



the Austrian

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THE Path to Victory

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From the Publisher

Jeff Deist

Majorities are no less exposed to error and frustration than kings and dictators. That a fact is deemed true by the majority does not prove its truth.

That a policy is deemed expedient by the majority does not prove its expediency. The individuals who form the majority are not gods and their joint conclusions are not necessarily godlike.

–Ludwig von Mises, Omnipotent Government

At this writing, the “winner” of November’s presidential election is not yet determined. But we know the limits of the political world. As Mises understood, there is nothing divine or uniquely wise manifested in the choices of electoral majorities. The West made a fetish of democracy, but it produced only oligarchy and managerialism in practice. In a country of 330 million people, with wildly diverse interests and views, national elections become elaborate harm rituals.

As always, the consent of the governed is nothing more than an absurd illusion.

That said, we must recognize Mr. Trump’s uncanny capability to make the right enemies. From the beginning, not long after he kneecapped the Bush and Clinton crime families in the 2016 election, the media and his own administration were out to get him. The CIA, FBI, and even the CDC (as we’ve seen) became politically aligned against him, assisting mainstream journalists in pursuing a soft coup.

We wish Trump had listened more to his own counsel rather than flattering turncoats like John Bolton. We wish he had “Drained the Swamp,” gotten us out of the Middle East, and stuck by his instincts about the Fed. We know what Joe Biden is—a man without much ability, scruples, or surprises up his sleeve. But Trump is nothing if not unpredictable.


Now we approach Christmas and a new year, so good cheer is in order. To that end we offer Lew Rockwell’s terrific talk “The Path to Victory” as a measure of optimism and clarity. Delivered way back in 2003, every word rings just as true today. It’s a strategic manifesto for how we approach the

task confronting us, which is always the same even when the cast of characters changes: promoting property, freedom, and peace.

Lew’s prescription? He reminds us that ideas matter, and the right ideas are absolutely necessary—but they require good and honorable people to advance them. That’s where you come in, and that is where the Mises Institute finds its broader purpose. We cannot retreat or give in to quietism; we cannot seek favor via compromise with the academic establishment or mainstream media outlets; and we cannot hitch our wagon to politicians or campaigns. Our virtue lies in speaking the truth, sticking to our guns, and reaching the best and brightest people we can with our message. DC is littered with think tankers, academics, writers, and journalists who thought they could play the game on their own terms. But nearly all of them become assimilated, and ruined, by the realities of politics and getting paid. As Nick the tobacco lobbyist says in the great film *Thank You for Smoking*, “Everyone has a mortgage to pay.”

Our interview with Professor Michael Rectenwald shows one example of someone who embodies the principles Lew Rockwell encourages. Rectenwald comes from the Left, and spent years mired in postmodernism, Bolshevism, and socialist literary circles. But something within him, perhaps driven by his own childhood influences, made him question the stridency and savagery of his own ideological colleagues. Comfortably ensconced teaching at NYU, he began to question the rhetoric surrounding the 2016 election and its Deplorable—to the point of creating an anonymous Twitter account to document just how far and fast political correctness and woke groupthink had shifted. Upon being outed, he saw how quickly and perversely his own administration and colleagues turned on him. The result was his departure from NYU, along with a profound shift in thinking which awakened his latent libertarian roots. Today he is a voracious writer of books and strong social critic, knowing the Left from the inside out. We are pleased to have him in our camp, so to speak, rather than with the illiberal liberals.

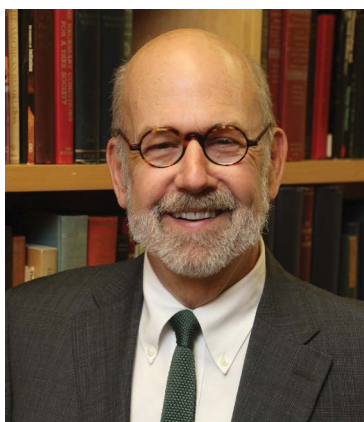
Finally, Dr. David Gordon is back with a review of *Break It Up* by Richard Kreitner. Secession and division are hot topics today, and rightfully so: in the truest Misesian sense of the word, liberalism requires the ability of electoral minorities to leave political arrangements. With red and blue states deeply at odds, subsidiarity may replace ideology as the great political issue of the twenty-first century in America.

As always, thank you for your continued support of our mission. 

Jeff Deist is president of the Mises Institute.

THE Path to Victory

BY LLEWELLYN H. ROCKWELL, JR.



