

## Herbert Hoover – October 1928

When the war closed, the most vital of issues both in our own country and around the world was whether government should continue their wartime ownership and operation of many [instruments] of production and distribution. We were challenged with a... choice between the American system of rugged individualism and a European philosophy of diametrically opposed doctrines doctrines of paternalism and state socialism. The acceptance of these ideas would have meant the destruction of self-government through centralization... [and] the undermining of the individual initiative and enterprise through which our people have grown to unparalleled greatness.

The Republican Party [in the years after the war] resolutely turned its face away from these ideas and war practices.... When the Republican Party came into full power it went at once resolutely back to our fundamental conception of the state and the rights and responsibility of the individual. Thereby it restored confidence and hope in the American people, it freed and stimulated enterprise, it restored the government to a position as an umpire instead of a player in the economic game. For these reasons the American people have gone forward in progress....

I would like to state to you the effect that... [an interference] of government in business would have upon our system of self-government and our economic system. That effect would reach to the daily life of every man and woman. It would impair the very basis of liberty and freedom....

It is a false liberalism that interprets itself into the government operation of commercial business. Every step of bureaucratizing of the business of our country poisons the very roots of liberalism that is political equality, free speech, free assembly, free press and equality of opportunity. It is not the road to more liberty, but to less liberty. Liberalism should not be striving to spread bureaucracy but striving to set bounds to it....

1. Explain the historical context of the speech (look at the date). What was the economy like at the time?
2. What choice was the United States presented with at the end of World War I?
3. What direction, according to Hoover, did the Republican Party take the country in? Why?
4. Do you agree with Hoover's views on the proper relationship between government and the economy? Explain.