

Dear Dave,

5/5/89

The enclosed Ben Wattenberg column, "Irving Brown's Cause," from today's Baltimore Sun, reminds me of our conversation in which I suggested that you would want to read Henry Beger's doctoral thesis at Madison. (I had not known that Brown had just died and I'm not a bit surprised at Wattenberg's neocon omissions in his epitaph.)

Henry, now professor of history at Washington College, St. Louis, is the son of our dear friend Ernest who for years had Frederick's only bookstore. When he was planning his thesis his formulation of which I now do not recall clearly and I was talking to him about it I suggested a reformulation of his basic concept into a study of the U.S. labor movement as an arm of foreign policy. He did that and to his father's chagrin refused several offers to publish it as a book. *(Ernie had asked me to counsel Henry)*

aside from reorienting his thinking I was able to help Henry by opening trade-union archives to him. Among these were those of the AFL-CIO. Brown represented it in Europe and Africa and the late Serapino Roumaldi in Latin America. George Meany's secretary, a fine woman named Virginia Tehas, was a customer when I farmed and it is she who opened those records up for Henry's study and use. I saw her every week and she thought Henry's study a good idea. I never discussed it in detail with her and I have no reason to believe she knew or asked what Henry believed and thought.

What Wattenberg avoids is that Brown and Roumaldi were, while working for the union, virtually adjuncts of the CIA and the State Department. There were successful in isolating those foreign unions that did not toe the US policy line. Roumaldi was a major factor in the overthrow of Cheddi Jagan in Guyana. *(In the end their boy, Forbes Burnham, had to shift pretty much to Jagan's position and as a result we never hear of him and Guyana any more.)*

Before the intrusions of military helicopters compelled us to cease our poultry operation and because I was a specialist in exceptional quality, there had come a time when, having heard of the fabled chickens of Bresse, I thought it might be a good idea to try raising them on the chance that they did have some genetic superiority as food. I was going to import 100 fertile eggs and hatch them and use those I retained as a breeding flock. Virginia offered to get the eggs here for me. She said she'd have Brown pick them up for a breeder and ship them - literally - in the diplomatic pouch! This reflects the actual relationship between the AFL-CIO and the State Department. *(God only knows what else may have been paunched!)*

I was not about to bypass the laws or try to and import regulations eliminated my Bresse project.

Henry never discussed with me why he refused to permit his thesis to appear as a book. The first reason he gave his father is that he did not have time for the required rewriting. But with the passing of time that was no longer a valid reason. I know he had at least one other book offer that he rejected. I also thought it a bit odd that he did not offer to let me read his thesis. While I do not know what actually motivated his decision not to permit it to appear as a book I am inclined to believe that once he was teaching history (his first job was at the University of Vermont and he later turned Dartmouth down to go to Washington) he decided that his thesis was too liberal.

If you can get the thesis I'd like to read it. I do not know of any other record of that aspect of labor and foreign policy at least for that period.

*Harold*

# Irving Brown's Cause

Balt. Sun

5/5/89

Washington.

**I**F IT REALLY IS the end of an era, if the Cold War really is over, we ought to ask: Why?

Part of the answer is Irving Brown, whose memorial service was

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By Ben Wattenberg

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held, appropriately, on May 1 — May Day — in the marble and mosaic grand lobby of the AFL-CIO headquarters in Washington.

Mr. Brown died in February of this year in Paris. He was 77. For four decades he represented the American trade union movement in Europe.

Many Americans do not know that American labor has a foreign policy and has been a potent player in American statecraft. Over the years that policy has generally been consistent and describable in straightforward phrases: "anti-fascist," "anti-communist," "anti-totalitarian," "pro-democracy."

There are many reasons, from patriotic to parochial, that labor is so concerned with foreign policy and so passionately pro-democracy. One reason, as AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland likes to say, is that, "We don't want to negotiate with an employer who also owns the police, the army, the courts and the atom bomb."

Irving Brown arrived in Europe as World War II was ending. The continent was destitute. Politically, only the communists were well organized. The Soviet Union had taken over the eastern half of Europe, and they were trying to gain influence in the western half. Their chosen instrument, their greatest potential prize, was the trade union movement. The communists knew that whoever spoke for the unions could credibly claim to speak for the workers. They knew that if they could capture control of unions, they could roll the waters of the West, for example, by subverting the Marshall Plan.

Backed with the authority and resources of American unions, Brown helped European unions fight communist doctrine and control. It was not an easy task. The European union movement came out of a leftist tradition of bitter class struggle and class consciousness alien to the American experience. Mr. Brown and his American colleagues

stressed that the biggest issues at stake went beyond left vs. right and on to the contest between free vs. non-free. In most European countries, through the toughest times of the Cold War, the communists were denied the domination they sought.

Later, Mr. Brown was influential in creating the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, which has worked globally to keep unions free and out of communist hands.

And so, in the course of time, the force of totalitarianism was stymied. Not, of course, by the trade union movement alone. There was allied military strength, a trillion dollars worth and more. There were courageous politicians of many democratic ideologies. There was the example of the fruits of a vigorous and often creative private business sector. But the unions were a prime target, and thanks in some large measure to American trade unionists like Irving Brown, the prize was denied to the oppressors.

Now, the tide of totalitarianism

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## Their greatest potential prize was the trade union movement.

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seems spent. They say it's the end of an era. If so, why? It is a long tale, with many tale-spinners, but let us remember that, in the first instance, totalitarianism foundered because it was prevented from succeeding.

At the memorial service, Mr. Kirkland spoke of the role of trade unionism in the new era: "For years a silent army has been assembling on the path (Brown) trod, but they are silent no more. . . . They have raised the banner of free trade unionism in Poland, and they are changing the course of history."

"In China they have taken to the streets. . . .demanding democracy. In Hungary they are forming independent trade union organizations. They have marched in the streets of South Korea and Chile. In South Africa they are tolling the death knell of apartheid. Wherever working people are rising from their knees and walking erect, they are choosing the path of Irving Brown."

Ben Wattenberg is a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and is author of "The Birth Dearth."

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