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BIRTMAN ELECTRIC COMPANY

November 12, 1952

Mr. Leonard E. Read, President
Foundation for Economic Education, Inc.
Irvington-on-Hudson, New York

Dear Leonard:

I have just received a copy of "The Field Glass" with Mr. McBain's statement which we discussed briefly when you were here. I have an idea or two as to the lack of response. In the first place, I agree with you in your No. 1 as listed on your letter because in the fourth paragraph of Mr. McBain's statement the first reading does not bring out clearly that the reader should feel free to drop a note to Mr. McBain immediately requesting future publications of interest. I also have a feeling that part of the first paragraph may have had the effect of causing the reader to be a bit suspicious of the motive. The reference to "invasion of business activity" seems to be the primary concern of Mr. McBain in this letter and not the all-important general loss of freedom. It is entirely possible that in previous comments to the people of Field's, Mr. McBain has made his broad interests sufficiently clear, but I do believe that there is a very definite possibility that some would say to themselves "well here is another one of these big business fellows who wants a clear track so that he can follow any business policies he cares to". If the invasion of business activity had been the last factor mentioned in this paragraph instead of the first, the impression might have been better.

These are my conclusions for what they are worth.

Cordially yours,

Chet

C. W. Anderson
Executive Vice President

CWA:aqr

C.W. Anderson

November 17, 1952

Mr. C. W. Anderson, Exec. V.P.
Associated Industries of Quad Cities
212 - 19th Street
Rock Island, Illinois

Dear Chet:

The attached letter from my old friend, Burt Peek, is self-explanatory. It is in response to an identical letter sent to you -- the one with which I enclosed a copy of "Isaiah's Job."

As I have told you on previous occasions, Deere and Company has never supported the Foundation, although I am pretty certain quite a number of their executive group know about and feel kindly toward our work.

I wonder if you can give me any advice about Messrs. Cook, Kennedy, and Block. How, in your opinion, should I approach them -- if at all?

My best to you!

Cordially,

Leonard E. Read

ASSOCIATED INDUSTRIES OF THE QUAD-CITIES

212-19TH STREET
ROCK ISLAND, ILLINOIS

C. W. ANDERSON
EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT

Harper
to note + file
11/26

Dear Leonard:

I'm sending you this correspondence because it outlines my "evolution" of thought which you questioned me about some time ago.

Cordially,
Chet

THE ASSOCIATED INDUSTRIES OF THE QUAD-CITIES

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OFFICES AT
212 - 19TH STREET
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TELEPHONE 6-7701

November 21, 1952

Mr. Willard L. Anderson
Augustana College
Rock Island, Illinois

Dear Willard:

I felt much better after receiving your delayed response of September 12th because I have two pieces of correspondence that have been gathering dust--longer than yours.

I hope you will not mind a few personal reflections because what I want to say requires this personal reference.

It was about seven or eight years ago that I can recall having had quite a series of serious discussions with a close friend of mine on the subject of the functions of government. He was in favor of strictly limited powers, I for broad powers to do the things that needed doing for the good of all the people. By the hour, we argued back and forth. Needless to say, neither of us were convinced of the validity of any of the adversary's points.

About this time, I read the book, "Road to Serfdom", by F. A. Hayek, the Austrian economist who had lived through several collectivistic developments in European governments. Perhaps my major in economics helped, but at any rate the logic and reasoning of Hayek caused me to reflect and reconsider some of the opinions I had formed over a period of several years. But, I had not really changed my mind.

During all of my formal education and first twelve years of business experience, any opinions that I formed as to the proper functions of government were based entirely on pragmatic reasons. Each new proposal called for a new set of facts and "logic" to arrive at an answer. I then had the good fortune to find some writings and meet some people whose approach to this whole question was based on years of deep study. For the first time it slowly began to dawn on me that in this great universe there are some principles of conduct, call them natural law or moral law, which are timeless and defy compromising. These "laws" are as applicable to me living in a complex modern

society as they were to Moses. It was becoming clear to me that an understanding of "moral law" would enable me to determine whether or not a group or government action was right just as well as whether my personal actions were right or wrong. It was clear that a group of us "protected" by a man-made law could be just as wrong according to the ten commandments as I individually and "unprotected" could be. It is a phenomenon of this age that most people will not singly or in groups held up with a gun and rob their neighbors for even the most noble purpose, but they will not hesitate an instant to place a law on the statute books to plunder and rob these same neighbors so that a harbor, airport or dam can be built for their own community.

Once this concept took root, I found that in these principles was a great comfort but also a challenge. New situations and perplexing problems were not easy to measure against this yardstick. It was not always easy to determine whether a proposed government activity was right or wrong. Those who have studied and worked at this philosophy for many years have told me that it is never easy. The challenging and comforting thought is that if you accept a Dicty, and the basic moral laws embodied in the ten commandments, and the teachings of Jesus Christ that the individual is important, you can go on from there with these principles to pass your own personal judgment on government as well as individual actions.

So you see I do not believe that the government should perform any functions that individuals or institutions will not or cannot perform except to defend the people against violence. According to my understanding of "Thou Shalt Not Steal", it is just as wrong to steal from me by taxation to build dams on the Missouri River or for the noblest cause, as it is to do it with a revolver. If I am wrong, I will have to change my definition of that to something like "the taking from another person, against his will, of anything he has produced and has chosen to keep, or which has come into his possession by voluntary exchange or voluntary giving--except for a worthy cause".

