



Keeping Faith With America

by
John F. McManus

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Can we pass our heritage of liberty to our posterity?



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The John Birch Society
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by John F. McManus

The United States of America! She was born in 1776, had to fight for her independence as an infant, and had to suffer growing pains just like a child progressing toward adulthood.

Before she flowered, she endured several wars, a few insurrections, and even a governmental crisis that happily produced the finest political system ever devised by man.

By the time she was one hundred years old — still a youngster in the life of a nation — she had become well-established as the refuge of the world's tired, hungry, and poor who left everything in the old world to walk upon her soil. Beyond those millions who came to America, there were many millions more who took comfort and found hope in knowing that there really was such a bastion of freedom and opportunity — such a place where dreams could be transformed into realities.

The Key to Greatness

What made America great? What set it apart from other nations and other lands? Was it the blessing of natural resources? No, there are equal or greater resources in all of the inhabited continents.

Was it her people that made America the envy of all the world? Not really. The people who transformed America from a backward wilderness into such a marvel came here from across the oceans. Obviously, something enabled them to do more in their new surroundings than they had been able to accomplish in their former homelands.

Was it government's wisdom, or government's programs that spurred our nation to such remarkable heights? No, again. It was not what government *did* that made America great; it was what government was prevented from doing that made the difference.

The real key to America's greatness is freedom for the individual. Freedom to work, to produce, to succeed, and especially to keep the fruits of one's labors. Here, a person is even possessed of the freedom to fail and the freedom to start over again. As much as the source of America's greatness has always been freedom to *do* this or that, the wonder of

America is that her people were free *from* the stifling presence of government power.

The American people have enjoyed more freedom than any other people in history. Yet, unrestrained personal freedom can produce its own form of tyranny. True greatness results when people who are free of government control choose to limit their own actions with moral codes like the Ten Commandments. And this combination, limited government and personal morality, is what has always characterized America. As Alexis de Toqueville put it in the 1840s after visiting the churches of our land: "America is great because America is good, and if America ceases to be good, America will cease to be great." Our people were free, but they were also good.

The birth certificate of the United States of America is the Declaration of Independence. Here we find the fundamental premise upon which our nation was built, the "self-evident" truths that men "are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights," and that in order "to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted."

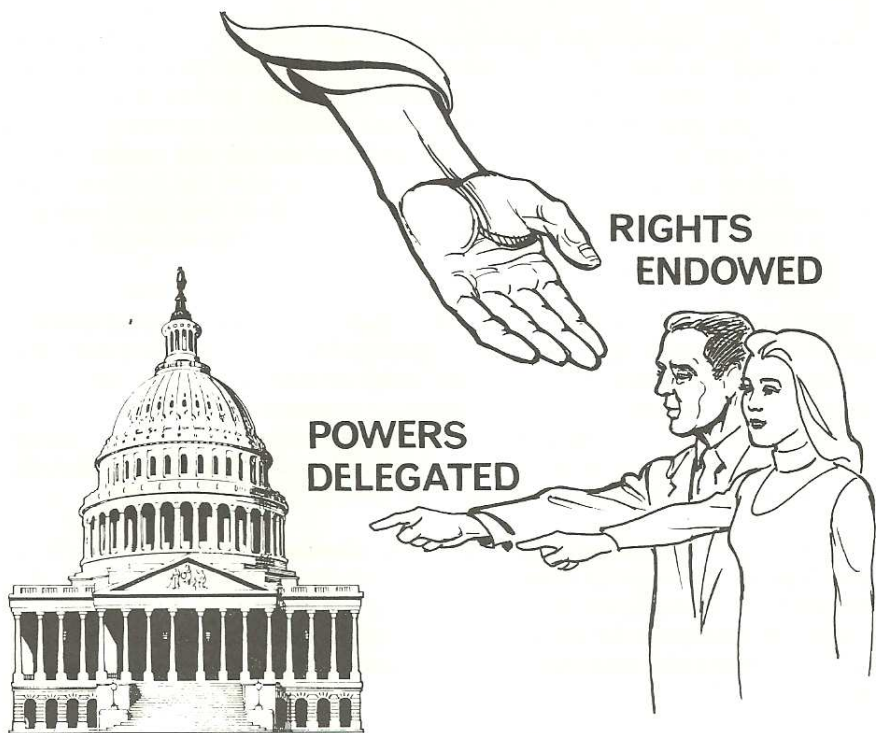
It's all very clear and very simple: God created man and endowed him with certain unalienable rights; men created government and delegated to it certain powers to protect those rights — to life, liberty and property, and also to speak, publish, practice religion freely, etc. Our nation's founders knew that government did not give them their rights; God did. And they also knew that government's purpose is to guard against the suppression of those rights by any foreign or domestic power — even by government itself.

Yes, it's all very simple. But it is ever so easy to take it all for granted.