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

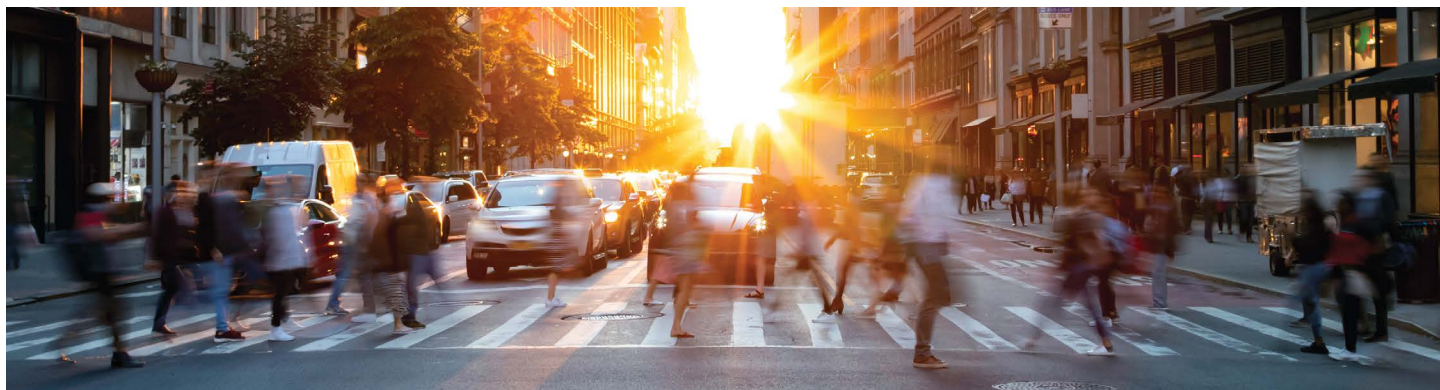
This talk was given at the Mises Institute Spring Seminar Series, Auburn, Alabama, March 5, 2003, and included in *Speaking of Liberty* (2003).

The Mises Institute was founded as a research center based on liberal ideas that have always been under fire: the ideas of Mises and the tradition of thought he represents. That means a focus on the Austrian school of economics, and, in political philosophy, individual liberty and the need to prevent the state and its interests from crushing it, as all states everywhere are inclined to do.

The first priority of such an institute is to keep a body of ideas alive. Great ideas have no inherent life of their own, especially not those that are opposed by the powers that be. They must circulate and be a part of the academic and public mind in order to avoid extinction.

And yet we must do more than merely keep a body of thought alive. We don't just want our ideas to live; we want them to grow and develop, advance within the culture and public debate, become a force to be reckoned with among intellectuals, be constantly employed toward the end of explaining history and current reality, and eventually win in the great ideological battles of our times.

What is the best means of achieving such victory? This is a subject that is rarely discussed on the free market right. Murray Rothbard pointed out that strategy is a huge part of the scholarship of the Left. Once having settled on the doctrine, the Left works very hard at honing the message and finding ways to push it. This is a major explanation for the Left's success.



Our side, on the other hand, doesn't discuss this subject much. But since some sort of strategy is unavoidable, let me just list a few tactics that I do not believe work. The following, I'm quite sure, will fail for various reasons:

QUIETISM. Faced with the incredible odds against success, there is a tendency among believers in liberty to despair and find solace in being around their friends and talking only to each other. This is understandable, of course, even fruitful at times, but it is also irresponsible and rather selfish. Yes, we may always be a minority, but we are always either growing or shrinking. If we shrink enough, we disappear. If we grow enough, we win. That is why we must never give up the battle for young minds and for changing older minds. Our message has tremendous explanatory power. We must never hide our light under a bushel.

RETREAT. One mark of the liberal tradition is its intellectual rigor. It contains more than enough intellectual substance to occupy the academic mind for several lifetimes. There is a tendency, then, to believe that retreating into academia and eschewing public life is the correct path. The idea is that we should just use our knowledge to pen journal articles and otherwise keep to ourselves, in the hopes that someday this path will pay off in terms of academic respectability. But this has not been the path of brilliant minds from Turgot and Jefferson, Bastiat and Constant, Mises and Hayek, to Rothbard and the adjunct scholars of the Mises Institute. They are all engaged at some level in

public debate. They believed that too much is at stake to retreat solely to private study. We cannot afford that luxury.

HOLDING CHAIRS IN THE IVY LEAGUE. I've seen this related error take a real toll on otherwise good minds. A young person can start out with real commitments, but he may fear the marginalization that comes with holding unpopular ideas. He tries to pass himself off as a conventional scholar, while sneaking in libertarian thoughts along the way. He may intend to reveal his true colors eventually, but then there are the demands of tenure and promotion, and social pressures to boot. Eventually, in short, he comes to sell out.

CONVINCING THE POLITICIANS. Another type of problem stems from the belief that political organizing is the answer. But this can only lead to despondency, as effort after effort fails to yield fruit. Despite what you hear, the political class is not interested in ideas for their own sake. They are interested in subsidizing their friends, protecting their territory, and getting re-elected. Political ideology for them is, at best, a hobby. It is only useful insofar as it provides a cover for what they

Despite what you hear, the political class is not interested in ideas for their own sake.



would do otherwise. I'm generalizing here, and yes, exceptions are possible. In fact, I can think of one in our century: Ron Paul.

PLACING HIGH-PROFILE ARTICLES. I know think tank people who would do just about anything to get in the *New York Times* or *Wall Street Journal*. This is a snare and delusion. Once you put a priority on the medium over the message—and this is inevitable once you begin to think this way—you are forgetting why you got in this business to begin with. If these venues come to you and ask you to offer an opinion you hold, by all means do so. But that is not the way it works.

