

doesn't deserve the credit for writing it. But now the polemicism is made transparent: according to O'Brien, Jefferson deserves denunciation for originating a theory of revolution, but doesn't deserve to be revered as the author of the theory. The reality is that Jefferson *wasn't*, and wouldn't have claimed to be, the originator of the political theory underlying the Declaration, but *was* an eloquent articulator of that theory.

In any case, O'Brien is guilty of several *ad hominem* attacks of the weakest sort. To suggest that there is something suspect about Jefferson because Mr. McVeigh (or whoever) likes to quote him is fallacious reasoning. It's like saying that since Charles Manson quoted John Lennon, Lennon must have been evil. O'Brien makes several such charges, including his thoroughly unpersuasive attempt to show that the Ku Klux Klan is "descended from" Jefferson, whatever that means.

As we are all now aware, Jefferson owned slaves, in spite of his often-stated view that slavery was an offense against natural law. For O'Brien, this is evidence of pathological, virulent racism. Any number of more sensible considerations of this paradox (most recently Sean Wilentz's excellent critique of O'Brien in *The New Republic* or historian Joseph Ellis's *American Sphinx*) have demonstrated that things are not that simple. Could Jefferson have shown greater moral courage than he did? Perhaps, but remember that slavery was the norm for that time and place, so there were more complex legal and financial factors involved, which, while not exculpatory, also suggest less harsh condemnation. During the Second Continental Congress, Jefferson tried to include an antislavery clause in the Declaration, but it was vetoed by the Southern delegation. Later he arranged for the release of some, but not all, of his slaves. Is it strange that someone who thinks that slavery is a moral wrong should not have done a better job ending the institution of slavery? How can we answer that question satisfactorily? Deciding that Jefferson could have done more is a far cry from branding him a vicious racist.

No personal attack on Jefferson's character would be complete without revisiting the allegation that he had a long affair with his

slave Sally Hemings. The "long affair" of the book's title is meant to refer most obviously to Jefferson's enchantment with the French Revolution, and his seeming endorsement of its worst excesses, which is part of the link between Jefferson and McVeigh, according to O'Brien, who documents this with selected writings (while ignoring other more moderate writings). But the "long affair" also evokes the relationship between Jefferson and Sally Hemings. Was there such an affair? The only honest answer is: we can't be sure. There is some evidence to support the story, but not very much, and the story originated in the mouths of political enemies of Jefferson. To accept uncritically the allegations as further ammunition for a personal attack is not the mark of reasoned discourse, yet O'Brien is far too quick to endorse the story in its entirety.

O'Brien's book is so clouded by animus that it fails to be either reasonable or persuasive. Whatever his faults, Jefferson doesn't deserve this, and more to the point, modern readers interested in exploring the perplexing legacy of Jefferson do not deserve it either. □

Dr. Skoble is Visiting Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Southeast Missouri State University.

The Libertarian Reader: Classic and Contemporary Writings From Lao-Tzu to Milton Friedman

edited by David Boaz

Free Press • 1997 • 476 pages • \$27.50

Reviewed by William H. Peterson

Asked Shakespeare's Juliet: What's in a name? Yesterday conservatism was "in" as the name of what could be called the free-society movement. Today, increasingly, libertarianism as the catch-name is in. Recent books by Charles Murray (*What It Means to Be a Libertarian*) and David Boaz (the title reviewed here and his *Libertarianism: A Primer*) have put the word "libertarian" in front of many who were not previously familiar with it.

As editor David Boaz says in his introduc-

tion to this fine collection, it is easier to define libertarian ideas than to agree on a proper name for those ideas. The essays he has chosen succeed in explaining the essence of libertarian thinking. Believers in statism may not be won over (although they should be!) but after *The Libertarian Reader*, they won't have any excuse for misrepresenting what libertarians stand for.

Mr. Boaz sets forth seven sections of selected readings, six of them on central ideas in libertarianism: skepticism about power, individualism, individual rights, spontaneous order, free markets and voluntary order, and peace and international harmony. The seventh section relates to the future of libertarianism and features a gem, "Paternalist Government Is Out of Date" by Michael Prowse of *The Financial Times*.

Selections and ideas match well, and make this a most handy reference work, even though many of the selections (such as James Madison's *Federalist* No. 10 and Thomas Jefferson's Declaration of Independence) can be found in conservative and other readers. Where Mr. Boaz especially shines is in his annotated comments and libertarian asides. He notes, for example, that Jefferson in his draft of the Declaration of Independence insisted on the phrase *inalienable* rights, that these rights are "natural," that government can't transfer or abolish them, that if it does, the people have "the right to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government."

Among these many selections are such other sharp questioners of state authoritarianism as John Locke, Adam Smith, Thomas Paine, Herbert Spencer, Frederic Bastiat, and, from the twentieth century, F. A. Hayek, Murray Rothbard, Ludwig von Mises, H. L. Mencken, and Charles Murray. (Of interest to *Freeman* readers is Doug Bandow's "Private Prejudice, Private Remedy," which originally appeared in the July 1996 issue of this journal.) David Boaz knows the literature well and has wisely drawn from it.

Particularly noteworthy, I believe, is the essay "The Right to Do Wrong" by Roger Pilon, director of constitutional studies at the Cato Institute (where Mr. Boaz serves as executive vice president). Mr. Pilon endorses

the Supreme Court's 1990 defense of flag-burning as a First Amendment right not only of speech but of content. Pilon's point is all speech is a form of action and, arguably, all action is, if not speech, at least a form of expression with which the government has no right to interfere—as long as the action is peaceful—no matter how much it annoys others.

Such jewels abound in this mustering of sharp minds. □

Dr. Peterson, an adjunct scholar at the Heritage Foundation, is Distinguished Lundy Professor Emeritus of Business Philosophy at Campbell University in North Carolina.

The Unknown Lenin, From the Secret Archive

edited by Richard Pipes with the assistance of David Brandenberger; basic translation of Russian documents by Catherine A. Fitzpatrick

Yale University Press • 1996 • xi-xx + 204 pages • \$27.50

Reviewed by Joseph T. Fuhrmann

It has been inspiring to watch the "opening up" of Russian archives since the collapse of the USSR. Foreigners now have access to documents once denied even to communist historians. The "Presidential Archives" in Moscow hold papers still classified "top secret," but a few people are permitted to work there. Bureaucratic attitudes in the open archives can still be confining and frustrating, but despite that complication, amazing materials are now available.

This volume contains a selection of 122 documents housed at the Russian Center for the Preservation and Study of Documents of Recent History (RtsKhIDNI) in Moscow. They have been translated into English and are published here under a joint venture between Yale University Press and the RtsKhIDNI. Yale has worked with Russian archives to issue three other titles in this "Annals of Communism Series": *The Secret World of American Communism*, *Stalin's Let-*