

*AN*

# ADDRESS

TO THE REPUBLICAN CITIZENS,

*DELIVERED AT*

!

NORWICH, (Con.)

On the 4th July 1806 ;

*BEING THE 30th ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE:*

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BY CONSIDER STERRY.

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NORWICH,

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1806.

# AN ADDRESS &c.

FATHERS, BRETHREN, &

FELLOW-CITIZENS,

**I**T may, perhaps, be expected by some, that I should, in the language of the *Rhetorician* pronounce an Oration on the present occasion—But, the little time allowed me, and the consequent want of preparation, precludes every idea of the thing, and will, I presume, apologize for my not being able to gratify the audience in this respect.

Notwithstanding these imperious circumstances, I beg leave to solicit your attention for a few minutes, while I address you with some reflections that have hastily suggested themselves to me, as proper to be noticed on this ever memorable day!—A day that completes the 30th anniversary of our emancipation from slavery and the dominion of a foreign yoke!

I shall not attempt, as time would fail me, to recount to you the various causes which led to, and the particular circumstances which attended the migration of our ancestors from the old world to this western hemisphere.—Neither shall I take up your time in detailing the unparallel sufferings of our fore-fathers, nor, the many difficulties and dangers which they encountered in their first settlement of the country—Suffice it to say, that they fled from the hand of tyranny and oppression, and sought, in the inhospitable wilds of America, an assylum where they could enjoy, unmolested, the privileges of civil and religious liberty, and transmit to posterity the invaluable boon.

Here, we might have naturally expected, that the heavy hand of the oppressor would have ceased from troubling—But, *Pharaoh-like*, not content with having let the people go, the Tyrant must also pursue them. And the



Colonists had hardly got foothold in the new world, ere new and oppressive exactions were made on them by the British king and parliament. To avert these unjust requisitions, petition and supplications were made to the *throne*; but without any other effect, than that of increasing the demand of the British Court, and their insisting on the right to bind the Colonies in all cases whatsoever, without their consent, and even without their having the privilege of representation. To supplication, succeeded remonstrance, in which every argument that reason or ingenuity could suggest, were made use of to convince the ministry of the injustice of their attempts upon the rights and liberties of America—But all to no purpose.—Many people, however, of the British nation, were, from the reasoning on this subject, convinced of the impolicy of the English Cabinet, and the justice of the American claim—which was now viewed, by those of both Countries, as the cause of *liberty*.

Thus, when every attempt to obtain a redress of grievances had failed, and the cup of reconciliation had become exhausted to its very dregs—After repeated insults—aggressions, and the murder of our fellow-citizens, the spirit of the American people was roused into action—the sword was drawn, and an appeal to arms was made as the last resort, in defence of our just rights and dearest privileges—This was soon succeeded by an event, the anniversary of which we have this day met to celebrate.—On this memorable day, the *declaration of independence*, (which you have just heard read) separated, forever, these *then* Colonies from the British empire, and laid the foundation of their future glory and grandeur.—During the ardent conflict which succeeded, America produced some of the greatest heroes and ablest statesmen, that any age or country could boast of—On this list were the names of WASHINGTON, FRANKLIN, HANCOCK, S. ADAMS, JEFFERSON, and many others, whose memory will be perpetual in the hearts of their grateful countrymen.—Great-Britain expended an hundred millions of money, with the loss of more than an hundred thousand lives, and

won nothing—Whilst America endured every cruelty & hardship from her inveterate enemies, & gloriously delivered herself from the tyranny of a foreign dominion, and gained a rank among the nations of the Earth.

Our independence obtained, presented to the world *Thirteen* free & independent states, each one claiming the right of sovereignty for itself—having no other bond of union or connecting tie of interest with each other, than what arose from the common danger without, and the remembrance of their efficient strength when united in the same cause, for the attainment of the just rights of man and the invaluable privileges of freemen.

