

Introduction

Hans-Hermann Hoppe is one of the most important scholars of our time. He has made pioneering contributions to sociology, economics, philosophy, and history. He is the dean of the present-day Austrian School of economics, and is famous as a libertarian philosopher. He and his writings have inspired scholars all over the world to follow in his footsteps and to provide a scientific foundation for individual freedom and a free society. The following pages are a modest attempt to honor the occasion of Professor Hoppe's 60th birthday. The contributors are former students, colleagues, and collaborators, united in admiration for, and friendship with, the laureate.

Hans-Hermann Hoppe was born in the German town of Peine on September 2, 1949. In the late 1960s and early 1970s he studied history, sociology, and philosophy at the universities of Saarbrücken and Frankfurt am Main. His 1974 doctoral dissertation, published in 1976, dealt with the praxeological foundations of epistemology. Its central thesis was that all cognitive processes, and thus the sciences, are but special forms of human action. It followed that the laws of action were also the basic laws of epistemology. Hoppe would soon discover that, a few years before him, the Austrian economist Ludwig von Mises had come to essentially the same conclusion. This was his first contact with Austro-Libertarianism

and it was the beginning of a process in the course of which young Hoppe, at the time a left-leaning statist, came to revise his political beliefs. The process accelerated when he started reading Murray Rothbard and discovered that Misesian “subjectivist” economics could be combined with objective political philosophy. But he first continued his philosophical studies, developing a new epistemology and methodology of the social sciences, based on the insights he had received from Mises and Rothbard.

Eventually, Hoppe turned into a full-blown Austrian when, in the early 1980s, he went to the United States on a prestigious Heisenberg fellowship. This time his research project concerned political philosophy, but it was again squarely built on Austrian economics. In 1986, he became Rothbard’s colleague at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), where he would teach for the next 21 years. After Rothbard’s untimely death in 1995, Professor Hoppe assumed a place of uncontested leadership among Austro-libertarian scholars, becoming the editor of the *Journal of Libertarian Studies*, a co-editor of the *Review of Austrian Economics*, and then a co-editor of the *Quarterly Journal of Austrian Economics*. Professor Hoppe, now Professor Emeritus of Economics at UNLV and Distinguished Fellow with the Ludwig von Mises Institute, also serves on the editorial board of *Libertarian Papers*. In addition to authoring numerous scholarly articles, his important books include *Handeln und Erkennen* (1976), *Kritik der Kausalwissenschaftlichen Sozialforschung* (1983), *Eigentum, Anarchie, und Staat* (1987), *A Theory of Socialism and Capitalism* (1989), *The Economics and Ethics of Private Property* (1993, enlarged 2nd edition 2006), *Democracy – The God that Failed* (2001), and *The Myth of National Defense* (editor, 2003). His works have been translated into at least 21 languages, not counting English.¹

Among Professor Hoppe’s many achievements we should stress in particular his brilliant critique of positivist methodology as applied to the social sciences, a new praxeological approach to political philosophy, an encompassing comparative analysis of socialism and capitalism, and a theory of secession as a means of

¹Professors Hoppe’s publications, including links to translations and a detailed bibliography, are available at his website, www.hanshoppe.com.

political reform. Most importantly, in his book *Democracy – The God that Failed*, Professor Hoppe has delivered a profound critique of democracy, as well as an original reinterpretation of Western history in the twentieth century, both of which have stirred international debate in academia and among the wider public. Other influential works from his pen have dealt with the role of migrations within a free society, and with the role of public intellectuals in political transformation processes. Moreover, he has excelled as an historian of thought and made path-breaking contributions to other areas such as monopoly theory; the theory of public goods; the sociology of taxation; the positive methodology of the social sciences; the theory of risk; the production of security; the transformation of formerly socialist countries; and the evolution of monetary institutions and their impact on international relations. And Professor Hoppe's work is ongoing: he is currently working on a major book project that will restate and elaborate on his previous work in the fields of epistemology and ethics – more generally, the nature of human rationality. The goal of the book is to provide “a systematic and interdisciplinary reconstruction of human history (pre-history, hunter-gatherer societies, agricultural societies, industrial societies).”²

The preceding list reveals that Professor Hoppe is not only an academic and scholar, but also a public intellectual of the first order. He has tackled important and controversial subjects even where this was likely to bring him into conflict with colleagues, politicians, businessmen, and conventional wisdom. He has not shied away from advancing provocative ideas, but has done so in a thoughtful and clear-cut manner that, more often than not, has garnered enthusiastic acclaim in lecture halls and among readers all over the world. His competent verve has inspired students and colleagues, such as those who have contributed to the present volume.

²“Hans-Hermann Hoppe: Potret Intelektual Anti-Intelektual” [“Interview with Hans-Hermann Hoppe, an Anti-Intellectual Intellectual”], interview by Sukasah Syahdan, *Akal dan Kehendak* (Indonesia) (Apr. 28, 2008) (English translation available at www.hanshoppe.com/publications).

Finally Professor Hoppe has shown leadership not only in the realm of ideas, but also through the practical promotion of scientific enquiry and open debate. Most notably, in August 2005, he initiated the foundation of the international Property and Freedom Society, which eventually held its inaugural meeting in May, 2006, and elected him president.

The purpose of the Property and Freedom Society is to promote the scientific debate of the politically relevant questions of our time without regard to the concerns of party politics. It acknowledges the expediency of intransigent libertarian radicalism, which, in the long run, is the surest path to a free society. It therefore seeks to promote Austro-libertarianism, which ties back to the nineteenth century French economists Frédéric Bastiat and Gustave de Molinari. It stands

for justly acquired private property, freedom of contract, freedom of association—which logically implies the right to not associate with, or to discriminate against—anyone in one’s personal and business relations—and unconditional free trade. It condemns imperialism and militarism and their fomenters, and champions peace. It rejects positivism, relativism, and egalitarianism in any form, whether of “outcome” or “opportunity,” and it has an outspoken distaste for politics and politicians.³

The present *liber amicorum* is testimony to the fact that these ideals have a universal appeal and inspire scholars from all over the world. It is therefore fitting that the name of Hoppe’s beloved Property and Freedom Society inspire the title of the present volume.

The editors wish to express their appreciation for the enthusiastic cooperation of all who have helped with this project. Our special thanks go to the contributors, as well as to Mr. Llewellyn Rockwell

³“Principles of the Property and Freedom Society,” available at www.propertyandfreedom.org (quoting the Opening Declaration from the Inaugural Meeting: Bodrum, Turkey, May 2006).

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Property, Freedom, & Society

Essays in Honor of
Hans-Hermann Hoppe



Edited by
Jörg Guido Hülsmann *and* Stephan Kinsella



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Now Professor Emeritus of Economics at UNLV and Distinguished Fellow with the Ludwig von Mises Institute, Hoppe and his writings have inspired scholars around the world to follow in his footsteps and to provide a scientific foundation for individual freedom and a free society. The present festschrift honors the occasion of his 60th birthday.



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