GETTING ON TV. The same applies here. I know people who were once dedicated to the ideas of liberty who developed a hankering for media attention, and eventually forgot why they got into the ideas business in the first place.

STARTING MORE THINK TANKS. I know this sounds silly, but some people on our side of the

fence believe that the more nonprofit organizations there are, the more likely we are to win the battle of ideas. To me, this amounts to confusing the success that franchising represents in the commercial marketplace with ideological success, which is not guaranteed by the proliferation of websites and institutes. Indeed, ideology is not solely a commercial enterprise. We are a nonprofit research institute for a reason. What we do pays huge returns for civilization but not in the form of accounting profits. Our reward comes in other ways.

BUILDING AN IMMENSE ENDOWMENT AND HIRING A HUGE STAFF. Funding and staff alone will solve nothing. Funding is crucial and heaven knows the Mises Institute needs more of it. Staffing is great, so long as the people are dedicated and competent. But neither is an end in itself. The crucial question is whether the passion for ideas is there, not just the financial means. Amazing things

are possible on small budgets, as I think the success of the Mises Institute shows.

WAIT FOR THE COLLAPSE. We know that socialism and interventionism cannot work. We know they fail, and we suspect that they might finally fail in a catastrophic manner. This may be true, but we are mistaken if we believe that the ideas of liberty will naturally emerge in such a setting. Crisis can present opportunities but no guarantees.

Finding errors such as these is easy, and I could list a dozen more. Let me offer a few points I think we should remember.

Our ideas are unpopular. We are in the minority. Our views are not welcome by the regime. They often fall on the deaf ears of an indifferent public. Big newspapers don't often care what we think. In fact, they want to keep us out of their pages. Politicians will always find us impractical at best, and threatening at worst.

In short, we fight an uphill battle. We must recognize this at the outset. We are what Albert Jay Nock called the remnant, a small band of brothers who have special knowledge of theory and history and a concern for the well-being of civilization. What we do with that knowledge and concern is up to us. We can retreat or sell out, or we can use it as our battle cry and go forward through history to face the enemy.

Let me offer just a quick outline of some principles I use:

EDUCATE EVERY STUDENT who is interested in what we do. Never neglect anyone. One never knows where the next Mises or Rothbard or Hayek or Hazlitt is going to come from.

ENCOURAGE A PROLIFERATION OF TALENTS. Some people are great writers. Others are great teachers. Still others have a talent for research. There are other abilities too, like public speaking and technological competence. It takes all these abilities to make up the great freedom movement of our time. There is no need to insist on a single model; rather, we should make use of the division of labor.

USE EVERY MEDIUM we can to advance our ideas, from the smallest newsletter to the largest website. Never believe that a medium is beneath you, or above you. We must be in the academic journals and we must be in the pages of the local newspaper. Along these lines, the web has solved the major problem we faced throughout history, namely finding a medium to communicate our ideas in a way that makes them available to everyone who is interested. But it never happens automatically. It requires tremendous effort and creativity to bring about change.

ADHERE TO WHAT IS TRUE. This means avoiding fancy ways of pitching your ideas in keeping with current trends. It's fine to be attentive to sales techniques. But never let this concern swamp your message.

SAY WHAT IS TRUE. Never underestimate the power of just stating things plainly and openly. Whatever the topic, the ideas of liberty have something to add that is missing from public debate. It is our job to make that addition.

DON'T NEGLECT ACADEMIA. Yes, colleges and universities are corrupt. But they are where the ideas that rule civilization come from. We must not neglect them. We must publish journals, sponsor colloquia, help faculty and students. Never let academia believe it has the luxury of forgetting about our ideas. This is why the Mises Institute holds seminars for professors and students, as well as financial professionals and interested people of every sort.

Educate every student. One never knows where the next Mises or Rothbard or Hayek or Hazlitt is going to come from.

DON'T NEGLECT POPULAR CULTURE. Yes, popular culture is corrupt, but not entirely. We must not neglect it, because it has a huge impact

on the way people see themselves and learn about their world.

USE YOUR MINORITY STATUS TO YOUR OWN BENEFIT. There is no sense in duplicating what others already do. If you publish, publish something radical and surprising. If you produce a book, make it a book that will change people's minds. If you hold a seminar, say things that are worth saying. Never fear the unconventional. It is possible to be conventional in form and radical in content.

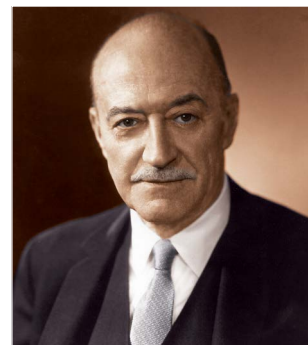
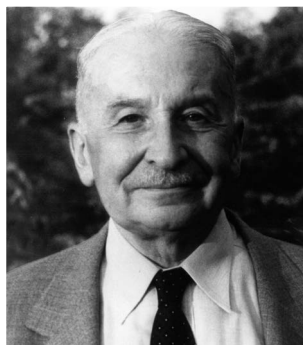
REMEMBER THAT INFLUENCE CAN BE INDIRECT. The effect of ideas on a civilization is like waves on water. By the time they reach the shore, no one remembers or knows for sure where they

We should use every means at our disposal to get the ideas out there; what happens after that is as unpredictable as the future always is.

came from. Our job is to stick to the task. We should use every means at our disposal to get the ideas out there; what happens after that is as unpredictable as the future always is.