This period, fellow-citizens, may be viewed as the commencement of a *new epoch* in the history of nations, and the laying the *corner-stone* of the first rational government in the World.—If you take a historical survey of those governments which have in different ages of the world claimed to be popular or republican, you will readily perceive them all to have been originally founded on principles hostile to the great and leading principles of true republicanism. Most of those governments owed their origin to Aristocratic pride, which was mistaken for true patriotism, and their great object, was ever, military glory—In none of them, can be found a recognition of the principle of equal rights, without which, whatever else the government might have been, it was not, neither indeed could it be republican—nor were those governments instituted by the deliberate and collective voice of the people, the only legitimate source, but were either the offspring of chance, or the effect of imposition.

The American States, it is well known, suffered many embarrassments, and experienced many difficulties, arising from the opposite interests and views of so many independent sovereignties in the neighborhood of each other. At length, after some ineffectual trials to patch up the old confederation of the states, which had been the effect of consent, rather than compact, during the revolutionary struggle, a Convention of delegates from the diff-

erent states, met and framed a constitutional form of government for these United States.

This instrument begins, as the Charter of every free people ought to begin, with an acknowledgement that **WE THE PEOPLE**, are the true source of all political power and authority.—This federative compact being submitted to the *people*, was, after mature deliberation, by them adopted as the supreme law of the land.

The novelty of the scene—viewing the representatives of a free people, met in deliberative council for the purpose of forming and instituting civil government, which in other countries had uniformly been the production of fraud and imposition, attracted the attention of all Europe—and they now beheld with wonder and astonishment the practicability as well as simplicity of a *government by the people*, which they had before only considered as the reveries of visionary theorists—and they blushed to own, that the sparkling gems of royalty, and the brilliant pearls of princes, were eclipsed by the superior splendor of the *majesty of the people!*

It is well known that at the time of forming the United States Constitution, much opposition was made to it, principally by those who were unfriendly to the independence of the Country. They declared that it was too democratic—that its want of energy would render it inadequate to the purposes for which it was intended—These enemies of republican government wished, some of them, to establish an open and direct *Monarchy*—others, a monarchy in disguise.—Like the Jews, who remembered the leeks and onions of Egypt, these men sighed after the trappings of Royalty. But the thing would not take.—Those who had fought and bled to establish our independence, were not willing that so much should go for nothing, and that the only reward for all their toil and labor should be no more than a change of Masters.—Thus the good sense of the people prevailed over the machinations of their enemies, and the republican representative system was established as the government of the *United States*, and guaranteed to the several states as the form



of their respective governments.—The enemies of civil liberty finding themselves thus baffled in their first attempts to destroy the benefits of the revolution, withdrew, but to wait for a more favorable opportunity to accomplish their designs.

The national compact having received the sanction of the people, it was put into operation, and the immortal *Washington*, placed in the Executive chair.—In the former part of the administration of this great and good man, whom from his eminent services to his Country, the people had been taught to call the Father of the nation, the people of the United States enjoyed great tranquility and happiness—The general prosperity justified the most sanguine expectations of sages and philosophers of the practicability as well as the happy effect of a republican government.—It was an experimental refutation of the opinions of its enemies, and brought into contempt the arguments and predictions of monarchists and oligarchs, who had never dreamt, that to make a government strong, the people must be interested in supporting it—and *that* they may have an interest in its support, it is necessary the government should be *their government*.

At this period of the public happiness and prosperity of the United States, a new and dazzling scene burst forth on astonished Europe, and soon arrested the attention of the whole world!—The event which I allude to, was the revolution in *France*—Here was exhibited to one view, the folly and madness of a tyrannical and corrupt government, and the natural consequence—“*man, seeking thro' blood and slaughter, his long lost liberty.*” This revolution appeared at first as involving in it the dearest interests of the American people, who could not but view it as a spark from the Altar of '76, and the effect of that great example which hath not yet spent its force, but will continue to operate throughout ages, and form a grand ingredient in the active fermentation, and in the history of nations!—And suffer me here to observe in the eloquent language of another—that “twenty thousand folio volumes of *declamation* will never establish one single solitary matter

