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Profiles In Irrelevance

By Robert Gore, *Financial Editor*



When electroshock revives a heart attack victim, nobody pretends the resuscitation has cured the patient, it has only prevented him from dying. The heart attack may have been caused by overeating, smoking, stress, drinking, or lack of exercise. The physician will prescribe various drugs, but a true cure requires dramatic lifestyle changes and perhaps counseling to understand why the patient engages in self-destructive behavior.

A good portion of the American electorate wants to administer electroshock to a bloated, sclerotic government. A smaller percentage recognize that the patient's symptoms will be terminal absent drastic and immediate changes. A relative handful are interested in diagnosing the philosophical and intellectual root causes responsible for the morbid deterioration.

Hillary Clinton is the embodiment of the disease, the obese grotesquerie who fills two trays at the all-you-can-eat buffet and goes back for seconds, thirds, desserts, and multiple refills of the Diet Coke. She has never met a domestic program or a foreign war she didn't embrace, and the chance that she would shrink the government's girth and power is infinitesimal. The corpulent state has made her and her husband quite wealthy and rewarded their cronies. Hillary and her party stand for nothing more than

more: government, power, and corruption. Any noises she might make about curbing the government are just that—noise—the Diet Coke washing down the feast.

That's not to say that the other party is any less committed to more government. While it has bloviated for decades about entitlement and welfare reform, such spending—even during years it controlled Congress and the presidency—has risen without interruption. The welfare and warfare states are the apples of Democrats' and Republicans' eyes, respectively, but in grand "bipartisanship," or more correctly *unipartyism*, both branches support each other's profligate pandering, prevarication, and payola.

Supposed flame thrower Donald Trump has already pledged not to cut Social Security, which is now the largest item in the federal budget, pays out more than it takes in, and will suck up an additional \$60 billion every year as the baby boomers reach their golden years. Where, the Cato Institute asks, will the money come from? "

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Leaving The Question Unanswered

By Francis W. Porretto



Note the following headline:

"Why Big Government Wants to Micromanage Your Parenting"

Doesn't that suggest, oh so indirectly, that the associated article (<http://acculturated.com/micromanage-parenting/>) will address Why Big Government Wants to Micromanage Your Parenting? I mean, call me dense if you like, but that was the inference I drew from it. Yet the article does no such thing. Read it for yourself and see.

Though I got a chuckle from the disjunction, my thoughts this morning aren't about poor headlining. Rather, they're about the motives we occasionally attribute to institutions.

"Organizations never know anything". – Marc Stiegler

The inclination to anthropomorphize organizations, institutions, political units, and so forth is an important component of the difficulty we have in comprehending the behavior of such aggregates. It takes only a moment's thought to realize that an aggregate – an entity composed of a number of individual persons, plus other assets – cannot have motivations, knowledge, instincts, fears, or convictions.

(Yes, yes, as long as we're being literal, aggregates don't really have behavior, either. It's even slightly misleading to say they have assets. But I trust you'll follow from here.)

When "John Galt," in his classic "*Dreams Come Due: Government and Economics As If Freedom Mattered*", wrote that "The system has a will to live (and to grow like cancer)," he was doing the same sort of anthropomorphizing. "The system," whatever we mean by that, has no will of any sort. What it has is a population of persons that act in its name. It's their aggregated will to live and grow that gives "the system" its dynamic.

For example, when we speak of "the government," we're usually speaking of its dynamic: the correlation of incentives and penalties that act upon it through the desires, fears, and convictions of those who populate it. Mohandas Gandhi caught the essence of this when he wrote:

"The State represents violence in a concentrated and organized form. The individual has a soul, but as the State is a soulless machine, it can never be weaned from the violence to which it owes its very existence".

A government is merely a facade behind which some group of persons wields coercive force, in each case for purposes of their own.

We who prize freedom have for some time struggled to find means by which to restrain and reduce government. Yet many of us are in thrall to the facade: the notion that "the government" is a unitary entity with its own motivations. In consequence, we seek to alter the incentives and penalties that apply to something that doesn't really exist. And of course, we get nowhere.

