

## **"1776 and 1984"**

A speech by John Hospers

### **Part I**

In 1776 there was a libertarian revolution in America.

It occurred under an unusual concatenation of circumstances. Intelligent and dedicated men, educated in classics and history, imbued with ideals of freedom because they all knew tyranny first-hand, gathered together to form a new nation. The constitution they devised was unique in history.

Although it provided for protection against individuals doing violence to one another, it provided primarily for protection against the abuses of government itself. Its main aim was to check the violation of the rights of citizens by their government. The tragedy of history, they knew, was that governments, which were supposed to protect human beings from violations of their rights, turned out to be the chief violators of rights--taxing, plundering, and enslaving. It was to be a severely limited government. Bind the government with the chains of the Constitution.

When these men talked about freedom, they meant freedom from oppression, freedom from tyranny, freedom of speech and peaceable assembly, freedom of the press, freedom from confiscation of property, freedom from arbitrary search. They wanted to make the decisions governing their own lives, rather than have officials in government make those decisions for them; they wanted their actions to result from their own choices, not from the choices of others. They wanted to institute a republic (not a democracy) whereby each person would be free to do anything except interfere with the equal freedom of others. And this, after all, is the essence of libertarianism.

It was these political freedoms that they had in mind in developing an American Constitution. They did not primarily have in mind economic freedom, the freedom of production and trade. Nevertheless, with government explicitly restricted in what it could do, it was not permitted to enact measures to prevent enterprising people from improving their own lot; and this they proceeded to do with such speed that within a century America was already the wealthiest nation in the world. This did not result from its supply of natural resources - many other nations, still mired in poverty had far

more - it resulted from the release of human energy, which freedom made possible.

At the beginning, the standard of living in America, as everywhere else in the world, was unimaginably low by today's standards. George Washington never heard of calories or vitamins, he lived on meats and starches through every winter. He never saw a glass of orange juice, his diet was so deficient that he lost his hair and teeth at an early age. His clothes were uncomfortable and unhygienic. He traveled on foot, on horseback, or in a springless carriage. His house had no toilet or bathtub, no furnace or heating stove, no light except sun and candles. What was his standard of living? It was so high that for a hundred years not one American in ten thousand aspired to it.

The Revolution began here, in living conditions hardly changed since Nebuchadnezzar reined. Two centuries ago, here in this country, men carried men on their shoulders, as coolies still do in China. American women still cooked over open fires, as women had cooked since before history began, and as more than two thirds of the women on this earth are still cooking.

In 1850 in New York state every woman made her household's soap and candles. Oil was always in this earth; men discovered it when Babylon was young; Romans knew it and saw it burning; no European had ever made kerosene. American women still spun thread and wove cloth with the spindle and the loom that were older than Egypt. Older than Egypt, the water-wheel and the millstone still ground the grain that American farms still cut with the knife and threshed with the flail that are as old as history. In one century, three generations, human energy has created an entirely new world.

What did the new-found freedom achieve? More than two thousand years ago, the Greeks knew the principle of the steam engine, but they lacked the technology to develop it. In Germany in 1704 a steamboat ran on the river Elbe, but the boatmen saw it as a threat to their livelihood, and they burned it; the inventor died in exile. So steamboats were developed in England, but there too they were under government control. The British government controlled their manufacture, sale, and use. The controls were sufficiently severe to make the manufacture unprofitable and the future uncertain. So it fell to America to develop the steam engine, and that is where it was done. Of course, the same attempts were made in America as elsewhere. Operators of sailing ships

in New England demanded government protection against this new intruder, which would soon destroy their sailing-ship industry.

But there was a difference. In America any laws to control the steamships and protect the sailing ships were unconstitutional. Soon steamships were going up and down the Hudson, then the Great Lakes, and finally the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers. Then they started to cross the Atlantic. They were fast, cheap, efficient-- and they captured the world's sea trade. Soon steamships were found in virtually every world port, carrying cargo faster and more reliably than any sailing ship had ever done. The uncontrolled American economy had achieved this. The controlled British economy had produced inferior ships. England was desperate. Parliament debated the issue hotly; it was now a matter of survival. "What had created the clipper ships? Not the American Government. Not protection, but lack of protection. What made the British marine second-rate? Safety, shelter, protection under the British Navigation Acts. In 1849 the British Government repealed the Navigation Acts and opened British ports to the world." (Lane, *The Discovery of Freedom*, p. 238.)

