

was to trim the fat, hold the line, and wait for the next onslaught of socialism that would carry the ball ever closer to the 100-yard line of 100 percent government. These were the policies of the Eisenhower, Nixon, and Reagan administrations, and the fact—staring us in the face—the fact of their utter failure even to slow the advance, much less reverse the progress, of socialism tells us everything we need to know about the futility of such Fabian tactics.

Most contemporary conservatives—all honorable men—assume there is enough health in the American body politic to make it worth preserving. They are wrong. It is not conservative temperaments that are needed in the coming struggle, but radicals who are willing to change things root and branch. For this reason I prefer to speak of the right or the right wing, not so much because it indicates a movement of opposition to the left, but because what we are upholding is the right, now and forever.

If we wish to be honest with ourselves, there are only two choices. We can be either Jacobins or Jacobites, communists or Christians. There is no Anglican via media between God and the devil. You must take your stand and make the best of it, and if you choose not to choose—that is, if you wish to be neo-conservative, neoliberal, fusionist conservative, or Tory Wet—then you have consigned yourselves to those suburbs of hell Dante reserved for the angels who could not make up their minds which side they were on.

To fight against the politics of Kant and his universal duty, we need the politics of Aristotle, who tells us that justice and friendship are coextensive, that if we do what is right because it is commanded, we act out of fear, and that we can only be just if we act out of love toward people we know. Aristotle's greatest student, St. Thomas, puts the question very clearly. Rather than lavish our wealth on the evil—criminals, drug addicts, child molesters, AIDS-stricken homosexuals, unwed mothers, and vagrants—Thomas tells us that we should will the greatest good to those who are closest to God. On the other hand, our charitable responsibilities are also proportional to the degree of affinity: "In what concerns nature we should love our kinsmen most. . . and we are more closely bound to provide them with necessities of life."

The entire welfare state of public schools, Social Security, AFDC, enterprise zones, food stamps, even foreign aid is built on the opposite premise. The more evil a man is—or as we should say, ethically challenged—the more money he receives; and each of us, through taxes, is compelled to divert wealth and resources away from family and friends and into the pockets of strangers and those who claim to minister to their needs. These are not policy questions or problems for a cost/benefit analysis. Welfare programs represent the systematic organization of evil, hell institutionalized on earth, and we must begin to fight them on moral and theological grounds.

But if our American education is too limited for Latin and Greek, if Aristotle and Thomas are both too difficult, we have other resources on which to build a conservative rejection of the welfare state. A recent bogus best-seller was a piece of nonsense entitled *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*. This title might have made sense, if children were still taught the proverbs and Mother Goose rhymes that formed our grandparents' character.

The answer to national health care is the old saw that an apple a day keeps the doctor away, or early to bed, early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise—which is to say, take

care of your health and welfare by working hard and living properly. To the calls for consumer protection, I say unto you, "A fool and his money are soon parted." And to the whole panoply of New Deal welfare-state policies and dreams, I offer: "If wishes were horses, beggars would ride; if turnips were watches, I'd wear one by my side; and if if's and an's were pots and pans, there'd be no work for tinkers." Finally, to Kant and Rousseau's dream of universal philanthropy, consider this wisest bit of proverbial wisdom: "Charity begins at home."

These are simple home truths, not the lies and distortions that we pretend to believe. We must begin the reformation of the country by first reforming ourselves, and the place to start is to call things by their right names. Managed competition and empowerment are both nothing less than socialism, and much that flies the conservative flag these days would have been called communism even in the 1950's.

As Confucius realized, "ancients who wished to demonstrate virtue throughout the world would first govern their own states well. Wishing to govern their own states well, they would first regulate their families. Wishing to regulate their families, they would first cultivate their own persons. Wishing to cultivate their own persons, they would first rectify their hearts. Wishing to rectify their hearts, they would first seek sincerity in their thoughts"—this last item is explained as allowing no self-deception. Calling a spade a spade. Here, over 2,000 years ago, is an outline of the only welfare policy an Old Right conservative can believe in. c

Past Life Regression

by Katherine McAlpine

Granted my present life is quite enough to deal with, what am I doing here with fourteen other fruitcakes, lying on the floor deep-breathing, making like I believe this stuff? "You are at peace, in perfect harmony. . . ." Taped ocean whooshes as the hypnotist tells us to visualize a silver mist and then step through it, into . . . Suddenly I'm nudged awake, curtly informed I snored straight through everyone else's scenic jaunts to Greece, Atlantis, and galactic haunts. Chalk up another party-poop award. "Some souls," I'm told, "are still earth-bound and less ready to make the journey." Yeah, I guess.

From Health Care to Discrimination

by Garrett Hardin



Igor Kopolnitsky

As we try to improve our lives with a national health care plan we must not forget the “law of unintended consequences” to which Robert Merton alerted us in 1936. Two examples illustrate the danger. Few people foresaw that federal support for poor mothers with dependent children would contribute to the breakup of black families, but it did. Nor did people foresee that rent control would contribute to the trashing of cities, but it did.

With those failures in mind, what can we say about the possible unintended consequences of well-intended health care legislation? I suggest that one of the most important consequences will be this: we will be forced to reexamine the word “discrimination” and the actions that result from it. Lest I be misunderstood, let me say that the attack on race discrimination made in the 60’s was by no means a mistake. Far from it. But the condemnation of discrimination has extended far beyond that early application. A national health care system can succeed only if discrimination—appropriate, defensible discrimination—is made an integral part of it.

The need for discrimination is most apparent in the application of medicine to the far end of life. Medicine has not “conquered death,” nor does it seem either desirable or likely that it ever will. But modern medicine has certainly postponed our deaths and increased their costs. Even worse, delaying mor-

tality with fancy medicine too often increases the suffering of the dying. A jungle of high-tech apparatus can keep life going long after the possibility of enjoying it has been lost.

The cost in money can be monumental. A few months of heroic medicine can cost more than all the medical care received during the preceding years. If being given the most expensive terminal care were made the “right” of all—and if most people availed themselves of this right—a national health care system would soon be bankrupt.

Those who reject high-tech medicine, allowing life to end naturally, are often accused of “playing God.” But how can the critics be so sure that God delights in seeing a human being suffer the indignity of having tubes stuffed up his nose while a heart stimulator and a breathing apparatus take over his most vital functions? Syringes drip medicines and nutrients into the veins; king-size diapers take care of the incontinent mid-section; speech is often impossible, the “beneficiary” indicating his wants by blinking his eyes, assuming he can hear what is asked of him.

Americans rightly fear yielding power to the state, but in some matters the trend runs the other way. The law used to prevent anything that looked like suicide, even if it was no more than passively withholding medicine that would prolong a painful life. In recent years the Hemlock Society has made notable progress in getting the public to see the justice of not forcing terminally-ill people to endure avoidable suffering. More and more elderly people are now signing “living wills,” which limit the medical care to be given at the end of life. Once people decide that refusing expensive and unwanted artificial

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