

# Over My Dead Body!

ROBERT MILLER

THERE appears to be an open conspiracy among some of our politicians—of various political persuasions—to regard the rest of us, not as individual human beings with personal and private feelings, desires, hopes and aspirations, but as masses of statistically activated fodder existing merely for the purpose of furthering some sacred social ideology. The end product in the mind's eye of those who find themselves, by the grace of God and a questionably fickle electoral system, invested with the awful responsibilities of government, is not the happiness and fulfilment of our lives, but the unhindered working of a system. They will argue, without any moral justification, that for the ultimate good of all, the cherished principles of a few must surrender to its will.

This idea of the state exercising supreme control over those who comprise it is by no means new, but that is no excuse for ignoring the present drift merely because we do not as yet experience any noticeable effects, nor for taking no action to halt it.

In politics the end rarely, if ever, justifies the means. There should be no end. It should be the natural desire and purpose of each individual, with mutual respect for human rights, to secure his own end. It is not the business or purpose of the state to do it for him. If individuals are to be graded, controlled and disposed of like vegetables—and moreover if they allow themselves to be graded, controlled and disposed of—theirs is an immoral government; and what is far worse, they have lost, or are losing, that which distinguishes them from vegetables.

There was an example of this disregard of people as individuals in 1968 when a Minister pronounced that "large families will shortly be regarded as a form of social delinquency. . . . Procreation is not a purely private matter." The fact that he was later censured by his own party for over-reaching himself in his desire to dictate how we shall live our lives rendered his words no less offensive. Before uttering such remarks, people in positions of trust and responsibility for others should reconsider most carefully the premises upon which they are allegedly founded. Nobody cares to tell us how many is "large". What the pseudo-Malthusians are really concerned about, I suspect, is not large families at all, but people not being able to provide for their children, regardless of the number they have.

If a minority of parents sponge on their fellows by abusing the benefits of the welfare state, the rules should be tightened up to discourage such abuse. Let Ministers and others look closer into the possible causes of such poverty—for when so many, in addition to the spongers, still find it necessary to call

upon financial aid from the state while in reasonably sound health, poverty there certainly is, not only in pocket but in self-respect.

Another example of attempted legislation based upon an immoral premise was the late Sir Gerald Nabarro's Renal Transplantation Bill, Clause 2 of which read: "It shall be lawful to remove from the body of a human person, duly certified as dead, any kidney or kidneys required for medical purposes unless there is reason to believe that the deceased during his life had instructed otherwise."

There was a not so obvious but vitally important innuendo in the word "unless", for by this the Bill sought to establish once and for all the ownership by the state of the kidneys of every person as soon as dead. Mr. Kenneth Robinson, the then Minister of Health, in rejecting the Bill, expressed the concern of many people when he said: "Accident victims are usually in the prime of life and seldom have had occasion to make wills. We must prepare for cases where there might be objections and those objections are now known. Medical science should not go beyond this and thereby lose the sympathy of public opinion."

The large number of criticisms that could be levelled at this badly phrased Bill were in inverse proportion to its uncommon brevity (as though for some reason or other it had to be prepared in a great hurry). Consider the absurdity of "during his life". How can anyone instruct anyone else to do anything at all before or after his life? There was the lack of an acceptable definition of death: the vagueness of the term "medical purposes"; the obvious impossibility of tracing and obtaining a rational decision from a tragically bereaved next-of-kin within one hour of the death of the "donor", and so on.

But all these objections, although possessing moral force and validity, are of far less importance than the fact that there was an attempt to deny and over-rule the most vital principle of human liberty. A Member described it as the Nationalisation of the Dead Bill. If it had been allowed to become law, there could then be no logical argument against subsequent amendments to include the heart, liver, lungs, eyes, brain—even arms and legs. When phrased in this way the idea sounds revolting, and indeed it is. Just where would it stop? And let no one be deceived into thinking that the whole distasteful matter has been decently buried; there are still those who will try again to introduce a Bill on these lines if given half a chance.

To argue that none of these things really matters, especially after death and that objection on this fine point really has no more significance than an interest-

ing philosophical exercise, and that such a Bill does not seek to deny personal freedom since anyone may contract out of it, is tantamount to maintaining that it should be legally and morally right that all persons apprehended for alleged offences shall be presumed guilty unless they can show evidence to prove their innocence, simply because they thereby have the right to plead not guilty.

