By Johan Norberg

When I look around at all of you, old friends, new friends, and some future friends, I think, this might be the greatest concentration of intellectual potential for more freedom in the world since [Atlas founder] Antony Fisher sat there all alone in a fighter plane over Britain contemplating how to set the world free.

And we are here in the great city of New York, the symbol of freedom, the city of freedom, the city of resilience and the city of well, Bill de Blasio, yeah, I am sorry about that. Are there any real New Yorkers here? It seems like you were the only ones not voting for the guy and his left wing populism. And that got me thinking that at times the struggle for freedom seems a bit hopeless, it seems a bit in vain. We are repeating the same kinds of arguments but we are watching the same kinds of mistakes being repeated again and again and that is the subject of my remarks tonight.

I know it’s frustrating when we are in some respects going backwards; when we see more surveillance, more fences, more tariffs, more rules, higher taxes, monetary policy out of control, Obamacare out of control. It is easy to think that the work we are doing in the freedom movement doesn’t have any effect. But, when I think about that, that is when I think about the remark from one of my favorite authors who wrote about a practicing Catholic, who was a ruthless guy. He was brutal to his friends and family, and

By Matthew Sinclair

There is always this experience of going to Atlas events, you sit there and feel so humble at the remarkable things being done by the network and the remarkable things being done by the Atlas team. This is their one chance to throw a big show, normally they sit in the background and help
Atlas Welcomes New Board Members

Adding to the excitement of Liberty Forum, Atlas’s Board of Directors elected two new members, Debbi Gibbs and Peter Goettler. Both of these outstanding individuals previously served on Atlas’s Advisory Council, generously supporting the organization and its mission with their time, resources and impressive wealth of experience and expertise. Debbi Gibbs is a music agency owner and longtime entertainment industry leader living in New York City and Peter Goettler is a retired financial industry executive and an adventurous world traveler, often spending his valuable time overseas meeting with and advising Atlas partners. “Atlas is incredibly fortunate to welcome Peter and Debbi to the board,” said Atlas CEO Brad Lips. “Their involvement is a boost to all of us, and a clear sign that this organization will continue to push itself to achieve big things.”

Atlas welcomes Debbi Gibbs and Peter Goettler to its Board of Directors.

William Sumner

The Board also voted to name former Atlas Chairman, William (Bill) Sumner, emeritus member, on the occasion of his scheduled retirement from the board. Bill’s history and contribution to Atlas are virtually unparalleled, serving since 1983 and giving two decades of service as Chairman. With this vote, the board hopes to continue to draw on Bill’s wisdom and counsel for years to come.

Inaugural Liggio Lecture, Kirzner Salon

Atlas was honored to host Israel Kirzner in New York City for a lecture and salon discussion alongside our own Leonard Liggio on Austrian Economics, their relationship with Ludwig von Mises, and other thought leaders from the 20th century.

Also during Liberty Forum, Professor James Otteson of Wake Forest University delivered the inaugural Liggio Lecture, detailing Leonard’s contributions to the advancement of the free society and to his own career. The lecture focused on the story of John Lilburn, one of the Leveler movement’s leaders and included parallels drawn between Lilburn’s and Liggio’s lifelong commitments to freedom.

Lights, Camera, Liberty! Video Winners

The film festival finalists from this year’s class of Lights, Camera, Liberty! participants took to their director’s chairs on the stage at Liberty Forum to showcase their best video work. At the conclusion of the screenings, and when all the popcorn had been consumed, the 2013 Lights, Camera, Liberty! Film Festival prize was awarded to Foundation for Economic Education for its video, “The Truth about Savings and Consumption,” created by Steve Patterson. With nearly 18,000 views, the video uses thoughtful animation to make complex economic ideas accessible and interesting to a public audience. Showcasing the diversity of training offered by Lights, Camera, Liberty!, other videos screened during the festival demonstrated successful use of documentary and narrative styles to achieve their purpose.

The Foundation for Economic Education wins Lights, Camera, Liberty!
Leading Lights at Liberty Forum

During Liberty Forum, Atlas’s Deroy Murdock presented the 2013 Sir Antony Fisher International Memorial Award to Ning Wang, Senior Fellow of the Ronald Coase Institute, for the book How China Became Capitalist, co-authored by the late Nobel Laureate Ronald Coase and co-published by the Institute of Economic Affairs. Dr. Wang’s acceptance speech honored the great Dr. Coase and echoed the important findings of their book, which recast the Chinese government as less of a prescient economic planner and more of a sideshow to the spontaneous entrepreneurial energy of China’s people. Dr. Wang offered signed copies of his book and joined the Wall Street Journal in studio the day he received the award to offer his take on China’s latest economic proposals.