A Confederation of States

The early Americans had to fight for their independence. Everyone knows about the War for Independence from British domination. But not too many are aware that the war was conducted first under a governmental system called the Continental Congress and then under another called the Articles of Confederation. These were loose associations of the several states that granted the federal government too little power. They did not provide for sufficient executive power, called for no judiciary to settle disputes between the states, and established no power to tax — not even to pay for military forces.

The federal governments under the Continental Congress and the Articles of Confederation were indeed weak. But they were not weak because they possessed few of the powers accumulated by government today; they were weak because they did not have sufficient power to carry out government's proper functions.



Despite the deficiencies of our nation's early governments, and largely as a result of the personal leadership of George Washington, America defeated the British and independence was assured.

Out of Many, One

Then, on May 25, 1787, after several conferences had been held elsewhere, representatives of a majority of the 13 states met in Philadelphia for the purpose of revising the Articles of Confederation. After only a few days of deliberations, sentiment to build a completely new governmental system began to take hold. By June 19th, the delegates decided not to revise the Articles, but to construct an entirely new national government. After taking that momentous step, they worked through the entire summer, finally approved the completely new Constitution on September 17th, sent it to the states for ratification, and adjourned.

The men at that constitutional convention (Washington, Franklin, Madison, and others) constructed the new governmental system in such a way as to keep faith with the Declaration of Independence — to empower government to act in defense of people's rights, and no more. The Constitution they gave us was written to govern the government, not the

people. While it grants government certain powers to act, its chief concern was to limit the federal government to clearly specified powers, to leave the states essentially sovereign, and to let the people be free. The marvel was that they were able to satisfy both those who wanted sovereign states *and* those who wanted all of America to be joined as one nation. They accomplished making of one out of many, which is what the Latin phrase “E Pluribus Unum” means — “out of many, one.” And they did it in such a way that the states retained their independence even while joined together for mutual protection.

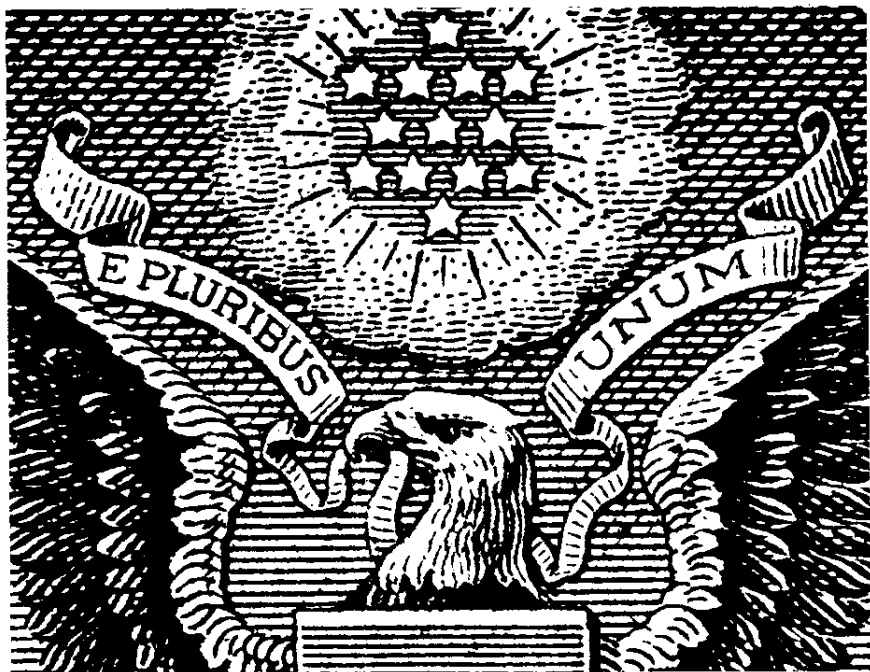
This, of course, is what is called the federal system. Federal powers were to be concerned almost exclusively with foreign affairs and domestic tranquility; the states were to be left with whatever other government powers might be needed. Should errors or excesses gain favor in any of the states, the built-in competition among the states would speedily make such error and excess obvious. But if federal power becomes excessive, there is no parallel government to show that it has gone wrong.

This is America’s marvelous heritage: a constitutional republic whose laws limited government to protecting the God-given rights of the people, and where the people were to be limited by the strictures of their deeply-held religious beliefs. No wonder America grew and prospered. No wonder millions came here, and many millions more deeply admired our nation from afar.

Sad to say, however, that there are some within our country who want to change the American system. They seek to convert our republic with its rule of law into a democracy with its rule by majority and then to rule by themselves. They don’t want government power held in check. They don’t want our nation to remain independent. They don’t even want the truths in the Declaration of Independence to be ingrained on the hearts of Americans — especially the truth that rights come from God. This basic foundation of Americanism can no longer be taught in the government schools that all of us pay for and many of us send our children to. Truly, the enemies of America have made great progress.

Not content, however, some of these individuals seek to use the 200th





anniversary of the various events which established this nation to formalize changes in the American system. They are counting on the apathy and ignorance of the people to enable them to proceed.

