

Too Healthy to Play

July 27, 2018

Republicans are very reliable. When given our system's "Mandate of Heaven" — majorities in both houses of Congress and the Presidency — they can be relied upon to do one thing: add debt by piling up huge deficits.

It happened under George W. Bush, and it is happening under Donald J. Trump: "The Trump administration expects annual budget deficits to rise nearly \$100 billion more than previously forecast in each of the next three years," the *Wall Street Journal* tells us, "pushing the federal deficit above \$1 trillion starting next year."

Republicans should ask themselves *why*. And while they ask themselves that, everyone else should ask

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the *next* question: why do politicians who say they want one thing so often deliver its opposite?

This is not a mere "right-wing" phenomenon. Leftists say they want "democratic socialism," but, as Irving Kristol noted, at some point not far down their road to Utopia, "democratic socialists" must choose



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between democracy and socialism.* By promising everybody everything, too quickly everybody gets shanghaied into service to produce that "everything," finding themselves conscripts in socialism's army.

The equation of socialism with regimentation and general un-freedom has been clear for over a century, explained carefully by sociologists, economists and even politicians.* And yet, increasingly, today's Democrats are embracing a philosophy with proven anti-democratic features.

Could some deep principle be at play?

Probably. It is built into the very nature of state governance, of politics itself. It may be why republics metamorphose into empires, conservatives go radical and liberals become serviles.

Which is why effective democracy requires *limited* government. To minimize that boomerang effect.

We might start by limiting spending.

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.

* Herbert Spencer's writings on socialism include **The Man versus the State** (1884) and **Industrial Institutions** (1896, **Principles of Sociology**, Vol. III, Part VIII); German politician Eugene Richter's satire **Pictures of the Socialist Future** (1896) is well worth reading; and economist Yves Guyot preceded Ludwig von Mises' classic **Die Gemeinwirtschaft** (1922, translated as **Socialism: An Economic and Sociological Analysis**, 1950) with several books, including **The Tyranny of Socialism** (1893) and **Socialistic Fallacies** (1910).