

A portrait of Lew Rockwell, a man with a white beard and glasses, wearing a grey suit and a yellow tie. He is smiling and looking at the camera. The background is a bookshelf filled with books.

The Austrian

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PAGE 4

LEW ROCKWELL
ON HIS LIFE'S WORK



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- 3** Jeff Deist – From the Publisher
- 4** Lew Rockwell on His Life's Work
- 15** Coming Events
- 16** David Gordon reviews *Human Scale Revisited*
- 20** 2018 Supporters Summit
- 22** Alumni and Fellow News; Annual Membership Levels
- 23** In Memoriam

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From the publisher

Jeff Deist

Civility is the word of the moment.

News stories lament the breakdown of civility in American society, while reports of Antifa street violence in cities like Portland raise uncomfortable memories for older Americans of 1960s riots. Editorial after editorial decries the loss of social cohesion and friendliness across the country, even within families. Pundits and politicians insist we must restore civility in politics. Otherwise we face a bleak and intensifying cold civil war: progressive vs. conservative, urban vs. rural, #metoo vs. Brett Kavanaugh, elites vs. populists, and Never Trumpers vs. Deplorables.

Yet how do they propose to accomplish this? More politics, more elections, and more top-down edicts from Congress and the Supreme Court. They see politics as the solution rather than the problem.

Hillary Clinton, for instance, suggests civility will be restored only following successful mid-term elections that place Democrats in control of Congress. And why not? The political world is all she knows, and the political world yields winners and losers, victors and vanquished. In her utterly politicized worldview, things will settle down only when the right people — her people — control US politics. Hers is a zero-sum world, always ruled by the political gang in power.

But Ludwig von Mises understood a different world, one organized around property and trade rather than the state. To him, private property was the basis of any civilized society. Without that foundation, without property and a concomitant system of mutual exchange, he knew humans were destined to devolve into poverty, war, and anti-intellectual savagery. Property gives us prosperity, and therefore material abundance to live civilized lives beyond the mere subsistence that marked most of human history. Property rights give us the ability to accumulate capital, to invest in higher productivity, and to have a greater degree of certainty regarding the future.

Civility cannot be sheared from the broader concept of civilization itself. Both words share the same Latin root *civilis*, which means relating to citizenship or public life. But it also means relating to others with courtesy, manners, and affability. If civilization is the sum total of a society and its culture, civility — or the lack thereof — is its building block,

the positive or negative social traits exhibited by people in that society.

Lew Rockwell, our founder and chairman, has a long career fighting for both civilization and civility. Along the way he met some of the brightest lights of our time or any time: Neil McCaffrey, Henry Hazlitt, Leonard Read, Percy and Bettina Greaves, Ayn Rand, Ludwig and Margit Mises, Ron and Carol Paul, and Murray and Joey Rothbard among them. So we're sure you'll enjoy our cover interview with him.


Don't miss David Gordon's review of Kirkpatrick Sale's remarkable book *Human Scale Revisited: A New Look at the Classic Case for a Decentralist Future*. Sale is no libertarian, and even a critic of material prosperity, but he understands the risks posed by consolidated political power. Thus he thinks the 20th century's trend toward larger and larger centralized states, prevalent both in once-confederated Europe and America, has been harmful to community, peace, and human flourishing.

“The foundation of any and every civilization, including our own, is private ownership of the means of production. Whoever wishes to criticize modern civilization, therefore, begins with private property.”

Ludwig von Mises

To Sale's credit, he is one of many thinkers from around the political spectrum challenging the accepted wisdom that political globalism and political universalism are *per se* beneficial. Just as Mises elevated self-determination to a defining principle of liberalism, progressives, conservatives, and libertarians increasingly see subsidiarity and decentralization as defining characteristics for a peaceful future.

Speaking of peace, on behalf of everyone at the Mises Institute let me wish each of you a very Merry Christmas, a Happy Hanukkah, and a peaceful, happy New Year. All of us want peace and prosperity for the world; all of us share a (true) liberal worldview, and all of us understand how non-interventionism in both the economy and world affairs is key to a better future. Let us all commit to making the world a better place next year through our own contributions.

We have big plans at the Mises Institute for 2019 — unique, outside-the-box speakers at events, new podcasts, a new entrepreneurs platform, and new opportunities to earn academic credentials from the Institute — and we hope you'll be part of them. 

Jeff Deist is president of the Mises Institute.



LEW ROCKWELL

ON HIS LIFE'S WORK

Llewellyn H. Rockwell, Jr., is founder and chairman of the Mises Institute, editor of LewRockwell.com, and author of numerous books, including *Speaking of Liberty*, *Against the State*, *The Left, the Right, and the State*, and *Fascism versus Capitalism*.

JEFF DEIST: One issue discussed recently at our Supporters Summit is whether we're winning or losing. So two questions: Who is "we," and are we winning?

LEW ROCKWELL: Well, the "we," fundamentally, is everybody who believes in civilization, who is opposed to what's been going on ever since the French Revolution, when the Left came to total power and set up a totalitarian state. This includes some, but not all libertarians, and many conservatives as well — but certainly not neoconservative warmongers.

Are we winning or are we losing? Both. We're winning in some ways but losing in others. More and more young people on campuses are attracted to us. When they look at their professors — I'm talking about the smart, good kids — the professors might as well have signs flashing on their foreheads that say "liar, liar." And the young people come to us because they want the truth and they want no baloney and they want no PC and they want a hard rigorous course of study and that's what they get from us. On the other hand, it seems that much is going downhill, but this has always been the case throughout all of civilization. It's always been a fight, and I think that we can win this fight, but we all have to work very hard. We have to educate ourselves,

educate others and it's possible to win, but it's going to be a close run thing.

JD: Is some part of "we" on the Left? Is a Dennis Kucinich or a Caitlin Johnstone or the late Alexander Cockburn part of us?

LR: Yes. Caitlin Johnstone is a very interesting writer. She mostly says what's true, although once in a while she falls from grace. Alexander Cockburn was tremendous. I think he was largely on our side. He was, for example, pro-gun and anti-green, which is very unusual on the Left. There are certainly left-wingers who are anti-war, who are anti-imperialist. They're with us on those issues and it's not necessary that people agree with us on everything.

