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The Third Way: Foundations Of Distributism As Contained In The Writings Of Pope Leo XIII And Gilbert K. Chesterton



Synopsis

Recently updated and re-formatted to make for a better Kindle experienceDistributism is an economic philosophy that developed in Europe in the late 19th and early 20th century, based upon the principles of Catholic social teaching, especially the teachings of Pope Blessed Leo XIII in his encyclical *Rerum Novarum* and Pope Pius XI in *Quadragesimo Anno*.According to distributists, property ownership is a fundamental right and the means of production should be spread as widely as possible among the general populace, rather than being centralized under the control of the state (state socialism) or by accomplished individuals (laissez-faire capitalism). Distributism therefore advocates a society marked by widespread property ownership and, according to co-operative economist Race Mathews, maintains that such a system is key to bringing about a just social order.Distributism has often been described in opposition to both socialism and capitalism, which distributists see as equally flawed and exploitive. Thomas Storck argues that "both socialism and capitalism are products of the European Enlightenment and are thus modernizing and anti-traditional forces. In contrast, distributism seeks to subordinate economic activity to human life as a whole, to our spiritual life, our intellectual life, our family life".Some have seen it more as an aspiration, which has been successfully realised in the short term by commitment to the principles of subsidiarity and solidarity (these being built into financially independent local cooperatives and small family businesses), though proponents also cite such periods as the Middle Ages as examples of the historical long-term viability of distributism. Particularly influential in the development of distributist theory were Catholic authors G. K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc, two of distributism's earliest and strongest proponents.This volume contains some of distributism's foundational writings from Pope Blessed Leo XIII and Gilbert K. Chesterton.

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Customer Reviews

I almost didn't buy this e-book when I noticed that "Pope" is misspelled "Puve" in a heading for Rerum Novarum. But I'm glad I looked past that. This collection is very well done, with minimal typos, good formatting, and linking that shows real consideration for the reader. The collection begins with the entry on Rerum Novarum from the old Catholic Encyclopedia (1907-1914). We then get the complete text of Rerum Novarum, Pope Leo XIII's 1891 encyclical on industrialization, property, and conflicts between employers and laborers. This is followed by four of G.K. Chesterton's books relating to "Distributism," i.e., the economic philosophy that the means of production should be widely dispersed, so that society will be made up of numerous small producers and tradespeople. The Chesterton works are:- What's Wrong with the World (1910)- Utopia of Usurers and Other Essays (1917)- Eugenics and Other Evils (1922)- The Outline of Sanity (1926) Chesterton is a superb writer and probably the best-known advocate of Distributism. He expresses numerous opinions that today are old-fashioned, if not reactionary. If you're interested in Distributism, this is a great place to start.

This is an excellent resource. I love the encyclicals in the beginning of the book. Although I'm not in agreement with Chesterton on a few points, I respect him as a mind. His writings on feminism are particularly entertaining and ring true. More pressingly, his attacks on modern economics are devastating. I would recommend this to anyone with an interest in political thought.

This exceptional anthology describes the reasonable middle path between the extremes of unfettered capitalism and undemocratic socialism presented in the blessed Holy Father Leo XIII's writings and the ouvre of the ever-witty Chesterton. Particularly pertinent today, distributism is a refreshing alternative vision of a well-ordered state that offers hope to those disillusioned by our

inherently unjust and discriminatory American model but are apprehensive of embracing a socialist system which disregards or devalues the Divine.

It is a timeless writing, filled with common sense. Not an easy read but one that will open the reader's eyes to the workings and manipulations of geopolitics, as well as the ever present wisdom and guidance of the Catholic Church in the world.

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