Were Carrie Lukas, the author of the article cited in the opening segment, to address "why big government wants to micromanage your parenting" in an analytical fashion, she would make no progress whatsoever for as long as she remained bound to "big government" as an entity with its own motivations. Progress only becomes possible when we address the motivations of those who act in "the government's" name, wielding its privilege of pre-indemnified coercion:

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The 18-Year-Olds' League

By Paul Rosenberg



My dream of what could be.

In 2016, after realizing that humanity had been at war for some 6,000 years with seldom a break of even a single year – and very often in a dozen places at once – a simple thought appeared in at least a hundred young minds scattered across our planet:

It's not the evil old men who keep all the wars going; it's us, the 18-year-olds.

The problem, they saw, was that they kept obeying the bitter and rapacious old men. Swept along by authority and the fear of standing alone, they had been – for millennia – marching off to kill other young people exactly like themselves.

The 18-year-olds on the opposite sides of all the battle lines had been doing precisely the same thing: obeying the orders of their own bitter and rapacious old men.

And then a very simple thought struck them: *If the 18-year-olds in every country agreed to not fight, who would?*

After all, the old men never fought for themselves.

And so, being a generation gifted with worldwide communication, they began to find each other and to talk among themselves.

Some of them dug into military literature to see if they were missing something. Others read studies in the psychology of killing. A few researched guerrilla warfare. And then, one by one, they began to study economics, cooperation and consent.

Within months, they had no more doubt; war was almost wholly dependent upon them.

Old men with bloodlust would never stop the killing; once they passed 50 or 60 years old, they were never going to change. But that wasn't really much of a problem, because a sufficient number of 18-year-olds could stop war anytime they wanted.

And so, in a matter of days, they wrote an agreement to be published in every country. They agreed they would carry it to their schools and to the streets of all their cities... they would eventually confront every young person in the world and encourage them to take their vow and add their names to the list of 18-year-olds who refused to march off to war.

Their agreement read as follows:

We, young men and women of all nationalities, hereby vow not to kill each other at the behest of old men and women.

We don't want to fight. We do not want to die. We do not want to see our friends dismembered, nor do we want to dismember others... or even to assist in it.

We want to live and love. Most of us want families. All of us want rewarding lives. And we do not want to live with the nightmares of war.

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Leaving The Question Unanswered

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1. Job security;
2. The thrill of power;
3. The prestige of authority;
4. The desire to be "socially relevant;"
5. The belief in one's moral superiority;
6. The conviction that an important cause is at stake.

In the usual case the lower-numbered motivations will be the more powerful and more enduring. (The reasons for this are best left to another screed.) Moreover, as time passes, those within "the system" would be ever more skewed toward the lower-numbered motivations; that is, an ever greater percentage of the persons employed there would be principally animated by job-security and thrill-of-power considerations. They would be innately opposed to anyone who might check their pursuit of those things – most emphatically including coworkers moved mainly by higher-numbered motives.

Some persons would seek positions in a Child Welfare and Protection department entirely for reason #6. However, once inside "the system," their prospects would be conditioned and constrained by the motivations and decisions of many others. Imagine that Smith, a firm believer that CWP should only act when a child's welfare is demonstrably endangered, were to be employed there. If he were to argue for inaction against the many Joneses who want CWP to grow (thus expanding their prospects for security and advancement) and act despite conflicting evidence and ambiguous accounts (because using State power is so much fun), he would almost certainly lose. The aftermath might include his demotion, or a transfer to "less demanding" responsibilities, or perhaps a campaign to persuade him that "a CWP career isn't right for you."

The application of that dynamic to the analysis of "CWP's behavior" should require no further comment from me.

It should be clear that we cannot alter the behavior of "the government" by treating it as an entity with motivations of its own. All we can do is influence the incentives and penalties that pertain to those individuals who act in its name and with its privileges. As many a Gentle Reader is currently muttering under his breath, that's difficult enough.