"American clipper ships opened the British ports to free trade. Half a century of American smuggling and rebellion and costly ineffectual blockades, seven years of war in America, and the loss of the thirteen colonies; and all the sound and sensible arguments of English liberals and economists, could not break down the British planned economy. American clipper ships did it.

"They were the final blow that brought down that whole planned structure. The great English reform movement of the 19th century consisted wholly in repealing laws. There was nothing constructive in it; it was wholly destructive. It was a destruction of Government's interference with human affairs, a destruction of the so-called "protection" that is actually a restriction of the exercise of natural human rights.

"In that mid-19th-century period of the greatest individual freedom that Englishmen have ever known, they made the prosperity and power of the British Empire during Victoria's long and peaceful reign.

"And to that freedom, and prosperity, and power, and peace; the American clipper ship contributed more than any other one thing." (Lane, *The Discovery of Freedom*; p. 239.)

America's political freedom made possible its economic freedom, and the economic freedom made possible a prosperity never before seen on this earth. In the years 1870-1890 the American standard of living doubled: that is, you could obtain twice as much for a dollar in 1890 as in 1870. And even so, the material standard of living was low by today's standards.

In 1900 there was a \$40-a-month mechanic, working 10 hours a day, six days a week, tinkering nights and Sundays in the woodshed behind his little rented house--no bathtub, no running water, no light but a kerosene lamp--in a far, cheap suburb of Detroit. Even Henry Ford did not imagine that his invention would change the face of the world.

There were no cars, no highways, no radios or planes, no movies, no tall buildings, no electric lights, no toothpaste, not many toothbrushes, no soda fountains, no bottled soft drinks, no hot-dog stands, no high schools, no low shoes, no safety razors or shaving cream, no green vegetables in the winter, and none in cans, no bakers' bread or cakes or doughnuts, no dime stores, no supermarkets. An orange was a Christmas treat, in prosperous families. There was no central heating, and only the very prosperous had bathtubs; they

were tin or zinc, encased in mahogany in the homes of the very rich. The rich too, had gaslights.

But the automobile changed all of American life, and life all over the world. The era of covered wagons and horses and buggies was over. The civilization that we know today, which we all take for granted, was in progress.

But when Mrs. Lane described this progress, she issued a warning: "Do you assume that this new world cannot vanish? This world that your grandfather could not imagine and that your children now take for granted. do you think that your grandchildren must surely inherit it?

"Do you imagine that the planes cannot be grounded, the factories close, the radio be silent and the telephone dead and the cars rust and the trains stop? Do you suppose that darkness and cold and hunger and disease, that have never before been so defeated and that are now defeated only on this small part of the earth, can never again break in upon all human beings? Do not be so short-sighted.

"The energies of living individuals must constantly create these defenses of human life and these extensions of human powers.

"Relinquish the free use of individual energies, and these defenses must vanish as the Roman galleys vanished. This whole modern world must disappear completely. Every effect ceases when its cause no longer operates.

"This whole modern civilization, that is not yet a century old, that is not yet established on any large part of the earth, can cease to exist.

"It must cease to exist, if individual Americans forget the fact of individual liberty, and abandon the exercise of individual self-control and individual responsibility that creates this civilization.

"Young Americans who had known nothing but this new world, naturally take it for granted. They see a great deal that is wrong in it; they can very easily imagine a better world. So can any honest person. The eternal hope of humankind is in the eternal human desire to make this world better than it is.

"But when they imagine that a control can exist which can be used over individuals to make a better world according to someone's plan, they are falling into an ancient delusion--a delusion from which most persons on this earth have never wakened."

## **Part II**

And now it is 1984. We are approaching the end of the 20th century. We are told that the 20th century has been the era, not of individualism, but of collectivism; not of capitalism, but of socialism; not of peace, but of war and terrorism; not of individual freedom, but of government control; not of free traders on a free market, but of concentration camps and torture chambers.

We live in the Orwellian century, and indeed in the Orwellian year. How accurate was Orwell's vision? To what extent is the world today as Orwell envisioned it?

Orwell was not a theorist as much as he was an opponent of lies, hypocrisy and tyranny. In the 1930s when a publisher asked him to go to the north of England and report on the plight of factory workers unemployed in the Depression, he went, and he became a socialist. He knew nothing of economics; he knew nothing about the

causes of depressions; but he reported with knife-edge clarity what he saw.