SUCCESS CAN TAKE MANY FORMS. I am often asked how we can think we are succeeding even as the government keeps growing. To me, this poses no great quandary. All governments want total control. What stops them, primarily, is ideological opposition. Without it, the government would grow much quicker and civilization would be doomed in short order. To what extent has the circulation of the ideas of liberty slowed down the growth of the state? How much worse off might we be?

CHANGE CAN HAPPEN QUICKLY. The ideological foundations of statism weaken in ways that are not always detectable. Change can happen overnight, after which all becomes clear in retrospect. If you had told the average Russian in 1985 that in five



years the Soviet Union would be defunct, you would have been dismissed as a madman. It's my opinion that statism in America may have run its course. We should all do our best to speed up the process.

In the history of warfare, there have always been armies that are ruled by the center and emphasize drills, lines, and discipline. They tend to treat their soldiers as expendable. They can win but at a huge price.

The other model is guerrilla warfare, usually undertaken by the underdog in the battle. Guerrilla armies usually consist of volunteers; every soldier is considered valuable. Their tactics are unpredictable. They are not ruled by the center but rather exploit the creativity of each member. Such armies have proven remarkably effective in the history of warfare.

I believe that the guerrilla model is what suits us best—a campaign of ideological guerrilla warfare conducted by the remnant. This is no guarantee of success but it is the best guarantee against failure that I know.

The key to our success, I believe, is that the Mises Institute is all about being attached to principle and truth before anything else. We've never traded short-term attention for building for the long term.

Mises did not either, and he paid a personal price. But his ideas are changing the world. We must all follow his lead, never giving in, never giving up, fighting for truth until our last breath. We have the passion and energy. Most importantly, we have truth on our side. I believe we can have the victory. ■■■

A portrait of Michael Rectenwald, a middle-aged man with short brown hair, wearing black-rimmed glasses, a dark suit, a white shirt, and a patterned tie. He is looking slightly to the left of the camera with a serious expression. The background is a solid blue color with some faint, out-of-focus text.

UN-WOKE

AN INTERVIEW WITH MICHAEL RECTENWALD

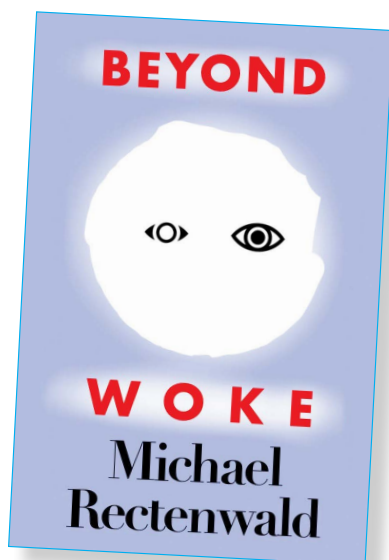
JEFF DEIST: Professor Michael Rectenwald, it's been nearly four years since the events which led to your departure from NYU began. In hindsight, does the whole episode (Rectenwald's story of being outed for an anonymous Twitter account and ultimately leaving his professorship is recounted in his book *Springtime for Snowflakes*) shock you more or less today?

MICHAEL RECTENWALD: It shocks me more as I think about it further, just how, by virtue of making criticisms of institutional mechanisms such as safe spaces and trigger warnings, no-platforming speakers and bias-reporting hotlines, that that was enough to get a whole platoon of social justice warriors on my trail and for them to try to ruin my academic career.

Michael Rectenwald was a professor of liberal studies and global liberal studies at NYU from 2008 to 2019. He holds a PhD in literary and cultural studies from Carnegie Mellon University, a master's in English literature from Case Western Reserve University, and a BA in English literature from the University of Pittsburgh.

Professor Rectenwald is a pundit and champion of free speech and opposes all forms of authoritarianism and totalitarianism, including socialism-communism, "social justice," fascism, and PC. He has appeared on numerous major-network political talk shows (Tucker Carlson Tonight, Fox & Friends, Fox & Friends First, The O'Reilly Factor, Varney & Company, and The Glenn Beck Show).

He is the author of eleven books, including *Thought Criminal*, *Beyond Woke*, and *Springtime for Snowflakes* and delivered the Ludwig von Mises Memorial Lecture at the 2019 Austrian Economics Research Conference.



JD: Reading your book, it struck me how your decades as a dutiful left-wing academic didn't buy you an ounce of sympathy or leeway with your antagonists.