Do Americans really understand their marvelous heritage? Sadly, they do not. It is already true that most Americans fail to appreciate that their rights come from God Almighty not from government.

Also, Americans in great numbers have been persuaded that national sovereignty and independence are outmoded ideas, and that in order to insure peace in a hostile world, all nations and all peoples must submit to an international power like the United Nations. Few stop to realize that any international authority powerful enough to enforce peace is also powerful enough to create world tyranny.

Changing Times, Timeless Principles

Further, a sizeable portion of the people of our nation have been led to think that our Constitution may have been perfectly fine for an agrarian society of fewer than five million people 200 years ago, but that it does not meet the needs of our highly industrialized nation of 240 million today. This is a clever, but false, argument.

If the Constitution were a set of specifics to rule the people, such an

argument might have merit. But the Constitution given us by wise men who studied and learned from history is, instead, a set of principles to govern the government. And those principles are just as valid today as they were when they were written in 1787. Wherever specific laws were needed to meet sudden needs or changing times, it was expected that these would be enacted at the state and local levels, not at the federal level.

Still more Americans have been led to believe that it is now the federal government's proper role to address all problems, that only a more powerful central government can solve them more speedily, and even that regulation by international authority of production, distribution and finance would be the most certain way to correct mankind's various ills.

There is today a strong tendency among Americans to accept the erroneous notion that government may properly redistribute wealth, that it may justly take from some and give to others in order to take care of the people. The men who founded the United States held no such beliefs, though they certainly recognized a personal responsibility to help the needy. And they gave government no authority to take it from some and to give it to others. They wanted government power held to a very limited role.

One of history's clearest voices warning about excessive government power was that of the great French statesman and economist Frederic Bastiat. His small but monumental treatise *The Law* was first published in 1850. Written to oppose the communist and socialist thinking of his day, and to define the proper role of government, his timeless words are sorely needed today to combat entrenched errors that infect America. Here is some of what Bastiat said:

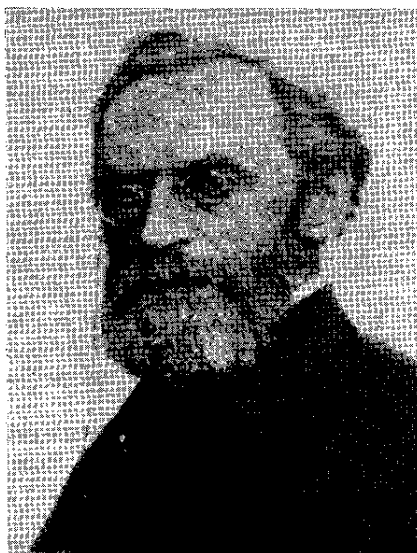
Life, liberty and property do not exist because men have made laws. On the contrary, it was the fact that life, liberty and property existed beforehand that caused men to make laws in the first place.

If every person has the right to defend — even by force — his person, his liberty, and his property, then it follows that a group of men have the right to organize and support a common force to protect those rights constantly. . . . [S]ince an individual cannot lawfully use force against the person, liberty, or property of another individual, then the common force (the law) — for the same reason — cannot lawfully be used to destroy the person, liberty, or property of individuals or groups. . . .

But how is this legal plunder to be identified? Quite simply. See if the law takes from some persons what belongs to them, and gives it to other persons to whom it does not belong. See if the law benefits



Frederick Bastiat



Carl Schurz

one citizen at the expense of another by doing what the citizen himself cannot do without committing a crime.

America — a Showpiece

The early years of the United States were characterized by government being held to its proper role. Our Constitution's barriers to legal plunder and social engineering unleashed the power of human energy and established justice in unparalleled measure.

And, even though he criticized our nation for its acceptance of slavery — a blot we did wipe away — Frederic Bastiat heaped great praise on America. He wrote:

There is no country in the world where the law is kept more within its proper domain: the protection of every person's liberty and property. As a consequence of this, there appears to be no country in the world where the social order rests on a firmer foundation.

Grand testimony about the wonder of America came also from the pen of a German immigrant named Carl Schurz. As a college student, he had participated in the failed 1848 Communist revolution in Germany. Exiled, he made his way to America and here found what freedom truly was. In 1853, he wrote:

Here in America you can see daily how little a person needs to be

governed. There are governments, but no masters; there are governors, but they are only commissioners, agents. What there is here of great institutions of learning, of churches, of great commercial institutions, lines of communication, etc., almost always owes its existence, not to official authority, but to the spontaneous cooperation of private citizens. Here you witness the productiveness of freedom. . . . We learn here how superfluous is the action of governments concerning a multitude of things in which in Europe it is deemed absolutely indispensable, and how the freedom to do something awakens the desire to do it.

Carl Schurz later became a United States Senator and then a cabinet officer in the administration of Rutherford B. Hayes. He learned the value of limited government from personal experience.

