Reviews

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(Davon Senger)
Socialists have never been shy of sketching out their dreams of a better world, but that better world has never materialised in socialist countries. Indeed, socialism has frequently achieved the precise opposite of what was intended by its architects. The first part of Towards a Liberal Utopia outlines the dreams of liberal economists and political scientists. These are not the dreams of people who wish to achieve their plans through central direction and who believe they know the precise outcome of the process called liberalisation. Rather our liberal thinkers sketch out frameworks for policy, which, in increasing the domain for individual action, will give rise to beneficial results that cannot be foreseen in detail. This will not lead to utopia, but the authors are confident that greater freedom will lead to better and more prosperous society. The second part of the book shows how an earlier generation of liberal economists turned ideas into action. Led by Ralph Harris and Arthur Seldon, the authors writing for the Institute of Economic Affairs helped to turn back the tide of collectivism by undermining its intellectual foundations. They were so successful that no serious political party now proposes a platform of central planning. As the authors featured in the first part of the book make clear, however, that does not mean that there are no new dragons of collectivism to slay. Some battles may have been won, but the war of ideas continues. Towards a Liberal Utopia is essential reading for all those who are curious to know how the liberal economic agenda will develop over the coming generation. I trust you get some satisfaction from how far the influence of the IEA has spread, directly...

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