



The Anti-Capitalistic Mentality

Ludwig von Mises

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In 1954, after a lifetime of serious theoretical work in economic science, Mises turned his attention to one of the great puzzles of all time: discovering why the intellectuals hate capitalism. The result is this socio-psycho-cultural analysis informed by economic theory. Mises explores answers from a wide variety of angles, and discusses the nature of academic institutions, popular culture, and how vices like jealousy and envy affect theory. All play a role in preventing people from seeing the self-evident benefits of economic freedom relative to controls. His comments on the resentment of the intellectuals cut very deeply. Mises shrewdly teases the anti-capitalist bias out of contemporary fiction and popular culture generally. In the course of his narrative, he explains aspects of the market that have generally eluded even its defenders. For example, is it true that markets dumb down the culture, exalting trashy novels and movies over higher-brow fare? Mises points out that the tastes of the masses will always and everywhere be lower than those educated and cultivated to love higher culture. But, he says, the glory of capitalism is that it brings to every sector what it wants and needs, and more of it than any other system. So, yes, there will be more trash, but also more great work as well. It is a matter of availability: Under socialism, nothing is available. Under capitalism, choice seems nearly infinite. His is quite subtle in his analysis here and throughout. It's remarkable how his narrative applies in our time, even more than when it was written. The style of this volume is more casual than you will find elsewhere. In some sense, it is more thrilling for it. The reader senses that Mises has unleashed a lifetime of frustration here, and shined a very bright light on some dark corners of opinion. The contents of this volume include: I. The Social Characteristics of Capitalism and the Psychological Causes of Its Vilification 1. The Sovereign Consumer 2. The Urge for Economic Betterment 3. Status Society and Capitalism 4. The Resentment of Frustrated Ambition 5. The Resentment of the Intellectuals 6. The Anti-capitalistic Bias of American Intellectuals 7. The Resentment of the White-Collar Workers 8. The Resentment of "Cousins" 9. The Communism of Broadway and Hollywood 10. The Non-Economic Objections to Capitalism 11. Ant-Communism vs. Capitalism II. The Ordinary Man's Social Philosophy 1. Capitalism as it is and as it is Seen by the Common Man 2. The Anti-capitalistic Front III. Literature Under Capitalism 1. The Market for Literary Products 2. Success on the Book Market 3. Remarks about the Detective Stories 4. Freedom of the Press 5. The Bigotry of the Literati 6. The "Social" Novels and Plays

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