

BOOK REVIEWS

Political Philosophy, Clearly: Essays on Freedom and Fairness, Property and Equalities

Anthony de Jasay

Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2010, 360 pp.

Political Philosophy, Clearly, part of Liberty Fund's "Collected Papers of Anthony de Jasay" series, gathers nearly two dozen essays from the prominent economist and philosopher. From them emerges a fascinating overview of de Jasay's thought on the nature of order, justice, and the state.

A word about the title. The "clearly" in *Political Philosophy, Clearly* informs the text in a handful of ways, all refreshing. First, as someone who found de Jasay's book length work—*The State*, for instance—often rather opaque, the essays in this collection come off as decidedly clear, making for breezy, if heady, reads.

"Clearly" also represents an allergy on de Jasay's part to fuzzy terms and the fuzzy thinking they engender. He rails against ill-considered use of such words as "fairness," "social justice," and "rights." Much political pontification is decidedly not clear, with words used widely without consideration given to what they actually mean. De Jasay attacks such obscurity whenever he finds it. In a short essay on rights, for instance, de Jasay notes that "by unravelling the tangled thought that lies at the base of most rights talk, one can lay bare some simple truths." True to the form, he goes on to argue that "the word *right* is blithely employed to convey at least two different meanings, one that makes perfect sense and another that does not" (p. 152). Many of the essays in *Political Philosophy, Clearly* see