We welcome people who simply are anti-war and anti-imperialist, even if they're wrong on economics or wrong on the state. If they agree with us on foreign policy, we have a foothold to convert them to libertarianism, though success is by no means guaranteed. It is possible that they can come to see that the institution that's causing the imperialism and fighting the wars is also doing horrible things domestically that violate individuals' rights. So, absolutely, we should reach out to everybody who's interested in anything that we're doing. There was a former LP presidential nominee who phrased it this way: there's a train headed out of the station, heading for total freedom and people are welcome to hop on the train with us, ride just a certain distance, and then get off if they wanted. We're glad to welcome them.

We have great inspiration from Mises and Rothbard and many other great men and women throughout the centuries who've defended our ideas, and it's important to study their works. It's important to fight every day the people like George Soros, who, in the guise of promoting the "open society," want to bring about the destruction of Western civilization. We're facing what Tom DiLorenzo, following Mises, called "destructionism" in his excellent talk at our recent Supporters Summit.

JD: Over the years you've talked about the Mises Institute and its role. You're also the proprietor of LewRockwell.com. How do you see its role, and what prompted you to start it?

LR: I started LewRockwell.com in 1999. The basic idea originated earlier when Bill Clinton was fighting his wars and bombing Serbia. I'll never forget, one day he announced the bombing of Serbia, and also hosted a conference at the White House for young people to promote the message that we don't use violence when we differ. He was advocating peace in the high schools, while at the same time his policies led to mass murder abroad.

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I started sending out messages about the wars to all the people on my email list. Then I copied the Drudge Report, a tremendous site. LRC has never reached Drudge proportions in terms of its readership, but I wanted every day to bring people news and opinion about what was going on in the country, about wars and the government, and make it available on the site. I've always seen LRC as an adjunct to the Institute and I'm amazed it still exists. It's a financial struggle to keep it going, but I think it's

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

very much worth doing. I've had many young people write to me and say, "LRC has changed my life." They read it. One gentleman at our Supporters Summit said, "I read LRC every morning after I say my prayers," a very sweet thing to say. So, I think it's had a good effect. It can have an even better effect and I must say I get a lot of joy out of doing it and talking about religion, talking about economics, talking about foreign policy, talking about domestic policy, talking about the state, all the ideas we're interested in. But at LRC I do it in a simpler and less scholarly way than the Mises Institute does.

JD: But people don't only need alternative economics and politics. They need alternative news, alternative history, and alternative views on healthcare. You don't shy away from those things.

LR: No. We run many healthcare articles that oppose big pharma, oppose big medicine and tell people there are alternative ways to do things. I must say revisionist history is probably the most popular thing that appears on LRC. People just love it when we talk about what really happened in World War I and World War II and the Civil War. The government always wants to lie and give people a phony view of what happened. Revisionist history is simply history as it actually happened. It's very important to present that view and it's fun to do it. I hear from people who are outraged that I would say that Franklin Roosevelt was responsible for the bombing of Pearl Harbor in order to secure America's entry into World War II through the "back door." But the evidence is clear on this topic and we have done a few podcasts on it. John Denson does a great job on historical podcasts. You're right that this is a very important part of what LRC does.

JD: During the last presidential election some people saw LRC as pro-Trump. Give us your thoughts on Donald Trump today.

LR: Well, I was for Trump as against Hillary, although I didn't myself vote. I don't vote since your vote makes no difference whatsoever. It's a useless thing, unless the election were to be decided by one vote. Despite its irrationality, voting assumes the role of a sacrament for the government. I enjoy not partaking of that sacrament.

I thought that Trump's campaign was quite wonderful in that it was pro-peace and anti-establishment. He said many great things, but unfortunately, few of the programs he spoke about have come about in

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practice. I still think, though, that we're better off than if Hillary had been elected; and for that reason, I publish pro-Trump articles. I also publish anti-Trump articles, because he has done so many bad things in terms of the military. Despite this, though, I still argue that he's better than Hillary, I also enjoy the fact that he drives the Left up the wall. And he does talk about immigration, even though he's done very little about it, whether because the courts won't allow him to do so or because his anti-immigration rhetoric is insincere. Who can tell? He also talks

about PC, like immigration a subject that needs to be considered in a negative light. Needless to say, I'm disappointed in him. However great my disappointment, though, there is no telling what Hillary might have done — my surmise is something far worse than what we now have.

JD: You mention PC. One criticism leveled at the Mises Institute, and at LRC, is that PC isn't real or isn't a problem. It's a figment of privileged white male paranoia.

LR: To say that PC isn't real strikes me as nonsense. People who say that are invariably violent advocates of political correctness. The universities today have in the humanities been taken over by the Left, following the plans set forward by Antonio Gramsci's "march through the institutions" and the cultural Marxism of the Frankfurt school. And so, we have to oppose PC. One of the reasons students come to us is that they're sick of the PC that they encounter these days, from the elementary grades through graduate school. They want a different view and we offer that to them. By and large, they like it. We do have our enemies who are PC-types, including many so-called libertarians.

But, I want to say it's fun to fight them and we have to tell the truth about who's doing what to whom; according to Lenin this is the key question in politics. We have to prevent people from doing bad things to us. We must fight the good fight. When I see the support for Trump's anti-PC stance, I realize that it will count very much in our favor that we oppose PC. More and more Americans hate the guts of these PC people and they're right to do so.

JD: On a related note, talk about the modern American political Left: the Bernies, the Elizabeth Warrens, Ms. Ocasio-Cortez, Antifa, and the rest. Give us your rundown.

LR: Antifa is, of course, a very violent and dangerous group. They're paid by George Soros and his ilk to hit people in the head with bicycle locks who are saying things they don't like. I would hate to think that we're going to end up in street fights, but this is what these people want. Ocasio-Cortez impresses me as a joke, not

somebody really to be worried about. Bernie Sanders is a socialist. Does he actually want to take the means of production and nationalize them and have the government run everything? He says he doesn't but I suspect he does. In every country that has tried this policy, it has led to the destruction of wealth and the spread of poverty. This is what Mises called destructionism, and it really is the goal of people like Bernie, and Elizabeth Warren, whom I find especially irritating, by the way, because she's a phony Indian.

