



Utopia of Usurers, G. K. Chesterton, IHS Press, 2002, 0971489432, 9780971489431, 133 pages. An engaging work sure to appeal to both scholars and students for the depth of its thought and the freshness of its claims, this is a two-part book by one of the 20th century's greatest writers. The first part is a coherent analysis of the theory, effects, and claims of capitalism. The second is a lengthy collection of articles from Chesterton's vast journalistic output. The author challenges the fundamental tenets of capitalism without favoring socialism or Marxism by providing a philosophical analysis of the pitfalls, drawbacks, and falsehoods regarding capitalism and its inevitability. This is must reading for any serious investigation into anti-capitalist thought. It is also an exemplary text of how Christian principles and thinking apply to the socioeconomic world..

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All Things Considered , Gilbert Keith Chesterton, 1969, Literary Collections, 190 pages. .

The collected poems of G.K. Chesterton , Gilbert Keith Chesterton, 1946, , 391 pages. .

The Crimes of England By Gilbert Keith Chesterton, G. K. (Gilbert Keith) Chesterton, 2008, Electronic books, 51 pages. This is an electronic edition of the complete book complemented by author biography. This book features a table of contents linked to every chapter. The book was designed for

The Ball and the Cross , G. K. Chesterton, 1995, Fiction, 178 pages. Chesterton's second novel chronicles a hot dispute between two Scotsmen, a Roman Catholic, and an atheist, whose fanatically held opinions inspire a host of comic adventures

An Essay on the Restoration of Property , Hilaire Belloc, Oct 1, 2002, Business & Economics, 102 pages. This short work is a program for property distribution as an alternative to how it is planned by socialist states or naturally happens in capitalist societies. It is a landmark

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The Club of Queer Trades , G. K. Chesterton, 1987, Fiction, 146 pages. Tells stories about an English club whose members must invent a new profession and earn a living at it.

A Miscellany of Men , Gilbert Keith Chesterton, 1969, English essays, 179 pages. .

The Man Who Knew Too Much By Gilbert Keith Chesterton, G. K. (Gilbert Keith) Chesterton, 2008,

Fiction, 119 pages. This is an electronic edition of the complete book complemented by author biography. This book features a table of contents linked to every chapter. The book was designed for

Heretics and Orthodoxy , G.k. Chesterton, Jun 12, 2013, Religion, . .

On Pilgrimage , Dorothy Day, Peter Day, Aug 1, 1999, Religion, 470 pages. "When Dorothy Day sat down to record her thoughts in diary form, she wrote not only as the leader of the Catholic Worker movement but also as a mother, a grandmother, and a

The Ballad of the White Horse , G. K. Chesterton, Sep 1, 2001, Poetry, 280 pages. .

“Now I have said again and again (and I shall continue to say again and again on all the most inappropriate occasions) that we must hit Capitalism, and hit it hard, for the plain and definite reason that it is growing stronger. Most of the excuses which serve the capitalists as masks are, of course, the excuses of hypocrites. They lie when they claim philanthropy; they no more feel any particular love of men than Albu felt an affection for Chinamen. They lie when they say they have reached their position through their own organising ability. They generally have to pay men to organise the mine, exactly as they pay men to go down it. They often lie about the present wealth, as they generally lie about their past poverty. But when they say that they are going in for a "constructive social policy," they do not lie. They really are going in for a constructive social policy. And we must go in for an equally destructive social policy; and destroy, while it is still half-constructed, the accursed thing which they construct.” (Summary from Gilbert Keith Chesterton, d. 1936)

If the phrase, *in vino veritas*; has been exponentially validated through the long ages of mankind, I would venture to say that anger, tinged with wrath, an anger that is not artificial, but, rather, spontaneous, is another deep wellspring of truth. It is the gushing forth of that which is meant to cleanse or to sweep away. Such a manifestation of wrath, rarely tied to self-interest or petty ambition, is the most honest account of what a man is, a revelation of his inner capacity for nobility and heroism. Of course, the appearance of anger on an occasion when some great good is sullied or threatened is truly a sign that there has been a great patience at work in the mind of the man of wrath. He has borne with that which he finds intolerable. He only *strikes out*; when he, from the deepest recesses of his being, knows that the good, if not defended now, will be damaged irreparably. The man of righteous anger will not see the idiocy of evil and error stand triumphant over the fallen body of the True, the Good, and the Beautiful.