MR: No, nothing, and I was even an advocate for black rights and I even came out in support of Trayvon Martin, and people knew that too, and it didn't mean anything to them when it came down to it. They still convicted me of thought crimes.

JD: Give our readers a brief biographical sketch. How far left were you?

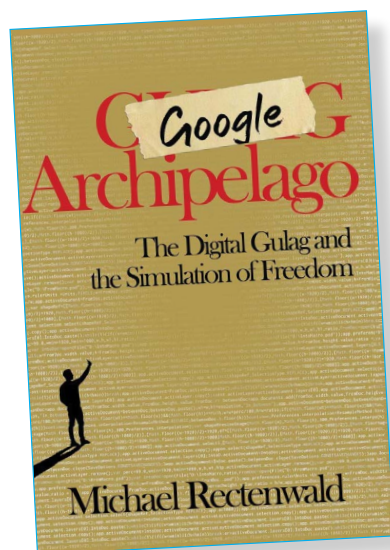
MR: Well, I was a left communist, as I called myself, I was left of the Bolsheviks if you will. That is to say that I believed in working-class revolution and overthrow of capitalism, but I didn't believe it necessarily led to a dictatorial state. I believed that the state would be coterminous with the people once they assumed complete control of the means of production.

I was very deeply in it, I wrote plenty of treatises on Marxism and economics, identity politics, political treatises, economic treatises, all kinds of essays that were published by Marxist

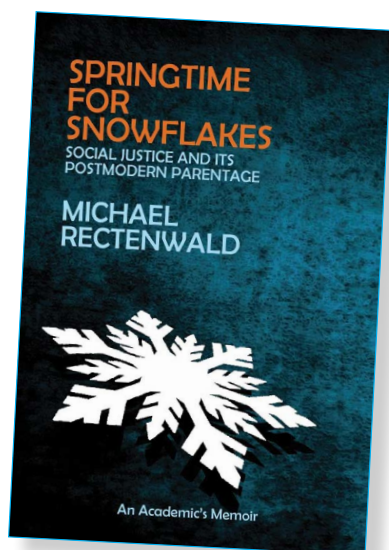
groups and their periodicals. At one point, I flirted with a Trotskyite sect, but they wouldn't have me. They thought I was too bourgeois for them. Even in the Left there's all these shibboleths that you have to pass through, that you have to mouth. One of them was basically that you

would accept anything having to do with transgenderism or any kind of new-fangled identity category. This is where I started to draw the line. I couldn't buy into it. As much as I'd tried, this became like a third rail that I eventually touched, and that was part of my evolution out of it.

I also saw what was going on in the university with the hiring practices in my own department. It was just outrageous. They were hiring people just on the basis of identity and not qualifications whatsoever, and I thought it was a complete sham, the way they were basically overlooking credentials in favor of identity categories and completely skipping really highly qualified people, in order to pick people that met these criteria. It just stunned me.



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JD: I'm struck by your descriptions of upper-middle-class academics dominating the Left. Wokeism is not a blue-collar, union hall movement to put it mildly.

MR: Yes. They're trying to control and overtake the system using propaganda and through education. They are trying to inculcate their ideology throughout the whole social body by making everybody that comes through the educational institutions subscribe to their belief system. And that's really how they've done what they've done to date in the US; it's this long march through the institutions that they've undertaken, and really quite successfully from the standpoint of what they're trying to accomplish.

JD: Something prevented you from ever becoming as vicious as your colleagues.

MR: Yes, I always considered myself a libertarian, believe it or not. I even called myself a libertarian, not a communist. I just didn't believe in imposing anything on people through force or threats, and also I didn't believe in this kind of mob mentality. In fact, I can recall when I was involved in various marches, I would be marching down the street with all these leftists chanting phrases over and over again and I just thought to myself, What am I doing? This isn't really what I think. I have other thoughts than Hey, such-and-such has got to go and all these mantras. I always felt it was sort of betraying myself deep down, that there was something individual about me that was being overridden by leftism.

JD: That's a powerful lesson. You spent a lot of years steeped in and studying postmodernism, which enjoys a resurgence today. When we consider Derrida or Foucault or Marcuse, should we be dismissive? Is there a real scholarship in postmodernism, or is it all BS?

MR: I wouldn't call it scholarship. What I would call it is very elaborate propaganda and I wouldn't say to dismiss it. We dismiss it at our peril, only because it's been so effective at undertaking what's been going on. Postmodern theory in its epistemological skepticism and subjectivism, its extreme anti-objectivity, and objective reality stance has really led to the kind of claims that are being made by the Left about my truth and my lived experience trumping everything, as against all kinds of objective criteria. So, I think we dismiss it at our peril because it's been effective. I think it has to be taken head-on and not simply scoffed at without engagement.

JD: The postmodernists active on Twitter, some of them academics, really do defend the concept of $2 + 2 = 5$. They argue math is a construct, not a description of an underlying reality. But how can we ever have social cooperation in such a world?

