

Book Reviews

Health Reform: The End of the American Revolution? by Lee Kurisko, M.D., hardcover, 256 pp, \$29.95, ISBN 978-097775344, St. Paul, Minn., Alethos Press, 2009.

Anyone who imagines that government-controlled medicine and “universal healthcare for all” is a laudable goal needs to read this book.

Dr. Kurisko has practiced for many years, first in Canada and then in the United States, and thus has a perspective that few can back up with their own experience and insight. Much emotion has been interjected into the “healthcare reform” debate in the United States, so a good dose of cold, hard facts is needed.

Dr. Kurisko was born and raised in Ontario, Canada. He loves his country and was saddened to leave in 2001. But he found it impossible to deal with the stresses of having to make life-and-death decisions about who would wait 3 months and who would wait 9 months for a CT scan or MRI. In his desperate attempts to make the system work in his hospital in Thunder Bay, Ontario, he worked more and more hours to ultimately provide unsatisfactory care. The Canadian government fails to keep up with innovations in medicine, controlling the purse strings for new equipment, deciding how many physicians can be trained in each specialty, and mandating the number of hospital beds in each province. Such top-down control leads to immeasurable suffering, as serious diagnoses are often not made in a timely fashion.

When Dr. Kurisko moved to Minnesota he discovered that freedom in medicine is a precious commodity. He fears that the United States is on the brink of handing that freedom over to the federal government. He writes this book in an attempt to make the reader aware that it is impossible for any bureaucratic government system of medicine to work well.

Dr. Kurisko tells story after story of the pain inflicted on a patient and long-suffering public in Canada. Their faith in a failing system is tragic; they ought to be rising up in angry protest. These are not anecdotes but examples of the inherent consequences of a system that leaves less to the judgment of

well-trained physicians, and more to the bureaucratic rules and algorithms that all must slavishly follow.

A student of history, the author carefully analyzes the origins and bases of the rights of Americans. He fears that Americans are about to give up the hard-fought freedoms won in the American Revolution, passively accepting the growing oppression of an increasingly controlling government. He writes: “Government exists to ensure that its residents have the freedom necessary to pursue their goals. It does not exist to provide those goals on a silver platter, as Canadians believe. In Canada, almost all citizens have insurance, but not all Canadians have access to health care.”

This book is an easy read and a valuable tool for refuting the misinformation emanating from Washington.

Alieta Eck, M.D.
Somerset, N.J.

Liberty and Tyranny: A Conservative Manifesto, by Mark R. Levin, hardback, 245 pp, \$25, ISBN-13: 978-1-4164-6285-6, New York, N.Y., Threshold Editions, 2009.

“...There are occasions when democracy building is prudent.”

“The conservative does not despise government. He despises tyranny.”

—Mark Levin

Nationally syndicated conservative talk-radio host and best-selling author (*Men in Black*) Mark Levin has written another *New York Times* bestseller. The publisher describes it as a “new manifesto for the Conservative movement for the 21st Century.”

In it, Levin offers his opinions on fundamental truths about conservatism, based on decades of his observation and experience. Levin defines conservatism as a way of understanding life, society, and governance. And he tells us, “prudence is the highest virtue for it is judgment drawn on wisdom.”

For him, the enemy is statism, which over the centuries has taken the form of monarchism, feudalism, militarism, fascism,

and communism. Statism seeks to control the individual by imposing on him a governmental and economic structure that is contrary to human nature. Statism is tyranny to Levin, and he believes that civil society is the sole antidote.

He believes that civil society’s highest purpose is its preservation and improvement. Further, he argues that the conservative defends free markets because he “defends the civil society and the Constitution’s limitations on federal authority against the tyranny that threatens them...” He says that the conservative has “passion for liberty and all the good that flows from it.”

Levin supports the war in Iraq and democracy-building. He says the conservative believes that there are “times when evil perpetrated by a regime is so horrific that to ignore it tears at the moral core of American civil society,” and that “prudence must dictate if and when the cost of American lives and treasure is worth intervention on these grounds.”

Levin believes that the Civil War and World War II were wars of “liberty against tyranny, which would have destroyed the civil society had they been lost.” He supports torture, insisting that torture includes “critically important, albeit rarely used, methodologies for securing intelligence and neutralizing the enemy.”

He carefully documents many of the problems we face because of the statist. For example, he lists the four government interventions that led to the housing bust of 2008, and he discusses the government interventions in the oil industry that restrict our production of energy. He identifies the prime role of the government, especially the Federal Reserve Bank, in causing and greatly increasing the severity and duration of the Great Depression. He documents the role of the welfare state with its Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, in promoting increased governmental control and regulation, and in making as many individuals as possible dependent on the government.

He documents how “enviro-statists” have declared war on civil society, and how they prevent progress and modernity by using junk science, misrepresentations, and fearmongering. Levin then exposes the

great “global warming” fraud, as well as the dangers of its accompanying cap-and-trade scheme.

Finally, he documents the government’s complicity in the immigration problem, and notes that nine percent of the population of Mexico was living in the United States in 2004, when nearly one-third of all immigrants were in the U.S. illegally.