Moreover, their ideology is becoming increasingly detached from reality. I've run into young people who actually deny that Stalin killed 40 to 60 million people. They say it's just a myth. So, it's important that we teach about what happened in communist countries and the amount of poverty and social destruction that took place — and we must demonstrate that communism *really is* the worst economic and political system ever to exist. It really did horrendous damage wherever it was in power, whether it is Mao and his followers killing tens of millions in China, or the tens of millions of



people who were killed in Russia and Eastern Europe under the Soviets. And then there's Cuba and Cambodia.

Young people don't know what socialism is, and even its advocates can't define or describe it. We support the free market, and, as Mises kept reminding us, it's our job to fight a war for the truth, a war both fun and invigorating to engage in. There is a dangerous situation in Europe, in Latin America, and in Asia, as well. On the other hand, we did see the Soviet Union collapse, and Eastern Europe and China become much freer. But, I've had people from China tell me that, it's so interesting how they're moving away from communism just as America's moving toward communism. And of course, it's true.

JD: And you actually have (American) Indian ancestry.

LR: Yes, I'm a one-eighth descendant of the Abenaki, a tribe of New England and Canada. They were driven

out, mostly from New England, by the British, and are an official tribe in Canada, though not here. If they had oil on their land, I'd probably own part of a gambling casino, assuming official recognition in the US! Needless to say, I didn't use my part-Indian ancestry to gain an advantage in college admissions or employment. But as for the non-Indian Elizabeth Warren, it seems to me that she's an evil woman, a real socialist who favors total state control.

JD: Give us your thoughts on the modern political Right in America, the Nikki Haleys, the John Boltons, the Mitch McConnells, the Fox News audience.

LR: I was glad to see Nikki Haley resign. Unfortunately, Trump praised her as the greatest thing since sliced bread. She's of course horrendous. I don't know why she resigned and I don't believe her statement that she just wanted to take time off. Something has happened, but I do not know what it is. She's entirely controlled by the neocons, our biggest enemies on the Right. These are



Lew Rockwell, Judge Andrew P. Napolitano, and Ron Paul

former left wingers, for the most part Trotskyites, who during the Vietnam War and after, moved into the conservative camp, calling themselves neoconservatives. This term cannot now be spoken, but that is what they are. It's a relatively small, smart, effective, and wealthy group that runs the American Right, as well as most of the people in Congress.

They don't run Ron Paul, needless to say, as well as a few others allied with him. Are they better than the Democrats? Well, they were all for Kavanaugh, not a good guy, but probably better than anybody the Democrats would bring into power. And also it's important to see the feminists defeated. So, I'm glad he was confirmed but I think the American Right, except for the people in our sector, are by and large trouble.

Judge Napolitano is a great force for good on Fox. And so is Tucker Carlson. Most of the Fox people, unfortunately, are neocons, like the Republican Party and the conservative movement generally.

The conservative movement has been really bad ever since Bill Buckley, who set out with money from the CIA to establish *National Review*. Various CIA agents also became editors of the magazine. They were determined to destroy the Old Right, and Buckley pretty much crushed it for a time. He wanted to have a pro-war right wing and the Old Right was anti-war, in particular as regards Franklin Roosevelt's war in Europe and in the Pacific. Buckley was very talented, very smart, very well-funded, very charming. He succeeded in doing horrific damage. But once he passed away, he entirely disappeared. It's a good thing to remember that, for most of us, our footprints in the sand are soon washed away. But, with Buckley, it seemed, not even a wave was needed. He just was gone. I think he has no effect anymore beyond the fact that the remaining neocons, whom he backed, have taken over the right wing.

While there are good people in the right wing, notably the paleocons, and the paleo libertarians, most of

the right wing presents us with a problem, the neocons most of all. Murray Rothbard, an effective and wonderful writer in all areas, was especially good at combatting them. I urge everybody to read what he had to say about the neocons. It arms you for the battle.

JD: There are parallels here because Buckley had his great purge of the Old Right and the John Birchers and such. There are people within libertarian circles

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who would like to purge anyone who doesn't accept a whole host of progressive cultural precepts.

LR: I do think that there are some student organizations that make a big point of this that may be having an effect on the students they attract, but we just have to fight it.

In this respect, they follow in the footsteps of Buckley who was extremely effective at purges. I knew him slightly. He was extremely smart and charming — a

concert-level harpsicord player, by the way. He knew a great deal about music and many other topics and was a very effective worker for the CIA. He'd been a CIA agent and I think remained one for the remainder of his life. As they say about the KGB, I think we can say about the CIA too, you never cease being an agent. Once in, you're always in. People often think that he purged the John Birch Society because of Robert Welch's book, *The Politician*, saying that Dwight Eisenhower was a communist. (Murray Rothbard, by the way, liked that book very much. He said if only Welch had said that Eisenhower was an agent of the Rockefeller conspiracy rather than the communist conspiracy, the book would have been just great.) But, that's not why they purged it. They purged the Birch Society because they came out against the War in Vietnam and to all these people, war *is* the key issue. They love war, they want war, they profit from war and this was why they got rid of all the anti-war people in the Old Right. But thank goodness Murray and many others didn't disappear. Their ideas are back and there is a real right-wing, anti-war movement. It's a small movement, but it's real. It's effective and the neocons hate it, and we have no love lost for them.

JD: You had interactions with Ayn Rand along with Buckley. Any thoughts or recollections about her?

LR: She was, of course, very smart, an autodidact. She was brilliant, extraordinary and again, entirely self-taught. She was tremendous. I had a chance to be in a room with her at a private home after she had spoken at the Ford Hall Forum in Boston, where I saw her several times. As she had very short legs, she sat on the couch with her legs curled under her. Everybody was invited to ask questions but I was a teenager and found her extremely intimidating. I remember her basilisk stare. I thought, "There's no way I'm asking her anything."

But, what can we say about somebody who comes from Russia and becomes a bestselling novelist in a second

language? That alone is a tremendous achievement. She also got all her supporters to read Mises and Hazlitt. By and large, she had a good effect, but she had her problems. She hated Christianity and wanted to destroy it, but still she was an aid to our side. And it's interesting that she was not always pro-war. She was not pro-World War II, for example. Unfortunately, she later became pro-war in some ways, especially against the Palestinians.

Mises was extremely impressive, very articulate and brilliant.

As Murray Rothbard said, a gentleman in his clothes and in his manners. He was everything I might have hoped he would be.

He wore a beautiful suit and his tie, his shirt, his hair, indeed everything about him, were impressive. He just was an extraordinary man.

