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3 pages

ZACK:

The argument for choice depends absolutely on understanding why the present system does not . . . can not . . . do the job.

My own explanation of 'why' is on its way to you separately: the memo "Why the States Will Have to Withdraw the Exclusive".

But Shanker makes essentially the same point in this talk: the 'nothing at stake' idea.

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I don't know what you'll get out of Al. He knows the problem. But his role as president of the AFT constrains him from a public challenge to the system. In private and semi-private sessions (like the one where I got these notes) he will say things that you can use. He's giving you the hint, in effect, where the answer lies. But if you put him on the public record he will defend the system.

Skillful questioning might get him as far as agreeing:

Yes, choice has a role. (It makes something 'at stake'.)

It might be OK if it were for the at-risk.

The 'charter' idea could be good for teachers, and OK if, again, it were focused on the at-risk.

It'd be OK in a charter school if the teachers weren't employees and therefore didn't do collective bargaining. They could work as 'partners'; joint owners. (I know this because Al told me.)

There probably is a difference between non-public school and private education.

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It's hard to convey understanding on TV. I did a local version of Washington Week on PBS here for seven years. I once laid out an idea for a series on education. ~~Here's a copy.~~ (KTCA never did it, by the way.) You can show lazy road workers and corrupt building inspectors and brutal cops but you can never show un-caring teachers. (As soon as the camera comes in the room, it changes.) More important, it's just not done. The only really safe thing is to call for 'more resources'. *Good luck!*

is on its way.