The word *rebel*; understates our cause. It is much too mild; it lets our enemies off much too easily. “By all the working and orthodox standards of sanity, Capitalism is insane. I should not say to Mr. Rockefeller *I am a rebel*; I should say *I am a respectable man and you are not*.”

All continues to go well in the Land of Plenty. That is why we normally focus your attention on the trivialities and mere accoutrements of human existence. Obviously there is no crisis to worry about. There are, of course, certain diabolical obstacles, even though one of them is, clearly, not the devil, to the transmission of this paradisiacal world to all of humankind; these evil individuals might even be an inconvenience to us. The reason these fanatics act as they do is on account of the fact that they just cannot stand for people to be free and happy. There are, sadly, some who want to be enslaved and miserable. But, as you can tell, these threats are quickly and assuredly being overcome. Once they disappear from your TV screens, the people whom they have tyrannically dominated will be free to follow their natural desire and join, like everyone else, the utopia that they have been illegitimately excluded from. And now the stock report.

Chesterton, in this series of articles, written for a Socialist newspaper and, yet, distinctly non-Socialistic in character, does, indeed, state that the *progressive*; men of his day are building a utopia. The only problem with this is that it is a utopia for a specific group of individuals. If you build a world that is meant to be perfect for a particular group of individuals, you,

sooner or later, make a world increasingly hell-like for those whom the utopia is not meant for. This is what angered Chesterton. The freedom that is allowed by the Liberal System loses its paradisiacal aura before the simple question, Cui Bono? To whose good is this utopia ordered? Who really benefits? In this text, the answer of Chesterton is simple: the Capitalists benefit and those Financiers who, having a monopoly on the issuance of credit, can make or unmake Capitalists. In this regard, we find Chesterton articulating a truth that is hidden from public sight by the jargon of Liberalism. The Capitalist/Liberal Order is absolutist and complete; by its very nature. It will tolerate nothing really independent of itself. Now it is true that any positive creed, true or false, would tend to be independent of itself. It might be Roman Catholicism or Mahometanism or Materialism; but, if strongly held, it would be a thorn in the side of the Servile State.³

Such is the society I think they will build unless we can knock it down as fast as they build it. Everything in it, tolerable or intolerable, will have but one use; and that use what our ancestors used to call usance or usury. Its art may be good or bad, but it will be an advertisement for usurers; its literature may be good or bad, but it will appeal to the patronage of usurers; its scientific selection will select according to the needs of usurers; its religion will be just charitable enough to pardon usurers; its penal system will be just cruel enough to crush the critics of usurers; the truth of it will be Slavery; the title of it may quite possibly be Socialism.

Most of us have seen Chesterton the novelist, Chesterton the wit, Chesterton the poet, and Chesterton the historian. In this text we find, as Aidan Mackey states in the preface, Chesterton exercising the noble office of agitator; In Utopia of Usurers, we find Chesterton's blood boiling. Perhaps he was trying to get our blood to do the same!

Dr. Peter Chojnowski has degrees in political science and philosophy from Christendom College, Virginia, and a Ph.D. in Philosophy from Fordham University, New York. He specializes in the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas and Catholic Social Thought and has written over 120 articles and reviews on Catholic, philosophical, economic, historical, and Distributist topics in such publications as Faith and Reason, The Angelus, Catholic Family News, The Remnant, Review of Metaphysics, and Penn State's The Lionhearted. He currently teaches at Gonzaga University and Immaculate Conception Academy. He lives with his wife and six children on a three-acre farm in Washington State.

Thanks for the great article!. I was allways surprised by the position of Belloc and Chesterton about WWI and allways thought it was because of the Patriotism spread by British Propaganda; at the beggining of the conflict regarding German atrocities;(nothing compared with what it has to come in the rest of the Century) after their invasion of Belgium, and specially the horror of many lifes of friends and relatives lost for nothing (but that happened in both sides, is very sad to go to a Catholic Church in any small village of Germany and find +40 names of fallen neighbours in WWI). In fact reading the after-war Europe and the Faith; one could image WWI as what it was: a non-sense European Civil War (or a Civil War of the Faith), even if Belloc is writing quite propaganda-like about the War in the same book.

