



FUTURE OF THE ATLANTIC CHARTER

By JOHN STUART

SOME of the liberal critics of the Atlantic Charter have fussed over its lack of conciseness, ripping every consonant and syllable apart in an attempt to discover what it forecasts for the future. Enamored as they are of the blueprint conception of history, nothing but the most exquisitely detailed plans can satisfy their longing to build an equitable world much as a housewife prepares a stew from the *Settlement Cook Book*. With their woes we can be impatient. They will always be unhappy over a document that lists a set of complex goals but prescribes no definite channels through which they can be reached except through the torment and sweat of battle. I can well imagine how during the threshold period of American history, the Declaration of Independence, among the most abstract of great democratic manifestos, dismayed the blueprint seekers by the absence of exact schemes describing the future contours of our federal life.

The Atlantic Charter is a war document. We were not at war when the President placed his signature upon it, but war was being made against us. And that August 1941, meeting between Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill when the Charter was formulated marked the closing phases of a fruitless American foreign policy. That policy was bound to the idea that the security of our country was assured by maintaining the strength of the British navy and that distance from Europe was our greatest protector. The Atlantic was supposedly an unbreachable Maginot line. This nineteenth-century dogma in a twentieth-cen-

tury world restricted our defenses to supplying Britain with the implements of war and hoping that she could continue to sustain herself. The fall of France forced us to begin a reevaluation of a policy that guaranteed neither freedom from Nazi assault nor protection of our interests as a world power. From a strategy of opportunism we were shifting to one divested of the theory that American strength was such that no one would dare challenge it.

THE Atlantic Charter, then, was symbolic of fresh developments in international relationships. When the first Nazi tanks crossed the Soviet border we too crossed the line which marked the frontiers of coalition warfare. Mr. Hull said as much when he remarked in his speech of April 9 that "We in this country have moved from a deep-seated tendency toward separate action to the knowledge and conviction that only through unity of action can there be achieved in this world the results which are essential for the continuance of free peoples." Bearing these words in mind it is immediately clear that the signing of the Charter, so far as its meaning for American foreign policy is concerned, closed the door on the dismal era of isolation and brought it into the invigorating atmosphere of coalition practice and theory.

That to me is the historical impact of the Charter. But more, it closed officially a decade of antagonism towards Britain and the conception of Britain's place as a sort of poor nephew to be abused by the rich uncle. The Charter, moreover, enunciated as government policy, incomplete at that

time to be sure and lacking the fullest realization of what our total responsibilities were, that we would have no truck with Hitler. In fact the Charter paved the way for a greater isolation of the European Axis by consolidating Anglo-American cooperation, later to be transformed by the Declaration of the United Nations into a bloc of anti-fascist powers as the common front for victory. This was a signal triumph for Mr. Roosevelt, who had been forced to labor under the most severe restraints of a cabal led by Senators Wheeler and Nye in Washington and the blackguard America Firsters in the rest of the country. When it is remembered that the President made his Charter commitments at a moment when the country was technically at peace and when Wheeler was pressuring the White House to act as the agency for a compromise settlement in Europe (through which Germany would be given back her 1914 colonial empire, and Poland and Czechoslovakia attached as "autonomous" appendages to a Greater Reich) then the President's achievement on the cruiser *Augusta* looms even larger.

The Charter not only represented our entrance into an embryonic coalition but had the immediate practical effect of hastening assistance to the Soviet Union with war materiel. It improved the machinery of joint action, even though the United States was limited in what it could do by the restrictions of the waning peace that marked the palsied months between June and December of 1941. The Charter helped to rally the nations seeking the destruction of Nazi tyranny and associated us

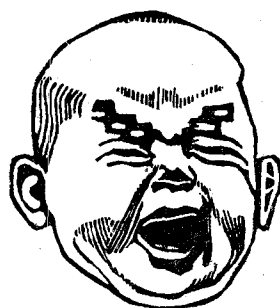
unequivocally with the objectives of the war of liberation. Those objectives were stated in the Charter's eight points renouncing all aims of territorial aggrandizement, arbitrary territorial changes, and upholding the right to self-determination of all peoples, equal access of all states to the trade and raw materials of the world, "the fullest collaboration between all nations in the economic field" for their economic advancement and social security, "a peace which will afford all the nations the means of dwelling in safety," freedom of the seas, and disarmament of aggressor nations pending the establishment of a permanent system of general security.