JD: Give us a personal recollection of the first time that you met Ludwig von Mises: his presence, how he carried himself, what he was like in person.

LR: Neil McCaffrey, the grandfather of our faculty member Matt McCaffrey, was the head of Arlington House Publishers, the only company that would publish conservative or libertarian books. Neil was brilliant, saintly, and scholarly. He was a very great family man, a very serious and knowledgeable Catholic, and was sound on Austrian economics. For example, most

conservative Catholics agree with the earlier view of the church that usury is bad. He was just terrific in explaining why interest rates are necessary to a successful capitalist society. He called me into his office one day and said, “How would you like to be Ludwig von Mises’s editor?” I, of course, said I’d be thrilled. So, I talked to Mises on the phone once or twice, and much more frequently to Margit von Mises, who as Murray Rothbard said, was a one-woman Mises industry. We brought three of his books back into print. We also worked on a monograph never before published. When these books came out, Leonard Read held a reception at FEE [the Foundation for Economic Education] in honor of their being brought back into print.

I loved Leonard Read, an important man in my life and a great man in libertarianism for his founding of FEE and for all the work that he did when he was there.

FEE in those days was a mansion with a wonderful dining room. I went into the dining room, entirely empty except for Ludwig and Margit von Mises, who sat at the other end of the room. I thought to myself, “Do I dare go over there?” Of course, I had to. Mises was extremely impressive, very articulate and brilliant. As Murray Rothbard said, a gentleman in his clothes and in his manners. He was everything I might have hoped he would be. He wore a beautiful suit and his tie, his shirt, his hair, indeed everything about him, were impressive. He just was an extraordinary man. I would guess that his bearing was not unusual in pre-war Vienna, but it was rare in this country and the chance to talk to him for about 40 minutes was an experience of a lifetime. And his wife, Margit, who’d been both a play translator and an actress, had just a tremendous ability to present herself.

JD: Of course, she lived many more years after he died.

LR: Yes, she did.

JD: And you had a much longer relationship with her, a close relationship.

LR: Well, she was very much an old-fashioned lady. I remember a time when people thought that she needed

somebody to stay with her. And so, a friend brought a female graduate student from NYU over to her. In very short order, she called him and she said, “I don’t want that woman here.” He said “why not?” She said, “she’s not a lady.” And he said, “what do you mean she’s not a lady.” She said, “She came out of her room in a bathrobe, not dressed.” She was unbelievable. Once she was going to Alpbach, a place in the Austrian Alps that she and Ludwig had visited as a couple. She went downtown to get her ticket from Lufthansa — she always flew Lufthansa — and as she entered the revolving door, caught her foot and was thrown to the ground. She got up, and bought the ticket, returning to her apartment, though bruised and battered. She was then in her 90s, and although any other woman that age would have had a broken hip, she was able to make the trip to Alpbach. All her life she was dedicated to her husband. She wanted to make sure that all his books were in print, translated into as many languages as possible. She was very strict and very sweet. She loved to have Mardi and Pat and me over to have tea. She would make *hors d’oeuvres* and serve sherry. It was a small apartment, but just a wonderful place. I had the chance to be there many times, and talked to her many other times as well.



When I took her to the Russian Tea Room, her favorite restaurant, and told her that I wanted to start an institute, asking her to be the chairman, she accepted. She was excited about it, but in looking at my résumé, which she had asked to see, she saw that I had had a number of jobs. She said, “I want to make sure you’re going to stick with this for your whole life.” And I told her I would agree to do that. She was an active chairman, somebody I regularly consulted. She was really brilliant and dressed beautifully. She was a tremendous

Murray was a very kind person. If somebody was moving in what he felt was the right direction, even if they still had a lot of wrong views, he was very tolerant and very anxious to help. If he saw just a spark of intellectual curiosity or ability, he was like a guy with a fire, pumping air into the fire, into the stove to get the heat going.

presence and as I said, she was an actress. She too was from an earlier and a better age and it was a great honor of my life to know her and to work with her.

JD: You were close with Murray Rothbard for many, many years, and he was your biggest intellectual influence. What don’t people know about him as a person?

LR: Milton Friedman, who like Murray was very smart, was extremely arrogant, Murray was the opposite. He was

a very sweet and kind person. The only thing that would upset him and even outrage him was somebody selling out, but if somebody was moving in the right direction, even though they still held many wrong views, he was very tolerant and very eager to help. If he saw just a spark of intellectual curiosity or ability, he was like a man pumping air into the fire in the stove to get the heat going. He didn’t just stick to people on his level — obviously. Except for Mises, there was nobody on his level. Basically, he knew everything. We say that about

David Gordon and David does know everything, but Murray knew everything more than David. If you were in his apartment and you were talking about some particular point he’d say, “Lew, check page 216 of this book in this bookcase.”

He and his wife, Joey, were very close. He called her “the indispensable framework,” in the dedication of one of his books and she was indeed. She was very smart. Margit von Mises said, “Murray, you’re responsible for the fact that Joey didn’t get a PhD.” She could easily have gotten a PhD, but she decided to dedicate herself to Murray. I could have pointed out to Margit that she had also made a similar choice to Joey’s: “You dedicated yourself to your husband and she’s dedicated herself to her husband.”

JD: And that’s viewed as a bad thing today, of course.

LR: Oh my gosh, it would be considered an evil thing. Joey had a Master’s degree in history. Her hobby was Wagnerian opera, about which she was an expert. Murray would have her read everything he wrote before it was published and sometimes she would say, “Murray, you don’t want to say that.” He had a wonderful home life. I remember once being in Las Vegas and when I came into the dining room, the table was covered with about two feet of academic papers. I asked Murray what this was. He’d been to the Western Political Science Association convention, not one of the high-level meetings. He picked up every single paper there and went through them all.

Despite the vast range of his reading and writing, he wasn't an academic hermit. He loved sports, for example, the Olympics in particular, about which he knew everything. If you were to talk to him about a particular event, he might say, "Well really, this guy's nothing like the 1924 champion." He loved basketball, especially the UNLV basketball team.