MR: That's right, but there is one thing that they do to create the social cooperation: they force it on you. In other words, what I've argued is—and I argue that in *Springtime for Snowflakes*—is that while this willy-nilly anything-goes postmodern epistemological presumption may seem to be liberatory, or it may lead to liberation, that everybody can assert their own truth. (Gee, isn't that wonderful. We're free from these master narratives, as they call them.) What I suggest is that in fact, when there's no objective criteria for a truth claim, then anybody can impose a truth claim of their own and then when they're collectivized, it becomes a mob insistence that you believe something that's completely insane and that's exactly what's going on.

JD: Without truth claims, the ultimate authority in society comes down to force.

MR: That's what it comes down to. It comes down to force. By collectivizing this subjectivism, they end up imposing it on you through mob force.

JD: Earlier in your academic career you began to sense something was wrong.

MR: All I wanted to do was become an English professor. When I got back into academia after a ten-year interim in advertising from 1983 to 1993, this invasion of theory had taken place, and that means critical theory and postmodern theory. They weren't reading literature

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anymore. They weren't writing about Shakespeare, they weren't writing about Milton, they weren't writing about any of this, except to politicize it in some cases. Mostly what I had to read was a bunch of postmodern and Marxist tracts of various sorts, and they just keep coming at you with it. Sooner or later you realize this is what you have to do and that obviously, after a while, when you're fed nothing but certain perspectives, *ad infinitum*, then you're going to adopt them or you're going to lose, you're going to be out. So, that's sort of how they roped me in.

JD: You mention '83 to '93 as transformative in academia. We imagine those as the conservative Reagan years, but the cultural undercurrents were radical. It was happening in universities under our noses.

MR: Yes, that's right. It was all being done very surreptitiously at that time, these people were in mourning, but they were also concocting new approaches for cultural Marxism. They were trying to subvert the academe, first of all and they did it through English departments, to begin with.

JD: Many mises.org readers undoubtedly are very jaded about academia today. Can you offer any optimism?

MR: Well, when I look at what's passing for "scholarship" today, I have to say that it's absurd. All that's happening in the humanities and social sciences, in particular, is a kind of elaborate propaganda and virtue signaling. They're pasting together these plug-and-play phrases and counting it as scholarship. It seems to me to be completely rotten to the core. I can't see any redemption there. There's no rigor, there's no real scholarship, there's no analytical thinking. It's simply a bunch of pasting together phrases that sound good to them. I mean, critical race theory has infected everything now, and of course, that derives from critical theory. It looks like a complete waste of time to me, to be competing in a game that makes no sense and has no criteria that I respect at all. So, it's worthless.

JD: But we can and should still defend a broadly liberal arts education?

MR: Yes, but not under the terms that they're undertaking now. I do believe in real critical thinking and real learning: how to argue, how to debate, how to defend positions, how to think. I don't really distinguish between what to think and how to think. I think we should try to think the

best things that have been thought and said, to paraphrase Matthew Arnold, to think and read and argue about and understand the best that has been thought and said and that certainly isn't what's happening now, it is garbage.

JD: Let's say a brilliant kid comes out of an Ivy League school with a rigorous STEM or finance program and ends up at Goldman Sachs or a Silicon Valley tech firm. If he knows nothing about history, about music, poetry, literature,

I do believe in real critical thinking and real learning: how to argue, how to debate, how to defend positions, how to think.

foreign languages—is he really an educated person?

MR: No, he's not. He's not an educated person and frankly, he's somebody that can be easily swayed by this cartoon version of history that's being taught, this kind of idiotic notion that the only evil that's ever been done on the face of the earth is by white western Europeans and Americans. It is absurd to think that this is the cartoon history that they're teaching and you're very susceptible to it if you don't get a much broader and deeper historical background. You won't know what's worth anything if you never are exposed to great thinkers and great writers.

JD: Earlier in your career you did research on secularism in the West.

MR: Yes, and especially in Britain.

JD: Secularism appears to be wildly successful. What does it mean for us? What replaces God?

MR: The secularism that I discovered, the first usage of the term was not atheist, that's one of the things that I was actually driving home, and I resuscitated this. It was well-established by the time I finished my work that the founder of the first movement called secularism—which was the first use of the term as such—was George Holyoke in 1851 and 1852, and what he was arguing for was secularism. What he was proposing was not atheist. In fact, he was developing this—as opposed to atheists that

he was involved with—and he was trying to inaugurate a movement and a way of thinking that wasn't necessarily antitheist. In fact, he was trying to cobble together nontheists and theists in order to effect the improvement of conditions in “this life.”

You could be a theist, but it was only a problem if it impeded you from working for improvement in this life, because he said we don't know about another one and therefore, we should not delay work in matters of temporal importance. That's really what he was arguing, but it got taken over by another camp that was headed by Charles Bradlaugh. Bradlaugh was a dogmatic atheist. He said secularism was atheist, there was no other way of interpreting it. They argued this for years, well into the 1870s when, I think, Holyoke gave up. Then he let them more or less take over the movement. That's pretty much the conception that people have about secularism today that it is effectively atheist, but it was never intended to be, at least as it was first used by its founder George Holyoke.