The next assault upon our personal liberty and rights will come in the shape of a Bill to enact the compulsory addition of fluoride to our water supplies. There has been much argument over the past few years for and against this measure which is put forward ostensibly for the purpose of reducing tooth decay in children. At the risk of labouring the obvious, I believe that children are the responsibility of their parents, and that this responsibility includes the dental welfare of their offspring. If it is believed that fluoride is useful in this cause (and there are still many professional people who know much more about the subject than I do, who do not so believe), it may be freely purchased in several forms including tooth paste. But whether or not the claims for its efficacy are justified, I am vigorously opposed to it for several reasons, mainly because I contend that since my body is my personal possession and I alone have the natural right to decide what shall or shall not be put into it, should the Bill succeed, this natural and sacred right will thereby be wilfully and wickedly violated. Even if it were remotely possible to prove that those who do not want fluoride in their water will be the better for it, I still oppose it on the same principle. One might as well argue that because most of us suffer from time to time from constipation, Epsom salts should also be added to the

water.

Such is the state of life into which we have metamorphosed, that we are all children of the Welfare State, the great Father and Mother of our existence. We have to be told what to do and what not to do, and what to eat and drink and what not to eat and drink, and so on, because this or that behaviour results in some of us becoming an additional expense to the National Health Service. The more we allow ourselves to be nationalised, the more we must expect to toe the line and bow to those who, God save us, always think they know what is good for us.

Enough ink has already been spilt to expound and reiterate human rights, and enough blood has been shed to defend them. These are the things in life worth more than life itself. In life and in death, man has a right to himself, so that his body shall be disposed of without mutilation. The onus is upon him to waive this right and to express his wish to donate his body or any part of it for medical purposes if he so chooses. And while he lives his body is his own, to feed as he alone shall decide. The state has absolutely no claim of right to any part of any human being, alive or dead. Let that be clearly understood by all, especially those in authority. There is no "if" or "but" or "unless" about it.

Medical science must be allowed to progress in the conquering of disease and the relief of suffering, and human lives must be saved whenever possible, but not at the cost of human dignity. Vital principles of liberty are at stake as never before. If we ignore this, we endanger the very *raison d'être* of life itself. We have fought hard and long for the freedoms we still have left, but if we are not very careful, even they will dissolve in apathy, and vanish for ever.

## Medicine for Britain

**S**TIFF medicine containing purgatives is prescribed for Britain's economic ills by the Sound Money League and Taxpayers' Association in a Manifesto issued shortly before the close of 1976.

The purgatives, apart from the vitamins that the mixture contains, include stripping government of the power to control the money supply and the denationalisation of telephones, gas, electricity, airlines, docks industries, and other loss-making enterprises.

The Government must set out to balance its budget within the next three years—and do it without increasing taxation. Indeed, states this well-written and well-reasoned paper, to achieve the necessary goals, taxation must be *reduced*, starting with the lowering of the top marginal rate of income tax from 98 per cent to 60 per cent

and limiting the overall maximum rate of income tax to 55 per cent of an individual's income. Sharp reductions are also proposed for Capital Gains Tax, Capital Transfer Tax, Development Land Tax (because of its adverse effects on housing) and other taxes.

The Association says that the main objectives of its *Programme for Britain\** are the minimum objectives that must be achieved before the economy can produce enough to increase our standard of living and substantially reduce involuntary unemployment.

There are no concessions to "middle-of-the-road" thinking in this paper and rightly so. Economic appeasement never works and only makes easier the "final solution" of Marxism.

The paper sadly lacks the extension of its logic into the fields

of free trade and the taxation of land values, parts of the economic jigsaw—and basic parts—that make up the picture of Britain as she might be. Maybe that will come later, but meanwhile these proposals will help to clear the path.

H.V.

\*Six pages foolscap, 25p post free, from LAND & LIBERTY.

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### ASHLEY MITCHELL

As we go to press we are sad to report the death, on January 12, of Ashley Mitchell, President of the International Union for Land-Value Taxation and Free Trade and member of the Executive Committee of the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values. He was ninety-one. To his daughter and her family we offer our sincere condolences.

A tribute to Ashley Mitchell will be published in our next issue.