



"The United States Constitution was designed for an agrarian society."

"The President is hobbled in his task of leading the American people to consensus and concerted action by the restrictions of power imposed on him by a constitutional system designed for an eighteenth century agrarian society far removed from the centers of world power."¹

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WHAT IS MEANT by "consensus" in this context? It means the shaping of a unified, common collective by Executive action in order that the nation can speak with one voice—the voice of the President. This project, if successful, would put an end to freedom of speech and freedom of the press, for obviously there can be no nation-wide "consensus" when everyone is free to advance his own opinions.

What is meant by "concerted action" in this context? It means, among other things, that the U.S.A. shall act as a disciplined body under centralized direction. Economically, the President would determine where, in the markets of the world, our largess would be bestowed and withheld and under what conditions. This would substitute a single, arbitrary exchange mechanism for untold millions of exchanges. How can there be a "concerted action" of a whole nation when anyone is free to buy and sell whatever and wherever and to whomever he chooses? This would spell an end to what is left of the free market in this country. Further, it would sound the death knell to private property, for an individual must be in control of a good or a service before he can be said to own it. The call for "concerted action" is the call for all-out federal control.

The best instance of "consensus" and "concerted action" among the nations of the world today is Russia. There the Premier of the Supreme Soviet is not "hobbled in his task of leading the . . . people to consensus and concerted action by the restrictions of a constitutional system designed for an eighteenth century agrarian society." In Russia—still substantially agrarian²—both the consensus and the action are whatever Premier Khrushchev dictates. Freedom of choice as to how one employs himself, what he does with the fruits of his own labor, and what and with whom he exchanges is not for each one to decide; it is a decision of *THE ONE!* There, indeed, is consensus and concerted action.

The Constitution was not designed for an agrarian society. Rather, it was designed by those who lived in an

agrarian society for the purpose of securing individual justice and individual rights regardless of technological changes. The Constitution more severely limited the scope and powers of government than had ever before been the case, and this curbing of coercive measures largely explains why our eighteenth century agrarian economy developed into today's industrial economy.³ Limiting political power to the inhibition and the penalizing of fraud, violence, misrepresentation, and predation—in short, to the invoking of a common justice—left no organized force standing against the release of creative energy. As a result, creative human energy was released here on an unprecedented scale and, thus, our industrial economy.

Asking for arbitrary political power here at home as a means of combating arbitrary political power elsewhere is not commended by the historical record. In industrial or market competition it is the free nation which excels. No nation ever came close to approaching our position in international competition. Only recently, as arbitrary controls increase, are we finding it more difficult to compete.

Militarily, the record is similar. History books, for the most part, are accounts of authoritarianism, one authoritarian battling another authoritarian. Then came the freest nation of all time—authoritarianism held in check by the Constitution. A free people became an economically strong people. An economically strong and thus a versatile people have had a record from Bunker Hill onward of making the authoritarians hand over their swords.

The Constitution was definitely and specifically designed to hobble all people who are so foolish as to think themselves capable of leading others by compulsion. It so functions today to an extent exasperating to the authoritarians—which is why they want to get rid of it. Blessings on the agrarians who designed it. Let us hope we have sense enough, not only to keep what we have left of it, but to restore to it the restrictions against incompetence which already have been taken from it.

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¹From a pre-recorded speech by Senator Fulbright to the Cubberly Conference on Education, Stanford University, July 28, 1961.

²See "The Hard Core of the Farm Problem" by Dr. Karl Brandt. *The Freeman*, April 1961, p. 31.

³There are 46 specific restraints against governmental action in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.