Atlas’s annual Think Tank Shark Tank, sponsored by the Rising Tide Foundation, saw four Atlas Leadership Academy graduates from across the world compete for a $25,000 prize to launch an exciting new project. The winner, Jacek Spendel from the Freedom and Entrepreneurship Foundation in Poland, plans to create an eight-part TV series to air in Poland, hosted by a popular classical liberal. Special thanks goes to the esteemed panel of judges, including Don Smith of the Smith Family Foundation, Terry Kibbe of the Rising Tide Foundation, Ron Manners of the Mannkal Economic Education Foundation, Dan Peters of the Lovett & Ruth Peters Foundation, Kathryn Washburn of the The Washburn Fund, and master of ceremonies, Fred Young. For those interested in participating in next year’s competition, be sure you are enrolled in Atlas Leadership Academy today and working towards earning your 12 credits through a variety of high-value and convenient training opportunities Atlas offers throughout the year.

Over breakfast, Tom Palmer made the case for liberty and shared the latest details about the widespread distribution of his latest book, Why Liberty, to student and think tank groups all over the world in multiple languages. Tom’s near constant global travel has him meeting with, speaking to, advising and training thought leaders, freedom entrepreneurs and students, many of whom face daunting challenges in their advocacy for freedom. Following Tom’s speech, one such leader, Magatte Wade of Senegal, explained why freedom truly is a life and death issue in her country, as those with no opportunities to escape poverty turn to treacherous attempts to leave Senegal northward by sea to Spain or Portugal. Many do not complete the journey. Magatte offered her growing conviction that opportunities for Africans depend on building the institutions of economic freedom, and that foreign aid is a false promise.

Watch author Ning Wang’s interview with Wall Street Journal’s Mary Kissel on our homepage at AtlasNetwork.org
Strengthening Leaders in the Worldwide Freedom Movement

Leading up to Liberty Forum, Atlas completed two of its most rigorous and exciting training opportunities within Atlas Leadership Academy. Think Tank MBA provides two weeks of intensive strategic training and one-on-one mentorship, and Think Tank Leadership Training offers the latest best practices for think tanks spanning three days. In total, nearly 75 leaders from five continents completed their training and showcased their skills at Liberty Forum through events such as the Elevator Pitch competition and Think Tank Shark Tank.

Strategy and Best Practices at Liberty Forum

Liberty Forum offered participants a variety of valuable panel sessions covering topics important to think tank leaders and staff. For example, Atlas hosted its popular “Q&A with Think Tank Luminaries” session where the audience could grill successful think tank leaders to learn the secrets to their success. This year’s luminaries included Arthur Brooks of the American Enterprise Institute, Parth Shah of India’s Centre for Civil Society, Marty Zupan of the Institute for Humane Studies, Larry Mone of the Manhattan Institute, and Eammon Butler of the Adam Smith Institute. The event was moderated by Atlas trustee and veteran think tank leader John Blundell.
at one point someone said, “Why is this that you are so nasty despite being a believer?” He said, “You have no idea how much nastier I would be if I was not a Catholic.” And that sounds a bit like an excuse but I think that is correct.

And I think that was an important point and let me spell out the obvious parallel: you have no idea how much nastier the United States and the world would be without the work that you are doing for freedom everyday.

Yes, I am young enough to want everything at once, but I am also old enough to understand that my fight has not been in vain even if I don’t get it all, if I get much more than I otherwise would have. And we must realize that our world could have been in much worse shape had it not been for the cause of liberty.

Yes, all of us want to go to heaven, but avoiding hell is quite an achievement nonetheless. And, I am sure that at least some of that is the result of people here making it possible to make the case for freedom all over the world. We must not forget what we are up against and the history of it all.

But, wait, it gets even better than that. Even though we can see problems in the short run, the overall global trend is still the same, we are winning.

We have seen more progress in these last two decades than in the two millennia before it and the same goes for economic freedom, and the ongoing discussion in most important countries today is still about how to liberalize further because brave people are making the case for freedom locally in their own countries every day.

We are at the point in mankind’s history when more people than ever lead longer lives than ever and have more freedom than ever to think, to talk, to create, to produce and to trade, to make life better for themselves and for their families. So it’s no coincidence that the world is also making faster progress than ever before.

