

# Hoover Says Democracy Arises From Individualism

System of Government Is Device to Carry Out Program of Organization, to Act as Medium in Assuring Justice and Restraining Evil Instincts From Developing Into Powerful Forces.

By HERBERT HOOVER, Secretary of Commerce.

(Editor's Note: This is the fifth installment of a series of articles by Mr. Hoover on "American Individualism" appearing daily in The Omaha Morning Bee. The following article deals with "Political Phases of Individualism.")

It is not the primary purpose of this essay to discuss our political organization. Democracy is merely the mechanism which individualism invents as a device that would carry out the necessary political work of its social organization. Democracy arises out of individualism and prospers through it alone.

Without question, there exists, almost all over the world, unprecedented disquietude at the functioning of government itself. It is in part the dreary social ferment of war emotion. It is in part the aftermath of a period when the government was everything and the individual nothing, from which there is much stimulation to two schools of thought. One that all human ills can be cured by governmental regulation, and the other that all regulation is a sin.

During the war, the mobilization of every effort, the destruction of the normal economy, the normal avenues of distribution, required a vast excursion over the deadline of individualism in order that we might secure immediate results. Its continuation would have destroyed the initiative of our people and undermined all real progress. We are slowly getting back, but many still aspire to these supposed short cuts to the millennium.

Much of our discontent takes the form of resentment against the inequalities in the distribution of the sacrifice of war. Both silently and vocally there is complaint that while some died, others ran no risk, and yet others profited. For these complaints there is adequate justification. The facts are patent. However, no conceivable human intelligence would be able to manage the conditions so as to see that all sacrifices and burdens should be distributed equitably. War is destruction and we should blame war for its injustices, not a social system whose object is construction. The submergence of the individual, however, in the struggle of the race could be but temporary. Its continuance through the porousness of individual action and its crushing of individual initiative would, if for no other reason, destroy the foundations of our civilization.

### Government Is Empire.

Look at us as the empire in our social system, our government has maintained an equality before the law and a development of legal justice and an authority in restraint of evil instincts that support this social system and its ideals so far as the imperfections permit. It has gone to the greatest distance of any government toward maintaining an equality of franchise; an equality of entrance to public office and government by the majority. It has succeeded far beyond all others in those safeguards of equality of opportunity through education, public information, and the open channels of free speech and free press. It is, however, much easier to chart the course of progress to government in dealing with the abstract problems of order, intellectual liberty and stimulation to intellectual and moral advancement than it is to chart its relations to the economic seas. These seas are new and only partly discovered or explored.

Our government's greatest troubles and failures are in the economic field. Every year since the contact of the individual with the government had its largest expression in the sheriff or policeman, and in debates over political equality. In those happy days the government offered but small interference with the economic life of the citizen. But with the vast development of industry and the train of regulating touchstones of the national and municipal government that followed from it; with the recent vast increase in taxation due to the war—the government has become through its relations to economic life the most potent force for maintenance or destruction of our American individualism.

### Equality Throttled.

The entrance of the government began strongly three decades ago, when our industrial organization began to move powerfully in the direction of consolidation of enterprise. We found in the course of this development that equality of opportunity and its corollary, individual initiative, was being throttled by the concentration of control of industry and service, and thus an economic domination of groups built over the nation. At this time, particularly, we were threatened with a form of autocracy of economic power. Our mass of regulation of public utilities and our legislation against restraint of trade is the monument to our intent to preserve an equality of opportunity. This regulation is itself proof that we have gone a long way toward the abandonment of the "capitalism" of Adam Smith.

Day by day we learn more as to the practical application of restriction against economic and political domination. We sometimes lag behind in the correction of those forces that would override liberty, justice and equality of opportunity, but the principle is so strong within us that domination of

the few will not be tolerated. These restraints must keep pace with the growing complexity of our economic organization, but they need tuning to our social system if they would not take us into great dangers. As we build up our powers of production through the advancing application of science we create new forces with which men may dominate—railway, power, oil and what not. They may produce temporary blockades upon equality of opportunity.

### Regulation Necessary.

To curb the forces in business which would destroy equality of opportunity and yet to maintain the initiative and creative faculties of our people are the twin objects we must attain. To preserve the former we must regulate that type of activity that would dominate. To preserve the latter, the government must keep out of production and distribution of commodities and services. This is the deadline between our system and socialism. Regulation to prevent domination and unfair practices, yet preserving our rightful initiative, are in keeping with our social foundations. Nationalization of industry or business is their negation.

When we come to the practical problems of government in relation to these economic questions the test lies in two directions: Does this act safeguard an equality of opportunity? Does it maintain the initiative of our people? For in the first must lie the deadline against domination, and in the second the deadline in preservation of individualism against socialism. Excluding the temporary measures of the war, the period of regulation has now been long enough with us to begin to take stock of its effect upon our social system. It has been highly beneficial, but it has also developed weaknesses in the throttling of proper initiative that require some revision. We have already granted relief to labor organizations and to agriculture from some forms of regulation. There is, however, a large field of co-operative possibilities far outside agriculture that are needlessly hampered.

