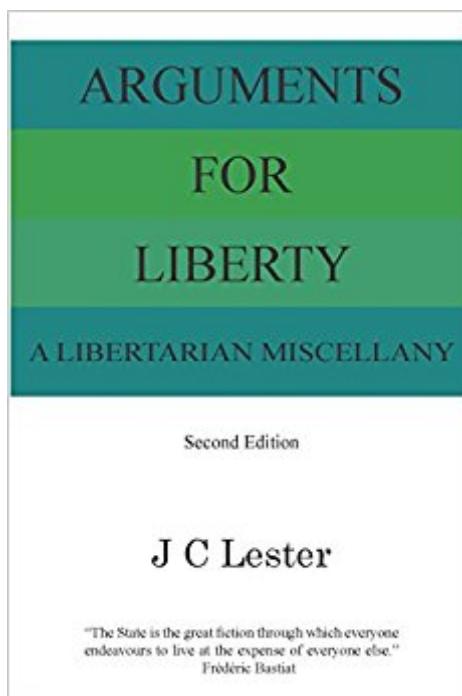


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Arguments For Liberty: A Libertarian Miscellany



Synopsis

Liberty is what libertarians advocate. Both because of the inherent value of human liberty and because of the increasing wealth and welfare it brings to all. They see the aggressive coercion of the state as the main enemy of liberty. The solution is to roll back the state until there is little or no state left. Libertarianism has been rapidly growing since the 1970s. But it is still not commonly understood or even given a proper hearing. However, you will increasingly come across it. Often it will be through state enthusiasts disingenuously claiming to be a "libertarian". At other times it will be through state enthusiasts attacking libertarianism as an "extremist" ideology. And very occasionally it will be real libertarians explaining and defending their views. J C Lester is a libertarian philosopher who has been writing about why liberty is preferable to politics for about thirty years. This book contains many of his shorter writings on the subject. These range from the populist to the philosophical. Together they function as a miscellaneous introduction to libertarianism. The various different topics and approaches should give the reader a good cross-reference grasp of the subject.

Book Information

Paperback: 196 pages

Publisher: University of Buckingham Press; 2 edition (November 10, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1908684623

ISBN-13: 978-1908684622

Product Dimensions: 6.1 x 0.6 x 9.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.9 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: Be the first to review this item

Best Sellers Rank: #6,305,131 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #93 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Ideologies & Doctrines > Libertarianism #2868 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Political Science > Reference #5300 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Specific Topics > Political Freedom

Customer Reviews

In *Arguments for Liberty*, Lester emerges as the contemporary follow-up to Frederic Bastiat. As Bastiat so quotably said, "The State is the great fiction through which everyone endeavours to live at the expense of everyone else." Lester picks up that ball and runs with it, to wonderful effect. What

he has to say about a lot of currently hot topics - abortion, discrimination, AIDS, heroin, and several more - is bracing, always interesting, and generally, to my mind, convincing. What it convinces one of is what the liberal view implies about these things. There are plenty of illiberal people about - all supporters of government are more or less illiberal, after all - and whether it will convince them is another matter. But it is great to have the liberal view so pungently expounded on so many important topics; Professor Jan Narveson, author of *The Libertarian Idea*; Mainstream libertarianism involves the conflation of certain kinds of deontological rights, property rules, and 'supporting justifications'; and without an explicit theory of liberty to explain any of these. Lester has a radical new paradigm. A central pre-propertarian and non-normative abstract theory of liberty is 'the absence of interpersonal proactive constraints on want-satisfaction' (for short, 'no pro-active impositions'). Maximally applying this to the real world entails self-ownership, all other property rules, solutions to relevant philosophical problems, and compatibility with preference-utilitarian welfare. The theoretico-practical derivations (of what liberty entails) are in principle separate from their ideological advocacy (that liberty is desirable). And both are put as conjectures for criticism rather than as 'justifications' that supposedly transcend the realm of assumptions; Professor Ray Scott Percival, author of *The Myth of the Closed Mind*

Jan Lester is a libertarian philosopher and the author of *Escape from Leviathan*, plus the philosophical dialogues *The Naked Politician* and *The Philosophical Genie*, as well as many scholarly and popular articles on libertarian matters.

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