I'm not a secularist in that sense. I'm a secularist in the sense that I agree with Holyoke that you should be able to work with other people in improving conditions without subscribing to either atheism or theism, necessarily. I think we live in a pluralistic society and you're not going to be able to organize the whole society on the basis of theism or atheism, but secularists are attempting to organize the whole society today on atheism. And what

it leaves is basically this kind of leftism that we're talking about because there's no other authority but them, it becomes a matter of imposing their will.

JD: Mises talked about how there is not one true God or one true faith for everybody, so we have to come together through markets and liberal society.

MR: Yes, I agree. That's essentially the same viewpoint that I hold, that I can't as a libertarian, try to force people to adopt my beliefs, but I also believe that I should be free to have them and so should others. I think we should work to persuade people to believe what we think is right. Obviously, or else why would we hold such views? But, nevertheless, we shouldn't attempt to impose them. There has to be another broader framework for cooperation, and I mean cooperation not in the communist sense. I just mean that we have to have a system...we have to have some more fundamental and overriding values that are broader than specific religious creeds and so forth.

JD: Is America heading toward an unpleasant form of cooperation?

MR: It sounds like it. That's certainly the direction it's headed. I'm just hoping and praying that we can forestall this, that we can prevail with real classical liberal ideals, and that the market survives and it's not completely destroyed in the process. As Mises pointed out, this is

I think we live in a pluralistic society and you're not going to be able to organize the whole society on the basis of theism or atheism, but secularists are attempting to organize the whole society today on atheism.



Michael Rectenwald on Tucker Carlson Tonight.



Michael Rectenwald on The Glenn Beck Podcast.

an anti-civilizational prospect that we're facing with socialists. They want to take everything and raze it to the ground. They think we should effectively start over and build up a civilization from the ashes, and that's a devastating idea, just devastating.

JD: A year zero mindset. Imagine how much you hate humanity if you refuse to benefit or even acknowledge its accumulated wisdom.

MR: Yes.

JD: Just sickening.

MR: It's very sickening. In the case of white people, you have to despise yourself and you have to despise your ancestors and you have to despise your entire cultural legacy and heritage, plus every creed that has ever been held that's antithetical to socialist ideology.

JD: I've heard you describe all of this as a demoralization campaign.

MR: Yes. They're trying to demoralize us by making it seem like we have no recourse to what's going on by continually assaulting people and every vestige of historical memory and culture. And then with the covid lockdowns—effectively isolating everyone—they're trying to demobilize us and demoralize us and tie our hands behind our backs while they're undertaking a complete rampage.

JD: And provoke a reaction. I've heard you say Antifa needs to create fascists to justify its existence.



MR: That's right. They have to have fascists and without fascists they have no future. So, they need fascists and they'll produce them if they have to. They are trying to provoke the Right, if you will, to rise up with arms because then they'll say, There they are, the fascists, and we said they were there. On the other hand, we're supposed to sit back as they burn things down. So, it's a really horrifying prospect.

JD: They're getting plenty of help from CNN and MSNBC and the *Washington Post* in creating this narrative.

MR: Absolutely, the whole mainstream media is not, you know, the ministry of truth. They are telling inversions of the truth at all times. In other words, we're being fed complete $2 + 2 = 5$ narratives on a regular basis. We're not necessarily trying to pay attention to it, but you can't help but bump up against it and say, Oh my God, this is what these people think is happening. And that's another source of extreme demoralization.

JD: What about social media companies? The pure libertarian position says you can't regulate them, you can't sue them for defamation—regardless of how bad or biased they might be. You have to build your own platform.

MR: These are not entirely privately held organizations at all. They're not in the business of expression. They have been "governmentalities" from the start. That is, they have been extensions and apparatuses of the state from the beginning, all of them, except maybe a couple, but certainly in the case of Google and Facebook, in particular. They are appendages of the state. I go into their funding and their governmental functions, so we're not dealing with some sort of corporate-held utterly private industries here. We're not talking about free and fair competition. These people were propped up by the military industrial complex.

JD: Tech companies aren't run by some noble businessman from an Ayn Rand novel.

MR: Not at all. This is the illusion from the start.

JD: Before we wrap up, I love your Pittsburgh story. You're from Pittsburgh, your dad was a blue collar guy. It's clear he played a role in keeping you grounded, even as you became a dyed-in-the-wool left-wing academic.

[Social media companies] are appendages of the state. I go into their funding and their governmental functions, so we're not dealing with some sort of corporate-held utterly private industries here. We're not talking about free and fair competition.

MR: That's right. My father was an independent contractor and he never had an employer. He had his own small business. My brother took it over and turned it into a rather large enterprise. I had to work from an early age and deal with material reality.

JD: And work with your hands.

MR: Yes, work with my hands and actually have pride in work and industry. My father was self-made. Looking back, and even during the time, I really respected what one can make with one's own industry: one can build, one can make things, one can do things, one can create and not rely on the state or on handouts. He was even anti-union, which I get too. He was always a Democrat because that's just the way it was, but then he became a Reagan Democrat. When I was a teenager, I used to argue with him about the Soviet Union. I would say it would be better, and he would just go into these diatribes about it. So we had these battles that kept me from going off over the edge.