Because they were willing to publish him, he wrote articles for probably more than 100 tiny periodicals that nobody's ever heard of. He was always happy, always cheerful, always optimistic, and never down. Mises, by the way, I was told by Murray, was never down and never let anything that had happened to him get to him. Murray said the only note of regret he heard from Mises was in talking about a former student of his, now a professor at Columbia, Mises said that it must be a wonderful thing to be a full professor at Columbia. By contrast he had a horrible position at NYU where he was no more than a visiting professor for so many

years. The dean there — John Sawhill, who later was one of Nixon's energy czars — would actually tell students not to take his courses and would put him in the worst, dampest classroom at the worst hours. But Mises never complained about it and I never heard Murray complain. The only time I ever heard him say a word of regret, was when he was talking about David Hackett Fisher who had written *Albion's Seed* at the time. Murray said, "Imagine, Fisher has 16 graduate students researching stuff for him." So, obviously, Murray would have loved it if he had had that, but, he had to do everything on his own. Imagine what he would have achieved if he'd been in a regular university with PhD graduate students.

Murray was extremely funny. You weren't in his presence for more than a few minutes or even seconds before you were laughing out loud. I remember when we had a very funny professor who gave a great talk against feminism. I said, "Murray, he's a standup comedian." He replied,



Ron Paul, Henry Hazlitt, Murray Rothbard, and Lew Rockwell

“Do you notice any similarities between him and me?” And of course, they were both Jewish and from New York.

Murray grew up in a building where Arthur Burns lived. Burns himself was described as having a very high-pitched, W.C. Fields voice without the humor, and he didn’t like Murray, even when Murray was a

Murray’s letters are the most extraordinary I’ve ever seen. Almost every letter is a paper and yet they are fun and, interesting. In fact, his personal correspondence will require many volumes when it is edited and published.

child. He was on the Columbia University economics faculty, though not on Murray’s dissertation committee. Murray’s committee passed his PhD, which was later published as a book: *The Panic of 1819*, even today considered the definitive work, often cited by people in the mainstream, on its topic.

Burns claimed it wasn’t good enough. Murray, probably correctly, thought Burns had it in for him and it delayed his getting his PhD for several years. Burns was such a powerful personality in the economics department that by opposing Murray, he was able to prevent him from getting his PhD, even though not on his committee. It wasn’t until Burns went to Washington when Eisenhower made

him chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, that Murray got his PhD. Joey said that when she was meeting Murray for a date, when he thought that Burns was going to prevent him from ever getting the PhD, she found him sitting down and crying on the curb. But he was soon back to being his normal optimistic self, and I never saw him as anything else.

The Volker Fund, gave him a job of reviewing important books in history, economics, and other areas and we have all of the extraordinary papers he wrote for the Fund. There are great academic papers on important books, both good and bad ones, and Joe Salerno and Patrick Newman are going to publish more of these papers. Some of them we’ve already published, in collections edited by Roberta Modugno and David Gordon. We still have vast numbers of unpublished papers.

JD: And his personal correspondence.

LR: His letters are the most extraordinary I’ve ever seen. Almost every letter is a paper and yet they are fun and interesting. In fact, his personal correspondence will require many volumes when it is edited and published.



I know David would like to do that and he'd be, of course, a great editor.

JD: Rothbard and Mises were very different in temperament. Talk about their relationship.

LR: When I asked Murray if he would be part of the Institute, and told him Margit had given me permission to start it, he clapped his hands in glee. He thought it was one of the greatest things he'd ever heard about. He loved Mises and when he would give a speech about him, he would tear up at the end. Mises was in essence a loveable person. He didn't suffer fools gladly in Vienna, people say, but in this country, he was just sweet, interesting, happy to help anybody who wanted to learn and



From left: Burt Blumert, Lew Rockwell, David Gordon, and Murray Rothbard

happy with his position at NYU. He was never paid by NYU, never got any kind of health insurance or that sort of thing from NYU. He had wonderful people who put up the money for his salary and thank goodness for that. Mises taught there for many years. His seminar included Murray Rothbard, Ralph Raico, Ronald Hamowy, Bettina Greaves and many other important people. The late Robert Nozick, in a speech at the 100th anniversary of the birth of Mises, talked about why the people at NYU hated Mises. He said that one of the reasons was that Mises attracted smart, achieving people from the outside world — businessmen, financial people, Wall Street people, and others of significance to audit his classes.

Nozick said that regular professors have never seen anything like this and they hated Mises and were envious of Mises for doing that. What an honor it is to do our best to carry on his legacy, Rothbard's legacy, Margit von Mises's legacy, Joey Rothbard's legacy.

And just one word about David Gordon and Murray. I remember a breakfast with David and Murray at Mises U in California, and when David walked in, I saw Murray's face just light up and it was at that moment I realized that really David was Murray's son. I mean, he was the son that Murray would have loved to have had and, of course, he's carried on Murray's legacy exactly as a great son would do. But, he was a joy to Murray. They talked on the phone every day.

As for me, I miss him every day and what an honor and what a delight it was to know him. ■■■

UPCOMING Events

March 22–23, 2019	Austrian Economics Research Conference; Mises Institute
June 2–7, 2019	Rothbard Graduate Seminar; Mises Institute
July 14–20, 2019	Mises University; Mises Institute

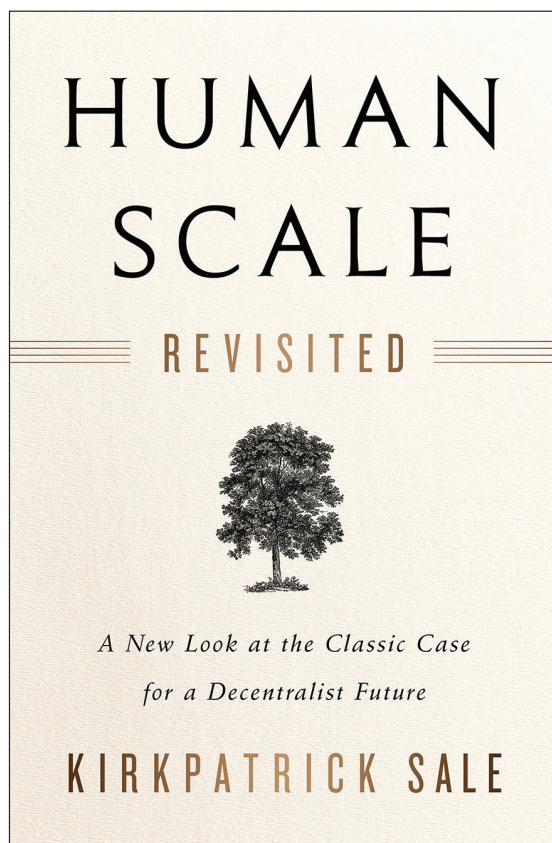
Student scholarships available for all events. See mises.org/events for details.

