

Libertarianism

Béatrice Gridel and Clémence Desveaux

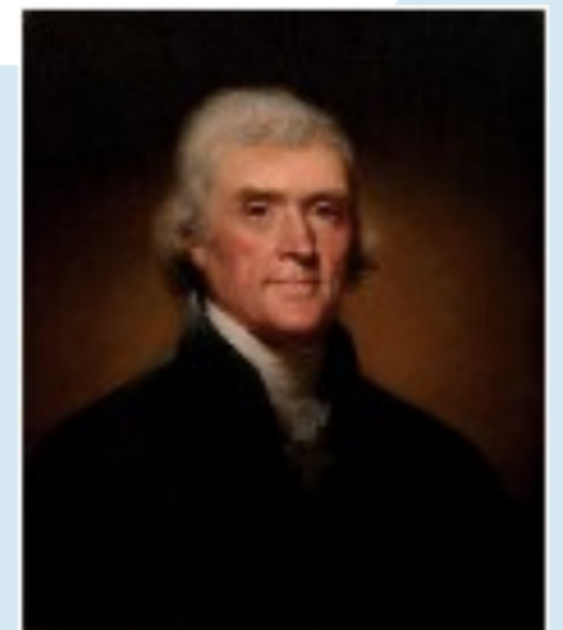
Introduction

- It is a political philosophy based on individual freedom and the limitation of government power.
- **1776**: Declaration of independence of the USA => Confederation of the USA.
- **1777 - 1781**: adoption of the "Articles of Confederation" => development of Libertarianism.
- This Confederation was challenged by its limitations and its inability to solve problems effectively => thus the promulgation of the U.S. Constitution in 1787.

How the libertarian movement has evolved over the centuries in the USA?

I. The libertarian movement at the time of Confederation

- Purpose of the Articles of Confederation = national identity, individual freedom and protection of fundamental rights.
- Cradle of the libertarian movement in American political history.
- Among the Articles of Confederation:
 - "Sovereignty resides in states" about sovereignty.
 - "No provision to regulate interstate trade" about regulation of trade.
- Thomas Jefferson = key figure in libertarian ideas of this era, especially with his Declaration of Independence.



II. Libertarianism since the establishment of the U.S. Constitution

- Spirit of the U.S. Constitution = pursuit of libertarian principles + creation of a stronger federal government.
- Balance between governmental strength and the protection of individual rights => Bill of Rights of 1791 (link with Libertarianism).
- Formation of the American Libertarian Party in 1971.
- James Madison = defender of Libertarianism => in favor of a system of checks and balances.
- Differences from the Articles of Confederation and challenges to libertarian ideas, for example today:
 - Congress has the right to regulate interstate commerce.
 - Congress has the right to levy taxes on individuals.

Conclusion

- Evolution of American libertarianism over the centuries.
- Modification of libertarian principles on the one hand.
- On the other hand, Libertarianism still persists in today's American society. ex : Libertarians' fight against "big government", to denounce a government they consider too powerful or corrupt.

