

Mr. Anthony Fisher,
1750 Taylor St., Apt 1101,
San Francisco,
Calif 94133

1 January 1980

Dear Anthony,

I entirely agree with you that the time has come when it has become desirable and almost a duty to extend the network of institutes of the kind of the London Institute of Economic Affairs. Though it took some time for its influence becoming noticeable, it has by now far exceeded my most optimistic hopes. And at least some of the institutes that you have more recently created, especially the Canadian one, prove that this was not mere special luck in finding unusually able people to run it, but that when repeated, the experiment promises equal success.

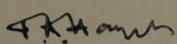
What I argued thirty years ago, that we can beat the Socialist trend only if we can persuade the intellectuals, the makers of opinion, seems to me more than amply confirmed. Whether we can still win the race against the expanding Socialist tide depends on whether we can spread the insights, which prove much more acceptable to the young if rightly expounded than I had hoped, fast and wide enough. As I keep saying, I am optimistic in the sense that if the politicians do not destroy the world in the next twenty years, I am sure then a new and less misguided generation will be able to take charge. But I am no longer sure that we have twenty years: while the growing understanding of the young makes me hopeful, what I see happen in politics makes me most apprehensive about the next ten years or so.

The future of civilisation may really depend on whether we can catch the ear of a large enough part of the upcoming generation of intellectuals all over the world fast enough. And I am more convinced than ever that the method practiced by the London Institute is the only one which promises any real results.

Sometimes I feel that what is really missing most is an understanding on the part of the capitalists themselves of the merit of what they are doing and the danger which they and with them we are all facing. They seem to share with the socialists the belief that it is a battle of interests and not a battle of intellectual arguments which guide social evolution. The attempts to appeal to the mass by propaganda in which they can sometimes be interested are futile. No system or systematic propaganda can undo the effects of the preaching of three to four generations of journalists, teachers and literary people who have honestly believed in socialism. It is only through that class we can hope to influence majority opinion.

I have sometimes despaired that this can be done at all. But the influence which it now appears thirty years' work of the Institute of Economic Affairs has achieved has made me again more optimistic. In building up that institute and trying the technique elsewhere you have developed a technique by which more has been achieved in the right direction than in any other manner. This ought to be used to create similar institutes all over the world and you have now acquired the special skill of doing it. It would be money well spent if large sums could be made available for such a concerted effort. If this letter can help you in any way in such endeavours, you are of course free to use it in any manner you think desirable. Your efforts will certainly have my blessings.

With kind regards and best greetings of the season, cordially yours,


F. A. Hayek