An engaging work sure to appeal to both scholars and students for the depth of its thought and the freshness of its claims, this is a two-part book by one of the 20th century's greatest writers. The first part is a coherent analysis of the theory, effects, and claims of capitalism. The second is a lengthy collection of articles from Chesterton's vast journalistic output. T...more An engaging work sure to appeal to both scholars and students for the depth of its thought and the freshness of its claims, this is a two-part book by one of the 20th century's greatest writers. The first part is a coherent analysis of the theory, effects, and claims of capitalism. The second is a lengthy collection of articles from Chesterton's vast journalistic output. The author challenges the fundamental tenets of capitalism without favoring socialism or Marxism by providing a philosophical analysis of the pitfalls, drawbacks, and falsehoods regarding capitalism and its inevitability. This is must reading for any serious investigation into anti-capitalist thought. It is also an exemplary text of how Christian principles and thinking apply to the socioeconomic world.

For over thirty years, G. K. Chesterton has been one of my favorite authors, but this month has made me question my evaluation to some extent. First I read Lord Kitchener, which had the virtue of being short and crisp; but The Utopia of Usurers and Other Essays displayed the author as a fish out of water. He begins by describing a nebulous plot by rich capitalists to sap the rights of the common man. He tries to follow a closely reasoned approach -- which is exactly what this author should not d...more For over thirty years, G. K. Chesterton has been one of my favorite authors, but this month has made me question my evaluation to some extent. First I read Lord Kitchener, which had the virtue of being short and crisp; but The Utopia of Usurers and Other Essays displayed the author as a fish out of water. He begins by describing a nebulous plot by rich capitalists to sap the rights of the common man. He tries to follow a closely reasoned approach -- which is exactly what this author should not do. Chesterton is a man of wit, wit that is coruscating and penetrating. But as a paragon of logic, he is seriously lacking.

Part of the problem, I believe, is that GKC was at this time (the early stages of World War I) trying to arrive at his later passion for distributism. Unfortunately, the War kept interfering, much like the head of King Charles I kept finding its way into Mr. Dick's head in David Copperfield. Curiously, I find he is better when discussing religion, perhaps because he could not write about religion without passion. But where politics and economics are concerned, the earnestness is there; but the wit is off to Brighton on holiday.

This is the first Chesterton book I have read that lacked any memorable quotes. Fortunately, I think that G.K. realized he had produced a clinker, because he was to return soon to much better efforts. There does, however, seem to be a five year period beginning with 1916 that saw Chesterton being too serious for his special talents.(less)

I usually enjoy Chesterton. This collection of essays had a few more out-dated allusions than usual. Also, I hadn't realized how much he hated Capitalists. He had no love for Socialists, either, so I'm left wondering what economic system he would espouse. He made good observations about the excesses of greed and exploitation of the common man.

Gilbert Keith Chesterton (1874-1936) cannot be summed up in one sentence. Nor in one paragraph. In fact, in spite of the fine biographies that have been written of him (and his Autobiography), he has never been captured between the covers of one book. But rather than waiting to separate the goats from the sheep, letâ€™s just come right out and say it: G.K. Chesterton was the best writer of the twent...more Gilbert Keith Chesterton (1874-1936) cannot be summed up in one sentence. Nor in one paragraph. In fact, in spite of the fine biographies that have been written of him (and his Autobiography), he has never been captured between the covers of one book. But rather than waiting to separate the goats from the sheep, letâ€™s just come right out and say it: G.K. Chesterton was the best writer of the twentieth century. He said something about everything and he said it better than anybody else. But he was no mere wordsmith. He was very good at expressing himself, but more importantly, he had something very good to express. The reason he was the greatest writer of the twentieth century was because he was also the greatest thinker of the twentieth century.

Born in London, Chesterton was educated at St. Paulâ€™s, but never went to college. He went to art school. In 1900, he was asked to contribute a few magazine articles on art criticism, and went on to become one of the most prolific writers of all time. He wrote a hundred books, contributions to 200 more, hundreds of poems, including the epic Ballad of the White Horse, five plays, five novels, and some two hundred short stories, including a popular series featuring the priest-detective, Father Brown. In spite of his literary accomplishments, he considered himself primarily a journalist. He wrote over 4000 newspaper essays, including 30 years worth of weekly columns for the Illustrated London News, and 13 years of weekly columns for the Daily News. He also edited his own newspaper, G.K.â€™s Weekly. (To put it into perspective, four thousand essays is the equivalent of writing an essay a day, every day, for 11 years. If youâ€™re not impressed, try it some time. But they have to be good essays, all of them, as funny as they are serious, and as readable and rewarding a century after you've written them.)