When he joined the rebels in the Spanish Civil War to fight Franco, he soon found that the Russian communists had taken hold of it; and the communists didn't want the independent workers' unions that Orwell championed. The communists regarded these deviants from these views as more dangerous enemies than Franco's soldiers were. They placed them in military positions from which they knew they would never return. They killed them as if they, who had come to help, were the enemy. Orwell saw now that they were tyrants, as ruthless as the ones he was fighting against. Both sides were alike in wanting absolute power, and using it to stamp out the individual.

Orwell felt betrayed; recovering in a hospital from a throat wound, he barely escaped from Spain with his life. He may never have learned that the same Russian soldiers he saw in Spain were never permitted to return to their homes. On one pretext or another, Stalin had them all shot on their return; after all, they could not be permitted to tell their fellow Russians how much better things were in the world outside--that people actu-

ally had watches, and more than one suit of clothes, even in a poor country like Spain.

Orwell was not as disillusioned about the left as about the right. His countrymen were not; and London's West End literary critics spurned and hated him for exposing the dictatorships of the left to which they were now turning their allegiance. Orwell saw them both as ruthless tyrannies. He had seen the future, and it worked too well. All men were equal, of course--sometimes equal in pay, but never equal in power: some were more equal than others. Out of his experiences in Spain came Orwell's *Animal Farm*. More than a dozen publishers rejected it because of its obvious parody of Soviet slogans before it was finally accepted. After all, the Soviets were now Britain's allies in the war. But to Orwell this made no difference: the truth was still the truth.

How did the trend toward 1984 begin? In the United States, along with most Western nations, it all began innocently from the best of motives. Especially after the depression, of whose causes they had no comprehension at all, the voters have wanted more and more things from the government, without a price tag attached.

The first of these historically was education; everyone in the United States can receive at least 12 years of free education. The motive, of educating the youth, was doubtless a noble one; yet the public schools today are turning out millions of functional illiterates, and by every comparison made, the private schools that still exist are doing a far better job.

Then Americans wanted to be insured against indigence in old age; hence, arose Social Security. Though this system is now virtually bankrupt, and the only way to keep the government's promise to take care of people in their old age is to tax the earnings of the younger generation more and more each year. The money originally put in has long since been spent. It is as if you lent Jones money on his promise to return it when you needed it, plus interest, but when you needed it, it turned out that he had squandered it all, and now he has to steal to get it back.

Then people asked to be insured against unemployment, so unemployment insurance came to be. They wanted to be insured against medical catastrophes, so Medicare was born; it is costing billions of dollars every year, including the treatment of people with imaginary illnesses ("after all, it's free") and physicians padding

bills and charging them to the government. The same with welfare, then food stamps--both programs full of graft and brimming with freeloaders, yet it would cost more to weed out the cheaters than it would to continue as before.

But of course, someone has to pay for all these benefits. Taxes grew higher and higher, but even very high taxes were not enough to pay for the programs, so a national deficit was born. It grew and grew, and continues to grow.

(Buckley, National Review, Feb. 10, 1984): "Along came a Republican president who said the tax structure was causing positive damage." (It was causing businesses to go bankrupt from the high taxes and regulations.) "He said that people were being taxed so heavily as to jeopardize their productivity. So he proposed to cut down taxes, and to cut down the insurance. Congress agreed to cut down taxes, but not to cut down insurance; so the deficit deepened.

"Meanwhile, the president said that we had neglected the first responsibility of government, namely defense. This too, he said, was a form of insurance: just as we want to insure against indigent old age, so we want to

insure against the loss of our liberties. The Democratic opposition went along, but rather sulkily, and it proposed higher taxes to pay for defense insurance." But higher taxes were very unpopular, so they talked about "taxing the rich." But that wouldn't do, as Sir Stafford Cripps pointed out to Britons in the late 1940s. If you taxed every millionaire 100 percent of his income, it wouldn't be enough to run the government for one day out of the year. So the people will have to tax themselves more, or else do with less insurance. Meanwhile, the high taxes "harden the productive arteries," and there is less employment to be found and more people to go on welfare, increasing the tax burden still further.

That is the situation we are in now. Each of these seemingly innocent steps along the way has catapulted us into 1984.

The U.S. has a national debt of 10 trillion dollars, enough dollars that the pile would extend from the earth to the moon. The interest on that debt will soon be the largest single expenditure of the government. The entitlement programs like Social Security and Medicare, have burgeoned beyond all predictions, and no one knows where the money will come from to sustain them for more than a few years. A huge bureaucracy in Washington controls the

conditions under which businesses can be run, with so heavy a hand that countless small businesses each year are forced into bankruptcy, with the result that new products don't reach the market and the employees are laid off and go on welfare. Many businesses have to spend 30% or more of their employee time doing useless paper work for the government.

