Part 6

Miscellaneous Essays

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One Thousand Liechtensteins

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Before I go into my friendship with Prof. Hoppe, I would like to say a few things in advance. Vienna, my hometown, was ruled by socialists from 1918 onwards, with a short interruption from 1938–1945, during the “Anschluss” of Austria to the “Third Reich” (in case anyone should think that the National Socialists were not just ordinary socialists in the end). Moreover, from 1970 onwards, the whole country was largely led by socialist-dominated governments.

Born into a conservative petty-bourgeois family, the first political lesson from my father’s mouth was that there are only two kinds of socialists: idiots and bandits. To this day, I have not come across even a single proof to the contrary.

I saw my father (he was a watchmaker) working every day from dawn to dusk. “*Nothing comes from nothing*” and “*never make you dependent on the political clique*” were the principles I learned from him. He would never have abandoned his principles and ingratiated himself with the ruling socialists for the sake of any kind of advantage. This has greatly influenced my own thinking. From the age of 13 on, just as I became interested in politics, I experienced a long era of socialist sole-governments under Chancellor Bruno Kreisky, who was considered by many to be a chrismatist. Under his rule, based on keynesian Voodoo-economics, the state expanded to gigantic proportions at the same time as the public debt ratio did. It was intuitively clear to me that this is an extremely unhealthy development that cannot last for long or lead to anything good. Kreisky’s credo “*I’d rather have a few billion in deficit than thousands unemployed*” led to stagflation and high unemployment, as liberal critics predicted from the beginning.

It was at this time, I can’t remember the exact circumstances, that Hayek’s 1944 published book *The Road to Serfdom* fell into my hands and I devoured it with the greatest interest. All economic and political developments, which I had emotionally evaluated as negative until then, I saw systematically analyzed and criticized in this volume. So, *The Road to Serfdom* became my first impulse to libertarian thinking. To cut a long story short, Hayek’s reading soon led me to the works of Mises, Rothbard, and finally to Hans-Hermann Hoppe, the only leading libertarian thinker I have the privilege of having met personally.

Shortly after the German version of *Democracy: The God that Failed* was published, Prof. Hoppe visited Vienna at the invitation of my friend Rahim Taghizadegan to discuss his eye opening theses with a handful of mostly young libertarians. It was on this occasion that I met Prof. Hoppe for the first time. Soon after that, I had two more interesting meetings with him: one on the occasion of a panel discussion that took place at the invitation of the Austrian People’s Party, a former bourgeois-conservative political party which, unfortunately, now stands for social democratic positions, and in which the audience present—many of them civil servants, chamber and party functionaries—was shocked by his theses, and the second in the context of a tribute to F. A. Hayek and Ludwig von Mises which took place at the Chamber of Commerce in Vienna. A series of visits to conferences of the Property and Freedom Society in Bodrum, where I was invited of giving a lecture myself twice, deepened my acquaintance with Prof. Hoppe. Hans, whom I am fortunate to count among my friends in the meantime, did me the honour of writing the foreword to my 2015 book *No More Democracy and Mob Rule*, which builds on the insights presented in his book on democracy.

What impresses me the most about Hans-Hermann Hoppe is his ability for sharp analysis and his absolutely uncompromising way of arguing. I know he doesn’t particularly appreciate Ayn Rands “Objectivism” very much, but I see certain similarities in terms of his and her adherence to principle.

Hans is sometimes accused by his critics of dogmatic stubbornness. However, I have not come across a single case in which his argument was not built on pure logic, completely conclusive and absolutely “watertight.” Nor is it the case that he makes his arguments exclusively in the ivory tower of libertarian theory. Rather, he incorporates conservative considerations that he recognizes as correct into his thinking. He is fully aware of the importance and value of traditions and takes them into account in all his deliberations. He leaves no doubt that libertarian thinking must not be limited to economic questions and the axiom of non-aggression, but must also integrate other rules that make peaceful coexistence possible in the first place, as he impressively explained in several of his speeches in Bodrum.

It is somewhat depressing to see that the path taken by the European Union is leading more and more to the over-regulated central state, which suppresses all individualism and entrepreneurial initiative, which manifests itself in a loss of innovation and declining growth, instead of the small scale structures of “*1,000 Liechtensteins*” preferred by Hans.[[1]](#footnote-1)

All the more important is the existence of a thinker like Hans, whose voice acts as a corrective. More and more—especially young, well-educated people—are recognizing the corruption and lust for power of the political elites of the European Union. My hope as an old white man on his way to retirement is that the ideas developed by Hans will provide a basis for young critical minds to develop an effective opposition to the status quo of the centralized, increasingly belligerent European welfare state.

1. See Hans-Hermann Hoppe, “My Dream Is of a Europe Which Consists of 1,000 Liechtensteins,” *Mises Wire* (April 16, 2022). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)