The "Unwritten" Constitution

Too many contemporary Americans have forgotten, or never even learned, what made our country great. Attitudes that were soundly and immediately rejected in the past whenever they came from the mouths of communists and socialists have gained a great following once they became the programs of Democrats and Republicans. During the 1950s and 1960s, longtime American socialist leader Norman Thomas frequently expressed great delight, as successive administrations adopted his socialist plans for America. In 1962, he gleefully assessed the situation he saw unfolding as follows:

The difference between Democrats and Republicans is: Democrats have accepted some ideas of Socialism cheerfully, while Republicans have accepted them reluctantly.

What both Democrats and Republicans had done and continue to do, of course, is turn their backs on Americanism and trample all over constitutional limitations on federal power. And now, there are attempts to formalize the new thinking by subverting the very documents that established our nation. Much of what the federal government does today is accomplished under what could be called the assumed powers of an "unwritten constitution." Rather than abolishing these assumed powers, prominent individuals seek to legitimize what has been done by changing the Constitution and doing away with many of its clear limitations.

But let us provide an example of the type of proposal that springs from discarding the essence of Americanism. In October 1975, in anticipation of the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, the World Affairs Council of Philadelphia published Professor Henry Steele Commager's substitute Declaration of INTERdependence. In a matter of weeks, 140 Members of Congress had formally endorsed it. Promoters of the new Declaration were busily introducing it to audi-

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Like fire, it is a
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George Washington



ences across the nation, and they had become quite confident that there would be a formal acceptance of their statement in 1976. For them, it was full speed ahead toward INTERdependence and away from national sovereignty.

Challenge to Independence

Before 1975 ended, however, some unbedazzled ordinary citizens studied Professor Commager's new Declaration. Because they knew and dearly loved the original Declaration of Independence, they were shocked and outraged by Commager's proposal. And they were amazed that any Member of Congress, or anyone else claiming to be an American, would willingly trade the magnificence of 1776 for the Commager subversion of 1976. Here is what they found:

The Declaration of INTERdependence ignored the self-evident truth that rights come from God. It called for an end to national sovereignty, the creation of a new world order, strengthening the United Nations, even regulation of business and monetary systems by international authorities. The Declaration of INTERdependence is a blueprint for national suicide.

Having found what they feared, the alert citizens succeeded in making Professor Commager's INTERdependence document extremely controversial. Numerous Congressional endorsers withdrew their support, some claiming that they had never even read it. The drive to provide solemn respectability for INTERdependence under the United Nations was set

back, as it well should have been. But the enemies of freedom never relax.

What Kind of Celebration?

Only a few years later, those who prefer powerful centrally-directed government are attempting to use the four-year period celebrating the bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution to do away with its clearly stated limitations on government power. In simple terms, they mean to change the structure of our form of government. Their plans must be shown for the subversion that they truly are.

And while the plans of the subverters are being exposed, Americans who remain faithful to the marvelous system bequeathed to us 200 years ago, should use this bicentennial period to create greater awareness of, and greater love for, the value of limited government and the Constitution that mandates it. One of the best available tools to accomplish this important goal is the book *Quest of a Hemisphere* by Donzella Cross Boyle. Happily, it is already in use as a textbook in many of our nation's private schools.

When the early Americans broke away from England, they did so because the British government was not limited, and its power had become oppressive. Much of the Declaration of Independence is actually a list of justifiable complaints against King George and his governors. Here you will find the reasons for such a bold move as to declare independence from the most powerful nation on earth.

Our nation's founders looked upon government as a necessary, but highly dangerous force. George Washington reflected the thinking of those times very well when he said:

Government is not reason, it is not eloquence — it is force. Like fire, it is a dangerous servant and a fearful master.

Thomas Jefferson cautioned against relying even on public-spirited and well-intentioned men. He urged his countrymen not to rely on confidence in men because it was the parent of despotism. He summed up his sentiments by stating:

In questions of power, then, let no more be said of confidence in man, but bind him down from mischief by the chains of the Constitution.

Wisdom of the Founders

When the Founders wrote the Constitution, their purpose was not to make government the arbiter of men's affairs, or the distributors of wealth, or an efficient controller of man's energies. They wanted nothing more from government than protection of their rights. The federal gov-

"The accumulation of all power — legislative, executive, and judiciary — in the same hands . . . may justly be pronounced the very definition of tyranny."

James Madison



ernment they created was to have few powers, and all were to be specifically defined. Then, they wisely separated those powers by forming the legislative, executive and judicial branches, and they built a system of checks and balances to ensure that no branch of government could ever act tyrannically.

Especially determined were they to separate the three branches of government, to keep any government official or agency from possessing the powers of lawmaker, law-enforcer, and judge — all at one time.

Consider the following attitude about the importance of separating these powers given by an early Virginia patriot named John Dawson:

That the legislative, executive and judicial powers should be separate and distinct, in all free governments, is a political fact so well established, that I presume I shall not be thought arrogant when I affirm that no country ever did, or ever can, long remain free, where they are blended.

James Madison, rightly named the Father of the Constitution, was even more emphatic about this need. He stated:

The accumulation of all powers — legislative, executive and judiciary — in the same hands . . . may justly be pronounced the very definition of tyranny.

