

Ron Paul Reading List: The Secret Behind Libertarian Success is Hidden in These Books

Robert Taylor in Politics, General Politics 38 minutes ago

In a recent [post](#) at LewRockwell.com, Robert Wenzel offered a "30 day reading list" designed to introduce the basic tenets of libertarianism by offering a daily article to read for a month. For anyone interested in learning a lot more about libertarianism in a short period of time, I highly recommend taking Wenzel's offer.

And while I am at best a lightweight compared to [Wenzel](#), who runs one of the best read libertarian blogs in the world, I thought I'd do something similar and offer my own introduction to libertarian philosophy.

First of all, I used to be your fairly typical conservative Republican, with some minor libertarian sympathies. I read the writings at Cato and Reason, and while both organizations are loaded with incredibly talented writers and researchers, their utilitarian and at times compromising demeanor turned me off. It wasn't until I discovered the ethical and philosophical underpinning of libertarianism, through hardcore libertarians like Murray Rothbard and Ludwig von Mises, that really lit that spark and led to me read voraciously, challenge my own thoughts, and slowly become more and more libertarian.

Libertarian philosophy rests on a major concept — self-ownership — that necessarily leads to other philosophies, like the non-aggression principle, property rights, and individual liberty. Thus, as long a person doesn't murder, rape, burglarize, defraud, trespass, steal, or inflict any other act of violence against another person's life, liberty, or property, libertarians hold that the government should leave him alone. Fundamentally, the strength and power of libertarianism comes from this ethical, rather than empirical, defense of individual sovereignty. Libertarian philosophy attempts to come up with a framework that defends individual rights for their own sake, analyzes what the proper role of force is in society, and reasons that

law and morality mean little if they are not universally applied to all individuals in society. Because of this, libertarians reject the state from a moral and philosophical position, and either aim to limit it to a few specific functions or abolish it all together.

And with that out of the way, here is a list of articles, short books, and long essays that I think provide a great summary of libertarianism.

Libertarian Philosophy/Ethics:

[*The Non-Aggression Axiom of Libertarianism*](#), by Walter Block

[*The Philosophy of Ownership*](#), by Robert Levefre

[*Rothbardian Ethics*](#), by Hans-Hermann Hoppe

[*If Men Were Angels*](#), by Robert Higgs

[*Proving Libertarian Morality*](#), by Stefan Molyneux

[*The State*](#), by Franz Oppenheimer

[*No Treason: The Constitution of No Authority*](#), by Lysander Spooner

[*The Law*](#), by Frederic Bastiat

[*Ending Tyranny Without Violence*](#), by Murray Rothbard

[*How and Why the State Destroys Society*](#), by Frank Chodorov

Entwined intimately with libertarian philosophy is a defense of the market economy, again based not on practical reasons (though markets have shown to be the most effective way of decreasing poverty and increasing standards of living), but because it is a natural extension of individual liberty and property ownership. Libertarians embrace the market because it provides individuals the opportunity to maximize their interests by engaging in mutually-beneficial trade with another, provides order through the profit-and-loss/price signals, and reject state intervention because it tends to harm this unbelievably complex and decentralized coordination that markets create.

Economics:

[*Economics in One Lesson*](#), by Henry Hazlitt

[*Planned Chaos*](#), Ludwig von Mises

[*What Has Government Done to Our Money?*](#), by Murray Rothbard

[*An Introduction to Austrian Economics*](#), by Thomas C. Taylor

[*An Introduction to Economic Reasoning*](#), by David Gordon

[*Capitalism: A Treatise on Economics*](#), by George Reisman

[*No, the Free Market Did Not Cause the Financial Crisis*](#), by Thomas Woods

[*Recession and Recovery*](#), by Robert Higgs

There are, of course, many objections raised to libertarianism on issues of practicality. How would roads be provided without a state? Environmental protection? Money? Regulations? Welfare? Education? Healthcare? Law and order? Security?

Practical Problems and Solutions:

[*Law, Property Rights, and Air Pollution*](#), by Murray Rothbard

[*The Privatization of Roads and Highways*](#), by Walter Block

[*The Private Production of Defense*](#), by Hans-Hermann Hoppe

[*Private Law Society*](#), by Hans-Hermann Hoppe

[*Welfare Before the Welfare State*](#), by Joshua Fulton

[*Practical Anarchy*](#), by Stefan Molyneux

[*From Mutual Aid to Welfare State: Fraternal Societies and Social Services, 1890-1967*](#), by David Beito

[*The Not So Wild, Wild West*](#), by Terry Anderson and P.J. Hill

[*Education: Free and Compulsory*](#), by Murray Rothbard

[*Top Ten Objection to Libertarian Anarchism*](#), by Roderick T. Long

[*Arguments Against Anarchy*](#), by Jarret B. Wollstein

[*What Has Government Done to Our Money?*](#), by Murray Rothbard

[*A Four-Step Health-Care Solution*](#), by Hans-Hermann Hoppe

[*Who Will Regulate the Regulators?*](#), by Thomas DiLorenzo

And finally, the most important issue facing the U.S. and the libertarian movement in general: war and peace. As the great classical liberal Randolph Bourne said, "war is the health of the state." Not only does war kill, injure, and displace human life and destroy wealth and property, but it diverts production from what the market and consumers want to what politicians, lobbyists, and generals want. War has traditionally been the number one contributor to the growth of state power, for it is during wartime that states justify the most amount of secrecy, expansion, and obedience. War, like any force or violence, is only justified in self-defense.

War and Peace:

[*War, Peace, and the State*](#), by Murray Rothbard

[*War is a Racket*](#), by Major General Smedly Butler, USMC

[*How the Swiss Opted Out of War*](#), by Bill Walker

[*Imagine an Occupied America*](#), by Ron Paul

[*Stopping the Next Hitler*](#), by Bill Walker

[*God of the Machine*](#), by Isabel Paterson

[*Why Libertarians Oppose War*](#), by Jacob Huebert

The War Prayer, by Mark Twain

Robert Higgs and the 'Ratchet Effect', by David Beito