IT is over these points that there has been a widespread public debate: much of it aimless, a good deal of it aimed at hurting the coalition, and most of it directed at using the Charter as a screen to obscure a blatant anti-Sovietism. The quarrel reached the furious stage when Prime Minister Churchill remarked in a recent speech in Parliament, supplemented on another occasion by Foreign Secretary Eden, that the Charter did not preclude territorial adjustments at Germany's expense and that the Charter was not a pledge which Germany could use to escape the penalty for her crimes. Raymond Daniell, writing from London to the *New York Times* (March 26) hopped off from the German issue into a breathless story that as "far as Russia is concerned that part of the Charter that opposes territorial changes not in accord with the freely expressed will of people concerned is made inoperative." Some liberals hit the ceiling and descended to write sizzling rebukes against Churchill's statement noting his "sympathy for the Russian standpoint" in relation to Poland and that the Russian desires for reassurance about their western frontiers were reasonable and just. Those liberals who in the past considered the Charter a 312-word comedy, and had criticized it at every turn, now became the Charter's staunchest champions. And their caterwauling was reechoed by the political pussyfooters on the right who cried that the Charter should be scrapped without much further ado. In fact, Mr. Luce's *Life* (April 3) offered its editorial wastebasket because the Charter was not as well written as the Ten Commandments and, I presume, because Clare Boothe Luce was not its author.

This trans-Atlantic squabble has raised a number of questions as to the Charter's meaning and its place in the war and the peace. It would be the pinnacle of absurdity for me to discuss all the Charter's connotations; only the passage of time and events can give the answers. I have tried to suggest that so far as our country is concerned the Charter marked a transition from unilateral to coalition action. Even about this point we should observe that we have in the past never really acted uni-

laterally, but rather sought to have other powers adjust themselves to American plans instead of to a joint enterprise.

The Charter as an integral part of the joint declaration of the United Nations placed a distinct moral obligation on us to forego such harmful practices and work cooperatively in the war and in the peace. (In the war by joint pooling of resources and a common strategy; in the peace



Mask

Helen West Heller

through international organization.) Historically the Charter will be better understood if it is seen as signalling the close of such methods as Versailles used to maintain "peace" and introducing a new *modus vivendi*—equal and joint cooperation—to achieve stability and world order. And the Charter will be best understood if it is constantly reexamined for dynamic qualities and if it is viewed as a flexible instrument in attaining complex goals. That was the sense in which Mr. Hull approached the document when he described it as "an expression of fundamental objectives toward which we and our allies are directing our policy. . . . It is not a code of laws from which detailed answers to every question can be distilled by painstaking analysis of its words and phrases. It points the direction in which solutions are to be found; it does not give solutions." This very flexibility of Mr. Hull's interpretation implies that the Charter is not a static affair whose constructions cannot be adjusted as the war moves into its final stages, and as we approach the peace. Mr. Churchill had a similar opinion when he observed recently that the Charter must be the subject "for renewed consultations between the principal Allies" as the changing phases of the war succeed one another.

This very sense of change takes the Charter out of the formaldehyde in which its detractors would like to pickle it. Its singular virtue is that it leaves many specific questions for settlement at the ripe moment. For in the complex network of grand alliance, all problems do not emerge simultaneously, nor can they be foreseen all at once. Differences of geography, economic circumstance, political tradition create a multiple of difficulties. What is of key importance is that there is agreement on fundamental objectives, as set forth in

the Charter, the practical application of which must conform to the needs of the different countries subscribing to it. And what is of equal importance is that the Charter is given sinew by the four powers who form the repository of the coalition's strength, its wealth and resources.

WHATEVER interpretations were placed on the Charter's broad principles at one period of the war, another period can bring fresh interpretations in the light of fresh needs and developments. The Charter had a more limited meaning when it was first promulgated and when many circles assumed that its purposes could and would be fulfilled only by Great Britain and the United States. The Charter was enriched and its significance increased by subsequent United Nations documents; for example, by the Anglo-Soviet treaty, by the master lend-lease agreement, by the Soviet-Czechoslovak pact, by the United States' agreement with Mexico, by the agreement establishing the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency, and, most important of all, by the Moscow and Cairo declarations culminating in the great Teheran statement. The Charter will have even more forceful impact as France takes her rightful place in the international community and as other Allied states retrieve their independence.