Thomas Jefferson said of the importance of keeping these powers separate:

The want of it has been the source of more evil than we have ever experienced from any other source.

It is precisely the accumulation of these three powers that has made many of today's federal regulatory agencies so oppressive. Businessmen who have felt the sting of the Executive branch's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) know that this agency has been given the power to create and enforce its own rules with fines and other penalties, and then to have administrative law judges (also representatives of the same Executive branch of government) hear any appeal. This same kind of power is possessed by the Internal Revenue Service and a host of other federal agencies. It is exactly the type of governmental oppression that our Founding Fathers were so determined to prevent.

Keeping Powers Separate

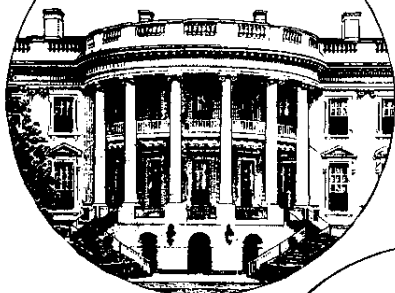
And so, the Constitution established three separate branches: Legislative, Executive and Judicial. But the Founding Fathers also gave us an intricate network of checks and balances so that each branch would be able to prevent the other branches from assuming more than their legitimate powers. Consider the following numerous examples of separating, balancing and checking the powers of government:

The Legislative branch makes the laws, but none can take effect without the signature of the head of the Executive branch, the President. The President has the power to veto what Congress has passed, but Congress can override his veto by a two-thirds majority in both of its Houses. Because Congress alone has the power to raise funds, it can restrain the Executive branch. Also, all bills for raising revenue must originate in the House of Representatives, whose members must go before the voters for reelection every second year.

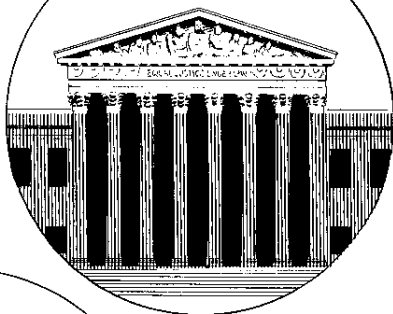
The President is designated as the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Services, but only Congress has the power to declare war. As the head of the Executive branch, the President can sign treaties, but they are to remain meaningless unless ratified by two-thirds of the Senate.

Judicial power is vested in the Supreme Court and lower federal courts. The Justices may not legislate, or enforce laws, or set government policy, but they may declare a particular law unconstitutional. All federal judges are appointed by the President, but they must be individually approved by the Senate. Federal judges, including Supreme Court Justices, are appointed to serve during good behavior, but Congress can abolish lower courts and limit the appellate jurisdiction of the Supreme Court. And the Congress may remove any federal judge from his post through impeach-

EXECUTIVE



JUDICIAL



LEGISLATIVE



The founders separated the powers of government into three parts, each with checks and balances on the powers of the other two.

ment. Yes, the powers of government were separated, checked and balanced — very capably.

In his “Farewell Address” to the American people, George Washington stressed the importance of keeping the powers of government separate. And he urged those who held office to

... confine themselves within their respective Constitutional spheres; avoiding the exercise of the powers of one department to encroach upon another. The spirit of encroachment tends to consolidate the powers of all the departments in one, and thus to create — whatever the form of government — a real despotism.

But while there was overwhelming agreement amongst our Founding Fathers about the need to keep the various powers of government separated, this important feature of a just government has been eroded to a frightening degree, and is under frontal attack today. In their zeal to have our government solve all problems, regulate men’s affairs, build

power for themselves, and turn our nation's sovereignty over to international authority, influential voices can be heard to condemn the doctrine of separation of powers.

Combining Powers

Williams College Professor James MacGregor Burns is such a zealot. In his 1984 book *The Power To Lead*, he boldly showed his hand with the following attack on the practice of separating the powers of government:

Let us face reality. The framers have simply been too shrewd for us. They have outwitted us. They have designed separate institutions that cannot be unified by mechanical linkages, frail bridges, tinkering. If we are to "turn the founders upside down" — to put together what they put asunder — we must directly confront the constitutional structure they erected.

What Professor Burns has called for is what John Dawson said would be the end of freedom, what James Madison called "the very definition of tyranny," and what Thomas Jefferson characterized as "evil." Burns surely does want to "turn the founders upside down," and to concentrate in one place the powers they wisely and carefully separated.

Far from just an obscure professor at a small college, Burns is the Co-Chairman of an organization called Project '87, so named because 1987 marks the 200th anniversary of the creation of the U.S. Constitution. This organization's Honorary Chairman is former Supreme Court Chief Justice Warren E. Burger. Mr. Burger leads the U.S. government's official Commission on the Bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution.

