

doctrine of eminent domain to justify taking private property. Moreover, in the *Kelo* decision, the Supreme Court explicitly established the condition that a taking must be “in furtherance of a public purpose.” Is a public purpose, then, not a common good?

For reasons of intellectual or, if one wishes, religious integrity, Catholics cannot come down on both sides of the property issue; neither can libertarians or, for that matter, conservatives. Assigning all blame to government, or to activist judges, will hardly do. “Cui bono?”—this is the rule used in Roman as well as in canon law for establishing at least responsibility if not culpability. The ethics and politics of property rights have, after *Kelo*, become more difficult than before. This collection of essays provides a very welcome guide to the maze of facts and arguments in this debate. It does not, nor does it purport to, answer the question of the telos (or purpose) of property or of the proper ethical decisions based on such determination. This will continue to be the province of the philosopher, the theologian, and the interested citizen. It can help philosophers, theologians, all citizens, and not least economists themselves, to better understand the functions of property in a society based on free markets.

—Wolfgang Grassl

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Max Weber: An Intellectual Biography

Fritz Ringer

Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004 (307 pages)

In this intellectual biography a long-time teacher of Max Weber’s thought offers us an advanced introduction to that thinker’s most essential texts. Each chapter covers a different aspect of Weber’s work, such as politics, methodology, the Protestant ethic, bureaucracy, and the sociology of religion. The author, Fritz Ringer, is an intellectual historian, not a social theorist or a philosopher, and he admits forthrightly that this work does not offer critical commentary or try to go beyond Weber. Rather, it is a “Weberian reading of Weber,” an interpretation that attempts to restate what Weber wrote as clearly as possible. This work is a capstone of Ringer’s accomplished career, and an excellent summary of Weber’s most important arguments.

Ringer follows Pierre Bourdieu’s valuable notion of an intellectual field in interpreting Weber’s texts. For Bourdieu, thinkers define themselves in relation to the intellectual orthodoxy of their time. These orthodoxies—influenced by but generally independent of broader social concerns—are grounded in traditional presuppositions, premises that can be questioned during periods of change. Ringer presents Weber as a clarifying thinker, critically examining the background assumptions of his age. For example, Weber’s brand of nationalism was rare among European intellectuals at that time, all of whom were nationalists: Weber’s nationalism was in fact inclusive, that is, not used rhetorically for the purpose of excluding a certain political viewpoint deemed

unpatriotic. Another example is Weber's insistence on the separation of learning from value judgment, which should not be read as the call to be objective in the sense of the pretension to be above all particular viewpoints and interests—a notion Weber sees to be impossible. Rather, Weber's idea of value-freedom is a reaction against the ethos of *Bildung* current in German universities: the demand that scholarship should produce a worldview and the self-perfection of the person. The role of an institution of learning should be to pass on specialized knowledge, rather than to prophesy, push a particular political worldview, or form students' ultimate life decisions. Weber simply wanted political positions to be argued in public, where they could be criticized, rather than only be pontificated in the classroom.

Ringer correctly reads Weber as a political liberal in the tradition of J. S. Mill, and puts liberal pluralism, rather than his methodology or his commitment to German nationalism, at the core of Weber's intellectual life. Weber was interested in the effects of social structure on the human personality. He was always concerned with freedom, not as the absence of behavioral restrictions, but as the development of one's character in a vocation. Freedom is the ability to make particular decisions in light of our ultimate commitments, which has nothing to do with spontaneous, inexplicable deeds. Freedom can be threatened by an excess of order. Weber wrote so passionately about the human cost of bureaucracy because he saw the possibility of people who would be willing to trade their freedom for security. In the tradition of liberalism, Weber valued the importance of individual and cultural diversity. In education, Weber understood that the freedom to learn only occurs within certain limits of what is acceptable; therefore, a positive commitment to tolerate differences is necessary.

Ringer brings out well Weber's orientation toward politics and economics. In politics, Weber was most concerned with fostering a tradition that upholds the responsibility of politicians. The formation of political leaders requires training and education in a system that grants real power and welds it to responsibility; Weber admired England's political system for its ability to accomplish this. In economics, Weber opposed both capitalism and socialism. The latter simply would not work, as it is technically impossible; the necessary information for running the economy cannot be attained by a central power, and the subjection of workers would merely be transferred from the owners of capital to the bureaucracy of the state. With respect to capitalism, Weber worried about the inescapable impersonality and senselessness of work, as well as the ethos wherein the successful view the poor as morally inferior. Also, for Weber, politics was unquestionably higher than economics. Economics cannot be self-contained, setting its own standards for itself; its guiding concern must be the welfare of the nation, not autonomous economic values such as productivity. Social policy should not be based on charity, but neither should it be based on narrow economic considerations.

The chapter on Weber's methodology, adapted from a previous work by Ringer, is the best in the book. Weber pursues singular causal analysis, in which the explanandum is a concrete historical particular, not a part of a general process or law. Religions, for example, are not lined up according to stages of development, but, rather, each is viewed

as a complex historical individual. This approach requires a dynamic model of causality, which uses counterfactual reasoning. Rather than one element causing another, causality here is the production of a deviation from what would have otherwise occurred in the absence of the causal factor. The social sciences also use rational constructions that highlight certain aspects of reality, and it is imperative that these are understood to be our constructions and not be confused with the reality itself.

—Philip J. Harold

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A Critical Inquiry into the Case Against Capital

Lawrence Eubank

Lincoln, Nebraska: Author's Choice, 2005 (480 pages)

Lawrence Eubank makes his debut as an author with his deeply reasoned, *A Critical Inquiry into the Case Against Capital*. He offers a detailed, philosophical rebuttal of Karl Marx's *Das Kapital*, clearly fulfilling his objective. As he states it, "The purpose of the present book is to show that Marx's central accusation against capitalism—that it enriches capitalists only via their exploitation of laborers, through the extraction of unpaid 'surplus value' from them—is a fallacy."

The author has developed a flowing, readable style, presented in a confident and convincing approach. Reading the 480 pages is thus made a pleasant experience except for two unforgivable defects, which this writer will attempt to portray.

The author is not an economist, surprisingly so, for he admirably undertakes, in the guise of another young David slaying the giant Goliath, to show that the master ideologue of the nineteenth century was a fraud, that his mammoth work was not true science but rather a snow job that violates the rules of consistency and logic. He does this quite convincingly as in argument after argument, he destroys the Marxian pretensions.

However, Eubank does not state to whom he has directed his study. Perhaps if it were to be addressed to profound scholars of Marxism (and it is presumed that some of these are still extant), it would resound quite favorably, as deep theorists might well appreciate the continuous, detailed, logical pounding that he offers, downing Marx on page after page, never omitting a single angle of each and every assertion. They would applaud his persistent, relentless refutation of argument after argument. They would revel in his blow-by-blow description of use value versus exchange value, of labor power versus labor, and in the fact that he never fails to exult with resounding huzzahs over each single defeat of Marx, which peel on practically every page of the book.

For the reader, like the present author, who has but a skirting knowledge of Marx, our author seems unequipped for the monumental task that he has designed for himself. He appears unaware of practically all of the previous scholarship on the subject. He barely mentions the great authors who have preceded him. Eugen von Böhm Bawerk, who authored the first devastating critique of Marx in *Capital and Interest*, is briefly