of fact—nor the *railings* of millions alter the nature of *cause* and *effect*.—While, in common with the friends of humanity, we sincerely lament the bloody events which have taken place by the revolution in France,—yet the effect it *has* had, and *will* have in ameliorating the condition of man in Europe, amply counterbalances the partial loss.” America fondly hoped to hail a sister republic in renovated France,—an event which in all human probability would have taken place, but for the universal league of tyrants and their myrmidons, formed for the purpose of extirpating and destroying from off the face of the earth and from among men, every vestige of rational government and every principle of civil liberty. This league passed in Europe, under the denomination of the conspiracy of kings—In America it is known by the indefinite term of *federalism*.

This conspiracy of federalism, which I shall have frequent occasion to mention; was made up of old Tories or the Monarchists of our own Country, British Merchants, agents, spies, and speculators, who (foiled at the adoption of the American Constitution, had remained in cautious concealment to gain time and strength,) thought the present a favorable opportunity to commence their indirect operations of undermining our Constitution and government, & thereby, if possible, to destroy the fruits of the revolution. In consequence of the neutral stand we had taken with respect to belligerent Europe, our commerce had suffered greatly from vexatious captures and ruinous spoils, by the different powers at war, especially from the British, who yet felt sore for the loss of their Colonies. These things looked favorable to the federal conspiracy, who had the art and address to rally round the standard of government, and to introduce themselves and their influence into our Councils, by which means they brought about the famous British treaty, so called. This treaty was to be but a stepping stone to other measures of humiliation to the U. States. The object of which, it can never be doubted, was to bring them back to the condition of Colonies and dependents. A clamour was set up

against the French nation, and the British were called our best friends—The great and good Washington, whose long and merited services had endeared him to every American, and who had determined to retire at the next constitutional term, from the noise and bustle of public life, to the enjoyment of the peaceful shades of domestic quiet, foresaw the impending storm, and in his valedictory address warned his fellow-citizens in the most solemn and impressive manner, against the machinations of their secret enemies to destroy the liberties of the country, and mar the fair fabric of our republican government, which had been erected at so much expense, toil and bloodshed.—But the election of Mr. *Adams*, who succeeded the venerable Washington, seemed to be the watchword to the conspiracy, that now, all things were ready—and the event but too well justified the indication.

It is well known, that the political principles of Mr. Adams were adverse to the simple principles of republicanism—and that the British government, with him, was the most stupendous fabric of human invention, and his model of perfection. Consequently this administration commenced with a system perfectly imitative of the tyrannical and corrupt measures of a British Court. *Alien and sedition laws—standing armies—navies---land taxes---excise laws---stamp acts---eight per cent loans*, and an immense increase of Executive patronage, were among the leading features of this administration,---all calculated to excite horror and disgust in the minds of republicans and the friends of the revolution. The ostensible cause of this system of measures, was averred to be the danger of foreign invasion; but it cannot now be doubted, that the real cause was an attempt to destroy the republican fabric and with it eradicate every foot-step & principle of the revolution. This, the leading friends of that administration, who were in the secret, dare not deny---The federal conspiracy in this country, ever acting in concert with the conspiracy of kings in Europe, in order to avert the public eye, & make the people look the other way, declared that a spirit of demoralization had gone forth,



threatning with universal destruction, all order, government and religion in the world. The republicans and friends of the revolution were branded with the epithets of *Jacobins, Disorganizers, Anarchists, French Republicans, opposers of good order and government, Atheists, Deists, illuminees, philosophists*, and in short, with every other opprobrious name which the malignant ingenuity of man could invent. They were charged with designs against the *Altar* and the *Throne*, the *cant* expressions of the day, and with intentions of dissolving all human and social ties, and of reducing mankind, once more, to a state of *Vandalism*. And the better to keep up the clamour, destroy the spirit of the people, and render republicanism odious, British hirelings and British presses were set up in different parts of the country and patronized by the federal conspiracy, in order to bring into contempt the principles of our revolution, by comparing it with the sanguinary scenes that disgraced the French, and to advocate a close alliance and connection with the *Universal Corrupter*.

