13

My Dinner With Professor Hoppe

Gregory Morin

Gregory Morin, Ph.D., Chemistry, owns and operates a manufacturing firm in Georgia (US). He is a chemist by training and an armchair economist by passion. He and his wife Joy are longtime supporters of the Mises Institute and the Property and Freedom Society. Greg currently serves on the board of the Mises Institute.

My first encounter with Hans Hoppe was at the 2015 Mises Institute’s “Austrian Economics Research Conference.” He spoke for over an hour to a rapt audience concerning the four key areas where Austro-libertarian philosophy offers a range of unique insights: “On Man, Nature, Truth, and Justice.”[[1]](#footnote-1) Given that Hans Hoppe has written on all four subjects it was an engaging talk to say the least. Being somewhat of a neophyte to this movement at the time my general impression was that he was “important” but I wasn’t exactly sure why. I had heard of Argumentation Ethics but not much beyond that. After the presentation it became clear why he was held with such esteem. The man wields logic and rhetoric like a golfer wields his club sinking a hole-in-one.

I encountered him again at the 2017 Mises Institute’s 35th anniversary event in New York City. He addressed an overflowing ballroom with equal parts wit and humor.[[2]](#footnote-2) He was not the totemic Teutonic figure that his reputation might suggest. He was a down to earth human being, and it could be argued he might even give Steven Wright a run for his money in the dry humor department. That evening he spoke of his former mentor, Murray Rothbard, with both affection and humorous anecdotes. There was more here than the gruff and stern “Professor Kingsfield” like academic that I, and I suspect many others, had assumed.[[3]](#footnote-3)

I’m sure what I will disclose next will not surprise Hans’s close friends. The man is a convivial socialite. It was not until I had the good fortune to attend several recent “Property and Freedom Society” gatherings in Bodrum, Turkey that I was exposed to a side of Hans that I’m sure his “fans” are entirely unaware of. To be fair it would not be expected one would know much about him personally as he is mostly retired and has the good sense to stay out of the “social media” landscape—offering up only the very rare podcast interview.[[4]](#footnote-4) Our (his admirers) impression of him is only through his writing and a few select YouTube videos.

There are numerous opportunities at PFS gatherings to mingle, talk, and drink, and Hans partakes in all three. At PFS gatherings it is not rare to see him laugh or smile. These annual gatherings are most definitely his milieu, and he is his most relaxed when among his friends and intellectual comrades. One memory that stands out for me is a dinner conversation that quickly veered toward popular culture. Surely this (pop culture) was not something a serious intellectual would waste his time on. There are so many other more important pursuits! On the contrary, he had an opinion on almost every topic. And most surprising of all was that he loved the “rom-coms” (romantic comedy). I believe “When Harry Met Sally” was at the top of his list!

“You should never meet your heroes,” they say. However, I’m happy to report that in the case of Hans Hoppe that adage does not apply. He does not disappoint and indeed exceeds what many assume by reputation alone. And for those libertarians concerned that the state uses popular culture to “distract” us—relax, don’t worry. If Hans Hoppe can balance intellectual pursuits and “frivolous” enjoyments while simultaneously destroying arguments for the state with unassailable logic, then so can you. If we spend our lives fighting the state and not enjoying life, then the state has already won. Don’t let it.

1. See https://mises.org/podcasts/aerc-2015/man-nature-truth-and-justice. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See Hans-Hermann Hoppe, “Coming of Age with Murray,” *HansHoppe.com* (Oct. 12, 2017). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. This is a reference to a character in the novel, movie, and television series “The Paper Chase.” [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See, e.g., Hans-Hermann Hoppe & Michael Malice, “PFP194b | Bonus: Interview of Hans-Hermann Hoppe by Michael Malice on ‘YOUR WELCOME’: Ep. 018—On the Right (PFS 2018),” *Property and Freedom Podcast* (Aug. 30, 2022; https://propertyandfreedom.org/pfp). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)