

sponsibilities of life, then their ideas will lead them into bondage, precisely because they are responsible and they do have the power of choice. Pontius Pilate had the power of choice. He chose to "wash his hands" of all personal responsibility, as if power can be so lightly abandoned. Röpke and Schumpeter were quite correct in their concern for our society: mass man, especially State-edu-

cated mass man, has been granted wealth beyond the dreams of Pilate (who never had the opportunity to see reruns of the Beverly Hillbillies in full color). Economic efficiency, in and of itself, guarantees nothing morally or culturally. It only guarantees that more and more men will possess greater and greater options. We should neither underestimate nor overestimate the blessings of efficiency. ☸

## A Proper Distrust

W. ALLEN WALLIS

THOSE who distrust governments are right. For governments everywhere undertake to do many things that cannot be done by governments — least of all by democratic governments — and they even undertake to do some things that cannot be done at all, either by governmental or nongovernmental means. Governments readily promise good incomes, good health, good morals, good taste, and good re-

lations among individuals. They promise equality, justice, tolerance, and safety, as well as peace, progress, prosperity, and purity, and even truth, goodness, beauty, and salvation. They attempt to protect us from our own follies — from the folly of smoking tobacco or marijuana, from the folly of watching indecent movies, from the folly of selling too cheap or buying too high, from the folly of buying too cheap or selling too high, from the folly of wasting our money, from the folly of failing to

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fasten seat-belts, from the folly of buying pills in containers that can be opened by children or arthritics, and from the folly of setting the wrong temperature on the laundry machine. The list is endless in number, infinite in detail, and growing exponentially.

It is a striking paradox that the more people distrust the government, the more powers and responsibilities they heap upon it, many of the new powers being designed to counterbalance other powers that the government already has. The more powers the government has, the more ruthless, corrupt, and pervasive become the efforts to control those powers, the more numerous and harmful become the failures of the government, and the smaller becomes the respect

and confidence that the government receives or deserves.

The appropriate remedy for excessive governmental powers, for abuses of governmental powers, for ruthlessness and corruption in gaining control of governmental powers is not to create new governmental powers but to dismantle those that now exist. Return the power to the people. Give each individual the right and the responsibility for making his own free choices and decisions. Inevitably, some individuals will make unwise decisions, even decisions that harm other people; but in the long run the harm done in this way is likely to be neither as great in the aggregate nor as hard to correct as the harm done by over-government. 

### *We Owe It to Ourselves*

INDIVIDUALISM suggests the idea that if a living is owed a man, he is both the creditor and the debtor. He must collect and he must pay. All he has a right to expect from society is that it will not intervene between cause and effect to his prejudice. To be assured of this he must be assured against political interventions. He is entitled to all he produces, but outside himself there is no power that can ethically produce for him.

E. C. RIEGEL, *Planned Prosperity*

IDEAS ON



LIBERTY

# Those Fellows with Dark Hats - the Speculators

JOHN A. SPARKS

**“What the witch was to medieval man, the capitalist is to the socialists and communists, the speculator is to most politicians and statesmen: the embodiment of evil.”**

**Hans F. Sennholz**

ONCE AGAIN the guns of public criticism are trained upon speculators. Legislative committees are hearing testimony about their activities; governmental officials are denouncing them. Why are speculators so often under attack? Borrowing from the old-fashioned western — why are speculators invariably portrayed as wearing black hats?

One reason for the tarnished image of the speculator today is the widespread misunderstanding about *who* speculators are. To many people, a speculator is a crafty, cold, professional, standing against a Wall Street backdrop. Granted, a gathering of speculators would include professionals. But, just as clearly, it would include many amateurs. Several years ago the occupations of per-

sons who held futures contracts on the New York Sugar Exchange during a typical day were disclosed. Of the nearly 1700 speculators who owned contracts, only about 12 per cent could be termed professionals, i.e. connected with the sugar industry or other professional speculation. The remaining contract holders were housewives, retired persons, engineers, retail proprietors, and members of other occupational groups.<sup>1</sup> A recent survey of traders in frozen orange juice concentrate futures showed that “executives, engineers, accountants, doctors and the like accounted for some 40 per cent of the long side of the market.”<sup>2</sup> Admittedly, in terms of business volume, professional speculators outdistance amateurs. But the professional image of the speculator obscures the fact that many ordinary people fall into this category. (An attempt can be

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