

# L *Union of Free Inevitable*

By ARNOLD J. TOYNBEE

ET US SUPPOSE—and this seems quite • a supposition—that the strain and anxiety under which we are living today are not a passing phase of history that is going to end tomorrow in a third world war that is now just round the corner. Let us suppose, instead, that this difficult and painful, but not intolerable, state of affairs is going to be with us for a lifetime, or perhaps for several generations or even centuries on end, without being wound up either by a Last Judgment or by a Millennium.

This is a reasonable expectation, because most human beings, at most times and places, have lived and worked under conditions such as these. The normal texture of private life is neither catastrophic nor beatific; it is a humdrum tale of "just one damned thing after another," and we have no reason for expecting our public life to be different. If we can bring ourselves to see our present troubles in that light, we shall be giving ourselves our best chance of coping with them.

Let us take stock of some of the troubles that, in our Western World, seem likely to be with us for as far as we can see ahead into the future. If we are right in reckoning that these troubles are likely to be perennial ones, the steps that are needed are not emergency measures but permanent arrangements for putting and keeping our Western house in order in the straitened circumstances by which the Western World is now being overtaken.

Suppose that the West is not, after all, on the eve of having to conquer or die on the battlefield of Armageddon. Suppose, instead, that we have to provide, at a minimum cost in "blood and treasure," for holding a number of military frontiers like the Northwest Frontier of British India from 1849 to 1947 or like the Roman Empire's fron-

tiers across Britain and along the Rhine and the Danube during the first four centuries of the Christian Era.

The frontier across the Korean Peninsula—a modern "Hadrian's Wall"—will be the first one to spring to American minds; French minds will think first of Indo-China, and the British minds of Malaya; each nation is naturally most conscious of the particular sector of our besieged Western fortress's common perimeter in which, at present, that particular nation is bearing the brunt of the burden. We have to make joint provision for the probability that all these fronts will have to go on being defended for years.

There will be some fronts, like the Greek and the Turkish fronts today, where there may be no actual fighting but where there will none the less be a need for eternal vigilance—a military need which will impose the economic burden of a constant mobilization in force. There will be other fronts, like the Korean, Malayan and Indo-Chinese fronts today, on which blood will continue to be spilled.

## "Disunity Spells Waste"

We have to provide for different calls upon us in different sectors, and surely it is bad housekeeping to go on handling these common Western frontier problems piecemeal in a Western World that is going to have to husband its resources; for, in holding a common perimeter, disunity spells waste of effort. And then we have to look behind the immediate military task of manning our besieged Western city's walls to the underlying financial and economic task of providing the sinews of war for the perpetual demands of our common Western frontier defense at a minimum cost to our common Western economy.

Here, again, our Western nations are still indulging in the extravagance of trying to live in about 40 separate watertight compartments, each sealed off from the rest by migration restrictions, by tariffs and quotas limiting the

movement of goods and by exchange restrictions limiting the movement of money.

Why, our Western community today is spending about three-quarters of its political energies\* and is depriving itself of about half of its potential economic resources in desperately struggling to go on keeping up these internal barriers that have now become not only useless but perilous for us. They are useless because they do not help us any longer to preserve the things that we value in our Western way of life; they are perilous because they already handicap us in our efforts to preserve these Western values against the mounting pressure of the present siege of the West by the great majority of mankind in the East—a siege which is going to last at least as long as our lifetime. We cannot afford any longer to keep up any internal barriers, inside our Western World, that are found to be handicapping us in our joint defense and therefore to be endangering the survival of our common values.

There are times when we can see ahead of us an inevitable destination that we shall not be able to escape, do what we will. But, when we find ourselves in that situation, we do not then just give up the game and let our feet carry us at random. Even when we see before us one of these destinations at which we are bound to arrive, we may still have a choice between alternative roads for reaching it; and we know very well that this still open choice may make an enormous difference to our fortunes.