The honest businessman who is trying to survive amidst the taxes and regulations is having an ever harder time of it; meanwhile the dishonest businessman, who gets government subsidies for his business, prospers, and even more so the super-big businessman who controls the government from behind the scenes, using government to force out the competitive newcomers.

There is less and less incentive for the honest businessman to exert his efforts; if he succeeds against all odds, half his earnings are confiscated by the government. And thus production, on which everyone's welfare depends, languishes; and more and more special groups arise to steal money from the government cookie-jar, while fewer and fewer people are available to put the money in. And, thus, the first group can outvote the second at the polls. The U.S. has become a semi-socialist state.

Yet if there is any lesson of the 20th century, it is that socialism doesn't work. It doesn't motivate people; it discourages productivity; it encourages huge debts and tremendous inefficiency in any economy that adopts it. Consider Mexico, which is practically floating on seas of oil--enough even to cancel out Mexico's multi-billion-dollar debt, if it were properly handled. But Mexico will not permit private ownership of oil lands; that would encourage large profits, and of course that would be immoral. No, the Mexican government itself owns the oil, and there is such inefficiency and waste and corruption in the whole governmental chain of command that Mexico is actually losing money on the oil. You'd think it would be impossible that a nation endowed with such a resource would be unable to lose money on it, but they've done it--quite an accomplishment.

Or consider the so-called developing nations of central Africa. One after another of them, after shucking off their colonial masters, has become a socialist dictatorship, with enormous wealth in the hands of a few at the seat of government and nothing but widespread poverty and misery among the masses. American loans haven't helped; they have simply lined the pockets of politicians and kept the dictatorships afloat. The International Monetary Fund hasn't helped; it has only

encouraged the same profligacy and resulted in the same widespread poverty. Wherever a socialist economy has emerged, it has resulted in misallocation of resources, centralized control of the economy, graft and corruption, poverty and starvation. Certainly no lesson of history could be clearer than this--as if it were not already clear from the history of the Soviet Union.

Most of the poverty-stricken masses of Africa and Asia don't know why they are poor; they know nothing of economics, nothing about trade or loans or international relations. But those who do are increasingly aware of the destructive effects of socialism wherever it is in operation. Their politicians may still have to appeal to the popularity of government handouts for their own people; in democracies they have to do this to get reelected. But that socialist economies don't work, is certainly well known where they exist. As Petr Beckmann says, there are no longer communists in the East; there are only officials holding on to the perquisites of power enforced by a ruthless police state. The only dedicated communists are in the West, those who still believe, as many Americans did in the 1930s, that only a fully socialist government was a "true brotherhood of man" and looked to the Soviet Union as a realization of that ideal.

That is the economic background to 1984, the lesson is that when you place more powers in the hands of government, it is going to use those powers; and that to entrust powers to the State is as rational as to entrust the fox to guard the henhouse. Orwell, who never renounced his socialism, apparently never learned that simple economic lesson. He thought you could put the powers of enforced equalization of income in the hands of the State and then expect those powers to remain within strict limits. He described vividly the long-term consequences of such policies, but he did not eschew the policies that led to these consequences. Yet had he known the inevitability of this causal chain of events, he should not have been surprised.

Still, the world as a whole is different from Orwell's 1984. The West is better; the East is worse.

In the West the press is still relatively free. I say relatively; papers can still print what they want that isn't libelous or condemned as obscene, but often these papers are controlled by the very men behind the scenes who also manipulated the election of presidents and congressmen. The result is that much of the news that is of the most vital importance never reaches us.

Nor does government control all industry. It takes the cream of the profits of any business that makes them, and cripples them with regulations, so that productivity doesn't expand as it would by leaps and bounds with modern technology; bureaucracies take positive delight in controlling the producers, and seeing yet another capitalist bite the dust. Even so, there are still many rags-to-riches stories coming true in the United States and to a lesser extent in the welfare states of Europe.

The State has achieved the almost total capitulation of the educational establishment. Educators by and large believe they can make it better under government than in the marketplace. About half the educators teach socialism to their classes; and one can get a Ph.D. in economics in most American universities without ever having heard of Von Mises. Educators vie with one another for government grants, no matter how useless and how often the same research has been done before. They don't want to be controlled in what they teach, but they don't mind at all if the businessmen on whose surplus they depend are totally shackled in their enterprises. Courses in social philosophy discuss how world's goods should be distributed, but seldom concern themselves with how they are to continue to be produced-- production is taken for

granted. Yet if Orwell's 1984 does come to America, at the first sign of dissidence these intellectuals would be the first people to be shot.

