

AS: In reply to Memo 20.

Centre for Policy Studies

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Rt.Hon. Lord Seebohm
91 Waterloo Road
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5th June, 1975.

I have now had time to brood about your letter of 15th May and its enclosures. As you may know, your purpose coincides with that of this Centre. You wish - as we wish here - to do something very difficult, to transform the climate of opinion in this country. The problem is not whether it is necessary but how best to set about so ambitious a task.

We here are trying to operate on several different levels: studies, articles, lectures, debates and letters. We reckon it will take time and many many parallel activities before we begin to penetrate the relatively closed minds of school teachers, many university dons, many journalists and other opinion-formers.

Your paper - or rather the paper prepared by Carter and Roberts - covers the ground excellently and exposes a number of the real difficulties. We have produced a similar effort which is going to be published and distributed in the near future. I enclose a copy.

Over the last year, I have made a series of speeches - and I enclose a copy of a book just published containing them - and have given a series of presentations on social market policy to packed meetings at 15 universities. The speeches, which I do not suggest you read and which I send only as evidence of relative solidity, and the quite separate presentations at universities, have all had the purpose of contributing to an understanding of the proposition that the free enterprise system is the best way to harmonise freedom, prosperity and caring.

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To secure fuller understanding of the methods available to improve the standard of living, the quality of life and the freedom of choice of the British people, with particular attention to social market policies.

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The problem has always seemed to be to reach out to a larger audience with arguments that will carry conviction. It is relatively easy to make speeches - but who reads them. It is relatively easy to explain ideas to a university audience - I have only been shouted down twice though all the meetings have been extremely lively. But is this the best way to reach opinion-formers and to open their minds to the real choices and the implications of each?

That is the problem which you with your group and we here have to try to solve. Perhaps it would be a good idea if we, each with one or two companions, were to meet for a lunch or for a drink at the Embassy one afternoon to discuss ideas - and the extent to which we might collaborate. My secretary will phone yours to see whether the idea appeals to you - and if so will try to make a meeting either here or at your convenience.

Finally, you may like to know that the speeches and university presentations have aroused sufficient interest at least in the people who produce Panorama for them to devote an entire programme to the ideas in which we both believe. This programme is to be shown at the end of June. I hope that I shall be able to use it effectively.