We may choose a rough, steep road which will bring us to the inevitable goal half-dead from exhaustion, or we may choose a well-graded, well-paved road which, when it brings us to the same goal, will deliver us there with our energies unimpaired. It is well worth finding the best road, even when we know beforehand that all roads lead to Rome; and this is just as true in our public life—in politics and economics on the big scale—as it is in our private affairs.

On that big scale, are we headed today toward one of those inevitable destinations that can be approached by different roads but which cannot be bypassed?

Personally, I believe that, in our generation, we are headed toward an inevi-

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## THE TOYNBEE VERDICT

ATLANTIC FEDERAL UNIONISTS will thankfully applaud Unconsidered opinion of Arnold J. Toynbee that the Union of the Free they have long been working to achieve is "the next step in history." Better than others they will realize that he supports their, and our, policy from A to Z on all major points. His monumental *Study of History* made Toynbee one of the outstanding world historians in our age; that it led him to this verdict is a matter of no little moment.

Even if his article did not bear his stamp of authority on the trend of history, even if it were unsigned, still the case it makes for Union of the Free would, by its intrinsic merit, remain powerful, persuasive, unanswerable. Dr. Toynbee has struck a mighty blow for liberty, union and peace.

What he calls "Western Union" and we call "Federal Union of the Free" or Atlantic Union is, he finds, "inevitable." The only question is whether we take the "well-paved road" that leads to "union today by agreement," or the "rough, steep road" that leads to "union tomorrow by force . . . half-dead from exhaustion."

Dr. Toynbee goes on to make a constructive suggestion on how to make the next move by the "well-graded" road.

His proposal is that all the national legislatures of the NATO countries instruct their standing committees on finance, defense and foreign policy "to meet regularly in common session in order to consider, discuss and recommend a common Western policy, a common Western system of defense, and common ways and means for financing these common Western services." Once this "growing point" is created he believes, a "democratically governed Western community could bring itself into being step by step." We, of course, have been urging the calling of a federal convention to explore the possibility of drafting a constitution to unite the Western democracies in an Atlantic Union. This point of method is the only point on which we seem to differ with Dr. Toynbee—and the difference is more apparent than real. His approach is as typically British as ours is American. The British Government was itself produced by an evolutionary process, the American by a constitutional convention. Britain, however, is the only democracy that has taken this unwritten way.

All the others—including all the members of its own Commonwealth except the United Kingdom—have followed the example of the 13 States by calling a convention and writing a constitution for the people to approve. This method saves time. While we read Dr. Toynbee's suggestion, we also read of the six Schuman Plan nations across the Channel meeting in a special assembly to try to draft a written constitution (see pages?, 9).

In the Atlantic case, there is room for both the English and the non-English approach. NATO already has an operating problem, and already there have been various suggestions for meeting it by forming some sort of consultative Atlantic Assembly drawn from NATO legislatures. Whether it evolves along the lines Dr. Toynbee suggests, or as proposed by Senator Guy M. Gillette (see FREEDOM & UNION, January 1952), or as discussed in the U.S.-Canadian meeting in Ottawa this Spring (see FREEDOM & UNION, June 1952), such an Assembly has several advantages. It can be started soon, with relative ease, so long as it is merely consultative. It permits problems to be discussed over the table by lawmakers from each democracy. Above all, it gets them to know each other and their common interests as a whole.

There would seem to be no need to either wait for this process to grow into a constitution or for a convention to write one before beginning to knit the lawmakers closer together by this Consultative Assembly.

It would appear wisest to approach the problem by instituting a Consultative NATO Assembly for the operational job, while convoking a federal convention to explore Atlantic Union on the constitutional level. The two could help each other, and all concerned. After all, a two-wheeled cart carries a bigger load than a wheelbarrow.

The discussion of method is healthy and helpful, but it should not divert us now from the emphasis which Dr. Toynbee himself rightly places on our major choice: "union today by agreement in preference to union tomorrow by force." Nor should it distract us further now from what unionists all round the Atlantic will agree on—that Arnold Toynbee, as the French would put it, *a bien merite de la patrie* which we are making for our children, the Union of the Free.