The late, great Milton Friedman famously said that it's less important to get "good people" into government than it is to create incentives for "bad people" to do the right things. Dr. Friedman intuitively grasped the non-atomic nature of the State. He was thereby immunized against both devil theories and savior complexes. However, his insight hasn't gotten sufficient circulation, possibly because he's principally known as an economist, and a specialist in fiscalism at that.

This is how we must reorient: away from such things as charter limitations on governments and toward the re-engineering of the incentives and penalties that apply to the persons within it:

- Term limits;
- Elimination of "sovereign immunity";
- Ironclad protections for "whistleblowers;"
- Abolition of unions for government employees;
- Repeal of the job-security provisions of the Civil Service Act;
- ...and any other special circumstances surrounding "government service" – I refuse to call it public service, as there's nothing a "public servant" hates more than actually serving the public – that energize venal, authoritarian, and self-protective motivations for seeking government positions.

Shall we undertake this effort with full seriousness, or shall we lock, load, and start discharging government employees "informally?" As much emotional satisfaction as the violent course might offer, the alternative would result in a lot fewer bodies in the streets. The question demands an answer.

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Profiles In Irrelevance

(Continued from page 1)

Pointing only to "waste, fraud, and abuse," as Trump does, wastes our time, abuses our intelligence, and is a fraudulent story line to peddle," is its derisive reply. Has there been an election the last 50 years where candidates have not promised to fund their promises by eliminating that unholy trinity? Has the unholy trinity done anything but grow?

This election's "solutions" to symptoms of American decay and decline are palliatives that fail to identify even immediate causes, much less philosophical defaults. Immigration is Donald Trump's signature issue. (Hillary Clinton does not have a signature issue, other than the necessity for a woman president.) A rational immigration policy would welcome capable immigrants with valuable skills, including entrepreneurial know-how, and exclude people most likely to soak up benefits, commit crimes, or wreak terrorist havoc. The US does not have a rational policy, and Trump has made political hay highlighting some of its deficiencies.

However, a wall on the Mexican border and prohibiting Muslim entry into the US are band-aids, and neither Trump nor any of the other remaining candidates have detailed the reasons for unwanted immigration. Hand out freebies and both citizens and immigrants—some of whom have entered the country illegally—will line up. If you fight never-ending wars against drugs and terror that turn foreign lands into hellholes you shouldn't be too surprised when immigrants from those lands show up on your doorstep. Some of them may not appreciate the justice of your cause, or may consider you an infidel, or may have arrived with the express purpose of destroying your way of life, and may take subversive or violent actions against you.

If Trump wants to dispel his image as a shoot-from-the-hip intellectual lightweight and really inflame the powers that be, he should question the welfare state and the wars on drugs and terror, not just on practical but philosophical grounds. On the practical side, they are bankrupting the country and destroying the economy. None of the candidates are talking much about the US's \$19 trillion plus stated debt, or its somewhere between \$100 and \$200 trillion in unfunded pension and medical liabilities, even as Detroit, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Puerto Rico et al. provide previews of coming attractions. None of them are pointing out the obvious: debt has become a millstone dragging down the US, and global, economy. Instead, all of the candidates' proposals would add to government's debt. They have their fingers crossed, hoping that the Federal Reserve perpetual-motion exchange of it's thin air debt for the government's will somehow delay the reckoning for their eight years.

It won't; it probably won't delay it for the eight months before the election. When it arrives, band-aids won't work. Somebody is going to have to do the intellectual heavy lifting, addressing the issue: what should a government do? That entails philosophic toil, and the correct answers rest on a foundation of reason, individual rights, and subordinated, limited government. If some are to be robbed to provide for others, then there are no individual, equal rights: we can't all claim a "right" to be supported. Liberty is a dead letter when a government intervenes in every aspect of its people's lives, including what they put in their own bodies, and employs bribery, espionage, subversion, and warfare to reorder the rest of the world according to its dictates. Civil liberties and rights cannot coexist with mass surveillance and suppression of expression deemed politically incorrect. There is no such thing as "minority rights" that justifiably infringe individual rights; the smallest minority is one, the individual.

