

In Memoriam: Elizabeth Read Brown, 1902-1987

ELIZABETH READ BROWN, member of the editorial board of this JOURNAL, a lifelong crusader for social justice and an outstanding librarian, died on February 10, 1987 in Columbia, Missouri. She was 84 years old.

Beth, as she was known to a legion of friends and relatives, was born in Michigan and earned bachelor's degrees at East Michigan University and Western Reserve University. She trained for her profession at the University of Michigan, which awarded her a master's degree in library science.

From 1928 to 1953 she held positions in libraries in Royal Oak, Mich.; Michigan State University; Albion College; the University of Michigan and finally the University of Mississippi.

Her move to Mississippi marked a turning point in her career and personal life. Dr. Harry Gunnison Brown, professor emeritus of economics and former dean at the University of Missouri, Columbia, lectured for a time after retirement at the New School for Social Research in New York and then accepted an invitation to resume teaching at the University of Mississippi. A widower, he taught there until his second retirement at the age of 75. In Mississippi, carrying on his research, he met Elizabeth Read, who shared his enthusiasm for land value taxation and the work of Henry George, and they were married.

But Beth didn't settle for a life of sedentary bliss. On Harry's retirement from the Mississippi faculty, they went to Pennsylvania and lived at motels and hotels in one city after another, while they waged educational campaigns for the adoption of land value taxation. Today, thanks to their work, the work of Percy Williams and his collaborators and of Steven Cord, Walter Rybeck and their collaborators, seven Pennsylvania cities have adopted differential taxation, shifting part of the tax on improvements to land values.

Beth also collaborated with Harry on his research and publication and continued writing on her own account after his death. She published thirty-odd scholarly papers in economics, history and library science.

She campaigned before the State Legislature for more equitable taxation and for highway safety. Especially concerned for children crossing the street to and from school, she opposed widening one street successfully because it would have cut down the sidewalks dangerously. And she served until her final illness as a school crossing guard.

For her work the 83d General Assembly of the Missouri State Legislature unanimously adopted a resolution "applauding Beth Brown for the many fine contributions she has made to the overall betterment of our society."

The last 35 years of her life were enriched by the loving relationship she enjoyed with the family that was her wedding present. To them, and her many

friends at the Unitarian Universalist Church and in the faculty and student body of the University of Missouri, we extend our deep condolences. Beth, like Harry, made her life an important contributor to the wellbeing of her fellow citizens and to American culture. We shall miss her sorely.

WILL LISSNER

Identifying Political Movements

THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT, I think, that the Scandinavian countries are both democratic and socialist, the latter more or less. Radical liberals, like the present writer, may regard their socialist measures quizzically, but with great respect—their experience is priceless for avoiding mistakes in policy as well as failure to adopt worthwhile policy measures.

But no one can convince me that the Sandinista Government in Nicaragua is a democratic socialist one. For a country to admit Cuban secret policemen—the counterpart of Hitler's and Mussolini's secret police and the creation of the dreaded Soviet KGB—is to barter its sovereignty for 30 pieces of silver. Emil Lederer once tried to prove that against the modern State there can be no political revolution, no matter how nearly unanimous is its popular support. But historians remembered that Greece fell, and so did Rome. Yet it remains true that secret police terrorism is a tremendous obstacle to democratic progress.

That consideration, then, is a good test of a political movement. Has it abolished or placed under strict civilian control the secret police, permitted total freedom in political, religious and cultural belief and advocacy? Certainly the United States has special interests that would make this country imperialist if they could. Neither Americans, Canadians nor Mexicans have a right to tell the people of other countries what kind of economic policies they should adopt. If our investors don't like a country's policies, let them stay the hell out.

But all of us western hemisphere Americans have a right to warn the peoples of other nations that toleration of terrorist secret police is a danger to the peace of the world as well as human freedom, at home and abroad. No one can pose as a democrat who tolerates that institution. And every democrat knows that one's country's police forces must all be held strictly accountable to a free judiciary and public interest oriented institutions of justice.

WILL LISSNER