

Then there are the Communist rulers of China, Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, and company, who were long feted in the West. Their victims roll was modest only when compared to that of the Soviet Union: 35 million. Given such a record, Rummel asks, why was anyone surprised at the murder of students and workers in Tiananmen square?

China's history is, in many ways, more tragic than that of Russia. Rummel figures that various emperors killed 33.5 million people. Nearly a million died at the hands of warlords early this century. Chiang Kai-shek's nationalists, backed so enthusiastically by many Westerners, slaughtered ten million, putting Chiang in fourth place behind Adolf Hitler in the pantheon of megamurderers. And then came the Communists.

As revolutionaries, Mao Zedong's forces killed millions under their control. Once in power throughout China, the new regime liquidated millions more opponents. The "Great Leap Forward" resulted in a famine that left as many as 27 million dead from starvation. Millions more were murdered during the Cultural Revolution. Almost as inconceivable as this endless slaughter was the fact that so many Western leftists could have promoted so vile a system for so long.

Mass murderer number three was Hitler, along with his criminal gang of anti-Semites, misfits, misanthropes, and racists. Rummel numbers the Third Reich's victims at 21 million. Germany's killings were heavily weighted toward genocide—of Jews, Slavs, and Gypsies, for instance, though few people escaped the Nazi jackboot. Hitler also deserves blame for igniting the worst war in history, with generous help from Stalin and others.

Rummel goes on to chronicle more modest killers, like Japan, Cambodia, Turkey, Vietnam, Poland, Yugoslavia, North Korea, and Mexico. What makes his analysis particularly useful is its impartiality. His book forces us to remember mass killing by the supposed good guys in World War II.

Even Great Britain and the U.S. come under criticism for their terror bombings of civilian populations during the same conflict. Rummel goes so far as to list Britain

as a "Centi-Kilomurderer," responsible for an estimated 816,000 deaths, primarily from its World War II aerial campaign, which exceeded anything attempted by Nazi Germany.

Death By Government is a depressing, unnerving book. For this very reason, it should be read in history classes not just across America, but around the world. The problem of power, as Rummel terms it, remains with us today—just ask residents of Angola, Bosnia, Chechnya, Georgia, and Rwanda, among many, many other lands. Only if we learn from the past can we ever hope to end state-sanctioned murder. The case for human liberty and limited government has never been made more effectively than by this fearsome book. □

Mr. Bandow, a Freeman columnist, is a Senior Fellow at the Cato Institute and the author of The Politics of Envy: Statism as Theology.

Beyond Politics

by William C. Mitchell and
Randy T. Simmons

The Independent Institute/Westview Press •
1994 • 234 pages • \$17.95 paperback, \$49.50
cloth

Reviewed by Gregory P. Pavlik

Within the last 30 or so years some advocates of limited government have begun promoting public choice economics. This small but increasingly influential school of thought applies assumptions of neo-classical economics about human behavior to public employees, elected or not. Public choice economists insist that politicians and bureaucrats are motivated by rational self-interest, and the manifestations of that self-interest result in perverse and disastrous consequences for the public. Many of their insights buttress earlier sociological and political analyses of both the State and the political class, echoing the work of such theorists as Franz Oppenheimer, Vilfredo Pareto, and Ludwig von Mises.

William Mitchell and Randy Simmons have written an interesting and informative

work on political interventionism in the economy from a public choice perspective. The book, *Beyond Politics*, begins with a discussion of welfare economics, that branch of the dismal science that deals with, among other things, issues of market failure. Market failure refers to the divergence of real markets from the assumptions of perfect competition.

One of the most troubling of market failures in the eyes of the general public is monopoly. On this issue and others, the authors approach the "market failure" from a public choice point of view, showing that the incentives of government officials are structured in such a way as to exacerbate the very problems, real or imagined, that the State is being used to solve.

For example, politicians in a democracy must seek popular re-election. The easiest and most effective means of staying in office is often the use of public power to benefit an electorally powerful interest or constituency. Why then the absurd belief that politicians can be relied upon to eliminate monopolies? For one thing, a genuine monopoly is impossible to maintain against the forces of a competition in a free market economic system. Politics is the only means of creating a sustainable monopoly through artificial barriers to competition. More importantly, it is in the interest of politicians to structure regulatory mechanisms that inhibit competition and lead to consolidation, since this creates a wealthy and grateful backer for the politician.

In a similar fashion, Mitchell and Simmons argue convincingly that market failures are often ill-defined and almost never warrant the degree of criticism they invoke. To drive the point home, the authors show that private solutions are invariably superior to public solutions. In fact, most of the book deals with what the authors call "public failure," the inability of the public sector to live up to the vision of an efficient and benevolent government handling the flaws of the marketplace.

The book ends with a call for a return to a free and unfettered economy, something which the authors have succeeded in dem-

onstrating as superior to the various schemes involving the State. Occasionally lost in the long discussions of the personal interests of politicians and bureaucrats and the economic consequences of interventionism is the fact that the most precious cost of growth of the State can be measured in terms of human liberty. The loss of freedom may be one of the unseen costs for economists, but it is the heaviest of burdens for civilization.

Beyond Politics is flawed by an overreliance on equilibrium models to illustrate points in the text. A free economy is dynamic and constantly changing. Many of the authors' points could be made using economic laws based on apodictic principles that do not presuppose static conditions in the economy. But this caveat should not preclude an appreciation of the devastating critique of statism, government intervention, and the pretensions of the political classes found in this book's pages. *Beyond Politics* is a cogent defense of the economic system of a free society and a firm rebuttal to some of its most vociferous critics among the economics profession. It deserves the attention of anyone interested in the great economic controversies of our day. □

Mr. Pavlik is director of The Freeman Op-Ed program at The Foundation for Economic Education.

Investment Biker

by Jim Rogers

Random House • 1994 • 402 pages • \$25.00

Reviewed by Richard A. Cooper

Jim Rogers autographed my copy of *Investment Biker* with the words, "Life is short; Ride hard and far." Rogers closes his highly readable account of the round-the-world motorcycle trip he and girlfriend Tabitha Estabrook accomplished with more words of wisdom: "More important, I've also learned that if you've got a dream, you have to try it; you must get it out of your system. You will never get another chance.