The result of such education is that effect of reading Orwell's 1984 is much less than it used to be, and much less than one would think it ought to be. Many of them have been taught that America should be a socialist nation, that businessmen are all exploiters, that those who earn a living should sacrifice enough of it to those who don't so that the income of the two groups is the same. They think it quite all right for the government to control the economy, indeed they typically agitate for more controls, not less. Much of what they read in Orwell they find familiar; it's here already, and it doesn't shock them.

As to the continuing low-scale wars sapping the nations, they believe we're in that already; they're used to it. As to the torture and murder, they don't like that part of course, but they doubt that in the real world much of it really went on; it has no sharp edge for them. They never lived through World War 2; they have scarcely heard of Stalin; they have never read anything about the Soviet regime; if you tell them about it, they think it's propaganda. They have never read

Solzhenitsyn; they have scarcely heard of him, and of course their teachers never mention him, for he is an embarrassment to them: what he reveals pricks too many holes in the collectivist views to which they are already committed. And of course the students don't read Solzhenitsyn on their own; the products of the television generation don't read anything on their own.

Nevertheless, here are some of the facts, compared with which even the worst of the fictitious situations in Orwell's world are relatively mild.

The methods of Stalin were crude, but effective. He didn't have to retrain people for the crimes he wanted committed, he just took the dregs of humanity, the people in prisons who loved killing, and promised them triple the wages they'd get anywhere else for just arresting people and torturing them in prison cells, the very thing they most enjoyed doing anyway.

Anton Antonov-Ovseyenko writes in his recent book *The Time of Stalin*: "Stalin selected hardened thugs and scoundrels who were born sadists but who, for all that, were as devoted to their benefactor as only a member of an outlaw gang can be toward his Chief. All the dregs of society rose to the surface. An investigator earned a

bonus of two thousand rubles for each confession. Every petty thief, sadist, or climber was free to go at it as hard as he liked." (pp. 150,157) During the war, when the Nazis marched into Soviet territory, even they were appalled at what they found "amongst the day-to-day equipment of the Soviet state." Nicolai Tolstoy writes, "instruments to break the bones of shins and arms, to squeeze testicles, to pierce the soles of feet and pull off the nails and skin from toes, to squeeze the main nose ligament until the victim bleeds profusely, etc. Recovered corpses resembled cuts of meat displayed on a butcher's slab. What prisoners had undergone was indescribable, even by the survivors. As a Pole in the NKVD prison recalled, 'The cries we heard were not always even recognizably human...'" (p. 219).

Whenever the Soviets conquered other nations, the same techniques were used. "Anyone who was suspected of harboring dissident acts or even thoughts (says Tolstoy in *Stalin's Secret War*) were tied to trees... Some had their eyes slowly gouged out. Others were scalped and had their brains squeezed out of their skulls. Men had their tongues torn out, their sides and legs slowly cut open, or had bayonets thrust into their mouths and down their throats." The same can be expected of any nation

that the Soviets may conquer in the future. It exceeds anything envisaged in Orwell's 1984.

The same methods continue today:

According to a series of articles in the Wall Street Journal (April 23 to May 10, 1984), "The Soviets are using recombinant DNA for military purposes... In at least one case, Soviet scientists were attempting to combine the venom-producing genes from cobras with ordinary viruses and bacteria; such an organism would infect the body and surreptitiously produce paralytic cobra neurotoxin." The Soviets also dropped poisonous gases called "yellow rain" on towns and villages in Laos, Cambodia, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

In 1979 an explosion at a biological-weapons facility in Sverdlovsk released anthrax spores into the atmosphere, killing about 1000 soldiers and civilians. And the CIA has detected the Soviets conducting tests with a re-entry vehicle designed to tumble when reentering the earth's atmosphere; the tumbling is to spray chemical warfare contents of the re-entry body over wide areas as the weapon nears the surface of the target.

The Soviets can only control people by the Orwellian methods of propaganda and brute force; once this is

gone, there will be massive defections. This is the Achilles' heel of the Soviet regime, and their rulers know it. In Sir John Hackett's *History of World War III* this is what finally defeats them.

Americans have taken comfort in the knowledge of the Soviet Union's Achilles' heel--the fact that unless tightly controlled their people will rebel against them by the millions. In Hackett's novel, *The History of World War III*, this is what happens: the Soviets invade Western Europe, but when one of their cities is bombed, the ensuing bureaucratic chaos is so great that the Ukranians, Uzbeks, and other oppressed peoples who have long wanted to be out from under the Russian heel take the occasion to form independent republics of their own, and that is the end of the Soviet Union as a unified power.

