

NOTES ON POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

I am delighted to have this opportunity to talk to the people of Omaha. My intention, for the next half hour, is to offer you a few ideas about what is happening to our country and where we are going.

We are living in perhaps the most interesting time in history. Every year brings us technological advances which human beings have never before enjoyed. Yesterday, for example, I flew in a jet from Boston to Chicago. I was able to relax in a comfortable seat 30,000 feet in the air and enjoy a well-prepared lunch. We covered the 800 miles in less than two hours. Fifteen years ago such a trip was simply impossible. Today I can address virtually everyone in ~~Omaha~~ in this area by merely standing in front of a microphone and television camera in a studio in Omaha. All of these advances have been due to one single factor above all others -- and that is freedom. Now, when we speak of freedom, we are speaking of man's long struggle against the restraints of government. For remember, freedom is the factor which has made all the difference. Our brains are not better than they were a thousand years ago. The natural resources we use today were there a thousand years ago. But why, after the founding of this country in 1776, were we able to advance economically and technologically at a rate and in a manner hitherto unknown in history?

The answer is quite simple: economic and political freedom. Under the conditions of freedom, in which individuals were able to create, invent, sell their products ~~and~~ or services, grow rich and keep the fruits of their labor, man found the greatest incentive for work--the rewards of the market place. People have a tendency to think of money as something evil and corrupting. Money in itself is merely a form of exchange, it is ~~a~~ ~~where~~ value stored in a convenient form, it is frozen energy. It is not an end in itself. It is a means to an end. Corrupt people use money for corrupt ends. Good people, productive people, use money for good and productive ends.

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Of course, not everyone ~~has been~~ able to take advantage of the tremendous economic freedom which existed in this country prior to the ~~socialistic~~ ^{strangling} controls which have been imposed on our economy, and not everyone has been able to take advantage of whatever freedom is still left in our economic lives. Some people lack the talents, the drive, and even the desire to succeed in the market place. And then there are those who even despise freedom and particularly the whole idea of a free-market ~~economic~~ economy in which men compete without the aid of government favoritism and in which a man's value is often measured by his ability to satisfy the needs and desires of the market.

The Communists, you will note, control the economies of ~~these~~ ^{their socialist state} Communist countries and make no bones about their inability to satisfy the consumer. In fact, the implicit ~~policy~~ ^{philosophy} in any Communist country is the consumer be damned.

But in a free-market system, a few highly inventive people have been able to create things which have been of benefit to millions. The beauty of our ~~country~~ ^{system} is that it provided the climate of freedom which permitted these individual geniuses to invent, create, and grow rich.

There is nothing wrong in wanting to become rich. There is nothing wrong in becoming rich by offering other human beings, in exchange for a value, something which will enrich and satisfy their lives. ^{then} And look at it this way: the rewards of the market place can be so high, that people will go to great and difficult ends to satisfy the most exacting desires of the greatest number of people. That is the story of capitalism. That is the story of ^{economic} freedom.

The free-market system particularly appeals to a peculiar breed of individualist-- the man who has confidence in his abilities, who can stand on his own two feet, who is inventive, creative, and has a tremendous capacity for work. These men have always been in the minority in any civilization, but the effort of this minority in a free-market system has been of enormous ~~benefit~~ value to the majority, to the millions who now ride in cars, fly in planes, have electric lights, and enjoy all of the luxuries, ~~and more~~

comforts, and pleasures of our industrial, commercial civilization.

Now this period of relative economic freedom we've enjoyed has been a short one in the long span of human history. It has lasted barely two hundred years, and already the controls and regulations which now increasingly govern our economic life threaten to bring this great experiment ~~in freedom~~ to an end. Some liberal economists expect it to end very soon. For example, John Kenneth Galbraith, the Harvard economist, said last month, "Men will look back in amusement at the pretense that once caused people to refer to General Electric or du Pont or Vickers as private business." He expects the government to take full control pretty soon *and he seems to be very happy that this two hundred year period of freedom will come to an end.*

Now most Americans take our freedom for granted, and they are not alarmed by statements such as the one uttered by Prof. Galbraith. The idea that we can lose our freedom is so unthinkable to them, that they misinterpret all of the signs that tell them that our freedoms are slipping ~~way~~ away. These Americans who take so much for granted do not realize that our ^{Country's} ~~two-hundred-year~~ period of freedom has been the exception to the rule. For throughout history, man has lived under one form of tyranny or another. One might ask: what is wrong ~~with~~ men that they invariably slip back into tyranny and put up with it for centuries. The answer is very simple: man's ~~resistance~~ resistance to tyranny has been ^{somewhat} sporadic. Such resistance has required enormous courage, and a tremendous desire for freedom. Unfortunately, only a small minority seem to have ^{want freedom} ~~these qualities~~ ^{enough to be willing to die for} ~~these qualities~~. The ~~vast~~ ^{many} majority of human ~~being~~ beings seem to prefer to knuckle under despotism and to learn to live with it. To give you an example: most Americans don't like the income tax and a great ~~number~~ ^{many} cheat on their returns. But if you asked these same Americans to organize a movement to repeal the income tax, ~~very few would~~ and thus spare themselves the necessity of cheating, very few would come forward. They would ^{to continue} prefer ~~their own ineffective method~~ ^{way} of fighting bureaucracy and oppression, a ~~method~~ ^{way} which only gives the oppressor an additional club with which to ^{clap} ~~hit~~ the citizen over the head.

