



# THE SUNDAY TIMES

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## ‘Subsidy’: Blair’s sickest NHS joke

It was noted that never has the word “choice” been so abused as last week when both Labour and the Tories used it to define their health policies. But just as battered was the word “subsidise”.

Tony Blair said it would be wrong to “subsidise” the middle class with a contribution to the cost of a private operation. But this ignored that it is the middle class who largely fund the NHS, “subsidising” sick sorts who use it but pay little tax.

Oddly, the Tories did not pick up on this. Labour has hoodwinked us all into believing the state bestows its goodies from heaven. The truth is the middle class pays for a state service, then often pays again to go private as the state can’t deliver.

A further deceit: it is claimed we don’t want choice but good local provision. But a Populus survey suggests 66% of pensioners would happily receive care abroad. And why not? Our call centres are in India; why not cancer centres? The biggest illness in Britain is the political paralysis in the NHS.

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