The Soviets, of course, know this very well. That is why, for example, (p. 101, Suvurov, *Inside the Soviet Army*) they invaded Hungary and Czechoslovakia instead of Romania. Romania has been far from submissive; it has good relations with Israel and China; it has thumbed its nose at the Soviet Union many times, yet there has been no retaliation as in the other cases.

Why? Because, unlike Hungary and Czechoslovakia before the take-over, Romania presented no threat. "Her existence does not threaten the foundations of communism. It has a cult of a supreme and infallible leader; it has psychiatric prisons and watch towers along its frontiers." No Soviet subject dreams of escaping to Romania. So it is left alone. But the other nations, to which Soviets might defect, represent for the Soviet government a contagious disease which must be stamped out.

That is why Soviet military strategy is quite different from the way it is conceived in the West. The popular opinion in the West is that any war would start slowly, with conventional forces, and only turn nuclear as a last resort, after all else had failed. According to Suvurov, the Soviet general command thinks this theory so silly that they wondered whether the West was airing it only for purposes of deception or diversion. When they realized that the West took this view seriously, they were unbelieving but delighted.

The actual Soviet tactic is quite different. Writes Suvurov: "The turning point (p. 162) must be reached within the first few minutes... The more terrible the weapon your opponent may use, the more decisively you

must attack him, and the more quickly you must finish him off. You can only prevent your enemy from using his axe if you use your own first. ... What alternative could there be? In peacetime Soviet soldiers desert to the West by the hundreds, their sailors jump off ships in Western ports, their pilots try to break through the West's anti-aircraft defenses in their aircraft. Even in peacetime, the problems involved in keeping the population in chains are almost insoluble. The problems are already acute when only a few thousand of the most trusted Soviet citizens have even a theoretical chance of escaping. In wartime tens of millions of soldiers would have an opportunity to desert - and they would take it. To prevent this, every soldier must realize quite clearly that from the very first moments of a war, there is no sanctuary for him at the other side of the nuclear desert. Otherwise the whole communist house of cards will collapse."

According to Suvurov, the first stage would be an initial nuclear strike lasting for half an hour by all the rocket formations that can be used. The second stage would last less than two hours: a mass air attack of all the fronts by all the long-range air force units carried out in a series of waves. The third stage, half an hour, will be more rocket launchers, now moved up from rear

areas. The enemy will try to hunt out and destroy all Soviet rocket launchers; so each of these should inflict the maximum damage on the enemy before this happens. The aim is to destroy all the targets that survived a first and second stage. The fourth stage, lasting 10-20 days, consists of operations by tank armies, attacking the enemy's defenses at every point where a breakthrough has been achieved.

These are the words of a high-ranking Soviet officer who has defected to the West; he has been in the inner circles and is in a position to know. Unfortunately modern war confers a tremendous advantage on the side that strikes first; and if he strikes hard, that may be the end, without the attacked nations having a chance to respond. It is this consideration which ought to unite libertarians in insisting on an effective defense, even though it is a government defense. To turn down the very concept of defense just because at this historical time it is government defense seems to me nothing less than suicidal.

And yet there are libertarians who favor unilateral disarmament as if a totalitarian power, inspired by our noble example, would also lay down its arms. Some believe it wouldn't but it does matter. Welfare statist

hide their heads in the sand, wishfully thinking that if only the U.S. spent its money on social programs rather than arms, the whole problem would somehow go away. If only we disarm, peace must come. But what if the other side doesn't disarm? Blank-out. This is the Achilles' heel of the libertarian party.

It's not that they deny one's right to self-defense; it's that they disapprove of government defense. But at the moment government defense is the only game in town. We may not like this, but it's a fact. There is no other option at the present moment, if we are to be defended against bombs and missiles. If libertarians wait until we have a non-governmental defense system or systems, international danger may well be upon us and any aggressor will seize the opportunity to strike, and that will mean either death or slavery, or probably both. I don't think that a libertarian credo demands self-immolation as the price of adhering to principle. Anyway, the fundamental principle of all libertarianism is not even the non-initiation of force; behind that lies the even more fundamental principle, the value of individual human life; and any strategy that would unnecessarily risk the destruction of a nation or a continent in the name of a totally voluntaristic principle would be violating that even more fundamental principle.