Have you read development statistics lately? Well, you should because it is, to borrow an expression, like being beaten over the head by a rainbow. It took mankind 100,000 years to achieve the GDP per capita of 1980 and it took nearly thirty years to do it again, to double that level. Since 1980, 700 million people left extreme poverty even though the world population grew by more than two billion and it happened in the countries that liberalized the most. You must really dislike mankind not to be incredibly excited by this development.

What was the Industrial Revolution, 200 million people doubling their average income in sixty years? Well, two billion people just did the same thing in 15 years. Ten times as many in a quarter of the time it took during the Industrial Revolution. In a way this is 50 times bigger than the Industrial Revolution.

Ladies and gentlemen, the results are in: Freedom is awesome!

What I’m saying here is not that there are no threats, we know that there are and some of them are vicious and downright evil. What I am saying is that there is hope. The battle for freedom is being waged in more places than ever with smarter people than ever with better arguments than ever. There is hope and you are creating that hope. You, donors to Atlas, partners to Atlas around the world, just heard that just this last year 29 new think tank partners arrived. Atlas now has 470 different partner think tanks in 83 different countries and that gives me hope.

Recently I met a young woman in a small European country and I asked her what convinced her to devote herself to freedom, and she shared a famous historical quote, “once a man’s mind has been stretched by a beautiful idea it never regains its original dimension.” And that beautiful idea was freedom. She had read one of the books that Atlas is promoting around the world. She had met with Tom Palmer. That help, that book, that meeting, convinced her about these ideas and she started to recruit students for this cause and started to teach others these values.

I have been asked to present tonight’s toast to freedom and I gladly accepted because it combines two of my favorite ways of stretching the human mind: freedom and alcohol. And because I’m now a father of two very independent kids and I rarely get the chance to tell people when to eat and drink, I would like to use this opportunity. So in honor of freedom and the work that all of you are doing to stretch people’s minds I suggest that we raise our glasses, and I would personally like to dedicate this toast to our two kids, Sophia’s and mine, who are here. And, for the work you are doing to make sure they can lead a life, grow up in the world where they can still be very independent minded indeed.

Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends, a toast to freedom!
us throw a big show. So this is so
wonderful they have a night like
this to show all the great work they
are doing. So, thank you to them
for this special moment.

One of the things most of you
know about right now is the beer
tax cut. That is a two hundred
million pound tax cut for British
drinkers. What you may not know
is that came from the five thousand
dollar prize we won last year from
Atlas’s Think Tank Shark Tank
competition. So maybe with this
prize we can think a little bigger
next time.

I think it is also such a special
moment that this is the Templeton
Freedom Award. I think it’s
remarkable to be part of honoring
the memory of such a special
man. And, it is great to have the
Templeton family here. It is a
very special moment for all of us.
I wanted to quickly just say that
the 2020 Tax Commission project
involved so many people, so many
people who
are in this
room. I should
mention Mark
Littlewood who
was one of the
commissioners
of the 2020 Tax
Commission, I
should mention
Sara Rainwater from the TaxPayers’
Alliance who has been an essential
part of the team for years. I should
particularly mention Matthew
Elliot who founded the TaxPayers’
Alliance and who has been an
incredible entrepreneur.

Thank you all for making this a very
special moment. I want to say one
quick thing about the substance
of the 2020 Tax Commission,
about why we thought it was so
important. We look around at
so many scandals coming out of
tax policy at the moment, all of
these stories and we see all of this
economic nationalism wrapped up
in it, so many socialists finding
their inspiration in various
scandals. Some people are playing
games; some of this is just the
fertile imagination
of innumerate
reporters. But,
all of this can be
a huge threat to
economic freedom;
it can be a huge
danger. But, it is
also an opportunity;
because all the
socialists are offering is more
of the same: more high taxes,
more complicated rules, more
 crackdowns, more of what has
been tried already and more of
what has failed already.

With the 2020 Tax Commission
we’ve already worked with other
Atlas Network organizations to
see how it can be applied in their
countries. Our view is that this
is an opportunity for the liberty
movement, for the free-market
movement, to say, we aren’t about
more of the same, we aren’t about
those complex, fiddly rules which
have led us to where we are today.
We are about a better alternative.
We are about the future. We are
about a tax system that looks not
just at the next quarter’s growth,
but the next quarter century,
and that we can look back on and
we can say, “We have achieved
something remarkable. We’ve got
a tax system we can envy. We’ve
got something genuinely better.”