In fact not only do the documents I have just mentioned implement and supplement the Charter but they are the specific means through which the Charter is given the energy of life. When compared with the Charter's principles, the Anglo-Soviet treaty shows definitely that the Charter's intent is embodied in the practical terms of the accord between London and Moscow. The Charter speaks, for example, in its fourth plank, of access on equal terms by all states to the trade and raw materials of the world. The master lend-lease agreement paves the way towards fulfilling this objective through Article VII which calls for international and domestic measures to eliminate all forms of discriminatory treatment in international commerce and for reduction of tariffs and other trade barriers. It also envisions consultations among governments to attain these goals. Such discussions are already in process on matters related to oil resources, and principles have been prepared as the framework for future conferences on international currency stabilization. The meetings that are being held and will be held represent of course the fulfillment of the Charter's fourth point at a later stage of the war. In the desperate days of the summer of 1941, that plank could have meant only the marshaling of all economic resources on the part of the United States to assist Britain and the Soviet Union. However, now that we are on the brink of victory in Europe, the question of war supplies remains important, but begins to recede before the large tasks of

reconstruction, trade, and commerce—in other words, peace supplies. This to me is the simple dialectic by which, for example, principle four of the Charter has been working out.

The Charter has already exerted its weight and will exert even more as the future unfolds. Only people who live in an abstract world see it as an abstract document. Their peculiar brand of criticism links itself to the hardboiled reactionary school which, in the months since the Polish border issue came to the fore, has tried to use the Charter's self-determination principle against the USSR. It is the old story of the crows donning peacocks' feathers. Those who lecture the Soviet Union on self-determination might just as well lecture Einstein on mathematics.

The argument of the "defenders" of self-determination runs somewhat as follows: if the USSR genuinely subscribed to the Charter, it would give up the Baltic states, "Eastern Poland," Bessarabia, and Karelia and let the inhabitants of these territories decide their own destinies—on the assumption, of course, that they have not done so already. History and ethnography are conveniently blocked out of the picture. And when one probes into the thinking of these suddenly zealous partisans of self-determination one concludes inevitably that even if the peoples of the Baltic states, for example, did decide to amalgamate with the USSR, after a plebiscite or by whatever means would be agreeable to the Wilsonian determinists, that amalgamation would be reprehensible—Bolshevism would be spreading its influence. In other words they are for self-determination, but not when the practice of that principle means a reunion of peoples torn away from the USSR after the last war. And probing even more deeply into these atrophied minds, we find amid other stone age relics a little axe called *cordon sanitaire*. Clemenceau's ghost still chairs the councils of tory groups who would like to resurrect Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia as part of a wall of states which the war has toppled once and forever.

It is clear that under the Charter the Soviet Union has every right to secure her frontiers as we have every right to secure our own. Walter Lippmann wrote in the New York *Herald Tribune* that the USSR's interest "in her western boundaries is not the desire to obtain territory or to introduce Communism in western Europe, but to put an end to the possibility of there being anti-Russian states on her western borderland." There is even more than security involved in the Soviet attitude. If security were the only pillar on which the USSR's policy rests then she might have held on to all of Finland after the war in 1940 and destroyed the Mannerheim government. Finland's Axis alliance in the present war, her government's mental res-

ervations at the very moment it was signing the peace treaty in 1940, and its attachment to Berlin's kite, would have fully justified the Red Army's occupation of the entire country. Anna Louise Strong in her book *The Soviets Expected It* reports a conversation she had with Sir Stafford Cripps, the British Ambassador to Moscow, shortly after the Soviet-Finnish war. He told her that "the Soviets may be sorry some day that they didn't take more of Finland when they could." But Soviet respect for Finnish independence (given Finland in the first place by the USSR) and the rights of the Finnish people—a respect which dominates the Soviet government's dealings with its own numerous republics and with nations abroad—made such a move impossible. That respect for Finnish rights was reiterated when Helsinki recently approached the USSR for armistice terms. Moscow declared that "it had no grounds to feel particular confidence in the present Finnish government, but if the Finns had no other possibility, the Soviet government in the interests of peace agreed to negotiate with the present Finnish government on the cessation of hostilities."

