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Public Funds for Private Schools

Review Author: James J. Meany

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Since the teaching function of the school is an "instrument," it must have its own proper effect. The author explains that this proper effect of the teaching function is *the production of knowledge*: "Left to itself, this is all that human teaching, properly speaking, does..."

In thus explaining the instrumental role of the school in education, the author seems to admit that the strictly academic activity of a school has for its proper end *intellectual formation*. Thus, it seems to this reviewer, there is no real difference between the author's view and that of the "intellectualists." This impression is confirmed by the practical applications of his doctrine which the author makes with regard to the curriculum of the Catholic school. They would satisfy the most ardent of intellectualists.

Let us say that the proximate end of a school's strictly academic activity is the intellectual formation of the student. The proximate end of the school as a whole, and the remote end of the academic activity, is the development of all the student's gifts and capabilities. The remote end of the school is Christian perfection. The ultimate end is God supernaturally attained. Such a view—by no means original—would not be out of conformity with Papal doctrine on the end of education. Would there be a real difference between it and the doctrine of our author, and between it and the view of the "intellectualists"? This reviewer confesses that after many readings of the book, he is not certain.

JAMES J. MEANY

PUBLIC FUNDS FOR PRIVATE SCHOOLS

PUBLIC FUNDS FOR PRIVATE SCHOOLS IN A DEMOCRACY.
Theory and Practice in Fifty-one Countries. By Benigno Benabarre, O.S.B., Ph.D. Manila. M.C.S. Enterprises. 1958. Pp. xvii, 325.

An earlier, mimeographed edition of this book was reviewed in this Quarterly two years ago (Vol. 5, No. 1, pp. 104-105). Its appearance in a printed edition, revised and improved, is an event worth attention. A long list of errata—and not complete, at that—appears in the front of the book. It would be unfortunate if this should discourage the prospective reader. Except for these lapses of the printer or proof-reader, there is every indication of careful thoroughness in the preparation of the work.

In Part I, Father Benabarre gives solid proof that in a democracy each student in a private school should receive from public funds an amount of financial assistance towards his education equal to the amount spent per student in government schools. The public funds would not be used to defray the expenses of the student's religious education, but of his secular (civic and scientific) education which, in the supposition, would conform to the academic standards required in the government schools. Such a system would eliminate the "double taxation" which parents suffer in the exercise of their natural right to provide for their children the type of education which they prefer. It would enable the citizens of the democracy truly to exercise their freedom of religion, thought, enterprise and association.

Part II describes educational practice in fifty-one countries with regard to the use of public funds for private school education. In the great majority of these countries, the state gives some financial assistance to private schools. Justice is done, or at least closely approximated, particularly in the countries of the British Commonwealth and in Denmark, Holland, Belgium, Eire and Indonesia.

The Constitution of the Philippines says that "the natural right and duty of parents in the rearing of the youth for civic efficiency should receive the aid and support of the Government" (Article XIII, Section 5). In view of this Article, collated with the Constitution's guarantee of man's other inalienable rights, one would expect a favorable "climate" in the Philippines for the doctrine advocated by Father Benabarre. Actually, the opposite seems to be the case. A possible explanation of this phenomenon might lie in the fact that, of the other fifty countries treated in the book under review, Spain and the United States give least support to their private schools. Perhaps that is why the concept is so foreign to the Philippines. It must be admitted, however, that in the United States the proponents of a just system have recently been gaining ground. For example, there are now approximately 40 bills pending in the U.S. Congress which would provide that a large percentage of the amounts paid as tuition or fees to an institution of higher education should be applied as a tax credit against the taxpayer's income tax bill. This trend towards "aid and support" of parents' rights is a hopeful one.

Not mentioned by Fr. Benabarre — he shows remarkable restraint in eschewing explicit local application — is a plan similar to his, proposed in the Philippines shortly before World War II. In its radio broadcasts on the "Catholic Hour," the Chesterton Evidence Guild promoted the "Per Capita System" whereby private schools in the Philippines would receive an amount of government subsidy proportionate to the number of students enrolled, the amount *per capita* being equal to that spent from public taxes for the education of students in the pu-

blic schools. These broadcasts have been published in pamphlet form. One of them, entitled *Article XIII, Section 5*, is particularly useful for its exposition of the constitutionality of the system proposed by Fr. Benabarre.

In the many countries which use public funds for private schools, the private schools which wish to accept this assistance, must in exchange submit to government regulation and supervision. The author might have stressed this more than he does. It is true, however, that this caution is of no practical necessity in the Philippines. So great is the amount of government control now exercised over the non-supported private schools that it would scarcely be possible to devise more controls in the unexpected event that the state should decide to offer financial assistance.

In the Epilogue to Fr. Benabarre's book, Justice Roberto Concepcion points out some of the financial difficulties in the implementation of the doctrine expounded by the author. For these reasons it is unlikely that such a plan will be implemented in the near future. But the book can accomplish this immediate good: it can persuade the fair-minded reader, if not to aid and support the private schools, at least not to put obstacles in their way. The book is highly recommended to all educators, legislators and molders of public opinion.

JAMES J. MEANY