That is why I hope that, even if
we are inadequate company with
some of the [finalist] organizations
here, we can achieve something
remarkable, and we can live in the
spirit of the Atlas Network which is
about that hope for a better, liberal
alternative. And that is the hope
and the spirit in which we accept
this prize. Thank you so much all
of you for being such great friends
and such great allies.

Learn more about the
Templeton Freedom Award
at AtlasNetwork.org/TFA

Atlas CEO Brad Lips and Atlas President Alex Chafuen join Jennifer Templeton
Simpson in honoring this year’s Templeton Freedom Award winner and finalists.
Atlas is pleased to announce Daniel Anthony will be joining our team as Vice President of Marketing and Communications. Daniel most recently served as VP at Illinois Policy Institute where he played a key role in rapidly expanding the think tank’s presence and influence. Daniel brings a wealth of for-profit experience to the free-market cause, serving in leadership roles at the prestigious advertising firm Saatchi & Saatchi in San Francisco and Chicago. Daniel holds an MBA from Johns Hopkins University.

Just in time for Think Tank MBA and Think Tank Leadership Training, Autumn Lansford joined Atlas in October as Programs Associate for Atlas Leadership Academy. Most recently, Autumn supported outreach efforts at the Institute for Humane Studies. In her new position, Autumn will coordinate training opportunities for think tank leaders and staff. To learn how you can get involved today, email Autumn.Lansford@AtlasNetwork.org.

“We met a lot of people who were actually risking their lives the way the founders of our country did in revolting against injustice. What an inspiration to those of us on the front lines in the states who are comfortable and safe in our battles.”
- Rebekah Alt, Buckeye Institute, USA

“It was great to see fellow freedom fighters from all corners of the world, both old and new. I started many new friendships and was able to discuss many future collaborations. It was extremely fruitful.”
- Richard Durana, INESS, Slovakia

“It was the best two weeks I’ve spent all year (Think Tank MBA and Liberty Forum) due to both the content and the people. I’m so happy to be in the movement with the whole Atlas Network.”
- Richard Lorenc, Foundation for Economic Education, USA

The Policy Research Institute of Market Economy released the Pakistani edition of the Economic Freedom of the World Report 2013, in collaboration with the Fraser Institute and the Naumann Foundation • In India, the Centre for Civil Society took its Freedom Caravan to 14 colleges in eight cities, engaging more than 2,000 students in discussions about individual liberty and economic prosperity by asking, “Why is India Poor?” • The Armenian Liberty Students Organization recognized Constitution Day with an evening discussion to present the ideas of liberty as a better alternative to the nostalgia of the Soviet regime • In response to Australia’s fall from fifth to tenth in the rankings of the Economic Freedom of the World Report, the Australian Taxpayers’ Alliance released a video on the importance of economic freedom • In Canada, the Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms released the 2013 Campus Freedom Index, a report that measures the state of free speech at Canadian public universities • Samriddhi, The Prosperity Foundation in Nepal launched a new program called Econ-ity, which is a media forum to promote new ideas and initiatives in the area of economic policy reform • The Hong Kong-based Lion Rock Institute hosted its annual gala dinner in October with more than 180 guests and supporters in attendance • Audace Afrique Institute in the Ivory Coast held an “Economic Freedom Forum” in early October, co-sponsored by Atlas and the Fraser Institute. The forum attracted 130 participants and discussed the findings of a national economic freedom audit • The Foundation for Economic Education (FEE) has been hosting educational and networking events nationwide this fall as part of their new “FEE Near Me” initiative, offering one-day seminars to connect students, partners and alumni to each other.

To get the latest updates on Atlas and news from around the network, visit AtlasNetwork.org and subscribe to our monthly electronic newsletter, Highlights.

Around the Network
JOIN US FOR ASIA LIBERTY FORUM!

Join a growing network of think tank leaders January 7-9, 2014 in New Delhi, India for the second annual Asia Liberty Forum, gathering 200 think tank leaders and other allies from the region. Speakers include Dr. Razeen Sally, an expert on trade policy in Asia, Ali Salman of Pakistan and Tom Palmer. This exciting event is hosted by Atlas’s Asia Centre for Enterprise and serves as the hub for several complementary events you can read about below.

Related Opportunities in India:

- Atlas-CPPR Research Methods Training, January 10-25, Kochi
- Think Tank Management and Leadership Training, January 10-12, New Delhi
- Students for Liberty Leadership Training, January 7, New Delhi

Visit ACENetwork.Asia to register or for more information.