A system of proscription, fine & imprisonment was pursued against all who dared to express their opinions of the government or to controvert its measures, that would have disgraced the reign of a *Danton* or a *Robespierre*.—*Marks\** were put upon the people in order to divide and set them against each other.—Our prisons were filled with the victims of federal persecution, and the land groaned under the weight of an intolerance, as *despotic as wicked*.—This was indeed a dark day!—*It was truly the reign of terror!*—The good sense of the great body of the people became paralyzed, and the political barometer fell, indicative of the setting sun of American liberty, and many *honest men* were deceived and led away.—Thus, Fellow-Citizens, had we "*fallen on evil times*" indeed!

But this state of political debility soon arrived to the zenith of its folly and madness,—the electrical spark from the Altar of '76, dispelled the darkness, and the people

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\* *COCKADES*,—A plan of insurrection invented by *Cobbett* the British emigrant, and patronized by the federal conspirators.

saw that they had been deceived & many of them immediately returned to their first love. The consequence of this change in the public opinion, was, that Mr. Adams and his *king-loving* Cabinet, who now stood exposed to public view in all their aristocratic deformity, were obliged to retire (*not a little chagrined*) to the domestic scenes of private life. And the great—The *wise*, and *patriotic* JEFFERSON, who had been the friend and confident of Washington, was elected to the Presidential Chair.

By this great triumph of republicanism over the federal conspiracy, a new political *era* commenced. And on this occasion we said we would rejoice, *because we had escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler ; the snare was broken, and we had escaped*, from that destruction which our enemies had been so long and so artfully preparing for us—In no instance, since the revolution, had there appeared such a signal interposition of divine providence in our national concerns as was manifested in this our deliverance from political sin and death. And the occasion demanded our grateful acknowledgement, that it is the hand of God which made us free and happy, and which keeps us so.

The *federal conspiracy* again baffled, disappointed and broken to pieces, began now to hide its diminished head, and the *conspirators* retired into their strong holds, vowing eternal hatred and revenge to all republican institutions—When the *faction* saw that all was over with respect to their own power and the confidence of the people, in the agonizing spasms of a dreaded dissolution, they commenced through the venality and corruption of the *press*, a virulent attack upon the republican administration—They bestowed on the President and heads of department, the most base and unqualified calumny—they endeavored to destroy the confidence of the people in their chief magistrat. by vilifying, and libelling his private character—As soon as one tale was worn out or refuted, another was put in circulation—They attempted to excite jealousies, dissensions and divisions between the Northern and Southern States—They prophesied that re-



ligion would be driven from the sacred Altar—That Priests would be buffeted, abhored and slain—That Bibles would be consigned to the flames, and that insurrection and general confusion, with a thousand other dreadful events would be the consequence of Mr. Jefferson's election—Mr. Jefferson *was* elected—But in what instance have these federal predictions been verified?—Has any one particular taken place in conformity to those prophecies? All things not only remain as they were, but a more general attention has been paid to every circumstance attached to these subjects. Our Meeting-houses were never more respectable in their *outside appearance*, than at the present day.—And I do not know that there is any want of respect towards those of the Clergy who deserve it—Nor have I heard of any instances of their persecution, or *Martyrdom*—Instead of a general decay of religion, are we not told, by its ministers, of great revivals, and that it was never more flourishing than at present?—Have bibles been burnt—Or has the marriage covenant been destroyed?—Has there been any insurrections among the people, notwithstanding the great efforts of the federalists to excite them?—Is not the public credit higher and the public confidence greater, now, than in the days of *black Cockades* and *gag laws*?—Is not our commerce more safe on the Ocean than formerly?—Do not the premiums of insurance demonstrate this fact?—Who is there, then, under heaven, that will not say, that those federalists, by their own predictions, have proved themselves a set of lying prophets, whose object was to deceive the people and disturb the public repose.