SMALLER IS BETTER

DAVID GORDON

REVIEWS

Human Scale Revisited: A New Look
at the Classic Case for a Decentralist Future
Kirkpatrick Sale
Chelsea Green Publishing, 2017
411 pages



What attitude should supporters of the free market take toward decentralization? Should libertarians support the movement for Catalanian autonomy, for example, even if leaders of that movement are unfriendly to the free market? Do we have a duty to spread free-market institutions far and wide through globalization? Or, on the contrary, should we leave to their own devices communities and nations that interfere with the free market and civil liberties?

On all these questions, Kirkpatrick Sale is a useful guide. This is at first sight surprising, because he does not support the free market. To the argument of Mises and Rothbard that capitalism generates prosperity, he would shrug his shoulders. He thinks that the virtues of material prosperity are grossly overstated. In his view, life was better in the Stone Age; and he would, if he could, return us to the happy conditions that he maintains then prevailed. When he writes about the “steady state economy” and extols environmentalism and economic self-sufficiency, we can only turn away in dismay.

Nevertheless, he has much to teach us, because he holds no illusions about the state. The state, he argues, is a destructive force; and if we must have a state, the smaller the better. “Governments, whether meaning to or not, always seem to create more havoc as they grow larger, and the largest of them historically have tended to be the most destructive and bellicose. ... Indeed, so regularly does one encounter this phenomenon in the reading of history that I am emboldened to advance this as a full-blown maxim, what we may call the Law of Government Size: Economic and social misery increases in direct proportion to the size and power of the central government of a nation or state.”

What is the evidence for this law? We cannot prove that this law *must* hold true, as do the laws of Austrian economics, but it is a

widely repeated pattern. Sale appeals to the great English historian Arnold Toynbee: “Time after time he shows that civilizations begin to decay after they are unified and centralized under a single large-scale government, and he posits that the next-to-last stage of *any* society, leading directly to its collapse, ‘is its forcible political unification in a universal [by which he means united and centralized] state.’ ... There is, Toynbee concludes, ‘the slow and steady fire of a universal state where we shall in due course be reduced to dust and ashes.’” Ironically, in the face of his own studies, Toynbee was himself a supporter of world government.

Sale appeals also to another thinker, who has influenced him even more than Toynbee, the historian of cities Lewis Mumford: “Throughout history, he has shown, the consolidation of nations and the rise of governments have gone hand in hand with the development of slavery, the creation of empires, the division of citizens into classes, the recurrence of civil protests and disorders, the erection of useless monuments, the despoliation of the land, and the waging of larger and ever-larger wars.” It is again ironic that, despite his insights, Mumford vehemently denounced Charles Austin Beard for his opposition to Franklin Roosevelt’s bellicose foreign policy.

Small states, Sale argues, are much less likely to engage in war than large ones: “It is an interesting fact that when the peoples of Germany were divided into dozens of little principalities and duchies and kingdoms and sovereign cities — from about the twelfth century to the nineteenth — they engaged in fewer wars than

any other peoples of Europe. ... Not that there was total peace, nothing so otherworldly as that. But there were long stretches without war, and those (mostly interne-cine) wars that did erupt tended not to be so intense or so lasting as those on the rest of the continent. All that changed, of course, with the unification of Germany and the establishment of one government over 25 million people and 70,000 square miles.” Readers should not fear that Sale has forgotten the Thirty Years War, the disastrous effects of which he discusses at length, but his point here is about the *frequency* of wars.

Sale takes the polarity between the vast centralized state and the local, self-governing community as fundamental. Small wonder that many people do not vote. Why should they, when they have not the remotest chance of affecting the outcome?

With great insight, he uses this polarity to help us understand American history. “The decentralist tradition, manifested in a persistent anti-authoritarianism and a quite exuberant localism, is basic to the American character ... resistance to unwanted laws and the flouting of colonial authority were common well before the Revolution itself, and riots and rebellions ... were recurrent. These fledgling Americans wanted to be left alone, to sink their roots how and where they pleased.”

The American Revolution only served to intensify these tendencies, and Sale in this connection cites a striking remark by Thomas Paine: “For upwards of two years from the commencement of the American War, and for a longer period in several of the American states, there



were no established forms of government. The old governments had been abolished and the country was too much occupied in defense to employ its attention in establishing new governments; yet during this interval order and harmony were preserved as inviolate as in any country of Europe.”

Like Murray Rothbard, Sale supports the Articles of Confederation over the centralizing Constitution, and he is a vigorous partisan of Jefferson’s plan, unfortunately never put into effect,

for small republics. “Around 1816, after having served his stint in the presidency, perhaps not wisely nor too well, he began to revive an idea that had long been part of his creed: ward government. A system of small ‘elementary republics,’ he began to feel — units of perhaps a hundred men or two populations of 500–1000 in all — was essential to the salvation of the American state, and a better alternative than his earlier notion of recurring revolutions.”

The Civil War weakened the American decentralist tradition, but it did not destroy it altogether. “The illegal war of 1861 and its centralizing aftermath — wars are always centralizing: that’s why governments have them — brought a temporary halt to the Jeffersonian

tradition and weakened the principle of states’ rights forever.”

The situation worsened in the next century. “With the first two decades of the twentieth century, the triumph of federal power was made manifest. The central government was acknowledged as supreme, its authority over its population’s pockets (the Income Tax Amendment of 1913) and habits (the Prohibition Amendment of 1919)

“Here at the very beginnings of American society, here at the fount of the American soul, we find the most developed, the most settled, the most reasonable demonstration of the worth and happiness of life without the state.”



and even lives (the Selective Service Act of 1917) fully established. ... What happened then in the 1930s and ’40s, with the familiar events of New Deal consolidation, seemed only a natural extension of the past autocracy.”

Against this centralizing trend, Sale counterposes the other term of his polarity, the self-governing local community. In particular, he admires the New England town meeting. “Here at the very beginnings of American society, here at the fount of the American soul, we find the most developed, the most settled, the most reasonable demonstration of the worth and happiness of life without the state.”

