

government monies run the very real and imminent risk that their mission and identity will be destroyed.

The Establishment Clause has served religion in America well, from the time of the Founders, right up to today. According to a 2008 survey conducted by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, Americans are overwhelmingly religious. Some 78 percent identified themselves as Christians (with

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4.7 percent belonging to religions other than Christianity), while 92 percent claimed to believe in some sort of universal spirit. Other studies, such as those done by sociologists Rodney Stark and Roger Finke (see *The Churching of America, 1776–1992*), demonstrate unequivocally the extent to which churches in America have proliferated. History also shows how the nation has profited from religion. Faith has always played a role in the public square, with generally positive effect. Many of America's social justice concerns were motivated by religious sentiment, for example, the call for an end to slavery. And the leadership in the civil rights movement was provided by religious figures.

Waldman sees the ongoing tension regarding the reach of the First Amendment as a good thing. He believes in the reasonableness of the American people and in the courts' ability to compromise when prudent and necessary. Waldman finds no indication of government hostility toward religion in America. If anything, he says, the opposite is true. This book is an invaluable historical resource, but more so, a tool for enlightened debate on church-state issues as they continue to confront our nation. ❁

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The “L” Word

WHAT IS LIBERTARIANISM, AND who, exactly, counts as a libertarian? For years, anarcho-capitalists, minarchists, teeny-archists, Randoids, and assorted laissez-faire true believers have fought pitched battles over these vexing questions of ideology and identity. Now they have a whole foot-breaking reference book to help remind them of those old, tender memories.

The Encyclopedia of Libertarianism (*The Encyclopedia* hereafter) doesn't seek to give definitive answers where none exist. In fact, there isn't a single entry marked “Libertarianism” to consult. Readers will just have to make do with entries on the “Liberal Critique of Libertarianism”; “Liberalism, Classical”; “Liberalism, German”; “Liberty, Presumption of”; “Liberty in the Ancient World”; and “Locke, John”; as well as the General Introduction.

At first pass, that seems a glaring omission. It's hard to imagine encyclopedias of conservatism, fascism, feminism, or Buddhism that didn't contain entries on...conservatism, fascism, feminism, or Buddhism. Especially as *The Encyclopedia* has entries on three of those four topics—four entries total when you add in “Conservative Critique of Libertarianism.” Why not just come out and say what libertarianism *is*, gentlemen?

The General Introduction asks, “In what does libertarianism consist?” and answers, “This question is much more difficult and profound than one might at first suppose.” Difficult, maybe, but profound seems a bit of a pat on the back. Writing for the editors, Manchester Metropolitan University's Stephen Davies lays out five different ways that one *could* analyze the “major ideologies of modernity” and dances around a concrete definition of libertarianism. My guess is, a workable consensus definition couldn't be found. What's that old Jewish saying? Four libertarians, five opinions.

However, the Introduction does tell us that libertarianism is big—huge! It is “a major feature of

The Encyclopedia of Libertarianism

Edited by
Ronald Hamowy

(SAGE, 664 PAGES, \$125)

Reviewed by Jeremy Lott

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intellectual and political life...at one and the same time a movement in politics, a recognized philosophy, and a set of distinctive policy prescriptions" whose adherents "play a prominent role in intellectual and political arguments in several countries." Rarely a winning role, however. In Washington, D.C., recently, you could be near certain that any policy wonk charging valiantly but futilely against the massive government bailout was either a cranky conservative or an understandably angry libertarian.

Despite its recent emergence as a popular term, libertarianism is no Milton-come-lately ideology either, argues Professor Davies: "Contemporary libertarianism is only the latest manifestation of an intellectual, cultural, and political phenomenon that is as old as modernity, if not older....[It] is only the most recent chapter in a long story that, in the Anglo-Saxon world, traces itself back to classical liberalism." Before there was the American Constitution, there was *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, or *The Bling of Nations*, as kids tend to shorten it these days (see "Smith, Adam").

Of course, not all libertarians will agree about that. Some radical libertarians see many of the towering figures of classical liberalism as tainted or not hard-core enough. The entry on the economist and agitator Murray Rothbard—by freewheeling libertarian historian Brian Doherty—correctly notes that Rothbard believed "even such free-market icons as Adam Smith represented regressions from largely forgotten previous advances in economic thinking."

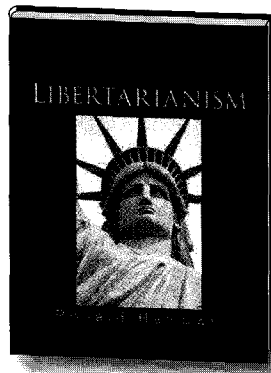
We could dismiss the radicals as freedom's bitterenders but this reviewer happens to think they're on to something when they posit a gulf between classical liberals and modern libertarians. For its special Millennium issue in 1999, a writer for the classical liberal British newsweekly the *Economist* pretended to review *The Wealth of Nations* as if it were the year 1776 and this were the hot "new book...winning praise from every quarter."