The most important of considerations in any attempt to pass judgment upon social systems is whether we maintain within them permanent and continuous motivation toward progress. These forces must be of two orders, one spiritual and the other economic.

### Education Advancing.

We may discover the situation in our own social system either by an analysis of the forces that are today in motion or by noting the strides of progress over the century or over the last 10 years. By a consideration of the forces that move us we can see whether our system shows signs of decay, whether its vitality is maintained, and by the touchstone of time we can find out whether these forces have been powerful enough to overcome the malign influences that would lessen the well-being of our system. If we should survey the fundamen-

tal of our civilization from the point of view of its progress by the test of time, we can find much for satisfaction and assurance. It is necessary to recount the values of economic individualism in stimulation to invention; large constructive vision; intensity in production with decreased physical effort; our increased standards of living and comfort. It is of course easy to enumerate our great economic progress, but the progress of the social forces that will sustain economic progress is infinitely more important—for upon them depends the real future of our people. Education in its many phases has made much advance. The actual equipment, the character of instruction, the numbers reached, period of instruction—show improvement with every decade. Public opinion has become of steadily increasing potency and reliability in its creation. The great strides in development of processes and equipment for production and distribution are being followed by increasing devotion to the human factors in their execution.

### Country Getting Better.

Moral standards of business and commerce are improving; vicious city governments are less in number; invisible government has greatly diminished; public conscience is penetrating deeper and deeper; the rooting up of wrong grows more vigorous; the agencies for their exposure and remedy grow more numerous, and above all is the growing sense of service. Many people confuse the exposure of wrongs which were below the surface with degeneration; their very exposure is progress. Some credit the exposures of failure in our government and business as evidence of standards of a lower order than in some other nations. A considerable experience leads me to the conviction that while we do wash our dirty linen in public most others never wash it.

It is easy to arraign any existing institution. Men can rightly be critical because things have happened that never ought to happen. That our social system contains faults no one disputes. One can recite the faulty results of our system at great length; the spirit of lawlessness; the uncertainty of employment in some callings; the deadening effect of certain repetitive processes of manufacture; the 12-hour day in a few industries; unequal voice in bargaining for wage in some employment; arrogant domination by some employers and some labor leaders; child labor in some states; inadequate instruction in some areas; unfair competition in some industries; some fortunes excessive to beyond the needs of stimulation to initiative; survival of religious intolerance; political debauchery of some cities; weaknesses in our governmental structure. Most of these occur locally in certain regions and certain industries and must cause every thinking person to regret and endeavor. But they are becoming steadily more local. That they are recognized and condemned is a long way on the road to progress.

### Democrat Will Succeed Gruenther on Utilities

A director of the Metropolitan utilities district to succeed C. M. Gruenther will be named within 10 days, according to Mayor James C. Dahlman, who also is a director of the board. The new director will be a democrat and will be named to fill out the six-year term which began on January 1 last.

### Highland Country Club Leases 160 Acres Land

Members of Highland Country club, a Jewish club recently organized, thought it to find the balance of perspective. A single crime does not mean a criminal community. It is easy to point out undernourished, overworked, uneducated children; children barred from the equality of opportunity that our ideals stand for. It is easy to point out the luxurious petted and spoiled children with favored opportunity in every community. But if we take the whole 35 millions of children of the United

States, it would be a gross exaggeration to say that a million of them suffer from any of these injustices. This is indeed a million too many, but it is the 34 million that tests the system with the additional touchstone of whether there are forces in motivation which are insistently and carefully working for the amelioration of the one million. Its by-products of endowed loafers, or hoodlums, at speculative ends of the economic scale, are indeed spectacular faults. Yet any analysis of the 165,000,000 of us would show that we harbor less than a million of either rich or impetuous loafers. If we measure our people by scales of other civilized people, we also find consolation. We have a distaste for the very expression of "class," but if we would use European scales of "classes" we would find that above their scale of "lower classes" we have in equivalent comfort, morality, understanding and intelligence fully 80 per cent of our native-born whites. No European state will lay claim to 80 per cent of this order. Does this not mean that we have been gaining something?

### American Consulate at Smyrna Razed by Fire

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### Cadet Noncoms Form Club at Central High

A noncommissioned officers' club has been formed at Central High school. The organization is somewhat similar to the cadet officers' club, which consists of the senior officers, but it is believed by those in charge that more benefit may be derived out of the new organization if it gets started right.

"The object of the club is to get a closer co-operation and to aid in making promotions," said Cadet Lieut. Col. Walter Key. "Each week the boys will hear a lecture on military tactics and leadership by one of the senior officers or by some outsider." Marion Morris, highest ranking junior officer, has been chosen president. There are no other officers. So far the club has heard talks from Maj. Judd Crocker, Capt. George Likert, Capt. Stanley Reiff and Col. Walter Key.

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