—CLARENCE STREIT

table union—in the nearer future, toward a union of the peoples of our Western community, and then, beyond that, sooner or later, toward a union of all mankind.

This seems to be the destination toward which we are being carried willy-nilly by the progress of technology. We can see no end to this progress; it seems to be continually gathering speed and momentum; and, in this mighty march, we can see one persistent tendency. Each successive technological advance has the effect of enlarging the scale of all human operations for all purposes—good and bad, peaceful and warlike, constructive and destructive.

### Why Union Must Come

Why is Western union inevitable? First, because the Western nations, all told, are only a small minority—not much more than one-fifth—of the human race. Second, because technology has already "annihilated distance," so that everybody in the world is now living within point-blank atom-bomb range of everyone else. Third, because the "know-how" of a technology that has mostly been invented by us Westerners is now rapidly being picked up by other people—not only by the Russians but by the Chinese, Indians, Africans and, in fact, all mankind. Technological "know-how" gives power; and, as the great non-Western majority of mankind is gaining this new power, its numbers are beginning to tell once more against our handful of Westerners.

During the last four or five centuries, we Westerners, thanks to our temporary monopoly of a technological "know-how," have been lords of creation in spite of the smallness of our numbers. We have taken for ourselves the choicest of the still empty quarters of the world (and they were not all entirely unoccupied); and we have imposed our economic, and even our political, ascendancy on most of Africa and on large parts of Asia.

Today, the tide is turning. It is right, as well as natural that it should turn, and we Western peoples certainly ought to give up trying to go on sitting on other people's heads. My own country, Great Britain, for example, has, I should say, done right in letting go of India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon. But it is one thing to give up dominating other people and another thing to

let other people turn the tables on us.

While we Westerners may have no right to go on depriving Asian peoples of their independence, we certainly have a right to preserve our own independence; and the Western union is the only way to preserve Western independence in a world in which the non-Western four-fifths of the human race is now drawing abreast of the Western runners in mankind's technological Marathon race.

In the days—now rapidly running out—in which we Westerners were enjoying our decisive technological lead, we could indulge in the luxury of being disunited among ourselves. We could afford this because, at that time, each single Western nation by itself was more than a match for the whole of the non-Western World.

But, for us Westerners, those spacious days are now over, and the division of our Western one-fifth of mankind into about 40 sovereign independent States would be suicidal if we were to allow it to linger on into an age in which we are losing our technological lead and are therefore being thrown, militarily and politically, onto the defense against the rest of mankind's formidably superior numbers.

When we can see, ahead of us, a destination that we cannot by-pass, common sense will counsel us to find and take the best and quickest of the various roads leading to it. Suppose, now, that we Westerners were to flinch, for the moment, from taking any steps toward meeting the undeniable change for the worse in our collective Western position in the world. What would be our Western prospects then? Well, the temptations which we should be dangling before our enemies' eyes in willfully refusing to repair the disunity that is our present great Western weakness—those temptations might lead those enemies into action that would bring on a third World War; and then we should have unity with a vengeance.

The sole surviving power at the end of an atomic war to the death would find itself condemned to the hard labor of setting up a dictatorial world government over worldwide ruins—including the dictator power's own. This postwar world government would have to be dictatorial, because the postwar state of the world would be desperate.

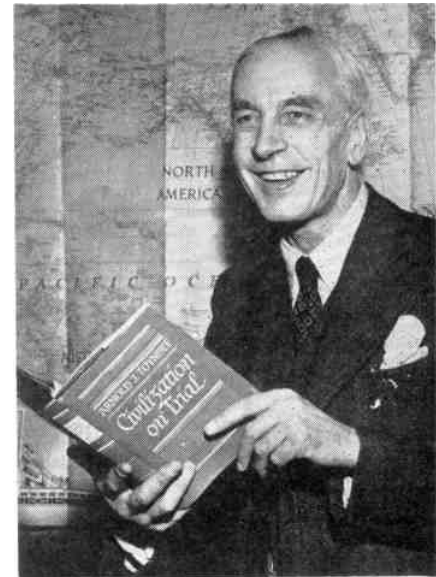
An atom-bombed world could not afford what would then be the luxury of preserving even a minimum of local variety and liberty. Uniformity and despotism would be the necessary penalties for our having allowed the world to come to this pass; and, even if the power on whose shoulders this grim task of imposing unity fell were to be the United States and not the Soviet Union, a unification of a devastated world on this dead level and at this high price is a prospect to which neither the Americans nor any other people could look forward with anything but dismay.

