

From: JOHN GUMMER

Copied to:
PM. SS. AMST
GUMMER

Ask
Mary

When Socialists talk about the State paying or the Government providing we have to remind them that there can be no payment and no provision unless the taxpayer produces the goods. All of us pay. All of us provide. Whether through income tax or VAT, excise duty or the tax on cars - we foot the bill for the public services. So they are our services not theirs. They belong to us all and are not there to be patronisingly dispensed by State agency or Town Hall.

Yet Socialist councils up and down the country behave as if public services were their own private property. Schools are there, not to provide the education the parents want but to promote the Council's political views on sex, race, peace, and society. Libraries exist, not to offer wider choice to the citizen who might not otherwise be able to afford it, but to offer instead that choice which the Council deems good for them. I see that Lewisham has decided to ban the works of Barbara Cartland! Now I cannot claim that, after a busy evening ~~reading~~ doing my Government boxes, I often turn to Miss Cartland's works. But what's it to Lewisham if I did? Or do they believe that only those ^{of us} who can afford to buy her books can have the choice?

← Is not the real fact that when we are forced to depend upon Socialists for public services, we soon find that they cease to be our services and become theirs.

Socialists like us to be dependent. It increases their influence as it reduces our freedom. Remember how they fought to keep as many people as tenants of the council as possible.. Remember how they battled against the Right to Buy. They'd much preferred us all to be tenants so we all could depend upon them.

Remember too how the Socialists' fight against privatisation. They hate the share-owning democracy. They hate it because it is real public ownership. They hate it because it puts Britain's

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industries out of their hands and into the hands of the people. And it puts them there for ever!

Now, of course, they have a new battle on their hands. They are going to fight tooth and nail to keep control of education. They hate the idea that the parents should choose. After all, Socialists know that they know better! In Ealing and Manchester, in Liverpool and Inner London, Labour councils have used the education system to advance their views of society. They have bitterly opposed all that we have already done to increase choice and extend opportunity. Now we will face them with the biggest change of all. We want a permanent shift in the control of education ^{we want to put education} into the hands of the consumer. We want parents to have real choice. We want schools to be able to plan their own future. Above all, we want to raise the standards of education by making it much more responsive to the needs of the children and the demands of the wider world.

This is another giant step in building a Conservative society.

[Education is far too important to be left to the educationalists. It is the people's right. And it is right that the people should choose.] Once it was only the rich who could afford to choose. In education, as in everything else, choice was the prerogative of the minority. It is the continuing Conservative crusade to spread that privilege of choice to the majority. Once, only a tiny percentage of families could decide to buy their own home. Now it is within the means of the majority. Once there were only a few who owned shares. Now, eight million people have a stake in Britain's future. More and more of our fellow countrymen and women have the freedom and independence which comes from ownership. We are dismantling the ~~dependent state and building the free society.~~

Singapore

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So let no-one say that there isn't much left for this Government to do. There's no chance of any coasting - long while I'm Prime Minister! When Parliament reassembles, we'll be starting on a major programme of radical reform.

Privatisation continues apace. After BP comes water and electricity. And there's much more to come after that. All that is crucial to the industrial future of Britain is much better in the hands of the people of Britain. And what an amazing example we have given the world. Privatisation features in countries as far apart as Togo and the People's Republic of China. In the United States and in France, in Tanzania and in Senegal, governments are following our example. It is the spring-tide of the people's capitalism which is sweeping away the remnants of marxist socialism.

I have no doubt too that our housing policies will repay a little imitation too. We have done so much to give people the chance to buy - now we must ensure that they also have the chance to rent. There will always be those for whom renting is the preferred course. Yet how narrow their choice now is. Our Rent Acts have discouraged private landlords from letting and socialist council-housing has left us with no-go estates, hard-to-let Tower blocks, and run down housing stock. This year we shall begin the reform of rented housing so that more people will have the chance to choose to rent privately. We shall give the Housing Associations a real opportunity to provide a wider range of accommodation to let. We shall give Council tenants much more control over their own estates and we shall promote new ways of improving run-down rented property. We want to give those who want to be tenants the chance to choose to rent.

And if that's not enough for Nicholas Ridley's Department - he'll also be bringing fairness and sense to the Rating system. At long last the absurdities and inequities of our outdated ~~system~~ local taxation will be replaced. Every adult will bear his share of the cost of local services. That's why it's properly called the Community Charge. Up to now most of the Community has benefitted from services for which only some of the community have paid. And

payment has been tied neither to use nor to ability to pay. We promised to abolish domestic rates and we shall carry out our promise. Of course the Socialists are opposed. They have ^{the time} ~~promised~~ to make this issue their great campaign for this Parliament. The trouble is - they haven't yet thought of an alternative. They have nothing to propose in its place. They oppose the present system, they oppose the Community Charge, they oppose the national Business Rate - how lucky we are they're so wedded to opposition!



From John Gummer

EDUCATION

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Yet ^{Such} any notion ^{of morality} ~~of morality~~ ^{requires.} entails opportunity. Men and women can only ^{reach to their best} ~~be fully themselves~~ when they can exercise choice.

It is therefore a central part of our Conservative belief that we should extend choice beyond the narrow confines of the privileged and make it available to all. Education plays a crucial role in that task.

It is because we believe in the dignity of human beings and the importance a job makes to achieving a decent standard of living, that we are determined to do our utmost to see that each child leaving school has been prepared to the best of their ability for the challenge of work.

