



The Money of Fools

Take the simple phrase "rent control." If you take these words literally — as if they were money in the bank — you get a complete distortion of reality.

New York is the city with the oldest and strongest rent control laws in the nation. San Francisco is second. But if you look at cities with the highest average rents, New York is first and San Francisco is second. Obviously, "rent control" laws do not control rent.

If you check out the facts, instead of relying on words, you will discover that "gun control" laws do not control guns, the government's "stimulus" spending does not stimulate the economy and that many "compassionate" policies inflict cruel results, such as the destruction of the black family.

Do you know how many millions of people died in the war "to make the world safe for democracy" — a war that led to autocratic dynasties being replaced by totalitarian dictatorships that slaughtered far more of their own people than the dynasties had?

Warm, fuzzy words and phrases have an enormous advantage in politics. None has had such a long run of political success as "social justice."

The idea cannot be refuted because it has no specific meaning. Fighting it would be like trying to punch the fog. No wonder "social justice" has been such a political success for more than a century — and counting.

While the term has no defined meaning, it has emotionally powerful connotations. There is a strong sense that it is simply not right — that it is unjust — that some people are so much better off than others.

Justification, even as the term is used in printing and carpentry, means aligning one thing with another. But what is the standard to which we think incomes or other benefits should be aligned?

Is the person who has spent years in school goofing off, acting up or fighting- squandering the tens of thousands of dollars that the taxpayers have spent on his education — supposed to end up with his income aligned with that of the person who spent those same years studying to acquire knowledge and skills that would later be valuable to himself and to society at large?

Some advocates of "social justice" would argue that what is fundamentally unjust is that one person is born into circumstances that make that person's chances in life radically different from the chances that others have — through no fault of one and through no merit of the others.

Maybe the person who wasted educational opportunities and developed self-destructive behavior would





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have turned out differently if born into a different home or a different community.

That would of course be more just. But now we are no longer talking about "social" justice, unless we believe that it is all society's fault that different families and communities have different values and priorities — and that society can "solve" that "problem."

Nor can poverty or poor education explain such differences. There are individuals who were raised by parents who were both poor and poorly educated, but who pushed their children to get the education that the parents themselves never had. Many individuals and groups would not be where they are today without that.

All kinds of chance encounters — with particular people, information or circumstances — have marked turning points in many individual's lives, whether toward fulfillment or ruin.

None of these things is equal or can be made equal. If this is an injustice, it is not a "social" injustice because it is beyond the power of society.

You can talk or act as if society is both omniscient and omnipotent. But, to do so would be to let words become what Thomas Hobbes called them, "the money of fools."

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