To the best of their reasoning powers, the founding fathers wrestled with questions of individual rights and the design of a government that would protect them. None of this campaign's candidates are going beyond bromides and slogans, superficially addressing problems while not considering even the first order reasons for those problems. They are not within nuclear blast range of the underlying philosophical decay and neglect that has put the nation in extremis.

Saying you will make America great again, or that America is still great, means nothing if you have no idea what actually made America great in the first place. It had nothing to do with "more" or cradle-to-grave, the American Imperium, democratic socialism, time for a woman, or the art of the deal. If this is to be a campaign of slogans, it would at least offer a measure of solace if baseball hats read: *Get the Hell Out of Our Way!, Leave Us Alone!, or Don't Tread on Me!* Unfortunately, such truly revolutionary sentiments are not on display, much less a truly revolutionary philosophy. Anyone expecting revolutionary results will be sorely disappointed.

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The 18-Year-Olds' League

(Continued from page 1)

If the old people want war so badly, let them go fight it. They've already had their families and careers.

Bitter old men and women will send us off to war forever if we let them. They've been doing just that, continuously, for 6,000 years; they're not going to change.

The jungle warlord and the militant senator are precisely the same in this; they *need* war. For 6,000 years they've issued orders to us, and we – confused and obedient – have marched off, in thousands and even millions, to kill each other.

But no more. We, the 18-year-olds of the world, hereby affirm that we will not go to war. We will protect our home towns if necessary, but we will not march off, based upon the fears and intimidations of old men and women, to fight other 18-year-olds like ourselves.

We are confirmed in this resolve by the wise words of Albert Einstein: "Nothing will end war unless the people themselves refuse to go to war."

We therefore jointly refuse. Let the old men kill each other if they care so much.

This, their agreement, was presented to young people in almost every school in the world, in thousands of town squares, and in countless homes. The names of more than 10 million signers were posted to Internet pages before they were certified as "domestic terror sites" and hijacked. After that, they moved to the DarkNet. At that point, the old men and women panicked, banned the evil, unpatriotic document, and threw thousands of the young people into jail cells.

But there were too many, and soon there weren't enough obedient enforcers to attack the young petitioners and not enough government cages to hold them.

Hope n' Change

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Apr 9—Mother Earth News Fair, Asheville, NC. Sat 9 am - 7 pm, Sun 9 am - 5 pm. Learn from over 150 workshops and lectures designed to get you further down the path to independence and self-reliance. Workshops include modern homesteading, organic gardening, herbs and natural health. \$25/single day pass, \$30 for the weekend. Western North Carolina Agricultural Center, 1301 Fanning Bridge Rd., Fletcher, N.C. See www.motherearthnewsfair.com for more.

Apr 12—DAV Monthly Meeting, Blairsville, GA, 7 pm – 8 pm. The Disabled American Veterans meet on the 2nd Tuesday of every month at 7pm in the Veterans Center. Held at the Veterans Building, 78 Old Blue Ridge Hwy. Blairsville. For more information please contact Mike Ruback 954-249-2707.

Apr 12—The Well Armed Woman, Georgia Mountain Chapter, Hayesville, NC. 5:30 p.m. A women's group dedicated to educating, equipping and empowering women gun owners. Meeting at Shooter's Exchange, 3280 NC Hwy 69, Suite 10, Hayesville, NC. For more information please contact Carrie Brekke at practicalpistoltraining@gmail.com.

Apr 14—The Well Armed Woman, Murphy Chapter, Murphy, NC, 6 p.m. A women's group dedicated to educating, equipping & empowering women gun owners. Meeting at Christian Martial Arts Center, 56 Valley River Ave, downtown Murphy.