Many Americans today

A lot of people are afraid to express their true feelings ~~today~~. They think

they still live in a free country, but they are too afraid to exercise their freedom.

~~consequently~~ Now, nothing is more characteristic of a ^{tyranny} ~~dictatorship~~ than the climate of fear which ^{that tyranny engenders in} grips the citizenry. When Americans ~~begin~~ begin to be motivated by fear, they are admitting that they no longer live in a free country. ^{And this is a very dangerous state of affairs,} For it is the nature of political freedom that it must be used in order for it to survive.

Now, here I am before this television camera, speaking to the good people of

Omaha, expressing my opinions and convictions freely, exercising the freedoms our

Founding Fathers obtained for us, knowing full well that there is ^{at great cost} ~~a Federal Communications~~ ^{are a half dozen governments} ~~Commission which have the power to bar me and the TV station if they wanted to,~~

various people in this community who may complain about my appearance. But I was

brought up to believe that ~~this was a free country~~ my country was the greatest and the the world

freest in ~~history~~, and I ~~intended~~ ^{these United States} no intention of dishonoring the men who founded this country by not exercising the freedom they gave me.

It is very hard to convince some people in this country that we are losing our

freedom. They are usually people with very naive political ~~ideas~~ concepts who are

prone to repeat the cliches uttered by various political authorities to whom they tend

to look up. The fact that the government invades their privacy through the income tax

return, or confiscates part of their ~~net~~ salary via withholding each week, or compels

them to accept government insurance, or compels them ~~in~~ into military service to fight

undeclared wars--these things don't seem to bother ^{a great} many people. People can tolerate a that

tremendous amount of tyranny. For example, while it is true ~~in~~ over 3,000,000 Germans

fled the Communist zone while it was ^{still} ~~still~~ easy to cross over into West Berlin, millions

more stayed behind preferring to endure the tyranny of Communism. This is equally true

in the United States. Those of us who are putting up the greatest and most vociferous

resistance to the steady encroachment of governmental tyranny are a small minority.

We find most of our fellow citizens indifferent to the ominous trends, ^{concerned} or concerned but unprepared to do anything about it. Of course, there is also that other minority. The minority which wants the tyranny and which is working for it. Remember in every despotic system will be found a large enough minority willing and able to do the bidding of the despots. We have seen this in every despotic civilization in the past and ~~in~~

~~We see~~

We see that minority in every Communist-controlled country. We see that minority in ^{well steps you} our own country, pushing more and more tyrannical legislation through Congress, pressing ^{of your money} for greater and greater incursions into our remaining freedoms. ^{property} ^{control} ^{your} ^{lover}

Now, what does all of this mean to you. Obviously, what I am saying here will have no appeal to those who are happy ^{with} ~~our~~ our present trend toward despotism. I am not interested in reaching them. I am ~~interested~~ interested in reaching those people who do believe in freedom. I want to tell them ~~that~~ that the hour is late and that their future is at stake. Make no mistake. There is nothing more important than political reality. For it is politics which decides whether you will live as a free man or a slave, it is politics which decides whether you will be sent to die in ^{or you son or your husband} some endless, undeclared war or be permitted to live out your life and pursue your own ^{his} happiness, it is politics which decides whether you will live in an expanding economy possible in a free-market system or in stagnation resulting from ^{feudal} ^{bureaucratic} socialist controls.

Now, political reality is made by men. It is not handed down to us by a deity. It is of our own making, either directly or by default. If we permit our government to fall into the hands of ^S ~~lovers of despotism~~, then we have only ourselves to blame. If we do nothing to rescue it, then again, we ~~have~~ shall only have ourselves to blame. We must never forget that politics must be our first concern, for politics provides the very basis for ~~that~~ the rest of everything else we do in life, everything concerning careers, families, etc. culture.

The history of the human race hardly encourages us to be optimistic. But we do have history to draw upon, and we know a lot more now than even our founding fathers knew and they knew the anatomy of tyranny as a terrible thing.

As George Washington said: "Government is like fire. Controlled it can cook your food & heat your home. Uncontrolled it can destroy you."