In one of the most valuable parts of the book, Sale confronts an objection. Even if the large centralized state brings with it great evils, can human society survive without it? Sale takes as his foil the famous Yale political scientist Robert Dahl, who said, “As for making all large political systems vanish into thin air, when the silk scarf is pulled away there in full sight are matters that cannot be handled by completely autonomous communities.”

One of the foremost reasons alleged for the necessity of a large state is defense. How could a small autonomous community protect itself against the onslaught of a powerful state? As one might expect, Sale is not convinced. “Larger states, far from providing peace, merely provide larger wars, having more human and material resources

to pour into them. ... Moreover, in the course of attempting to provide its defense the state exercises its own forms of coercion and violence ... such a state, preoccupied with defense, begins to justify all acts, however dangerous.”

How, though, does this respond to the difficulty? However bad the large state may be, how can small communities survive without it? Sale answers in this way: “Historically the response of small states to the threat of such large-scale aggression has been temporary confederation and mutual defense, and indeed the simple threat of such unity, in the form of defense treaties and leagues and alliances, has sometimes been a sufficient deterrent. ... Moreover, the difficulties for any large power trying to subdue a host of smaller societies are truly formidable and would be additionally so if those societies, in a human-scale world, were efficiently governed, harmonious and homogeneous, and concertedly self-protective.”

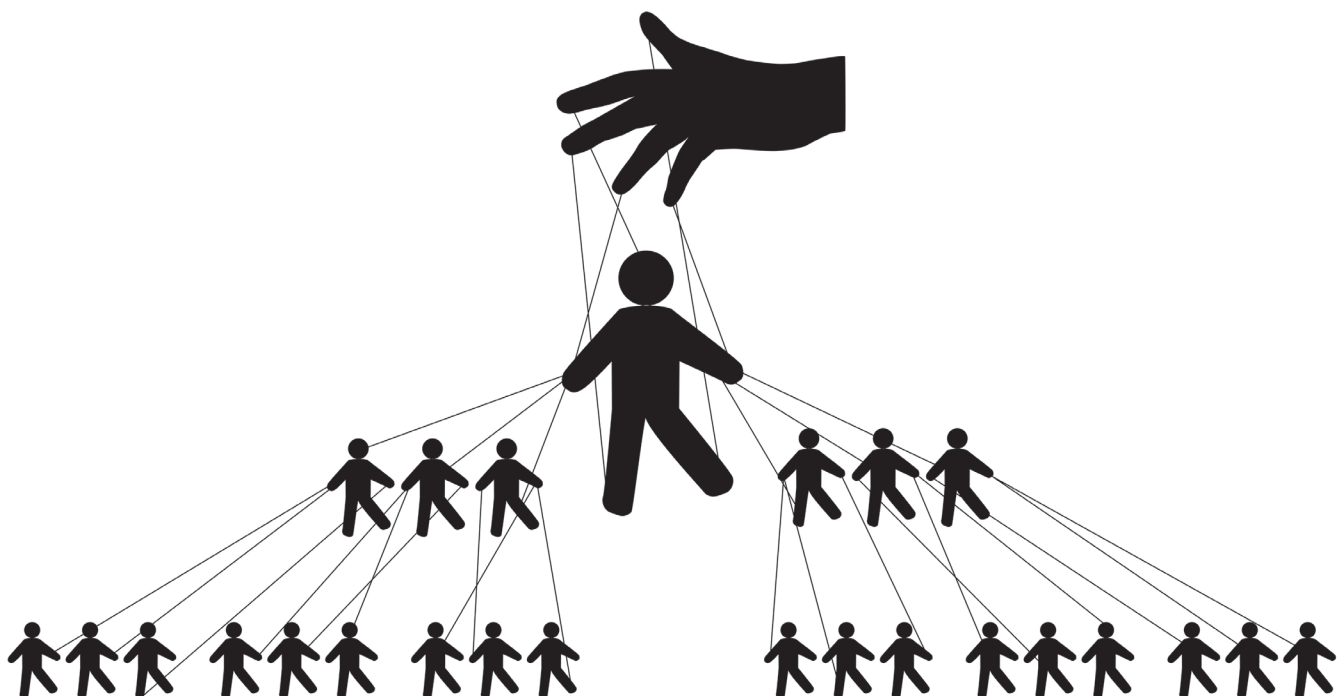
Sale has no more use for another frequent justification for the large state, the claim that people cannot provide on their own for “public goods,” such as roads, control of pollution, and education. “As with pollution, so with the other public services of the state. There is not a one of them, not one, that has not in the past been the province of the community or some agency within the community (family, church, guild) and that has been taken on

by the state only because it first destroyed that province. ... Indeed, there is not one public service, not one, that could not be *better* supplied at the local level, where the problem is understood best and quickest.”

Not only does Sale oppose centralized control of the economy, but he also manages to sound remarkably like Mises and Rothbard in doing so. “Simply as a result of the inefficiencies and inequities of their size ... big governments tend to set in motion forces that they are unable to control, or understand, with consequences they are unable to foresee ... regardless of any other attributes, beyond a modest size a government cannot be expected to perform optimally, and the larger it gets, and the more distended the policy, the more likely it is that it will be increasingly inefficient, autocratic, wasteful, corrupt, and harmful.”

Sale’s remarkable book, the product of wide reading in many different fields, will impress everyone who values personal liberty and rejects the Leviathan state’s endeavor to steamroller us into conformity with its maleficent plans. ■■■

David Gordon is Senior Fellow at the Mises Institute, and editor of *The Mises Review*.