All actions must be considered in context; and the present context in international affairs prominently includes governments. The fact is that there is a barbarous world out there, and there are people with enormous power who envy our prosperity and our liberty and would take almost any risks to keep us from enjoying them. We cannot simply wish this away.

### **Part III**

Yet it is probable that the Orwellian vision of the world will never be completed. A world of governments headed by ruthless and despotic men, a world of rebellious subject populations who had to be kept in line through terror - that was a familiar world to Orwell. Big Brother controls through fear, and through constant intrusion - such as watching television eyes in every home. It was the world of indoctrination and coercion.

But what if despots need not have rebellious populations? What if people can be conditioned through drugs, surgery, selective breeding, and recombinant DNA, to be passive vessels of Big Brother? Not rebelling against him but being fully cooperative with him, either through early conditioning or (more promisingly) through selective breeding so as to eliminate the active and indepen-

dent minds who are the greatest potential for rebellion among his subjects. Then the threat to Big Brother would evaporate and methods of torture and terror would no longer be necessary.

If a world totalitarian state would come to pass, it will not be on the Orwell model. It will be, instead, on the model of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. Huxley's Controller "saw that total control should start at conception. In hatcheries made possible by reproductive biology, embryos were molded to order by genetic means to become humans of certain types. The level of intelligence was controlled by manipulating the amount of oxygen given the foetuses. Future sewer workers, who needed few brains, were mass produced on low levels of oxygen. Persons were induced to love their assigned status and the regime by the use of neo-Pavlovian conditioning techniques, by sleep teaching, and by a wondrous 'soma' drug. Most of the techniques Huxley fantasized for the distant future are already becoming available..." (Vance Packard, *The People Changers*, p. 5)

The rise of technology has been far more rapid than Orwell could have suspected, and it has taken forms that he could not have predicted -- technology that would be worse than frightening if placed in the hands of any

government. Some of these brave new world fantasies have already become reality, and others are easily within the range of present technology, should the decision be made to go ahead with them.

Already there are devices for pacifying troublesome people and dissenters: for a time brain operations such as pre-frontal lobotomies were popular, but now thora-zine and other drugs are used because they are cheaper and can be used on a day-to-day basis. People can be kept under surveillance by locking transmitters to their bodies (Packard, p. 4). Sub-humans can be treated for doing menial work and as a source of spare parts for human bodies.

The ancient Stoics used to say, "Surrender everything you have to, except your will. People may injure your body, but do not let them injure your spirit. Even if you are sick or in pain, this need not affect you; keep intact your inviolable will." Heroic words, these. But modern technology has made it possible to break the will. Tortures can be inflicted such as virtually no one can resist. And anyway various forms of truth-serum can be forcibly injected so that you cannot help revealing the truth under their influence no matter how much you may try to hide it. The will itself can be broken.

But a much simpler way than all this has come into view. We can re-shape people so that they will not want to resist; we are becoming capable of genetic engineering that will produce whatever kind of people the rulers want.

Maya Pines, in her book *The Brain Changers*, writes, "In France, where generations of peasant women have painstakingly force-fed geese by hand (to fatten their lives for good foie gras), surgeons have begun to take over the job, performing a delicate operation on the geese's hypothalamus to knock out their centers of satiety. This makes the geese eat incessantly--as of their own free will--damaging their insides and consuming almost as much as when they were stuffed by hand. To top it all, a drug company is now developing a chemical that could be injected directly into the animals' brains to produce the same effect in only a few minutes, at negligible cost." She adds, "There is something particularly revolting about these self-stuffing geese. Surely the American scientists who investigated the brain mechanisms responsible for appetite and satiety could not foresee such applications of their work. It makes one wonder how our own brains may be changed some day, and for whose benefit. What may all this research do to human beings?" (p. 231-2)

Peace-loving rats that grew up in a laboratory have been turned instantly into killers by injecting certain drugs into the aggression center of their brains. The transmitter acetylcholine caused the release of aggression. In other rats, the scientists inserted tiny hollow tubes into the rats' brains; then they put in a few drops of carbachol, the rats pounced on the mice and killed them with a single hard bite on the back of their necks--their first murder. Then the scientists found chemicals that would turn off these killer attacks. Methyldatropine caused the wild rats to suddenly become pacifists, walking to the mice, sniffing them, but doing nothing else. Dr. Douglas Smith (p. 104, Pines) said that similar "pharmacological prevention" could control aggressive behavior in human beings, as in *Clockwork Orange*.

