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Republican Perspective

By Christopher Panton

Something Wicked This Way Comes”

This is the first time that I have written an opinion piece for the Republican Perspective in the News. I suppose that I should present my credentials. Not a difficult task. I don't have any. Unless you allow that “been there, done that” is credentialed enough. In order to describe the context of that phrase, I have to go to the file marked “history” - some of it personal.

I was born in England three years before World War II began. At elementary school, we had never known anything but war-time deprivation and missing parents, so it was all very normal to us. However, among the adult population, expectations about the bright future, once the axis powers were defeated, ran high. But it was not to be. The transition from a war-time to a peace-time economy was very troubled. To us kids, conditions in peace-time - not being much different than on a war footing - were a sort of comfortable continuum. Though, unbeknown to us, the enemy was demonstrably no longer on the other side of the English Channel, but was, in fact, setting up shop, right there, in jolly old England!

During the war, the country was governed by a well-represented coalition of Conservative, Labor and Liberal politicians. The country's leader was, of course, Winston Churchill. In view of his sterling war-time performance, Churchill and the Conservatives were expected to be a shoo-in at the first peace-time general election. Much to just about everyone's surprise, they were defeated handily by the well-to-the-left, socialist Labor Party.

Social legislation in Britain, up to that time, was not just a 20th century phenomenon. The first stirrings can be traced back to the mid-19th century, or even earlier. Much of the credit goes to the, then, Liberal party - known as “the working man's party.” However, the rising power of the unions at the turn of the 20th century spawned a new political party, funded by the unions. Its objective was to be more aggressive on behalf of the “the working man.” It eventually became the Labor Party.

Prior to the end of the war in 1945 and after the General Strike of 1926, the Labor Party had, on occasion, sat in the seat of power. However, their mandates to govern were

shaky and they were beset by internal rivalries. So, it was all the more surprising that they were returned to power in 1945 with a healthy parliamentary majority. Barely pausing for breath, the new government introduced a rapid sequence of draconian socialist legislation, featuring government take-over of many private sector industries and services. Predictably, the result was crisis-level dysfunction and a floundering economy.

The coup de grace was delivered with advent of government run National Health Care in the late 1940s. Like everything else up to that point, it was “all free folks.” This Promised Land of free health care turned out to be satanic chaos. Every cough or snuffle meant a rush to the doctor. Populations in some of Britain's less developed Commonwealth countries poured into the UK (read “immigrants”) in order to take advantage of the welfare bounty. Insufficient medical personnel and facilities, plus the gut-busting demand, meant that many who truly needed treatment were unable to get it. Worse, it didn't take long for many medically trained providers to become seriously disenchanted with government bureaucrats telling them how to run their business to the point that many left the country.

To pay for all the inefficiencies, subsidies and “free” health care, the government raised taxes to punitive levels (today, the United States borrows to cover its costs), a move that was particularly focused on the professional, salaried cohort. With the result that they, too, began to leave the country in droves - the infamous “brain drain.” And in 1963, I was one of them. That is, nearly 20 years after the post-war socialist Armageddon, the country that had once been a major world power was still spiraling downward out of control and nobody at that time knew where the bottom was.

Do I have to spell it out? Self-inflicted crisis (here in the United States, we're still in one - even though you may not think so), unions (our public service unions are out of control and obsessively funding their own political agenda), and health care (Obamacare is even more cumbersome and ill-thought out than the UK's original) all contributed to the British downfall. Sound familiar? That cynical laughter you hear is history repeating itself.

If I'm allowed another column, then I can suggest to Republicans possible ways of getting us out of this declining situation. And it's no good talking to the Democrats; they are a part of the problem, not the solution.

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