Appraising the Constitution

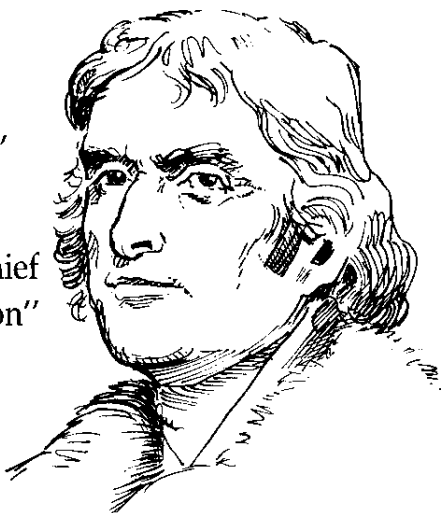
Project '87's stated purpose is to commemorate and appraise the Constitution. Its rather obvious appraisal is that the Constitution is extremely deficient. Though Burns himself has suggested numerous changes, the organization he leads claims not to take any positions on proposed amendments.

Project '87 publishes the quarterly *this Constitution* under a grant from the taxpayer-funded National Endowment for the Humanities. Additional funding is given to the organization by the Hewlett, Lilly, Rockefeller, Ford and Mellon foundations.

this Constitution carries articles about the history of the period surrounding the creation of the Constitution, reports on programs to celebrate the bicentennial, and contains a special section for use by students in their classrooms. But it is also full of promotion for such dangerous proposals as the already rejected Equal Rights Amendments, the Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing abortion, and other goals of the

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Thomas Jefferson



so-called feminist movement.

Also, rather than take its own stand on radical proposals to alter the Constitution, Project 87's publication gives wide coverage for the ideas of a related but separate group called the Committee on the Constitutional System. The CCS, as we shall detail, has offered many specific proposals that would dramatically alter the U.S. Constitution.

The three leaders of the CCS are former White House Counsel to President Carter Lloyd Cutler, former Secretary of the Treasury C. Douglas Dillon, and U.S. Senator from Kansas Nancy Kassebaum. As far back as 1980, Lloyd Cutler authored the article, "To Form A Government," in *Foreign Affairs* magazine, the journal of the world-government-promoting Council on Foreign Relations. His attitudes on that occasion have not changed.

Prominent among those who serve on the Board of Directors of the CCS is the same Professor James MacGregor Burns, the leader of Project '87. He is joined by about 50 others, many of whom are well-known arch-liberals and internationalists.

In January (of) 1987, the Committee on the Constitutional System published its 20-page report and recommendations. Here is what this

group recommends:

- (1) virtual abolition of the Constitution's separation of powers,
- (2) dramatic strengthening of the power of political parties,
- (3) making treaty ratification substantially easier, and
- (4) changing the American system to a parliamentary-style government.

This frontal attack on the vital separation of powers is very revealing in light of the stress placed upon it by so many of the Founding Fathers. The Committee on the Constitutional System wants to concentrate vast governmental power in only a few hands, hardly what America needs. As can be seen in its report, the committee recommends strengthening parties as agents of cohesion and accountability.

The danger here can be assessed by studying the systems in many nations of Western Europe and elsewhere. In these countries, England for example, political party leaders not only choose the candidates, but they then dictate how the elected representatives must vote. Any who oppose party discipline stand to lose the party's endorsement and any chance for renomination and reelection. Elected officials in these nations are almost totally beholden to party bosses, not to the electorate.

The CCS does not like primaries where voters choose their candidates. It wants to encourage — even to the point of compulsion — straight-ticket balloting where a voter may not choose the best candidates, only the best party slate. It wants public financing of elections, not even directly to a candidate, but to political parties that will in turn finance their selected candidates. And the CCS also wants party leaders to be able to name many of the delegates who participate in Presidential-nominating conventions.

All of this would, of course, distance elected officials from the voting public. While it would indeed create greater party and government cohesiveness, it would enable political party officials to force a single-mindedness among the Legislative and Executive branches instead of maintaining the separation that has traditionally kept government from running amok.

If all of this were to become reality, not even a courageous Senator or Representative would ever again oppose the will of a President who shares his party affiliation. Would a President dare veto legislation supported by his party's leaders? How would any control over the party leaders be exercised by the people? Would there be any possibility that either an

independent candidate, or an independent-thinking member of any political party could be nominated and elected? These are questions that the CCS does not want raised. But they are full of vital considerations.

Amending the Constitution

And there is more. Not only does the CCS want to concentrate vast new powers in the hands of unelected political bosses, it wants to weaken the separation of powers with specific amendments to the Constitution.

One amendment urged by the CCS calls for four-year terms for all House members and eight-year terms for senators with federal elections every fourth year. This would require the holding of all elections for the House and the Senate in conjunction with the Presidential elections. All of this, of course, would tie legislators more closely to the Executive branch's leader, the President, as well as make it much more difficult for the people to vote out of office a congressman or senator who is deemed unworthy.

Another amendment offered by the CCS would permit members of Congress to serve in the cabinet, something deliberately barred by the Constitution. This merging of the legislative and executive functions of the government would surely weaken the legislative branch and concentrate more power in the already enormously powerful executive branch.

