

"Writing the truth
as I see it;
trying not to
offend
those who will
disagree."

The truth as I see it[®]

Idaho Common Sense[®]



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Subject or citizen?

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"Oh posterity, you will never know how much it cost us to preserve your freedom. I hope that you will make a good use of it."
—John Adams, second U.S. president

American statesman Dean Alfange, born in Istanbul in 1899, reflected the values of an American citizen when he wrote, "I do not choose to be a common man; it is my right to be uncommon . . . if I can. I seek opportunity . . . not security. I do not wish to be a kept citizen, humbled and dulled by having the State look after me. I want to take the calculated risk, to dream and to build, to fail and to succeed. I refuse to barter incentive for a dole; I prefer the challenges of life to the guaranteed existence, the thrill of fulfillment to the stale calm of Utopia. I will not trade freedom for beneficence nor my dignity for a handout. I will never cower before any master nor bend to any threat. It is my heritage to stand erect, proud and unafraid, to think and act for myself, to enjoy the benefit of my creations and to face the world boldly and say: 'This, with God's help, I have done.'"

We faced the wrath of Great Britain and risked our lives for these values. We had been subjects. We demanded to be citizens. We knew the price of being subjects, of security. We knew the price of becoming citizens, of freedom.

The founding fathers decided to pay that price for our freedom, for our citizenship. They willingly traded security for freedom. Do we still want to be citizens? Are we still willing to pay the price? Perhaps Alfange's words no longer matter, no longer are relevant. Perhaps the thought of a "mother" government deciding what's best for us and making decisions for us is what we want.

Maybe the price of freedom is too high, the security of a subject preferable. Maybe we claim to want freedom, but really want "caveat" freedom, freedom with the caveat, "but only as long as."

We demand independence – but only as long as handouts continue. We demand freedom – but only as long as it's easy, no hardship. We demand a government subservient to us – but only as long as it does not require us to sacrifice.

We demand the freedom to dream and to build – but only as long as the government accepts the risk if we fail. We demand to experience the joys of life – but only as long as the government guarantees to build our "Utopia" if we cannot. We demand our pride and dignity – but only as long as government subsidies continue.

If Alfange reflected today's values, might he disappointedly write, "I choose to be a common man; it is too hard to be uncommon . . . and I no longer can. I seek security . . . not opportunity. I expect to be a kept

citizen, willingly humbled and dulled by having the State look after me. I will not take a calculated risk. I do not want to dream and to build. I will not risk failure to succeed. I will always barter incentive for a dole.

The challenges of life are too hard; I want a government guaranteed existence. I have no interest in the thrill of fulfillment; I want the stale calm of Utopia. I will always trade my freedom for beneficence and my dignity for a handout. I will cower before my government and I will bend to its threats. It is now my heritage to crouch, ashamed and afraid, to no longer think and act for myself, to no longer dream of new creations and to no longer face the world and say: 'This, with God's help, I have done,' . . . because I traded my freedom to the government."

I am a subject. Again.