Chesterton was equally at ease with literary and social criticism, history, politics, economics, philosophy, and theology. His style is unmistakable, always marked by humility, consistency, paradox, wit, and wonder. His writing remains as timely and as timeless today as when it first appeared, even though much of it was published in throw away paper.

This man who composed such profound and perfect lines as "The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult and left untried," stood 6'4" and weighed about 300 pounds, usually had a cigar in his mouth, and walked around wearing a cape and a crumpled hat, tiny glasses pinched to the end of his nose, swordstick in hand, laughter blowing through his moustache. And usually had no idea where or when his next appointment was. He did much of his writing in train stations, since he usually missed the train he was supposed to catch. In one famous anecdote, he wired his wife, saying, "Am at Market Harborough. Where ought I to be?" His faithful wife, Frances, attended to all the details of his life, since he continually proved he had no way of doing it himself. She was later assisted by a secretary, Dorothy Collins, who became the couple's surrogate daughter, and went on to become the writer's literary executrix, continuing to make his work available after his death.

This absent-minded, overgrown elf of a man, who laughed at his own jokes and amused children at birthday parties by catching buns in his mouth, was the man who wrote a book called *The Everlasting Man*, which led a young atheist named C.S. Lewis to become a Christian. This was the man who wrote a novel called *The Napoleon of Notting Hill*, which inspired Michael Collins to lead a movement for Irish Independence. This was the man who wrote an essay in the *Illustrated London News* that inspired Mahatma Gandhi to lead a movement to end British colonial rule in India. This was a man who, when commissioned to write a book on St. Thomas Aquinas (aptly titled *Saint Thomas Aquinas*), had his secretary check out a stack of books on St. (less)

In that never-ending battle to answer the question, "Which Chesterton book should I read first?" one of the easiest and yet most pointed solutions came from that great English Chestertonian, Aidan Mackey, who said read any of Chesterton's books first. It doesn't matter as long as you start somewhere. The important thing is to start. You've wasted enough time already! And he was right in saying so.

Mr. Mackey, who is more fit than anyone on the planet to write an introduction to any one of Chesterton's books, has written the introduction to a stunning new IHS Press edition of Chesterton's *Utopia of Usurers*. Ironically, in the very first sentence of his introduction, he says this is not a book he would recommend to newcomers. And he's right again.

Start anywhere, but start, is still sound advice. But don't start here, is even sounder. The reason is that this is a book written in a rage, as Chesterton himself admits in his opening paragraph. We like to think of Chesterton as avuncular. We like to see him in his slippers. We want him to look comfortable because we want to be comfortable. But this is not a book that offers a lot of comfort.

Similarly, we may encourage people to read the Bible, but we don't recommend that they start by opening to the prophet Amos. The comparison is a good one, for in addition to admitting that he is in a rage, Chesterton also admits to being a prophet—probably the only time in his entire literary career where he makes such a statement. That is because there is a direct connection to his writing in a rage and his writing as a prophet. He is not predicting the future, he is warning about an almost certain sort of future unless things change, and his hope, like the hope of the prophets of old, is that his prophecy may not come true.

For instance, does anyone dispute that the arts have become degraded? And the most degrading thing is that the once noble use of the arts and the once noble skills of the artists have been co-opted by advertisers. Art—once the handmaiden of religion, that was used to express the inexpressible, to help lift our eyes and our hearts toward heaven—art is now merely a tool of commercial interests, used expressly for the purpose of getting the many to give money to the few.

Now, says Chesterton, "the artist will work, not only to please the rich, but to increase their riches; which is a considerable step lower."

Does anyone doubt that the media is controlled by only a few, and therefore, information is controlled by those same few? Says Chesterton, "Knowledge is now a monopoly, and comes through to the citizens in thin and selected streams, exactly as bread might come through to a besieged city. Men must wish to know what is happening, whoever has the privilege of telling them. They must listen to the messenger, even if he is a liar. They must listen to the liar, even if he is a bore." A more apt description of the network news you will not find anywhere, even though this passage was written a lifetime before the first television signal beamed its boredom into anyone's living room.