Where is the man, who is injured by the measures of government?—Are the people distressed by the decrease of taxes, or do they groan under a sense of relief from the public burdens? If the government of the United States can pay quarterly all its Creditors, and discharge annually a large amount of the public debt, is it not far better than to keep up *excise laws*, *stamp acts*, *eight per cent loans*, and useless *standing armies*? Is it any satisfaction to a man or does he derive any pleasure in paying money for those

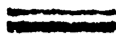
things which are sure in return, to reward him with the loss of his property and his liberty?—On these interrogatories, I need not appeal to the common sense of the people to decide—They have already decided them in a manner honorable to their understanding and the republican cause, in the re-election of Mr. Jefferson.—162 to 14, is such a proof of approbation in the measures of the republican administration, as can never be wiped away or expunged by all the malignant slanders, falsehoods and misrepresentations of its enemies—But it will stand in glowing characters on the page of history as an everlasting monument of the wickedness and stupidity of *federalism*.

It is really matter of astonishment to every reflecting mind, that after such a series of salutary measures as have been uniformly pursued and practised by the present Administration, there should still be found so much apparent opposition to it.—Does not this prove that the cause of invective is not the effect of any real evil that is experienced, or from any apprehension of it;—but from a determination to destroy the people's confidence in the administration, by faulting and misrepresenting every measure, right or wrong?—Is not this the *conspiracy of federalism*—the old heaven, which the better to conceal the *cloven foot*, has lately assumed the unmeaning appellation of *federal-republicanism*?

In no state in the Union, except from the vile pander of some prostituted press, has the national administration been so much abused & vilified as in Connecticut.—This state appears to be not only one of the strong holds, but the last hold of federalism.—Connecticut once prided herself on her republicanism—she affects to believe she is so now. Why then does she keep up her opposition to the general government?—Would the policy of our national government suffer in a comparative view with the measures and policy of Connecticut?—Has the national government ever erected itself into a *revolutionary tribunal*, for the trial of those who have decently expressed their disapprobation of its measures—or even of those who have conspired its destruction?—Has it erected a *guillotine* for the

political decapitation of those who did not subscribe to its infallibility—or dared to draw in question the *constitutionality* of its measures?—Has it ever arrogated to itself the stile of a *goverment of morals*, which needed no other Constitution, or pole star, to guide and direct it in its legislative capacity?—Are its Courts of Justice actuated by a vindictive spirit of persecution, or their decisions influenced by party politics?—Does it ever draw money from the public treasury by *private resolves* without a public act of appropriation, by which the people may know how, and where their money goes?—Has it crowded the prisons of the United States with victims of political intolerance, by not suffering the greatest libels under heaven to be tried at the tribunal of public opinion?

To all these questions I know you will answer in the negative.---But should you ask if these evils exist in Connecticut---you will, fellow citizens, decide this question for yourselves---In Connecticut there are many matters of serious complaint, and much room for reform---but the intolerance of federalism renders a discussion of this subject somewhat hazardous---Here the republicans are hedged about and a *mark is set thereon*;---Yet I shall venture to say, generally, that no state in the union, has ever given such striking proofs of the management of its government by a *junto*, as are to be found in this *truly devoted state*. Without any other constitution than a *Kingly Charter*, the defects of which are supplied by a *Church and State Union*, supported by the marriages and inter-marriages of certain families, the administration has become almost as hereditary as a monarchy. Nowhere is the idea of the sovereignty of the people treated with so much contempt as it is by the federalists in Connecticut.---*Favoritism* is the high road to perferment, tho' its purchase is rarely made but at the expense of those principles which enoble the mind & adorn the man.---The freedom and purity of our elections have been perverted and corrupted.---Among the many current calumnies of the day, which are hawked about by the federal conspirators (to in-



