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"I'm for Free Enterprise--BUT!"

WILLIS H. HALL

FREEDOM of religion, freedom of the press, and our free enterprise system are the foundations upon which we have built the greatest way of life of any nation. This is our American heritage given to us by the Founding Fathers who had courage to fight and die for the God-given rights of free people. Freedom of religion remains substantially intact. Freedom of the press endures in spite of sporadic attacks by those who would like to control, regiment, or direct the people's access to news.

Our concept of free private enterprise is under attack from many sources. Powerful forces who believe in the socialization of property, the supremacy of the State, the subservience of people to government, are constantly boring from within and without to achieve their objectives. But, the greatest threat to our free enterprise system comes from within. There are too many people who are for free enterprise – BUT!

Rugged enterprises in the homebuilding industry fight public housing – BUT government mortgage corporations are needed. Some manufacturers object to any government regulation of their business – BUT they welcome a government tariff to curb foreign competition. Chambers of Commerce in the TVA area fight for free enterprise – BUT government power, subsidized by all the people, is sought. Some retail merchants resist government regulation – BUT seek government aid in policing "fair price" agreements. Segments of the petroleum and mining industry are firm believers in the free enterprise system – BUT government should control competitive imports.

Farmers are rugged individualists and great believers in free enterprise – BUT they fight to preserve the right to have Uncle Sam finance rural electrification at half the government cost of borrowing money.

Too many of us believe in the free enterprise system until the going gets tough – then a little government subsidy in the form of tariffs, import quotas, or other devices is requested.

We need a new dedication, a renewed devotion to our American enterprise system.

There is no room for a doubting Thomas. The preacher who wishes to preserve freedom of religion must also be a fighter for our free enterprise system, without BUTS.

The editor of a now defunct afternoon Detroit newspaper once said, "This newspaper is for enterprise, hook, line, and sinker. . . . BUT, we recognize there are proper areas of government ownership." There can be no freedom of religion or freedom of the press without a strong free enterprise system. Look at Cuba!

We can't compromise with statism. Government ownership is an insatiable octopus whose tentacles reach out to grasp everything in its area. TVA is a striking example. Starting as a flood control project, with the incidental development of hydroelectric power and a pledge not to construct or operate steam electric generating plants, it now operates the largest steam-generating power system in the world. We, the taxpayers of Michigan, through the taxing power of the federal government, have been forced to contribute one hundred million dollars to subsidize this operation. We are subsidizing our own destruction because TVA-subsidized power is luring Michigan industry and Michigan jobs to the TVA area.

Former President Herbert Hoover said, "The genius of the private enterprise system is that it generates initiative, ingenuity, inventiveness, and unparalleled productivity. With the normal rigidities that are a part of government, obviously the same forces that produce excellent results in private industry do not develop to the same degree in government business enterprises."

We have a responsibility to fight against the slow erosion of our free enterprise system. To preserve the right to our American heritage we must work harder at our responsibilities. We must oppose the "gimme" pressure groups and the political "hander-outs." We must militantly challenge the philosophy that government can do everything for us and charge the bill to others. There are no others – they are you. We must stand, as individuals, for the right to own, to save, to invest in our free enterprise system. Without this freedom, other freedoms will soon be of little value.

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