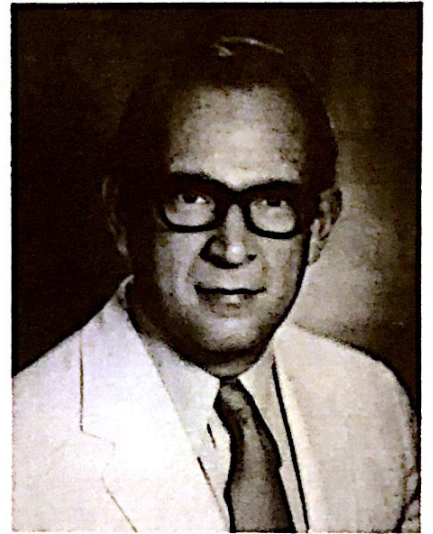


Restoring Liberty To America

A Fourth-of-July Address

by Dr. John Hospers

Presidential Candidate of the Libertarian Party



Two hundred years will soon have elapsed since the year 1776. The Founding Fathers established at that time a nation unique in the history of the world, the American Republic. It was unique in that it provided for a balance of powers among the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government. It was unique also in that it provided a constitution in which the rights of man were explicitly protected, even against a majority which might have used the democratic process to curtail the rights of minorities and dissenters—that is to say, it was strictly speaking the constitution of a republic and not that of an unlimited democracy. In the constitution of this republic was guaranteed the freedom of each man to speak his mind without fear of retaliation by the state; the freedom of the press, enabling him to write what he wanted and publicize it to whom he wanted, to direct his criticism even against the state if he so chose; the freedom of peaceable assembly, guaranteeing his right to band together with others to discuss any and all ideas, including those opposed to the government itself; the right of trial by jury, and numerous other associated legal rights curtailing the power of the state—and these made our republic even more unique than any state that had preceded it. The Founding Fathers knew from their own experiences in Europe the meaning of tyranny, oppression, and violation of

the rights of man; and this time they were determined to make no mistakes, but to enshrine their conception of human liberty in the document that marked its inception, and ensure the preservation of the rights of individuals in the new republic for all time to come.

The new constitution was not without flaws. One of these was the absence of any prohibition against slavery—an omission which, however politically necessary at the time to keep the South in the Union, was not corrected until the Civil War. If one man has the right to dispose of the life of other men as he sees fit, this is slavery. And if a government has the right to dispose of a man's life as its officials see fit, that too is slavery—and thus another defect in the Constitution was the failure to prohibit the non-voluntary use of human beings in military service. A free nation is best protected by a free and voluntary army, and only a voluntary army is compatible with the right to life as stated in the Constitution.

Still another flaw was the absence of any reference to economic freedom, the freedom of every individual to engage in a trade or profession of his own choosing and to trade his product or service on the free market with other individuals without any coercion by government at any stage of this activity.

This was not because the Founding Fathers opposed economic freedom—quite the contrary—but because it would have seemed wildly implausible to them that their Constitution could be interpreted in such a way as to permit such restrictions on it as have since occurred. The Bill of Rights should have contained one other article: "Congress shall pass no law abridging the freedom of production and trade."

Finally, the references to the "general welfare" and the "public interest" were not sufficiently spelled out so that later interpreters of the Constitution were able, in utter violation of the spirit of the original document, to permit the economy of the United States to be managed, as it is today, by an enormous bureaucracy, whose whim is law, whose ostensible aim is humanitarian but whose real aim is power; and which now holds the productive people of the nation in its control. Though it produces nothing, it holds a dagger at the throats of all those who do produce the goods and services without which the nation cannot survive; it wastes several dollars of the taxpayer's money for every dollar it distributes; and by increasing controls and subsidies and decreasing the incentive for those who do produce, has created millions of the very poor which it professes to help—by taxing some to pay for the

support of others, by increasing the cost of the goods they must buy through tariffs, grants, and subsidies, by hedging them about with endless legal requirements for starting and sustaining any economic enterprise, and finally by going into business itself (always at a loss) and charging the hapless taxpayer in the form of still higher taxation. This interference by government into the economy has multiplied a thousandfold in the last half century, until it has come to affect the life of every American today; it has been the principal betrayal of the American Constitution and is the main cause of our current economic problems. If the economic control of producers by non-producers continues as it has for the last forty years, it will result in the total control of the state over the lives of all its citizens.

Today the American dream has become a nightmare. Our economy is governed not as much by Presidents and Congressmen as by a self-perpetuating bureaucracy whose power and privilege persists even when administrations change, and whose all-pervasive influence stifles incentive, maims productivity, encourages dishonesty as a way of life, and regiments the lives of its citizens, forcing them to act not on their own

judgment but on the judgments of their economic rulers. This is the tragic end-result of decades of a national policy which has increasingly restricted the ability of each man to make his own decisions and determine his own fate—and it is, of course, at the opposite pole from the ideal of liberty which was held by the Founding Fathers and embodied in our constitution.

It is in these circumstances that we are present at the founding of the Libertarian Party. As its name implies, it is dedicated to the restoration of liberty to America—and this means first and foremost freedom from government. We believe that the powers of government should be drastically curtailed, and that the only function of government is to protect the rights of individuals: the right to life, because each man cannot defend himself alone against all possible aggressors; the right to liberty of speech and action, because man lives by his own free decisions, and the consequences of his own actions should be upon himself and not (via government) foisted on others; and the right to property, because property represents the fruits of one's labor, and the man who is not permitted to control what he has is still a slave who exists only by permission of his

masters; and any bandit or any government that takes it from him is taking away the means by which he must live, and his ability to plan for the years ahead, and forcing him to live on its terms rather than on his own.

We, the members of the Libertarian Party, hold that no one is the owner of anyone's life but his own; that the lives of others are not his to dispose of; that no man's life should be a non-voluntary mortgage on the lives of others; that no one may use force to change the course of the lives of others; that one may use force only in retaliation against those who have initiated its use; and that no government has the right to initiate the use of force against any citizen.

The American Constitution carefully specified very great restrictions, not on individual actions, but on the powers of government; and its entire emphasis is on the non-interference by government in the lives of its citizens. If this ideal of liberty had not been betrayed by the leaders of our nation, and by all of its major political parties, there would have been no need for us to form a new party in order to bring to the attention of our fellow Americans truths which are at once so plain and so profound.

Break Free From Big Brother. Vote Libertarian.

Vote for Dr. John Hospers and Mrs. Tonie Nathan for President and Vice-President of the United States, on November 7, 1972. If they're not on the ballot in your state, find out how to cast a write-in vote.

Contribute to the Hospers-Nathan campaign. Checks should be made out to *Libertarian Party Campaign Fund*, and sent to the Fund at 1415 N. El Paso, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80906.

Join the Libertarian Party, as an active member. Annual dues are \$4 for students, \$6 for regular membership, and \$12 for sustaining membership. Checks should be made out to *Libertarian Party*, and sent to the Party's National Headquarters, 7748 Lowell Blvd., Westminster, Colorado 80030.

Additional copies of this reprint are available from the National Headquarters, at the following prices:

25 / \$1; 100 / \$3.50; 500 / \$15; 1,000 / \$25; 5,000 / \$100