That statement was completely consonant with Soviet practice. And it is more than just security which shapes the Soviet attitude towards Bessarabia, or "Eastern Poland," or the Baltics. These areas are part of the Soviet Union by the will of their peoples. In the fall of 1939 the National Assemblies of the Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia ("Eastern Poland"), for example, petitioned the Supreme Soviet of the USSR to incorporate these territories as part of the Ukrainian and Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republics. Everyone over eighteen took part in the elections which were held for candidates to the Assembly. In the Western Ukraine ninety-three percent of the electorate went to the polls, and in Western Byelorussia ninety-six percent. All votes were cast by secret ballot. The total result—one of the great examples in history of the exercise of

self-determination—overwhelmingly approved reunion with the USSR. And it is the summit of the ridiculous to hear some people suggest—the New York *Times* editors included—that perhaps a plebiscite under international auspices be held to determine once again what these elections decided so unreservedly. One might just as well start a clamor for an international plebiscite to determine whether Louisiana be returned to France or Texas to Mexico.

"We have not and cannot have," said Marshal Stalin in his speech on the twenty-fourth anniversary of the October Revolution, "such war aims as imposing our will and our regime on the Slavs and other enslaved peoples of Europe who are awaiting our aid. Our aid consists in assisting these people in their liberation struggle against Hitler tyranny and then setting them free to rule on their own land as they desire. No intervention whatever in the internal affairs of other peoples!" If ever there was a statement by a leader of the coalition respecting the Charter's self-determination clause then this was it. And more,—the Red Army has shed rivers of blood in defense of this principle, a principle which might well have been lost to civilization if it had not been for the immense burdens which the Soviet military forces have carried so successfully. The right to each nation's sovereignty and independence is what this war is being fought for, and the Red Army's contribution to the protection of this right can be read on the tombstones of millions of Nazi killed on that coiling front from the Arctic to the Black Sea.

THE Charter is a living instrument. Its provisos, as I have tried to suggest, are complex and their attainment is intimately bound to the developments growing out of a successful termination of the war. Any attempt to deal with the Charter independently of the international scene and the probable course of events is a serious error. As a war document the Charter is indivisible from the other great war documents. It complements them as they complement it. It points the way to the settlement of colonial problems: it does not offer the means of settlement. Its application to Germany is totally dependent on the joint views of the leading Allies who now obviously have it under discussion. But one thing is certain: the Charter cannot be abused for the revival of an aggressor Germany or of a Germany which will abuse it to throw the world into darkness once again. The Charter is a symbol of promise and of hope resting in good will among nations. It cannot be used to freeze the future without freezing its ideals. It is as permanent as the grand alliance. Without that alliance and the four powers that lead it, the Charter becomes parchment and ink, a museum curio indicative of things that might have been but did not come to pass.



Maxwell Gordon

SUN AND SMOG

By ELIZABETH GURLEY FLYNN

RIDING down the Allegheny Valley at midnight, one feels the wartime pulse of Pittsburgh. Shifts are changing, workers, men and women, Negro and white, bundled in warm clothes, get on and off. The man who took me to the bus was on his way to buy a couple of bottles of beer for his wife, coming off shift. "She likes it after a day's work," he said simply. His Croatian mother told me of her life of struggle as we waited. "Good-bye Missus, come again," she said, smiling warmly. She cried when the Nazis temporarily recaptured her native village from the Partisans. Yugoslavia is near and dear to thousands here. Tito's furrowed face is in every Slav home I visit. They await news. They rejoice in the victories of the Red Army.

I listen to workers' talk as the smoke-filled bus rolls around the hills. There is no dead-pan silence of aloof strangers, as in our subways. It's good not to see noses stuck in the *News* and *Mirror*. Good Americanisms heard now around the world—"So long, Bill"—"Take it easy, Joe"—"Be seeing you, John"—talk of unions, machines, output, politics goes on. These are older men. Their sons are in the war. Their identification badges and CIO buttons gleam like medals.

The lights of "Iron City Bell" signs twinkle by. Pittsburgh looms near. She is a dirty-faced eastern twin of white and gleaming San Francisco—she would be as beautiful if she could be clean. Enthroned upon her hills, encircled by her rivers—she is queen of industrial America—dingy, sooty, grimy—with garlands of ashes, gas, smoke, fog, and flame in her hair. "Smog," they call it, and accept it as a soldier does mud. A woman said to a soldier, "First we have to win the war, then fight this awful dirt." He agreed solemnly, as to a postwar pact to enlist in the women's endless struggles to keep curtains white and floors clean. Flags hang here limp and grey, as if battle-scarred.