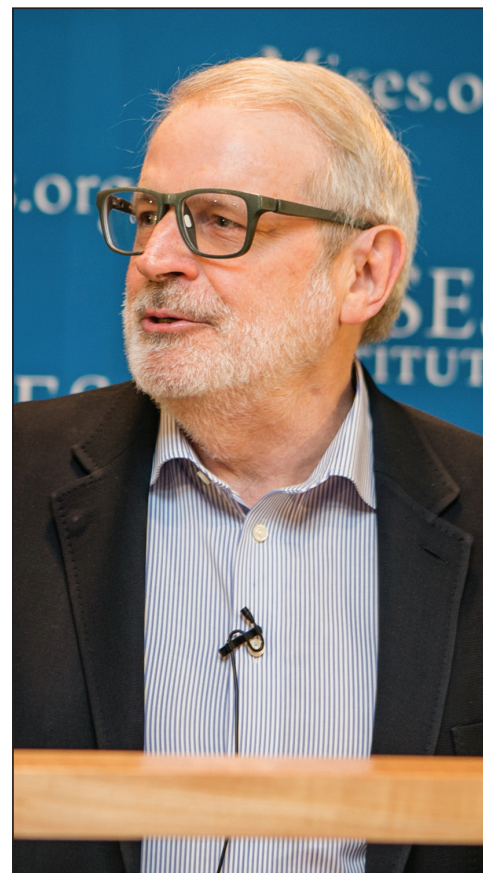


HOMECOMING IN AUBURN SUPPORTERS SUMMIT 2018

It was great to be able to have so many friends join us for our Supporters Summit. This year, we gathered at our campus in Auburn to give members and supporters a chance to see our buildings and grounds, and to experience the traditions of a Homecoming weekend at Auburn University.

The event began with a great talk by David Stockman on the real state of the economy, followed by a celebration honoring Hunter Lewis who was presented with the George F. Koether Award for Writing in Defense of Liberty.

The second day of the event included talks by Jeff Deist, Judge John Denson, Yuri Maltsev, and Ryan McMaken, as well as a panel of former Mises Fellows including Tom Woods, Per Bylund, and Martin Stefunko. At our author's panel, we were excited to announce upcoming projects including a fifth volume of Rothbard's *Conceived in Liberty*, edited by Patrick Newman, as well as the upcoming *Rothbard A-Z*. Connor Boyack also previewed the latest *Tuttle Twins* book, inspired by *Anatomy of the State*!



David Stockman



From left: (Mises Research Fellow Alumni Panel) Peter Klein, Sandy Klein, Martin Stefunko, Patrick Newman, Per Bylund, Tom Woods, and Mark Thornton



Hunter Lewis



Members Chris Condon, Daniel Masveyraud, and Rafael Acevedo



Allen Mendenhall and Jeff Deist

Our last day featured speakers such as Peter Klein discussing "Socialism in Silicon Valley" and Tom DiLorenzo on "Political Correctness as Misesian Destructionism." As always, supporters had a chance to meet the speakers, have books autographed, and interact with other freedom lovers from around the world.

We want to thank all of those who were able to make the trip to Auburn, and hope to see many more at our upcoming events. To hear lectures from the weekend, see mises.org/library/summits-and-seminars.



Lew Rockwell and Ron Paul



Attendees and speakers at the Supporters Summit

Alumni and Fellow News



**WALTER
BLOCK**

Senior Fellow **WALTER BLOCK** reached a new milestone this year. He has now published 100 peer-reviewed articles as co-author with his students. This demonstrates Dr. Block's longtime commitment to helping students publish their work, but is only a small portion of the many hundreds of articles that Dr. Block has published either as co-author or as sole author.



**THORSTEN
POLLEIT**

Senior Fellow **GUIDO HÜLSMANN** was interviewed in September in Germany's top business weekly *Wirtschaftswoche*. The interview, titled "Der Sozialstaat ist in Wahrheit unsozial" ("The Welfare State Is Really Anti-Social") is available in German online.

Senior Fellow **MARK THORNTON** published a new book *The Skyscraper Curse: And How Austrian Economists Predicted Every Major Economic Crisis of the Last Century*. The book is now available at Amazon and in the Mises bookstore.

Senior Fellow **JOSEPH SALERNO** and Former Mises Research Fellow **CARMEN ELENA DOROBĂȚ** co-authored "Currency depreciation and the monetary adjustment process: reconsidering Lord King's contributions" in *Oxford Economic Papers*, July 2018.



**DEMELZA
HAYS**

Associated Scholar **THORSTEN POLLEIT** has published a new introductory text on Mises and his work: *Ludwig von Mises für jedermann (Ludwig von Mises for Everyone)*. It is available online through both the German and US Amazon sites.

DEMELZA HAYS, a 2015 Mises Research Fellow, was named to the *Forbes* "30 Under 30" from Deutschland/Austria/Switzerland. Ms. Hays is currently a PhD student at the University of Liechtenstein, specializing in cryptocurrency.

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For more information, phone or email Kristy Holmes (334.321.2101; kristy@mises.org).

IN MEMORIAM

We mourn the passing, but celebrate the lives and achievements, of these great supporters of liberty and the Mises Institute. Their far-sighted concern for the future of freedom will always inspire us.

- Mises Society Member: **Bettina Bien Greaves**, of Hickory, North Carolina
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- Supporters: **James O'Neill**, of Middle Point, Ohio; and **Professor Leland B. Yeager**, of Auburn, Alabama
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2018 Accomplishments ...

- Mises University, our flagship student program, attracted applicants from all over the world. Students described the program as “the best week of the year!” Many of our faculty are Mises U alumni. We had students from 129 schools, 24 countries, and 33 US states.
- Our faculty and staff continue to be guests on Fox News, RT, the *Tom Woods Show*, the *Ingraham Angle*, and many more!
- New Mises Academy online courses, including “The Economics of Bitcoin.”
- The Mises Institute Ward and Massey Libraries received over 4,300 donated books. Our collection contains over 44,000 titles now!
- Published several new books. *Getting Libertarianism Right* by Senior Fellow Hans-Hermann Hoppe, *The Skyscraper Curse*, by Senior Fellow Mark Thornton, and *Liberty, Dicta, & Force* by Rothbard Society Member Louis E. Carabini. Also, the forthcoming ultimate reference book, *Rothbard A–Z*.
- Hundreds of new articles, epub, audio files, online texts, and books were added for free online viewing and downloading at mises.org.
- Professors and graduate students from around the world attended our Austrian Economics Research Conference and Rothbard Graduate Seminar, which featured Mises Institute Senior Faculty and many others.
- Members and students flocked to our Mises seminars and conferences in Nashville, San Francisco, Fort Worth, Auburn, New York City, and Lake Jackson which were streamed worldwide.
- *Mises Weekends*, our weekly interview series with Jeff Deist, continues to reach a larger audience.
- More Mises University students and Mises Fellows than ever are getting their work published, earning graduate degrees, and accepting teaching positions.
- Nearly 500,000 unique monthly visitors to mises.org. Also, our email subscription list has increased over 20%.



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Thanks to our generous Members for making all of this possible!