If union is—as it surely is—our destiny, then clearly the best option, among the alternatives before us, is union today by agreement in preference to union tomorrow by force.

This idea is, of course, already "sold" to American minds; for it has been translated into fact long ago in the domestic life of countries with federal constitutions. The political pioneering job that America, Canada and the nonfederal as well as the federal countries of our Western World have to take in hand together today is the planning and execution of a first practical step toward Western union in a world which has now been through two World Wars but has not yet condemned itself to having to fight a third of them that certainly would be by far the worst of all.

### "Next Step in History"

Of course, what form this step would take is being discussed all the time between statesmen and officials of our different Western Governments; but we all know that a mere cooperation between the agents of separate national governments is not enough to establish and maintain our political and economic unity. At any rate, this is not enough in democratic countries like ours in whose domestic political constitutions the last word lies with the electorates of elected legislative bodies. In Western countries whose constitutions are federal as well as democratic, it is an axiom that a political unity at the governmental level will remain precarious, and perhaps illusory, unless and until it has been underpinned by unity at the deeper level of popular representative institutions. And here is a chance for our Western community to recapture the initiative in the world by taking



Historian Toynbee calls union "practical."

"the next step in history."

We Western peoples claim to be democratic peoples. We claim that democratic self-government is one of the most distinctive and most valuable elements in our common Western way of life. If we mean this seriously, we cannot intend to leave out democracy, as we understand it, in making our long-term provision for preserving the vital common interests of our Western community. It would be not merely "un-American" but "un-Western" to leave the management of vital common affairs exclusively in the hands of officials and heads of States.

What, then, might be our first step toward bringing Western democracy into action on behalf of Western defense? If we start from national democratic institutions that are already going concerns, we shall put our finger on those committees for all manner of purposes through which the national legislatures of Western countries have learned, by experience, to conduct their business.

A combination of standing committees with committees appointed *ad hoc* has been the organizational device through which our Western national legislatures have made themselves effective for action. Most Western national legislatures today have well-established standing committees for reporting to them on cardinal affairs such as foreign policy, defense and finance, and they all deal with business for which no standing committee happens to exist.

Why should not the legislatures of all the Western States members of NATO instruct their standing committees on finance, defense and foreign policy (or instruct committees appointed for these purposes *ad hoc*, where there do not happen to be any standing committees for them) to meet regularly in common session in order to consider, discuss and recommend a common Western policy, a common Western system of defense, and common ways and means for financing these common Western services?

If we were now to take this first step of convening delegations of national legislatures from all the NATO countries to deal, at this level, with NATO's common affairs, we might find that we had created a growing point from which a democratically governed Western community could bring itself into being step by step.

The first business on the agenda of a convention of delegations of legislatures would be to agree upon rules of procedure. Should each delegation cast a single vote *en bloc* on behalf of the national legislature by which it had been elected? Or should each delegate be as free in this joint convention as he would be in his national legislature at home to cast his own vote according to his own individual conscience and judgment?

The whole tradition and spirit of Western constitutional history would tell in favor of the second of these two.

Who would dream of suggesting that, in the House of Representatives at Washington, all the Representatives from, say, Pennsylvania must always vote the same way or that, in the Senate, the pair of Senators from each State must always act like Siamese twins?