The meeting was typical of nearly forty I held in western Pennsylvania and West Virginia, in a seven weeks' recruiting job for the Communist Party. If the women were in charge, we had coffee and luscious home-made cake—if the men, we had beer. It was informal and sociable at this miner's home. Three miners, four miners' wives, three daughters—war workers—helped start a new branch that night. We discussed the war, Teheran, the elections, the soldiers' vote, women as voters, the postwar world. They are deeply concerned to reelect President Roosevelt. They listen intently, discuss very seriously. Language differences handicap expression, not thought. No one tries to be smart or win

an argument, nor are they harassed with rumors. It's a relief not to hear "But *PM* said," or "I read in the *Post*." These people read progressive papers, in Croatian, Slovak, Serbian, and in English—the *Sunday Worker*. They belong to unions, fraternal and Slav organizations, to political action committees. For them the Communist Party is the ideological hub of the wheel.

In spite of the legal persecutions instigated by Dies several years ago in relation to the election petitions and the wholesale harassment of the foreign born, the Communists have maintained prestige and influence here. Most of the Communist leaders who were jailed at that time are now in the armed forces—in the Pacific, Italy, and England. The Supreme Court decision on the Schneiderman case cleared up fears on the rights of naturalized citizens and the legal status of Communists. Communists are well known here by name, Tony Minnerich, Mike Stanovich, Tony Solopac, and others, as leaders of past struggles of the unemployed; of the miners; to build the CIO; to fight fascism. Local men who fought in Spain are remembered—Dave Doran, who died there; Harry Steinberg who met death later, torpedoed as a seaman. The death of Henry Forbes, former district organizer of the Party, who was killed in action on February 16 in Italy, caused universal sorrow among thousands who knew and loved him there. The fight of Communists on the home front against defeatists and appeasers is appreciated. The valor of Communists in Europe and China is revered among the national groups. One Greek woman asked me, "Are American Communists good, like the Russians?"

THE acceptance of Communists as a win-the-war force is indicated by the fact that I spoke at recruiting meetings in houses, halls, hotels, schools, settlements, recreation centers, and a church, in West Virginia. When Earl Browder speaks in Pittsburgh in June, it will be in one of the biggest theaters and at least 800 new members will welcome him. The original modest quota, 550, was reached April 1 and a new "sight" of 700 set for May 1. Eastern Pennsylvania has a quota of 1,500, and is over 1,000 today; 150 are shipyard workers. From 2,200 to 2,500 new members will be added in the Keystone State by the National Convention, May 20. At this writing, over 14,500 have been added nationally, pretty good for an organization which the croaker press insists is "going out of business."

We are actually just scratching the surface in enrolling those people who naturally belong and are ours just for the asking.

They are far more numerous than we estimated at first—old time friends and sympathizers; members of Communists' families; folks who were Communists and "just didn't know it"; associates in trade unions and mass organizations. They are a cross-section of the population—miners, steel, electrical, aluminum, railroad workers—many Negroes and women. I am convinced that when the proposed changes in the Communist Party become final, there will be a tremendous growth in our organization. Its influence as a political force will be greatly increased. The change of name, to fit more accurately its actual role in relation to American politics, meets with understanding and ready acceptance among these basic workers. In West Virginia where progressive forces must defeat the pro-fascist Rush Holt, who aspires to be governor, our people are relieved to be able to concentrate their efforts. A person who signs a petition for a minority party to be placed on the ballot there forfeits his right to vote in the primary of any other party. In former years, this forced our people to isolate themselves in order to carry on an independent Communist campaign, which would be fatal today. Now they will pool their forces with all other progressives for Roosevelt and against Holt.

Earl Browder's speech *Teheran and America* has aroused widespread interest in union circles because it unfolds possibilities of economic security in the postwar period which is the opposite of John L. Lewis' gloomy forebodings. Senator Kilgore of West Virginia sees eye to eye with Browder on the practicality of postwar employment for all. He said recently, "While we have been spending our resources, material and human, we have also come to a great economic self realization as a nation. If we can produce at a rate of \$200,000,000,000 a year, with 10,000,000 of our people away from home, what cannot we do when they return?" This makes sense and gives hope even to the miners in West Virginia.

Whenever I return from the coal fields people are curious as to what I have heard, as if I had journeyed to a far country. Miners are militant, their views are confused and contradictory, but on the whole not too alarming. They are for the war. A high percentage of their sons are in it. Their daughters go away to work in defense plants. They are anxious to do their share, though they begrudge the operators their large profits. They are rather ashamed and apologetic about their four strikes last year, especially as they are still working under the Ickes memorandum and not their traditional contract. They are critical