B.F. Skinner, describing behavior engineering some years ago, said, "We have the technology for installing any (human) behavior we want." (Packard, *The People Changers*, p. 4) And a University of Michigan psychologist, James V. McConnell, proposed, "We should reshape our society so that we all would be trained from birth to do what society wants us to do." The techniques are here; there are plenty of scientists who, to get government grants, would gladly do anything the government

says. The apparatus is in place; it would require only a change in government to put it into practice.

Petr Beckman wrote, "Orwell's 1984 will not come true.

"The West is not moving toward 1984 because it is moving toward Brave New World. In George Orwell's fascinating vision (1948), men are coerced into a society of slaves; in Aldous Huxley's unforgettable novel (1932) they are conditioned into it."

"In a recent speech, a German journalist noted the failure of Soviet propaganda: 'I guarantee you that there are no communists under 40 in East Germany; the only communists are in the West.' To which this (ex-Czechoslovak) writer will add a guarantee that there are no communists under 40 anywhere in Eastern Europe, and probably very few, if any, in the U.S.S.R. itself.

"Why?

"Because the 1984 type of brainwashing does not work. Nobody is so stupid as to believe that the American imperialists will kill widows and orphans for profit - nobody, that is, who is force-fed such nonsense. Why, then, can large segments of the population in the West

be made to believe that the evil corporations, driven by lust for profits, will give cancer to anybody in sight (including themselves, apparently), as well as future generations?

"Not, we submit, because of the rantings of the Jane Fondas and Caldicotts. They are themselves too 1984-ish to have lasting effect; they probably just give most people the creeps. But in Brave New World, people 'planned' for work in urban factories are, in childhood, shown pictures of flowers and the countryside and they are given electric shocks. No need to coerce them into city living when they grow up: they hate the country quite 'naturally.'

"So why do millions in America regard 'profit' and 'capitalism' as dirty words? Why do they distrust science and technology? Why will they let fraudulent charlatans frighten them out of their wits with witch's brew concocted from scientific vocabulary?

"Because they have been conditioned; not by Marx's *Capital*, but by NBC's Colombo, in which every businessman - subtly and unobtrusively - is a fool, a crook, or both, as he is in virtually any other TV series" (see Benjamin Stein, *The View From Sunset Boulevard*, Basic

Books, 1978). (And the average American now spends only more time working and sleeping than in front of the conditioning tube). We lack, the space to give a million other examples from the printed media, the movies, school textbooks, college courses, and every other conceivable channel of communication where the conditioning spices are added subtly, but persistently.

#### **Part IV**

But how plausible in this picture of the Brave New World? There are now hundreds of books and articles demonstrating the superiority of the free-market, as well as books such as Ayn Rand's espousing their philosophy of liberty.

Almost no such books existed a generation ago. A rising tide of Americans is now aware that government, not the market, is the cause of inflation, depression and poverty. These people, no longer children of Roosevelt's new deal, are waiting in the wings, even in Washington, to reverse the course of the American economy, to remove the ball and chain of big government which still consumes the days and years of our lives.

Even the academicians who have thus far turned to the government and defended it in return for favors to

them, may come to realize that the Russian revolution which they have viewed so favorably is passé and that the real revolution, the revolution of 1776, of individual rights has taken place in their own land, unseen and unacknowledged by them.

The use of force by one government after another did not stop the clipper ships. In the end, they won the day and the wielders of governmental power had to go along or stagnate and die. In the same way, the soil of 1984, unlike the soil of say 1954, has been prepared for an outbreak of freedom which can pull even the welfare statist kicking and screaming into the 21st century and that is where we libertarians come in.

We are the intellectual spearheads of the coming renaissance of liberty. Just as the intellectual influence of the Fabians propelled Britain into socialism a century ago, so the intellectual influence of libertarians can turn Britain, and indeed the world, back to individual liberty because now the soil has been prepared.

The consequences of socialism in practice are increasingly plain for anyone with eyes to see. "It's the essence of man," said Aristotle, "to make decisions.

His own decisions, not those made for him by others." To implement this simple but profound truth and to apply it over and over again, in its countless manifestations in our individual and social lives; that is our libertarian mission. Surely, it's the noblest of goals and I see no good reason why we should not be able to achieve it.

Thank you very much.

I delivered this speech, "*1776 and 1984*" to the *Society for Individual Liberty* in London in the early summer of 1984 before a huge audience and cheering crowds. It was given in 1984, and I prepared it for that event months ahead. The fact that the speech was referencing 1984 itself, seems to have made it more impressive. I delivered it twice, in the morning and evening. Afterwards, I went to the London opera. Those were the days!

John Hospers, June 2008