In order to correct all these problems, Levin believes that the conservative must become more engaged in public matters. “Parents...must...teach their children and grandchildren to believe in and appreciate the principles of the American civil society,” he writes. And, we must “take the time to explain conservative principles and their value to the individual, family, and society generally.”

Liberty and Tyranny successfully presents the conservative case against statism.

Jerome C. Arnett, Jr. M.D.
Helvetia, W.V.

End the Fed, by Ron Paul, hardback, 212 pp, \$21.99, ISBN 978-0-446-45919-6, New York, N.Y., Grand Central Publishing, 2009.

“The only unique power of the Fed is to create money out of nothing.”

“[The] central bank is the biggest generator of underground criminal activity ever.”

“Bad economic policy can destroy a civilization.”

—Ron Paul

A physician and former USAF flight surgeon, 11-term Rep. Ron Paul (R-14-Texas) is a distinguished counselor to the Ludwig von Mises Institute and an authority on Austrian economics, with its emphasis on sound money and small government. He is author or co-author of at least six earlier books dealing with economics.

According to Dr. Paul, civilizations literally rise and fall on the basis of the quality of their money. All citizens should have an intense interest in what money is and how our central bank, the Federal Reserve Bank (the Fed) takes wealth from the poor and middle classes and transfers it to the wealthy. Dr. Paul says that the Fed’s inflation is responsible for our boom-bust cycles, price inflation, recessions, depressions, and our excessive debt.

Dr. Paul believes that the Fed’s debasing of our currency constitutes counterfeiting, and that it robs the poor. As he says, “It’s cheating. It’s a tax.... It benefits the few at the expense of the many.” He believes the

Fed should be abolished because it is immoral, it is unconstitutional, it undermines liberty, and its inflation undermines the morals and property rights that are the foundation of our free-market economy.

Dr. Paul explains that the Fed is not a government agency but a coalition of government and big bankers, and it provides the largest banks with privatized profits and socialized losses. Since its creation in 1913, it has thrived on secrecy and inside deals, which only serve the interests of the elite.

Under a free market and a stable quantity of money (the total amount doesn’t matter), increased production of goods will result in a gradual fall in the price level year by year, and therefore an increase in the purchasing power of the dollar. This means a steady increase in the standard of living for each member of society.

The Fed, however, is in the business of generating inflation, Dr. Paul says; the widespread misconception that it fights inflation is simply false. From the country’s founding until 1913, the money base was stable with very little inflation, and our standard of living rose to the highest in the world. But during the Fed’s 95-year reign, the dollar has dropped in purchasing power to less than 5 percent of its 1913 value. The only response from Congress has been to give the Fed even more power as the principal central economic planner.

Creation of the Fed has been called the most tragic blunder Congress ever committed. It is a form of financial fascism that benefits the privileged rich and powerful over the poor and middle classes. Its inflation is the most vicious and regressive of all of the forms of taxation, Paul writes.

In addition, according to economists Ludwig von Mises and Murray Rothbard, inflation is an indispensable means of militarism, with its accompanying growth of government. For example, only an estimated 21 percent of the cost of World War I was financed through direct taxation; 56 percent was financed through Fed-backed borrowing, and 23 percent through outright money creation by the Fed. Its monetary inflation has allowed the U.S. government to pursue one war after another, and to set up a huge welfare state that covers all classes in society. It is no coincidence that the century of two world wars and nearly constant lesser wars coincided with the century of central banking.

Dr. Paul tells us that there is little understanding of any economic policy in Washington. Because of this ignorance, legislators have been led to believe that there

are no limits on what they can spend. As a result, all the attempts of Congress, presidential administrations, and the Federal Reserve to run the economy have been disasters. They have brought us to our current tragic economic mess: our wealth is drained, our productivity is sharply diminished, our freedoms are eroded, and our empire is fragile. The entire federal government is now one giant toxic asset.

All we have gotten from Congress is more of the same—more spending and more money creation. Since we have been through nearly 100 years of repeating the same cycle, Dr. Paul believes it is time we learn from this experience. He believes that the free market offers the only answer to our dilemma. As he points out, market forces are always working to correct the mistakes made by government, and evidence is abundant that the markets always have been stronger than elites armed with false ideologies.

Dr. Paul insists we must return to the gold standard, *with no Fed*. In four fascinating chapters he outlines the philosophical, constitutional, economic, and libertarian cases for doing this. He believes this is the single greatest step we can take to restore constitutional government, build prosperity for all Americans, and restore our freedom. While he thinks that more people are coming to understand this, Dr. Paul points out that our problems are the still-widespread ignorance of much of the public, the arrogance of the members of the Fed, and the irresponsibility of Congress.

Congress will only respond when it is impossible not to, Paul writes. So, education of the public in economics is the necessary key to political change. Everyone must understand that self-reliance, free markets, private property, sound money, and enforceable contracts are necessary to ensure prosperity, peace, and happiness.

As von Mises has noted, economics is “the philosophy of human life and action and concerns everybody and everything.” It is why he admonished that to learn economics is every citizen’s “primary civic duty.”

Freedom cannot exist without sound money. If it isn’t already too late, ending the Fed will mark the beginning of the rebuilding of our free society. Without this, the prospects for our freedom are dismal, Paul concludes.

Jerome C. Arnett, Jr., M.D.
Helvetia, W.V.