Apr 16—Introduction to Tactical Weapons, Murphy, NC. This answers the question: "what is the best weapon for personal defense?" Students will supply their personal concealed handgun and ammo. First part of the class is an introduction to the AR, AK and Tactical Shotgun (supplied) which will include a live fire exercise with each. Second part of the class, participants will use each weapon in a scenario to learn the benefits and limitation of each. Ammunition supplied for the rifles & tactical shotgun. \$75 (fee includes approximately \$25 of ammunition). Limited to 6 participants. To register call 706-896-6075 or e-mail practicalpistoltraining@gmail.com.

Apr 26—Women's Pistol Shooting Clinic, Murphy, NC, 10:00 am - 2:00 pm. From the Women of the NRA. For women who would like to learn how to safely handle and shoot a pistol with other women in a friendly environment. \$40 fee includes instruction, range fee, targets and lunch. Bring your pistol, ammo, eye/ear protection and folding chair. To register contact Deborra Forehand, NRA Instructor, 828-342-9510 or email dmforehand@icloud.com.

Apr 29-30—Blue Ridge Trout Fest, Blue Ridge, GA. 9:00 am – 5:00 pm. The event begins on Friday evening, April 29th with the Blue Ridge Trout Train and Auction. The Blue Ridge Trout Fest will gather fly-fisherman, river sports enthusiasts, allied outdoor recreation fans and their families to Blue Ridge for fun, education, food, entertainment and services. Entrance \$5, 12 & under free. Proceeds will benefit the Blue Ridge Chapter of Trout Unlimited. To be held in Downtown Blue Ridge City Park. See www.blueridgetroutfest.com or call 706-374-2390 for more info.

Apr 29 - May 1—Heritage Life Skills, Waynesville, NC. This 5th Annual Life Skills event features classes & demonstrations featuring bee keeping, and more. Featuring speakers Dr. William Forstchen, Rick Austin and Survivor Jane, Dr. Bones & Nurse Amy and Charley Hogwood. For information call 828-456-5310 and visit www.carolinareadiness.com.

“An Open Letter to the American People”

In 1776, our Founding Fathers pledged their “lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor” to form a new, free, prosperous nation. *They warned us that it was our responsibility to preserve and defend it.* Unfortunately, we didn’t listen to their wise advice. As a great service to America, they have returned to issue their *final warning*:

We, The Founders, warned you of the dangers of excessive taxation. Now you labor nearly six months of each year to pay your taxes to all levels of government *whilst your economy suffocates* under this cruel burden.

We, The Founders, warned you of the dangers of foreign entanglements. But now, thousands of your sons and daughters suffer and die in foreign lands whilst your government plans to reinstate the military draft.

We, The Founders, warned you of the dangers of irresponsible government spending. But now, your growing National Debt stands at TEN TRILLION DOLLARS and your babies are indebted tax slaves from the day they are born.

We, The Founders, warned you of the dangers of a *private Central Bank* (The Fed) and a *debt-based monetary system*. Now many of you drown in credit card debt; whilst others of you are losing your homes to foreclosure.

We, The Founders, warned you to *preserve and obey the Constitution* because power corrupts. But now, your secretive government can spy on you, harass you, and detain you at will, *without due process, under the guise of “National Security”*.

We, The Founders, warned you of the dangers of political parties. But now, two very powerful parties *covertly conspire against the people; plundering you and your nation, whilst they pretend to oppose each other.*

We, The Founders, warned you to keep your nation sovereign and independent. But now, you submit to UN, NAFTA, and WTO authority *whilst your borders are deliberately left open to endless illegal immigration.*

We, The Founders, warned you to *be distrustful of your government.* But you have believed the sugarcoated falsehoods of ambitious politicians and now, you no longer know whom to trust or what to believe.

We, The Founders, warned you to maintain a *free, independent, unbiased press.* Now, your centralized “Mainstream Media” *influences the news and your elections by the use of propaganda, distortions and omissions.*

We, The Founders, warned you that the *price of liberty is eternal vigilance.* But whilst you were distracted by ballgames and TV shows, *your government stole your liberties and bankrupted your children.*

http://www.justpullit.com/uploads/1/4/8/9/1489925/open_letter_to_american_people.pdf