

'After all, it was Hoover, coming to office in 1929, and out of a background of carefully amassed statistical knowledge who warned that the Americans, controlling twenty percent of the world's oil were even then consuming sixty-five percent of it and, later, "there is a limit to oil supplies . . . the time will come when . . . the Nation will need this oil much more than it is needed now. . . ."

<sup>2</sup>*Voluptas*: [L.] Pleasure; specif., sexual pleasure. [Webster] *i.e.* Just for fun.

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## *Capitalism and Friedman*

**Can Capitalism Survive?**, by Benjamin A. Rogge, *Indianapolis, Ind.: Liberty Press, 1979. 319 pp. \$9.00 (paper \$3.95).*

**The Machinery of Freedom**, by David Friedman, *New Rochelle, N. Y.: Arlington House, 1978. xvi + 240 pp. \$10.00.*

"LIBERTARIAN" ideology has spawned two groups of individuals willing, to a greater or lesser degree, to accept the word libertarian as descriptive of the views they espouse. One is composed essentially of philosophers—ideologues if one prefers—who, by oral or written efforts, attempt to persuade others of the rightness of those views. The second group contains those who hold similar views but, being of a more active political nature, have organized a Libertarian Party with all the pertinent trimmings: conventions, platforms, and candidates in both national and state elections. The authors of these books belong in the first group rather than the second.

One expects to find considerable similarity in the views expressed by Rogge and by Friedman and, indeed, is not disappointed. But the more fascinating aspects of these two volumes are less their similarities than their differences.

"What's in a name?" asked Shakespeare, then demonstrated persuasively that some people passionately believe considerable importance rests therein. Those not intimately familiar with Professor Rogge's works should be warned that this book most emphatically is not an organized treatise on comparative politico-economic systems despite its title. More accurately, but less attractively, it could have been called *Selected Essays by Professor B. A. Rogge*, or in the less dignified lingo of an LP record album, *The Best of Ben*. The book takes its title from that of the lead essay, "Can Capitalism Survive?" and harks back to the same question raised, and also tentatively answered in the negative, by Professor Joseph A. Schumpeter in his *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (1962). The choice of title was most astute for, although the lead essay is probably not the best nor most representative, it may entice some additional readers to a truly rewarding experience.

Those who have known Rogge intimately over the years may concur with his confession that he is "more of a speaker than a writer." Few, however, will regard that as a derogatory comment for his abilities as a speaker have placed his services in continual demand. Again and again, his speeches combine good humor, good taste, and good sense in just the right proportions to produce, when served up in his characteristic mid-America accent, truly delectable intellectual dishes thoroughly enjoyed by his audiences. The selection process (for this is a highly limited selection, not his *Collected Works*) was certainly inspired. Analogically, one might describe these nineteen essays as vintage Rogge, products of the best crops over the years, put down to mature and mellow in the wine cellar of the book's pages. In any event, it should serve to widen Professor Rogge's audience, increase his influence, and improve his readers' taste. Those already receptive to his ideas will find their plea-

asures and prejudices increased and reinforced; those exposed to them for the first time will find this collection stimulating no matter what their prejudices may be.

Like days of the week or months of the year, despite an amazingly high average level, some of Rogge's essays are better than others. The title essay is not this reviewer's favorite, for example. For one reason, and a serious one applicable to both Schumpeter and Rogge, the most important question may not be "Can Capitalism Survive?," but rather "Did Capitalism Ever Exist?" The best three essays, in this reviewer's opinion and not necessarily in order, are "The Case for Economic Freedom"; "Paradise in Posey County"; and "Christian Economics; Myth or Reality?" All nineteen are well worthwhile, however, and though they are grouped under sub-headings, the order of reading them is of small importance. Each can stand on its own; like an individual man or woman, each has its unique personality.

David Friedman's *The Machinery of Freedom* carries as a sub-title, "Guide to a Radical Capitalism." This is significant in at least two meanings of the word "radical." The book not only goes to the root of the matter but also advocates sweeping changes in the political and economic structure of human society. Indeed, Friedman uses so many different terms to describe himself (libertarian, Adam Smith liberal, Goldwater conservative, anarcho-capitalist, anarchist—even by implication socialist if appropriately defined) that he obviously is concerned not about labels but basic fundamentals. Forty different essays plus preface, introduction, interlude, postscript, two appendices, and one index within 240 pages necessitates extreme brevity on virtually every topic. No essays exceed eleven pages in length, and the majority contain less than five, sometimes only two. Stylistically, the literary result is staccato, requiring the reader to supply his own intellectual glue in the interstices. The

overall result, however, is a collection of feisty essays which shake the foundations of present-day socialism, liberalism, and egalitarianism.