What would be unacceptable in a national legislature must be also unacceptable in a common legislature; and we might therefore expect that, if and when a common Western legislative body had once been set up, the members would not vote by countries but would assert their individual responsibility by combining and dividing in parties distinguished by policies and not determined by State lines.

This, though, would be unlikely to be the end of the process of Western constitutional development, for a Western electorate would soon begin to ask why it should not elect this common

Western legislature as well as the local national legislatures. If democracy means the control of governments by legislative bodies that are elected and re-elected by the people, then democracy would call for the direct election of a common legislative body charged with the supreme responsibility, of controlling the Western community's common executive services.

Here would be a way of putting an inevitable Western union on a characteristically Western democratic basis. One strong point in this approach would be that it would lead our Western community toward the goal of common democratic self-government step by step, in response to a succession of practical demands. If the West could thus build itself together into a united democracy instead of remaining the pack of 40 separate sovereign independent States that it now is, then we Westerners could begin to look the future in the face with a renewed confidence.

We may hope, then, that "the next step in history" will be the creation of a growing point for Western union on a democratic basis; but, of course, this prospect raises further questions.

In achieving Western union, should we be throwing the United Nations onto the scrap heap? And, in bringing one-fifth of mankind under a single system of self-government, should we be prejudicing the chance of achieving union on a world scale?

To these two questions, there is a single answer; and this answer is well known to Americans because it is a point that has had to be considered by every people that has a federal form of government.

The answer is that, in order to bring



a number of peoples together into political union, it is not enough just to draw up a federal constitution and enact it. Federation will not work unless the peoples that it is intended to unite are close enough to one another already in their ways of life to be capable of cooperating effectively. We Western peoples do seem to be like enough to one another to be capable of making com-

mon political institutions work, and there is no reason why the circle of States included in NATO should not be extended progressively, as the original 13 States of the United States have been increased to 48 by the successive admission of territories to statehood.

We ought to go on the principle that the door stands ever open for the admission of States that have given practical evidence of a capacity for democracy. Turkey, for example, which is already within our Western circle, clearly demonstrated its eligibility in 1950, when it performed the notable democratic feat of passing, without bloodshed or revolution, from a one-party to a two-party regime as the result of a genuinely free general election, which was neither manipulated nor over-ridden by the party then in power. Turkey will certainly not be the only once-nondemocratic country to qualify for entry; Ceylon, for instance, might also soon be a strong candidate.

#### Can't Join Free & Slave

Yet, though our Western community could, and should, be an open one, it is unfortunately not yet possible today to foresee the time when parliamentary democratic countries and Communist countries will be able to federate with one another; and here we can see the abiding importance of the United Nations.

The constitution of the U.N. is not federal or even confederal. The U.N. is not, in fact, a political community; it is a political forum, in which questions can be debated and opinions aired but in which no act of government can be performed. Yet we cannot do without this forum, however successful the development of NATO may be, so long as the U.N. remains the closest approach the U.S. and the Soviet Union can make to one another; for to meet—and even to quarrel—in a forum is far better than never to meet at all.

The constitution of the U.N. at least gives a chance for peoples that have been brought physically close together while remaining spiritually far apart to keep in touch with one another.

But would it be possible for a democratic Western union and a group of Communist countries to go on living side by side in a shrinking world for an indefinite time to come without drifting into war with one another? Perhaps

the most one can say about this is that, at least once in the past, something of this kind has been successfully accomplished. In the last generation before the beginning of the Christian Era, a Graeco-Roman world stretching from the Atlantic coast of Europe to the shores of the Indian Ocean was divided, by peaceful agreement, between two

powers, Rome and Parthia; and, for the next 250 years, these two did contrive to go on living side by side, in spite of local frontier incidents.

Why should not we Westerners and the Russians manage to get on with one another at least no worse than that? And, if, at the price of this minimum of mutual forbearance, we could pur-

chase even as much as 50 years of coexistence without a third World War, the prospect of world unity, which seems so remote today, might perhaps by then have come within the range of practical politics.

Meanwhile, the next step is Western union on a democratic basis; for this is practical politics now.