Throughout history there have always been those who profess to know better than the people themselves what is best for them, how they should spend their money, what "areas in the West" should be developed with their money extracted by force. I believe that doing these things in this way is morally wrong. The economic approach or analysis indicates that where there is economic freedom, capital will flow to develop those areas where there is a possibility of getting a return or in other words where it is a sound investment. But much more important than this is the wrong in it and a conviction that good is never accomplished by evil means. My faith also tells me that people are basically good; they want to do the thing that is right and moreover they cannot develop as children of God unless they have the choice of doing right or wrong. It is through making such choices that individuals grow and character improves. Without opportunities for choice and living under the direction of those who know what is best for other persons, we can have only stagnation of individuals in society.

Mr. Willard L. Anderson

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November 21, 1952

May I suggest that at your leisure you will enjoy Reverend Clinchy's and Reverend Opitz's articles which I have enclosed.

Cordially,

C. W. Anderson
Executive Vice President

CWA:LK
Encs.

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BIRTMAN ELECTRIC COMPANY

November 25, 1952

Mr. Leonard E. Read, President
Foundation for Economic Education, Inc.
Irvington-on-Hudson, New York

Dear Leonard:

I have your letter of November 17th and Mr. Peek's letter of November 11th which I am returning to you as you probably need it for your files. It is my understanding that Mr. Edmond Cook is the person in the upper strata of Deere & Company who is most interested in the work you are doing. When Baldy Harper was due to come out here, Jim Rogers talked to Mr. Cook and found that he was very agreeable to being a member of the sponsoring committee. He told him, at that time, that he knew you and was familiar with the work the Foundation was doing. Therefore, what I would suggest is that if it does not seem awkward to you during the next few months, drop Mr. Cook a line when you send him your publications. I believe he is sufficiently interested in your work that from that starting point, he would see that you met either Mr. Kennedy or Mr. Block or perhaps both when you are again in this part of the country. You may be assured that if I have any opportunities to do so, and I do know both Mr. Cook and Mr. Kennedy, I will pave the way as best I can.

Did you receive my letter of October 29th with which I enclosed a copy of Bert Metcalf's talk? What would you think of our sending a copy of it to Bill Johnson at Faith and Freedom to see if he is interested in printing it. Perhaps Jim Rogers article also might be interesting to Bill, with a little refinement.

If you did not receive a copy of this letter, I will send you another as I am rather curious to know what you think of the explanation which Jim Rogers and I gave to Metcalf and Jardine, as outlined in my letter.

Perhaps on about December 3rd when I will be in New York, I can come up to Irvington where we can discuss this at greater length if you are there at that time.

I almost fainted dead away a few mornings ago when I heard on the news that two of your good friends, Hutchinson of Chrysler and White of Republic Steel, had been mentioned by Taft, I believe, for Secretary of Defense, but, of course, this has since been delegated to General Motors' Wilson. My very best to you.

Cordially yours,

C. W. Anderson

C. W. Anderson
Executive Vice President

CWA:agr
Enc.

may
C.W. Anderson

November 28, 1952

Mr. C. W. Anderson
Executive Vice President
Associated Industries of the Quad-Cities
212 - 19th Street
Rock Island, Illinois

Dear Chet:

Thanks ever so much for your note of the 26th and the copy of your letter to Willard L. Anderson. I have read it this morning with the greatest of interest and appreciation. Your own evolution in the philosophy is not too different from my own. I'm going to pass your letter around to Harper and some of the others that they may see it too.

I appreciate your advices about Mr. Cook of Deere & Company, and enclose a copy of the letter I am writing him today. I hope you think this is all right.

I must apologize for not answering your letter of October 29th concerning E. S. Metcalf and Alex Jardine. My only excuse is that the work here has gotten the best of me, and this is one item I neglected to handle. I know I have your forgiveness. At the time of receiving it, I asked my associate, Doc Curtiss, to look it over, and also Mr. Metcalf's speech and give me his comments. Enclosed is his memo to me. His implied criticism of your sentence has some validity. In a way I think I would state the idea, which I believe you have in mind, in a different manner, but we can get to that when next we see each other.

Things are so rushed with me at present that I'm going to have to leave it to you and Jim Rogers to defend the Foundation with Messrs. Metcalf and Jardine with reference to our public school position -- or perhaps I should say "my public school position." Any worthwhile answer on that must await the writing of rather a lengthy piece which is presently engaging my attention. Perhaps by next spring I shall have something to show not only to you, but to them.

With reference to Bill Johnson, why do you not write him directly? I think that would be better than were I to write him for you.

Reverting back to the public education subject, I think that both you and Jim did a good job in explaining our position. I replied to a

Mr. C. W. Anderson

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November 28, 1952

critical question of this sort somewhat in the following manner: "I am not advocating anything. As an explanation of this, let us assume that the 75 in this room compose the society of the United States. Now let us assume that a majority or more of us understand the fallacy of rent control. Could there conceivably be rent control in our society? I think not. Therefore, all I am trying to do is to present to you my ideas that you also may consider them when forming your judgments on different subjects. There is a distinction between advocacy and education." As I read your letter, this is about what you and Jim were saying to our two friends in the educational field.

I am taking off from here Sunday and will not be back in the office except on Saturday, December 6th, until the 15th. Any chance of your coming up here on that Saturday? If not, make it a point to come up here anyway and see Harper and the others. Maybe you'll want to discuss with Curtiss his memo to me. I'm sorry, indeed, if I must miss seeing you.

My best!

Cordially,

Leonard E. Read

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H. C. THOMPSON, ROCK ISLAND
BIRTMAN ELECTRIC COMPANY

January 9, 1953

Mr. Leonard E. Read, President
Foundation For Economic Education, Inc.
Irvington-on-Hudson, New York

Dear Leonard:

I thought you might be interested to know that a few of your libertarian friends in Davenport instigated the enclosed statement of protest to the Davenport Chamber of Commerce.

My best to you.

Cordially yours,

Chet

C. W. Anderson
Executive Vice President

CWA:aqr
Enc.