Not content with radically altering our form of government, the internationalist fervor of the CCS shows in its proposal for another amendment that would relax the requirements for treaty ratification from the present two-thirds of the Senate (67%) to a simple majority of both Houses of Congress (51%), or to three-fifths of the Senate (60%). The CCS has specifically lamented the power of the Senate that has blocked ratification of various disarmament treaties, several United Nations-sponsored conventions and treaties, and a wide variety of other international trade, tax and environmental treaties. Reducing the requirements for treaty ratification would surely speed our nation toward interdependence under an all-powerful world government. And no American should want that.

Creating a Parliament

In many ways, these recommendations would create in America a parliamentary-style government, similar to what already exists in European nations. One striking feature of this type of government is that it favors implementation of the agenda of the political party in power, no matter what that agenda may contain. The CCS wants to end stalemates that characterize our government's operations and that it identifies as the inevitable product of separating powers. But, whenever freedom is to be maintained, stalemates in government are most often highly desirable.

Were we to adopt the parliamentary method, which is essentially what

the Committee on the Constitutional System wants, we would also see our President able to dissolve Congress and call for new elections if Congress impedes his wishes. Or, Congress could declare that it had no confidence in the President and force him to step down. We would find our senators and congressmen responsive, not to the voters who elected them, but to the party bosses who have great power over them.

These and other features of a parliamentary system would blur the important distinctions between the Legislative and Executive branches. A parliamentary system would indeed make government decision-making more efficient, but efficiency in government is not as important as limiting its power. It might be true that Mussolini made the trains run on time in fascist Italy, but the cost of his efficiency proved to be enormous. The most efficient governments on earth are ruthlessly efficient; they can be found in the Soviet Union and the Peoples Republic of China. It is worth noting that there is no separation of powers in these tyrannies.

What America needs is just the opposite of a dilution of the separation of powers that our Founding Fathers gave us. And we do not need conversion of our government to a parliamentary system. The problems we have as a nation are almost exclusively the result of violating the Constitution in the first place. Changing it is not what is needed. Instead, we should return to the Constitution and cancel many of the programs and policies already violating its precepts. And each of the separate branches, especially the Legislative branch, should reassert its constitutional prerogatives, many of which other branches have usurped.

The Constitution Ignored

The Committee on the Constitutional System complains about our nation's mounting national debt. Yes, we have a huge federal deficit that threatens our future, but most of it has been accumulated because of federal programs that the framers of the Constitution never envisioned because they had taken great pains to forbid them. These programs should be abolished.

Let us be specific: The Department of Agriculture has regulated many farmers out of business and now spends \$25 billion per year in subsidies. Where in the Constitution is there any justification for federal presence in agriculture?

The Department of Energy inhibits energy production, keeps our nation dependent on foreign suppliers, and produces no oil, coal, gas, or electricity, while costing over \$10 billion per year. There is no place for an Energy Department in the U.S. Constitution either.

The Department of Education spends over \$15 billion dollars each year, and educational quality declines proportionately with each new increase

in funding. The federal government is nowhere empowered by the Constitution to have any role in the field of education.

No one would ever suggest that federal welfare and medical programs should be terminated overnight. But they should never have been started. Each federal program designed to provide something at taxpayer expense to help the "needy" multiplies a thousand times the number of "needy" who demand the same benefits. These programs should be humanely and carefully phased out of existence. If they are not, productive America that pays all the taxes will soon grind to a screeching halt.

Poverty warriors and self-appointed spokesmen for "the needy" have all the evidence they need to arrive at this conclusion in Charles Murray's important book, *Losing Ground*. At one time an eager advocate of government welfare programs, Murray saw after years of working in the system that huge sums of money had actually produced an effect exactly opposite what he had expected. The war against poverty had been losing ground every year, as the number of those in poverty increased steadily actually as a direct consequence of the poverty programs.

And these are only some of the federal programs that are violating our Constitution, concentrating vast powers in government's hands, and bankrupting this nation. Most of our political leaders have no intention of putting an end to these agencies, bureaus, and departments. They would be perfectly happy to see constitutional limitations on their assumed powers removed for good. They care little about freedom but a great deal about directing our lives, spending our earnings, and transferring our nation's sovereignty. All of which means that the job of protecting America is up to her people.

Rather than standing by and watching the celebration of our Constitution's 200th anniversary become the occasion for weakening and even destroying its limitations on government power, Americans ought to set a goal of restoring the clear intention of its framers — the restriction of government to only those powers specifically granted in its pages.

And rather than defer to internationalists who want to destroy our nation's independence with treaties, Americans should demand that our nation withdraw from the United Nations and all of its subsidiaries. Our presence in these sovereignty-compromising associations costs us greatly in dollars, but even more in the ability to function as a free and independent nation.

Restore the Constitution

Our goal as Americans should be full restoration of the Constitution by the year 2000. Let's end the entangling alliances that George Washington warned about in his Farewell Address. Let's roll back the un-

Constitutional powers and abolish the un-Constitutional agencies that are destroying America.

