Part One

Grato Animo Beneficiique Memores

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Life With a Freedom Fighter

Gülçin Imre Hoppe

Dr. Gülçin Imre Hoppe lives in Istanbul.

I first met Hans in 2003, at the Mises Institute’s Supporters summit in Auburn, Alabama. He was then presenting his book *The Myth of National Defense*.

I was working on my PhD on the subject “Ludwig on Mises’s Contributions to Economic Thought within the Austrian School” at the University of Istanbul. I had started this project in my 20s but did not finish. In 2003, I got a second chance, took a break from business and accepted the intellectual challenge. Choosing Mises and praxeology, of all subjects, I must give myself some credit for having the right instinct and being suspicious about mainstream economic theory and wondering why it did not make any logical sense.

During my studies I became a Misesian. However, Hans’s views were not easy to digest. My mainstream “commonsensical” way of looking at political and economic phenomena got seriously challenged. Reading over and over his views on the state, democracy, and ethics, I could not escape the sheer logic behind his argumentation. What appeared extreme at the beginning eventually became intellectually impossible to escape.

Because of my experience, I keep telling young beginners studying Austrian theory to not just repeat the often outrageously sounding and appealing slogans, but to carefully read and digest the logic behind the argumentation.

In 2006 Hans left UNLV with an Emeritus status and moved to Istanbul, Turkey, and we started a life together. We have an international, transcontinental “patchwork family” with four children and by now seven grandchildren.

From the very beginning Hans had the idea of starting a conference at our family-owned hotel, the Karia Princess in Bodrum, Turkey, the ancient city of Halicarnassos where Herodotus lived. Hans believed firmly in the concept of a “salon,” where intellectuals from all over the world come and meet and exchange “not politically correct” ideas. Maybe it was born as a reaction to his maltreatment at UNLV (he was attacked for having used a perfectly innocent example to illustrate the principle of time preference).[[1]](#footnote-1) I must admit, I did not believe that the salon idea would take root and go anywhere. But to my astonishment the PFS grew and flourished from year to year.

Initially, being an economist, I had thought it would make more sense to organize seminars for good students who would profit from studying the fine points of Misesian and Rothbardian economic theory in small groups, getting the benefit of learning from Hans Hoppe, Guido Hülsmann, Thomas DiLorenzo, and so on.

Regardless of my initial skepticism, as a family we did our best for Hans’s conference to be a unique and great experience. During the first years we did also some “touristy” stuff, which was later mocked by our English friend Sean Gabb. In time, Hans invited many interesting intellectuals and some of them became friends.

The gatherings at PFS took the place of his teaching at the Mises Institute. The Mises Institute is very dear to both of our hearts, but at PFS Hans could shape the event to his own liking. Half mocking, half serious, I used to complain that I set out for an intellectual endeavor, but then ended up being just the “chef of catering and guest relations.”

In retrospect now I see that this is not the case. I became Hans’s “good student,” his *famulus*, who day by day listens to his comments on political and economic events, on history, war, religion, and methodology. We always find something to talk about because we are both quite some geeks. We love to learn, we love to explain and teach, we love to brainstorm about the reasons behind events, we love to criticize, and we also love to play with words (Hans also loves to play this game with the grandchildren).

Sometimes I get annoyed because, coming from a family of medical doctors, and having studied biology for several semesters, I tend to hold the natural sciences in high esteem, whereas Hans has a lesser opinion of them, for “methodological reasons.” Since I am not a philosopher, in those fields I naturally cannot follow him. He has a very good training in philosophy and the logic of argumentation from his time at the Frankfurt School. On the other hand, when he makes upsetting remarks about politicians, I ask him: “Hans, didn’t you read your own book? How can you of all people expect there to be any good politician?”

Our preferences might not make us very endearing to other people, but I must say Hans has a very soft and loving side, which he prefers to hide behind a tough and earnest shell. He is a very concerned and thoughtful father and a very loving, playful Opa.

Writing does not come easy to Hans. He works on every word and sentence, on its logic and meaning extremely carefully. Like a goldsmith he carves out his thoughts and brings them to paper. Because of his extreme concentration he does not like to be bothered at all during working.

Often after months of lingering thoughts he gets intellectual ignited by some event and starts writing in a frenzy until he is finished and happy with the result.

Many years ago, in the Caribbean, I took a picture of a plate on a little house. The inscription was a thank-you note to the father of the owner. It finishes with “Pokie was a freedom fighter.” My husband Hans is a real freedom fighter, dedicating his life to follow the truth. He dismissed fame, money, and an easy life with cushy teaching jobs and social popularity. He relentlessly followed his instinct and knowledge.

I am blessed to be the wife and student of Hans Hoppe.

1. See discussion of this incident in Mark Thornton’s chapter in this volume. —Eds. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)