Now it is not enough to know that politics is the most important reality of organized society. It more important to know ~~what~~ why it is, and how it can be understood. Our Founding Fathers understood very clearly that the source of all tyranny and despotism was government; that ^{know that despotism} governments ^{to} oppress and governments ^{to} persecute and that therefore governments, which have been so constantly a source of malevolence, are to be feared and controlled. ~~Therefore~~ Now, the reason why governments do become such incredible sources of malevolence is because a government has a monopoly on the use of force. Now what is the nature of this force? ^{Now do you see} Must it always be malevolent? Can it ever be benevolent? The answer is, yes, ^{with certain} ~~government~~ the government's use of force ^{are} can be of a benevolent nature if that force is use for self-defensive purposes only. ~~Imagine~~ ~~example~~ Let me explain: ~~every~~ no one has the right to initiate the use of force against another individual; but everyone has the right to defend himself against the initiation of such force by another. Now it is this right for self-defense which we delegate to our government and becomes a benevolent force, a force which prevents the criminal from violating the rights of other individuals. Our police departments are a prime example of this benevolent use of force for self-defensive purposes only.

Now, when a government uses force in any other manner, it is acting illegitimately, for the simple reason, as we explained, that no man has the right to initiate the use of force against another man, and therefore he cannot delegate to his government a right he doesn't have. Now this is an important distinction, for in it is to be found the difference between a benevolent government and a malevolent one. And once a government departs from the simple principle that it may not initiate the use of force, that it can only use force in a self-defensive manner, there is no limit in the despotism to which it may go. The Nazi government in Germany went so far as to initiate a program of exterminating a ^{minority} ~~portion~~ of the population ^{which} ~~was~~ happened to be of another religion.

As you know we delegate to our government certain powers which enable it to arrest criminals, compel citizens to pay up on damages suits, etc.

And this happened not too many years ago when the thought of such despotism coming to pass in so cultivated and civilized a country as Germany was considered impossible. And we saw what happened overnight in May, 1945, when the Nazi regime ended. Suddenly, the despised, persecuted minority was no longer persecuted or despised or being exterminated--all because there had been a change of government. Now is it not obvious that our Founding Fathers knew what they were talking about?

They were so conscious of what they were dealing with that they spent a year devising a federal government so controlled by an elaborate set of checks and balances that it would be very difficult for the despotically inclined to assume total power overnight. The system could only be destroyed via a gradual ~~corrosion~~ erosion of these checks and balances. That erosion, I am sorry to say, has been the most ominous and tragic development of our time, and anyone who believes that that erosion has not been careful and deliberately engineered by a well-organized and well-financed clique of totalitarians, doesn't know his ~~history~~ history.

But what disturbs me more than anything else is that so many people are either unaware that such an erosion has taken place, are indifferent to the development, or actually believe that it is good and justified. They do not realize that they are simply posing no obstacle to the gradual takeover of this country by despots. Surprisingly, some of the most unconcerned are those who should be the most concerned. To be quite blunt, I am speaking of members of my ~~own~~ own Jewish faith who ~~have~~ have suffered at the hands of despots throughout history but who at this moment are quite active in promoting the erosion of our system of checks and balances and are opening the way to despotism. Many of them do not know that they are doing this. But they should know better considering how much they have suffered. I have been asked by many baffled conservatives why it is that so many Jews, who are so conservative in the conduct of their personal affairs, are so liberal in their political thinking. Frankly,

I can only attribute this attitude to political naivete and extremely poor and uninspired communal leadership. And unfortunately what we see today is simply a repetition of history. For example, three of our Jewish festivals commemorate events of political significance. Passover commemorates the Exodus of the children of Israel from slavery in Egypt and their becoming an independent people in their own land with their own laws; Purim commemorates the saving of the Jews from extermination by the despot Haman; and Hannukah commemorates the victory of Judah the Maccabee over the despotic Greco-Syrian king Antiochus IV.

It is interesting to study the background of the Israelites predicament in Egypt. As you know it all started when Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery to the Egyptians. Pharaoh then had a dream, and Joseph interpreted that dream for Pharaoh, predicting that there would be seven years of good harvests and seven years of famine. Joseph became Pharaoh's minister and worked out a scheme of socializing Egypt and putting the entire land under the Pharaoh's control. Well you can be sure that everything Joseph predicted came true. There was a famine. But Pharaoh, Joseph and the Egyptian priests came out ahead. Joseph then asked the Pharaoh for permission to bring the rest of his family and tribe to Egypt. The Pharaoh gave the permission, the Israelites came to Egypt and enjoyed the good life, became prosperous and had a great deal of influence with the Pharaoh who under Joseph's guidance had organized the total state. But eventually Joseph died and the old Pharaoh died and there arose a new Pharaoh "who knew not Joseph" but inherited the total ~~power~~ power, the dictatorship, which Joseph had helped bring about.