

January 19, 1955

Dear Dr. Rumely:

I am very grateful for your thoughtfulness in sending me Mr. Fairless' address which I read with great interest. I, of course, have always been a vigorous opponent of socialism and still am; I find myself now also concerned with the threat from the other side. I think that Carroll Reece's investigation was unfair and incompetent and did free enterprise of the mind a great deal of damage. I do not think we ought to argue free enterprise in economics without having intellectual free enterprise also, and yet I think there is no doubt that intellectual free enterprise is the target of many.

I wish also that the proponents of free enterprise would join with President Eisenhower in trying to get international free enterprise. The Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act is now before the Congress. As long as we are a creditor nation I do not see how we can permanently remain prosperous without expanding the area of free enterprise. Yet the United States Government has been laggard in this matter. It seems abundantly clear that we do not want any free enterprise competition from the Swiss in the matter of watches, but it is my firm belief that the protection given the American watch industry has allowed it to go to seed instead of maintaining that lively developmental attitude by which alone it could hope to succeed. I do not believe the Swiss are inherently that much smarter than we.

As you doubtless know, I am a strong believer in the kind of program that President Eisenhower is trying to put over. It seems to me that he is having about as much trouble from reactionaries as from socialists. Those of us who are not left-wingers and not right-wingers but in the middle of the road feel the squeeze from both sides. I have the strong feeling that if the ultra-conservatives continue to assault free enterprise of the mind, to run away from international free enterprise, and to insist on domestic programs which also cramp free enterprise we will be falling into the hands of the radicals sooner or later. I hope there is still some room in America for an old-fashioned liberal whose orientation goes back into the classical tradition of that great word which was so nearly ruined by the New Deal.

Sincerely yours,

Henry M. Wriston

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