The quotations opening most chapters are both well-chosen and appropriate. This reviewer shares Friedman's fondness for both H. L. Mencken and Mr. Dooley, but is less enthusiastic about Lenny Bruce and several other sources. Some of the introductory poetry or quotations, composed or invented for the purpose, are worth savoring. Try "Paranoia," for example, or "Ask not what government can do for you. Ask what government is doing to you."

Choosing the three best essays is again very difficult. Most stimulating are: "i don't need nothing"; "creeping socialism"; and "buckshot for a socialist friend." (The use of lower case is in the original.) Particularly intriguing is the final paragraph in the last mentioned essay:

In the ideal socialist state power will not attract power freaks. People who make decisions will show no slightest bias toward their own interests. There will be no way for a clever man to bend the institutions to serve his own ends. And the rivers will run uphill.

Similarities between the two books are too many to warrant detailed attention. Both authors call themselves libertarians, among other things, for example:

[The libertarian] principle is that each man and each woman should be permitted to do his or her own thing, singly or in pairs or in groups as large as the Mormon Church or General Motors, so long as it is peaceful.

. . . *To the libertarian*, in a certain sense, *it is not the ends of man's actions that count but only the means used in serving ends.* To each of the ideologues he says: "You may be right and you may keep on trying to convince me and others that you are right, *but the only means you may use are*

those of persuasion. You may not impose your vision *by force* on anyone. This means not only that you are not to stone the hippie or the college dean or the businessman or even the policeman; it means as well that you are not to get the policeman or the sheriff to do your stoning for you." (Rogge, "The Libertarian Philosophy")

The central idea of libertarianism is that people should be permitted to run their own lives as they wish. We totally reject the idea that people must be protected from themselves. A libertarian society would have no laws against drugs, gambling, pornography—and no compulsory seat belts in cars. We also reject the idea that people have an enforceable claim on others, for anything more than being left alone. . . . (Friedman, "introduction")

Is there not substantial agreement here? It would seem so. Yet, upon reading these two books almost simultaneously, this reviewer found himself debating sublineally more frequently with Friedman than with Rogge. This might be explained by a certain distaste for the word "libertarian," at least in part because it is reminiscent of the word "libertine"—a reminiscence not unaided by the actions of some, but not all, self-proclaimed libertarians. But such a cavil is applicable to both authors, not to one alone. This reviewer believes himself to be at least ninety percent libertarian, but is neither Ivory soap pure or sure. Doubtless there is some true conservatism in my genes. The disagreement might also be partly explained by a reaction to different literary style. Rogge, by musical analogy, could be likened to Beethoven; Friedman to Bach. If one prefers Beethoven to Bach (and I do), one is likely to prefer Rogge's libertarianism to that of Friedman, yet at the same time strongly preferring either or both to Mussorgsky or Shostakovitch. Rogge's style is sophisticated, polished, urbane—with a

touch of *panache*; Friedman's is brash, machine-gun like, feisty—even quarrelsome at times. For example, see the essay entitled "is william f. buckley a contagious disease?"

But style alone is usually of only secondary consideration. Where this reviewer truly parts company with *The Machinery of Freedom* is the question of anarchy as opposed to limited government. Friedman goes to considerable length to describe his position as "anarchist" or "anarcho-capitalist," and to argue that "government has no legitimate functions." He asserts ". . . Everyone wants primarily laws that protect him from crime and let him interact peacefully and productively with others. Even criminals. Not many murderers would wish to live under laws that permitted them to kill and be killed." Such assertions do not fit the facts adequately. There are some mad men; there are some bad men; there are men who kill for the joy of killing; who steal for the joy of stealing; who commit other acts as heinous or worse in order to get their "kicks." There are persons who, for one reason or another, are incapable of making the appropriate decisions of individuals in a libertarian or free society. For this reason, if for no other, there must be a government however effectively or drastically limited; there is no other choice for the present or the foreseeable future. To assert otherwise is to postulate a society composed of nothing but saints. As the old saying goes, "You will be governed by God or, by god, you will be governed!"

One can find substantial support for the argument this reviewer has made. For example:

However attractive anarchy may be as a philosophy, it is not feasible in a world of imperfect men. . . . The paternalistic ground for government is in many ways the most troublesome to a liberal; for it involves acceptance of a principle—that one shall decide for

others—which he finds objectionable in most applications. . . . Yet there is no use pretending that problems are simpler than they are. There is no avoiding the need for some measure of paternalism. . . . The consistent liberal is not an anarchist. (Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom*)

Few, however, will fail to find both pleasure and intellectual stimulus in either or both of these volumes, be he libertarian, socialist, liberal, anarchist, conservative, or even Liberal! But, yes, Virginia, there is a generation gap!

Reviewed by ARTHUR KEMP