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31 May 1984

11 JUN 1984

Mr. Arthur Seldon  
Institute of Economic Affairs, Ltd.  
2 Lord North Street  
Westminster SW1P 3LB  
England

Dear Arthur:

Thanks for your follow-up letter dated 15 May. I still think it best if I do not contribute anything to the projected volume, since nothing I have done quite fits the bill here.

As for my own views on education, that I noted, we need to distinguish practice and ideals. Given the state monopoly as it exists, I surely support the introduction of vouchers. And I do support the state financing of vouchers from general tax revenues. However, although I know the evils of state monopoly, I also would want, somehow, to avoid the evils of race-class-cultural segregation that an unregulated voucher scheme might introduce. In principle, there is, after all, much in the "melting pot" notion of America. And there is also some merit in the notion that the education of all children should be a commonly shared experience in terms of basic curriculum, etc. We should not want a voucher scheme to reintroduce the elite that qualified for membership only because they have taken Latin and Greek classics. Ideally, and in principle, it should be possible to secure the beneficial effects of competition, in providing education, via voucher support, and at the same time, to secure the potential benefits of commonly shared experiences, including exposure to other races, classes, and cultures. In practice, we may not be able to accomplish the latter at all. But my main point is, I guess, to warn against dismissing the comprehensive school arguments out of hand and too readily.

All the best,

Sincerely,

Jim Buchanan

*I will reply  
on 3rd of June  
AJ  
12 June*

/bht