

ON SETTING CLOCKS
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The passage of the Medicare bill by the House was hailed by the *Atlanta Constitution* as a great stride forward toward the fulfillment of the objectives of the Great Society. To uncritical liberal followers, it was the greatest piece of social legislation passed in decades. In the political cartoons and editorials attendant on this news, the *Constitution* could not resist needling the doctors and the American Medical Association for their “sorry” record of obstructionism. The medical profession was pictured as sweating uncomfortably, and apprehensively awaiting the worst. The implications of this smug reporting are that the liberal and socialist viewpoint has been right all along, that the doctors have been wrong all along, that finally justice and reason have triumphed, and now the medical profession is about to reap the consequences of its stupidity.

That we have lost a major battle should be evident to all in the profession; and it is also evident that we have been moved a step closer to the federalization of all medical services. Organized and disorganized medicine must now adjust to the situation in the best manner possible. But that the liberal socializers have been right all along is not proved at all, any more than the Japanese ideology was proved right when it devastated the U.S. Navy and Pearl Harbor at the onset of World War II. What has been proved is the political power of the President; that his control of the legislative branches of government has increased to an extent that whatever program the Johnson administration chooses to sponsor is virtually certain to be enacted.

Since the present Democratic administration seems committed to welfare statism and a socialistic approach to government, the liberal element is understandably content to support its legislation and applaud its victories. Although the motives of some liberals may be suspect, most of them are sincere in their dedication to the cause of improving the lot of humanity in general and the underprivileged in particular. We admire their sincerity, their dedication, and most of their goals, but we do not always feel that their methods and solutions are the correct ones. We are annoyed, too, at times, by their intolerance and by their apparent assumption that the liberal thinker has a monopoly on intelligence, wisdom and altruism. However, we cannot find it in our hearts to classify all liberals as Left-Wing Extremists in the same manner that they often classify those with conservative beliefs as Right-Wing Extremists, even though there may be equal or greater reasons for doing so.

In regard to the complacent liberal assumption that federal control of medicine will improve the health of the nation, and provide better medical service to the elderly and underprivileged than now exists, there is much evidence at home and abroad to the contrary. One needs only to review the history of the National Health Service in Great Britain to realize this. The problems created by the socialization of medicine are endless, and they progress with mounting cost and complexity until everyone – doctors, patients, taxpayers, bureaucrats and government officials – is dissatisfied.

The recent wrangles, threatened walkouts and strikes in Canada, Great Britain, France, Belgium and Italy all testify to this. If there were any evidence that the ordinary people of any of these nations enjoy better health or better medical services than we do in this country, there might be some justification for federal control of medicine here, even with all of the problems that would ensue. But such is not the case. It is difficult to understand the blind unreason of the liberal reformers who would have us discard a functioning and comparatively efficient system of medical care with admitted inadequacies, and adopt an inefficient, expensive and failing system of socialized medicine with even more inadequacies.

Similarly, the ridiculous pretension by the liberals that nothing in this era can be considered “true progress” unless it follows the path of expanding central control by government and increasing reform by social legislation – in other words, increasing socialization – is not based on sound observation and experience. To any suggestion that federal governmental power should be curtailed and its control decreased, the true liberal will throw up his hands in mock horror and reply in patient condescension with his pat and pet cliché that you cannot hope to turn back the clock of history.

The liberal today is overwhelmed by urbanization, awed by automation, frightened by population, incensed by segregation, in love with integration, and content with his own evaluation that no one is better qualified to cope with any situation than himself. Because a problem seems complicated to him, he proceeds on the basis that the solution necessarily must be more complicated. With examples of floundering socialism on all sides of him, his solution is not to eliminate some unworkable aspect, but to prop it up by adding more complicated and unworkable socialization to it. In other fields of endeavor this is known as compounding one’s error, but to the bubbleheaded liberal it is always “a significant step forward in our progress toward social reform.” Time out for nausea.

Except in the small countries, and particularly those with a homogeneous population of similar heritage, socialism has been not only ineffective, but has adversely affected the nations employing it as a form of government. Only those smaller nations, content with their isolation and unimportance as international powers, seem to be able to function adequately under what our liberal dreamers like to call “enlightened socialism.” We fail to see what benefits the more socialistic forms of government have brought to the larger countries of Europe, like England, Spain, France, Italy and Germany. Since the time of social upheaval in the 18th century that saw the founding of our nation, and the establishment of republican forms of government in western Europe, each nation embracing socialism has seen its fortunes decline. Many have experienced breakdowns in government, dictatorships, civil wars, blood purges and mass killings. Each has suffered turmoil, devastation and war. All have become progressively weakened to the point where today they are dismissed as second-class powers.

In contrast, the United States, pursuing its version of a republican form of government with emphasis on individualism, property rights and free enterprise, has prospered and emerged as an all-important international power. Though we have used some of the concepts of socialism to good advantage, it has been our free enterprise, capitalism, and restricted form of representative government that have brought us to this position, and not socialism. The complexity of society notwithstanding, there are no valid reasons why we should discard a successful system of government and change to even “enlightened socialism,” as most liberal planners would have us do, and as we have been doing with increased momentum for the last thirty-odd years.

Socialism does work, of course, as an effective form of government. There is no reason to doubt that it does, since Communist Russia, that aggregation of cooperative Soviet Socialist Republics, has also emerged as the other all-important international power. And soon, Red China will emerge as still another. Socialism followed to its logical conclusion is eminently successful only when it is carried on by the methods of Russia and China. Adolf Hitler also understood this. Socialism demands a dictatorship, whether it be by individual, Reichstag, Presidium or ruling class; it demands class distinction and privilege; and, unlike democracy, it demands civil obedience and suppression of dissent.

It seems incredible that the sincere liberals, with their bleeding hearts and compassion for the masses, could admire the methods of socialism. We are sure that not one of them would have us sacrifice a few million underprivileged intellectuals, capitalists and non-conformists to the firing squads and labor camps in order that we may enjoy the full pleasure of socialism in the manner of the Russians and Chinese.

It may be that socialism as practiced in Communist countries is the solution to all mankind’s problems. It may well be that in another indefinite period of years, all of us here will be living under true socialism. In truth, socialism, like Utopia, may be wonderful – when you get there. But we doubt that getting there is half the fun.

So, when our liberal friends tell us that the socialization of medicine is a great step forward, and that we should not hope to turn back the clock of history, we reply with an uncertain, “perhaps.” If someone is determined to drop the clock of history in our lap, chances are we would feel safer turning it back. Setting it forward could be more dangerous: Doomsday may be just minutes ahead.