Despite all of Smith's "strictures about the dangers of governments acting in league with producers," the *Economist* reminded, "he proposes an enormous extension of the role of the state," including "universal education, at public expense," something like antitrust law, and "roads, canals, bridges and other works necessary for universal opulence

but too costly to be undertaken at private expense." The reviewer predicted, "Mr. Smith's book" may be remembered, in the long run, "for laying the intellectual foundations of, for want of a better term, big government."

ONE MIGHT APOLOGIZE for the digression at this point, and normally I would. Except, except. This is exactly the sort of rabbit trailing *The Encyclopedia* encourages. The volume can be used as a straight reference, but it's at least as valuable as an intellectual curiosity. It's a product of the Cato Institute, that Beltway beachhead for sober free market thinking. However, it is intended to be broadly representative of libertarian thought and history. It usually succeeds at hitting that target.

Most major libertarian figures are included here, if grudgingly. During the recent Republican primaries, cosmopolitan Catoistas were known for their hostility to former Libertarian Party nominee and antiwar candidate Ron Paul—because of his more populist positions on immigration and social issues. Paul's entry in *The Encyclopedia* by Cato executive vice president David Boaz is all of seven column inches (a typical page has 18 column



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inches), but it's here—along with 546 pages full of entries on everything from the common law to the revolution in France to Puritanism to the accomplishments of Swedish economist Knut Wicksell.

This book will appeal to libertarians of all stripes, of course, and intellectual history buffs, as well as to anyone who has ever wondered, "I wonder what libertarians would think about X," or even "Why would libertarians think *that*?" Though if you have, my friends, let me just warn you: it's a slippery slope. ☼

The Slaughterhouse

What's Good for the Gipper

WE ALL GET ANNOYED. People leave their cell phones on in movie theaters. Drivers tailgate and then slow down once they pass you. Keith Olbermann continues to receive a paycheck, one that presumably helps him feed himself. It happens.

Some annoyances are more important than others, and like a small child who tugs at your pantleg because he needs to go to the bathroom, William Kleinknecht's annoyance should be your primary concern. The dude is annoyed. I know this because he told me so. "This book is borne of annoyance," he states in his introduction. See? Annoyed.

Specifically, it's "a great bewilderment over the myth that continues to surround the presidency of Ronald Reagan." Poor people whom Kleinknecht describes as "psychically disenfranchised" are puzzled over "this Hollywood actor and shill for General Electric, this obvious enemy of the common people he claimed to represent, this empty suit who believed in flying saucers and allowed an astrologer to guide his presidential scheduling." Indeed, the working

class often gave voice to the complaint that Reagan was hoarding astrologers from the psychically disenfranchised.

Kleinknecht wrote this book to blow off some steam, and what a startling success considering that it's filled with hot air. "The

apotheosis of Ronald Reagan was never more abject than the coverage of his funeral," he laments, because no one in their right mind should ever say nice things about a dead man at his funeral, let alone a popular president. This alone is evidence enough not to have William Kleinknecht speak at your funeral. He might begin the eulogy: "This eulogy is born out of annoyance." Then you're really in for it.

J. Peter Freire is managing editor of *The American Spectator*.

Reagan was "a repudiation of a long epoch of reform." This reform had "opened the way for the remarkably affluent and egalitarian society," a "golden era that has never been fully appreciated by liberals." And what a golden era that was. Double-digit inflation, foreign people aiming nuclear missiles at us and our good-for-nothing friends, wide lapels, fondue. It was a time when Americans were so comfortable with failure they elected Jimmy "Wonder Boy" Carter just to make sure nothing changed. It was kind of like living in Moscow, except the without the funny hats.

Not so in the Kleinknecht narrative. Wonder Boy was kinder to the common man than Ronald Reagan. Apparently, the common man was better off with the economy in the toilet, and he just didn't know it. The common man was too greedy, as evidenced by "the increasing self-absorption of Americans....Americans were stampeding to therapists to fill their inner emptiness." See, it wasn't the government that was the problem. It was the people. And their ineffective, non-government subsidized therapy sessions.

That's what the book is really about. Voters as idiots. They are, after all, a big problem. They vote the way you don't want them to. They like things you don't like. And because they also have the ability to vote, they don't adhere to your rigid standards for presidential perfection. If Kleinknecht sounds like he didn't read his book aloud to friends who could offer constructive criticism, it's probably because he didn't. Those friends are probably just waiting for it to come out as a pop-up book, since that's what they're most used to.

How else to explain such hopelessly naïve arguments? He asserts that the real reason social welfare programs were ineffective was simply that they lacked funding. That industries failed because the government wasn't bailing them out. (Sound familiar?) But Kleinknecht is a journalist, not an economist, one who learned under the balanced tutelage of Professor Howard Zinn, author of the Marxist tome, *The People's History of the United States*. If this book sounds a little Bolshie, it's not for lack of trying.

It certainly won't go over well with those strange few who might have some fond memories of a presi-

The Man Who Sold the World: Ronald Reagan and the Betrayal of Main Street America

By William Kleinknecht
(NATION BOOKS, \$26.95, 352 PAGES)

Reviewed by J. Peter Freire