That is what has led to the national curriculum, the objective testing of children, and the encouragement of higher standards in our schools. Yet we have an equally important priority - the extension of parental choice.

and my father who we have

~~yet~~ The hard Left hate the idea that the parents should choose. After all, Socialists know that they know better! In Ealing and Manchester, in Liverpool and Inner London, Labour councils have used the education system to advance their views of society. They have bitterly opposed all that we have already done to increase choice and extend opportunity. ^{I believe} ~~Education is far too important to be left to the educationalists. It is the people's right. And it is right that the people should choose.~~

We are therefore about to take a dramatic step forward in extending choice in education. Not only have we kept the range of choice by maintaining the rich and varied private sector in schools, which Labour would have destroyed, we are now about to create a third sector. This is the self-governing state school which, by the democratic decision of the parents, can be voted out of the grip of the ~~hard left~~ and placed in the loving hand of those who care for and serve it. These Independent State Schools are an entirely new concept. They can become the Etons of the people. Nothing that we have done, or shall do, so clearly embodies the Conservative idea of choice.

It is not in the interests of parents or children or employers that education should be the monopoly of local government or that all schools should be as equal and comprehensive as possible. This "like it or lump it" attitude is a recipe for drabness, uniformity, low standards and control by experts. How do we know? Because we have tried it for nearly twenty years. And it has been a resounding failure.

There is no reason on earth why local authorities should have a monopoly of free education. What point of principle suggests this is right, what point of recent experience or practice suggests it is sensible.

Indeed everything we have learnt since the war suggests that Britain must find a new way forward in education.

Few things are more alarming for the future of this country than the international comparisons that have been made of attainment among young people in Britain and abroad. If our education is backward today, our national performance will be backward tomorrow.

To compete more successfully in tomorrow's world - with Japan and Germany, with the United States and the newly emerging countries of the Pacific - we shall need a well educated, well trained, creative, fast thinking workforce.

In the 1990s the problem gets sharper. The number of teenagers will fall. But there will be no drop in the number of qualified men and women we need. So we shall either have to raise standards in schools - or lower them in universities and polytechnics.

Yet it is the plight of individual boys and girls, rather than our national problems, which most worries me.

In the last few years, we have seen disadvantage heaped on the shoulders of those youngsters in our inner cities who should be helped by their education to escape into a better future. Extremist education authorities and extremist teachers have failed to give those young people the education they need. They have stuffed their heads with dangerous nonsense.

Children who needed to be able to count and multiply and operate a computer keyboard have learnt non-racist mathematics, whatever that may be.

Children who needed to be able to express themselves orally, and in writing, in clear English have been taught to mouth political slogans.

Children who needed to be able to respect the values of life have been taught their inalienable right to be gay.

Those children have been cheated - wickedly cheated - of their just claim to a sound start in life.

An we should not only be worried about the most seriously injured casualties in our schools. For too many of our young, we have tolerated the second or third best, the slap-dash, the 'so what' culture. Every good teacher, and every good school, is a reminder of what too many young people are denied.

Curran

EDUCATION

Yet any such notion requires opportunity. Men and women can only reach to their best if they can exercise choice.

② The hard left - and, my goodness, they are hard - hate the idea that people should be able to choose. In particular, they hate the idea that parents should be able to choose their children's education.

After all, Socialists know that they know better! In Ealing and Manchester, in Liverpool and Inner London, Labour councils have used the education system to advance their views of society.

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Those children have been cheated - wickedly cheated - of their just claim to a sound start in life.

And we should not only be worried about the most seriously injured casualties in our schools. For too many of our young, we have tolerated the second or third best, the slap-dash, the "so what" culture.

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So I believe that our most important task in this Parliament is to raise the quality of education in our schools. First, by establishing a National Core Curriculum. This will set standards which pupils will be expected to achieve in English, maths and science. Progress will be tested at every stage so that parents, and the children themselves, can see how well they are doing and where additional help may be needed.

It is vital that all children master basic skills: reading, writing, spelling, grammar, arithmetic and geometry; vital that they understand technology and basic science; and vital that they have the challenge of well-designed homework.

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Of course, there are, across the whole of the country, plenty of excellent teachers and successful schools. But they act as a reminder of what too many young people are denied - especially in some of our inner cities.

Mr President, why should these parents be told simply to "Like it or Lump it"? Why should parents be denied the right to choose what they think is best for their children?

Why should local authorities have a monopoly of free education? What point of principle suggests this is right?

Where is the evidence which suggests it is sensible?

As Conservatives, we believe parents have the right to choose. And so in this Parliament, we are taking a dramatic step forward in extending choice in education.

~~So far that is~~

Keeping the independent private schools, which Labour would have destroyed is not enough. So we are now about to create a new sector of independent state schools - by allowing parents to vote democratically to take their children's school out of the hands of the local authority into the hands of parents and teachers. And in many cases, out of the hands of the hard

left and into the loving hands of those who care for the school and serve it.

These independent state schools are an entirely new concept. Out of them can come the Etons of the people. Nothing that we have done, or shall do, so clearly embodies the Conservative idea of choice.

Mr President, the parents I know yearn for their children to have the discipline of learning and standards of achievement so that they can develop their talents to the full. It is the hope of every parent and the right of every child. In education, as elsewhere, we are extending opportunity wider and still wider. And nowhere is this more needed than in our inner cities.