through a freely and lawfully formed majority of it.

Our common sense tells us that the time has come when we must begin to apply this means to this purpose between our democracies, and no longer merely within our own.

To be able to continue practicing within our individual countries our common principle that the state is made for man, we must henceforth cease practicing between our democracies the opposite, absolutist, Communist principle, that man is made for the state. We betray our own principle for that of dictatorship if we say that the nation's sovereignty must not be sacrificed even when this would advance the sovereignty of the citizen -- or even when, as now, this lessening in the rights of our state is the only way to preserve not only our own rights as citizens but our very lives.

Like our forefathers -- Americans, British or Canadians, French, Germans, Italians, Dutch, Scandinavians, Greeks and Turks -- we must now choose between the sovereignty of the State and the sovereignty of the Citizens. Shall we sacrifice the citizen needlessly -- worse than needlessly -- merely to preserve unaltered a form of Union of free men (the democratic nation) which, like the city-state and tribe before it, has now outlived itself in some respects and thus has put in jeopardy the lives and liberties it served so long? Or shall we preserve and advance our nation's citizens by transferring to a broader Union of the Free whichever powers they delegated to the nation that they now agree would serve their purpose better if re-delegated to this new Union? There can be no doubt whatever of our choice. We can not to ourselves be false, and still be true to others.

The only doubt is whether we shall choose Union of the Free in time to save the liberties and lives of countless millions, or only after it is too late to prevent catastrophe.

Since we would make this choice once disaster fell, let us make it now. Let us run no risk of acting too late to prevent another catastrophe and -- God forbid -- the complete triumph of the ancient dogma that makes man bow down to the state and that would utterly destroy our way of life. Delay has cost us appallingly already; let us not risk acting so late that all the sacrifices we thereafter make will prove to be vain.

The difficulties and dangers that now seem so certain -- to dictatorship and to many of us -- to keep us divided against ourselves: Will they not seem to the next generation as small as those our fathers faced seem now to us? What are these difficulties and dangers compared to those we face by any other course? As Lincoln nobly said: "The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion."

All that we hold true and sacred requires us, the people of the Atlantic community, to begin now, with no further delay, to work out a practical way of governing our common affairs by the same democratic Rule of Law that already governs our national, local and city affairs, through the constitution of a still greater Federal Union of the Free.

Our most imperative and noblest task today is to unite all our people in a Union so constituted that it will govern our common affairs democratically and effectively, while guaranteeing not only our Bill of Rights as individuals, but the rights of each of our nations to continue to govern independently its purely national affairs.

We must form this Union not as anything exclusive but in such fashion that it will spread by example's peaceful and prodigious power. We must create it as a nucleus destined by its nature to grow with gentle gradualness. We must so constitute it as to hasten the distant day when liberty-and-union will gain universal acceptance by its success in our pilot plant, as have already representative government, nationalism, universal suffrage, mass production, scientific objectivity, and many other Atlantic concepts.

How to create the seed of this giant tree of Liberty-and-Union presents many problems -- spiritual, cultural, political, military, economic. They form a whole as intricately related as the organs of a living body, and we must see and solve them as a whole.

We can, and must, declare that there are some fields in which an Atlantic government would serve our liberties and lives better than can our national governments -- even though we differ on which fields they are. And though we may differ on the form this government should have, we can and must declare that the time has come for the people of the Atlantic community to form an effective democratic federal government in those fields which they agree they share in common, with adequate guarantees for national independence in all other fields, and for individual liberty, justice and peaceful growth.

We can, and do, declare our faith that we the people of the Atlantic community possess the vision, courage, maturity and resourcefulness to work out and agree on a constitution for such a government. The sooner we set about it, the sounder will be our Federal Union of the Free, the safer world peace, the surer man's vast future.

In this mighty undertaking we invite all our fellow Atlanticans to share. To it we each solemnly pledge ourselves, personally.

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Such is the Declaration that we are still privileged to make, individually and through the Atlantic Convention. It needs to be made not merely by leaders but by followers. In our free society, we each must be both to some degree, on some level. Any citizen who feels -- or wants to feel -- himself to be a sovereign can make this declaration. To be turned into reality, many must make it now.