Something else threatens the American system. There is no need for a constitutional convention; there is a need instead for citizen awareness that will force elected and appointed officials to abide fully by their oaths to support and defend the Constitution we already have.

In fact, a constitutional convention has always been looked upon as a dangerous vehicle that could lead to great harm. Even though Article V of the Constitution allows for the creation of such a convention, there has never been one during the 200 years of the Constitution's existence. The reason? The Constitutional Convention of 1787 that was called for the purpose of revising the Articles of Confederation exceeded its mandate and abolished what it was merely supposed to revise. Out of that convention came our present Constitution. But, ever since 1787, there has been a judicious reluctance to give any new constitutional convention the opportunity to destroy what we were fortunate enough to get in 1787. Hence, amendments have always been added through the other prescribed method, the one that calls for approval by two-thirds of each House of Congress and then ratification by the legislatures of three-fourths of the states. A constitutional convention is a Pandora's Box that Americans for 200 years have avoided opening.

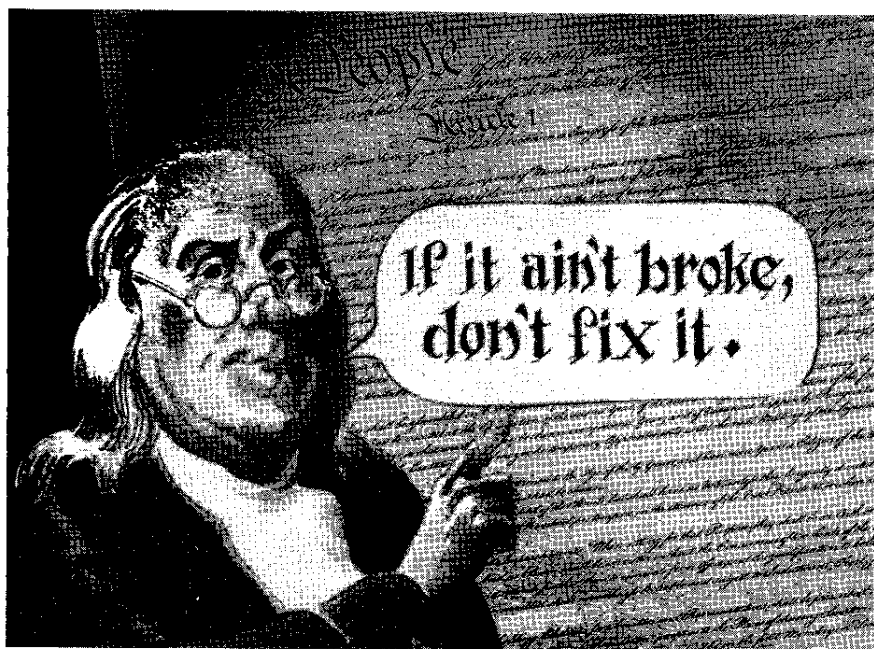
The simple truth is that the Constitution does not need any of the amendments offered by the Committee on the Constitutional System. What it needs instead is adherence.

The only change that would improve the Constitution is a few amendments to remove several existing amendments that cling like huge barnacles to our ship of state. One especially harmful example is the 1913 amendment calling for the income tax championed by Karl Marx in the Communist Manifesto. Get rid of the income tax? Yes, indeed.

If the federal government could finance its needs prior to 1913 without an income tax, it obviously had other means of raising needed revenue. And if it could function then without the federal government in everyone's pocket, it can do so now. The problem is that government has exceeded its boundaries and it has broken many of the chains imposed on it by the Constitution. That its cost has grown enormously should come as no surprise.

America at a Crossroads

America is at a crossroads. Interest in the Constitution spurred by the celebration of its 200th anniversary should lead many Americans to an awareness that its value lies chiefly in its restriction on the power of government. Such an understanding, if widespread enough, will return



our nation to the road marked freedom, productivity, and independence.

But, as we have shown, there are powerful forces at work plotting to enlarge already deep cracks in the constitutional wall our Founding Fathers gave us. They are determined to keep Americans from understanding the magnificent system given us 200 years ago. And they plan to expand government's power in response to problems they and like-minded liberals and internationalists created in the first place. The road that these individuals would take us down is labelled big government, interdependence, and tyranny.

Yes, our nation has come to a crossroads. Which way we shall turn shall ultimately be decided by the people who live in this greatest of all nations. It is time for Americans who love liberty to chose the road marked freedom. Commit some of your time, energy and resources to reawakening fellow Americans to their marvelous heritage, as well as to the threat facing it. The men who gave us America deserve to be repaid by your effort today. And the children of today, as well as those of a million tomorrows, are relying on us to keep government chained and freedom flourishing.

Whether or not America keeps faith with its magnificent past is up to you. You know how fortunate we are to be Americans. And you know that

Constitutional powers and abolish the un-Constitutional agencies that are destroying America.

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