fluence our elections,) is the story of the *two millions* of dollars sent to France to pay tribute to *Bonaparte*---A more silly or more infamous falsehood was never before propagated---yet our members of Congress from this state are giving countenance to the report, among the ignorant and uninformed part of the community---But they dare not assert it as a fact, because they know that the *tale* is false upon the face of it. *Election*---*Thanksgiving*, *fast-day*, and *federal 4th of July sermons*, are considered as so many engines, made subservient to electioneering purposes. The *liberty* of the press, in this state, has been destroyed on one side whilst its *licentiousness* has been supported on the other. Every method is taken to secure patronage---for, be a man's talents or abilities what they may, without this saving recommendation, he can obtain no public office or appointment under the state government, whatever. ---Even war has been declared against the Arts and Sciences, whenever, (which according to federal doctrine is rarely the case) they have been found in the possession of republicans. In no state has political intolerance marked its Ruthless progress, by such desolating ravages, as it has in Connecticut. Prosecution, fine and imprisonment have become the order of the day---Under such an order of things, who will say that we are the happiest people in the world, or that we have the best government or that it is the best administered. Here, political intolerance has been carried into every thing---even those institutions, the very existence of which, depends on the entire exclusion of all party spirit, have felt, more or less, the shock of its baneful influence.---In a word, if there was no prospect of a change in this state, we might then well say, that the revolution had been ineffectual, and that we have fought and bled in vain for its attainment.

But, fellow-citizens, I have already detained you much longer than I intended at the outset, yet suffer me to make a few observations more and I shall have done.

When we cast a reflecting eye over the *tragi-comic* scene

of Connecticut politics, however disgusting the picture may be to an honest and peaceable man, there appears to be no alternative---no compromise between freedom and slavery. The state of party has arrived to that pitch, there is now no such thing as going back, nor remaining stationary. To press forward, therefore, is the only way of salvation for the republicans. It is by a just, steady and spirited perseverance only, that they can expect to escape the *dry pan* and *gradual fire* of federalism. And though the contest has been long and ardent, yet, they must not faint nor *be weary in well doing*; for from the present appearance of things, the day cannot be far distant, when *truth* shall prevail over *falsehood, error and delusion*. To accomplish this desirable event, the republicans have only to feel their own weight in the scale, by a vigilant exercise of their legal and constitutional rights. The gain of *fifteen hundred* to the republican interest within the last year, make a difference of *three thousand* in the relative strength of the two parties---Another such gain, (than which, nothing is easier,) and the business is done. Therefore, march to the proxies, not in the servile spirit of slaves who obsequiously obey the will of their masters, but with the energies of freemen determined to support their rights, and the *hydra* of federalism will fall prostrate before you.---This monster is always artful and intriguing, but like *toryism*, it is ever cowardly.

There are, undoubtedly, many men who still appear in the federal ranks, for no other reason, but because they feel that it would be a mortification to their pride to declare by their conduct that they had been in an error; but it is a much greater mark of wisdom in any man, for him to acknowledge his fault, than obstinately continue in error. The former is but saying, I am wiser to-day than yesterday, but the latter is evidence of incorrigible folly and weakness. And hence, it is much more difficult for people to return from wrong to right, than it is to err in the first instance.

Fellow-Citizens, on the late glorious event of the return

of our *elder sister*, the respectable state of *Massachusetts* from error and delusion, to the correct principles of the revolution, permit me to felicitate you.

This great example furnishes evidence strong as proof from holy writ, that republicanism or the rights of man, must & will finally prevail over all its enemies---And tho' the federal conspiracy may, for a while, keep up its *barkings*, and in those places where it is predominant, its *persecutions*, yet all the ravings and railings of the conspirators will be vain---“The finger of heaven points to” their destruction. They have already seen a part of the *hand writing upon the wall*, which has caused their countenances to change, and their thoughts to trouble them. Let them read it---and this is the interpretation thereof ;

“First stretch thy arm, and, with less impious might,  
Wipe out the stars, and quench the solar light :  
“*For heaven and earth,*” the voice of God ordains,  
“*Shall pass and perish but my word remains,*”  
TH' ETERNAL WORD, which gave, in spite of thee,  
REASON to man, that bids the man be FREE.”

*FINIS.*