JD: You had a big Catholic family, nine kids. He had a lot of mouths to feed!

MR: Yes he did, and we lived fairly well for having nine kids and him making every dime with his own labor. We had a middle-class lifestyle. I can't say that we were dirt. We had things, so it went well.

JD: You live in Pittsburgh today. You went to Pitt and then later Carnegie Mellon. If you had grown up in, say, Brooklyn—and gone to Columbia or Harvard—I suspect



you might be a very different person today. You might have gone along with the crowd at NYU.

MR: Oh, absolutely. There would be no grounding for me to come back to. I would have been completely sucked up in it and I would be in the resistance today. I would be one of them and completely deranged, as far as I'm concerned. That's where they're at. So, yes, I've been spared that thankfully.

JD: One happy result of your departure from NYU is becoming an unbelievably prolific writer. You're writing fourteen to fifteen hours a day, six to seven days a week, and it looks like you're going to publish two books in 2020.

MR: I've already published two books in 2020. One, it's already printed. It's just that it won't be released until December 1, but I've got advance copies and I'm selling them. The other one came out in the summer and then I have another one I'll have done by June 2021. So, that'll be five books in three years. So far, it's four in two years.

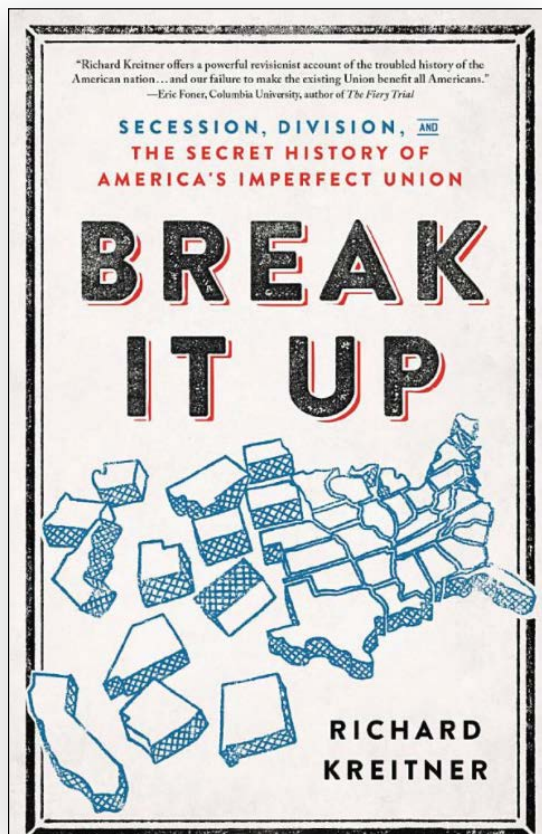
JD: I think your dad would be proud of that. You're working without a university sinecure. You stuck to your guns at NYU when you could have rolled over and had an easier career path.

MR: Absolutely, that was almost a sinecure there, and now I'm an intellectual entrepreneur going it on my own and I'm proud of it, very proud. ■■■

LET SLIP THE DOGS OF SECESSION

DAVID **GORDON**
REVIEWS

Break It Up: Secession, Division, and the
Secret History of America's Imperfect Union
By Richard Kreitner
Little, Brown, 2020
viii + 486 pages



The extreme polarization in American politics today has led many people to ask: Is the United States too large? Don't people who find the centralizing policies of the Leviathan state oppressive have the right to leave and govern themselves? Ron Paul thinks so. As Richard Kreitner notes, "Ron Paul called secession 'a deeply American principle.' For a country founded in the act of secession, Paul argued, there was 'nothing treasonous or unpatriotic about wanting a federal government that is more responsive to the people it represents....If a people cannot secede from an oppressive government, they cannot be considered free.'"

Dr. Paul has many precursors for his view. As Kreitner observes, in 1863, the individualist anarchist Josiah Warren argued that "individuals were inherently sovereign; no government could legitimately wield power over them. 'A state or a nation is a multitude of indestructible individualities, and cannot, by any possibility, be converted into anything else!' Warren declared. He called for 'a "Union" not only on paper, but rooted in the heart.' As for the [Civil] war, Warren opposed slavery as the most extreme possible violation of individual sovereignty, but he could find no justification for forcing the South back into the Union. As he wrote, 'There can be no secession from the freedom to secede!'"

You may wonder whether this position, held not only by Paul and Warren but by Ludwig von Mises and Murray Rothbard as well, is extreme within the context of American history. It is the great merit of Richard Kreitner's excellent book to show that it isn't. Kreitner, a writer for

The Nation who has devoted five years of research to *Break It Up*, shows the remarkable extent to which disunity is the dominant theme in American history. He is by no means a supporter of the free market, and his own policy proposals, such as a call for action against “the coming climate chaos,” are best ignored. Nevertheless, his work is of great value to us. It covers American history from colonial times to the present, but I’ll concentrate on only a few items of particular interest.

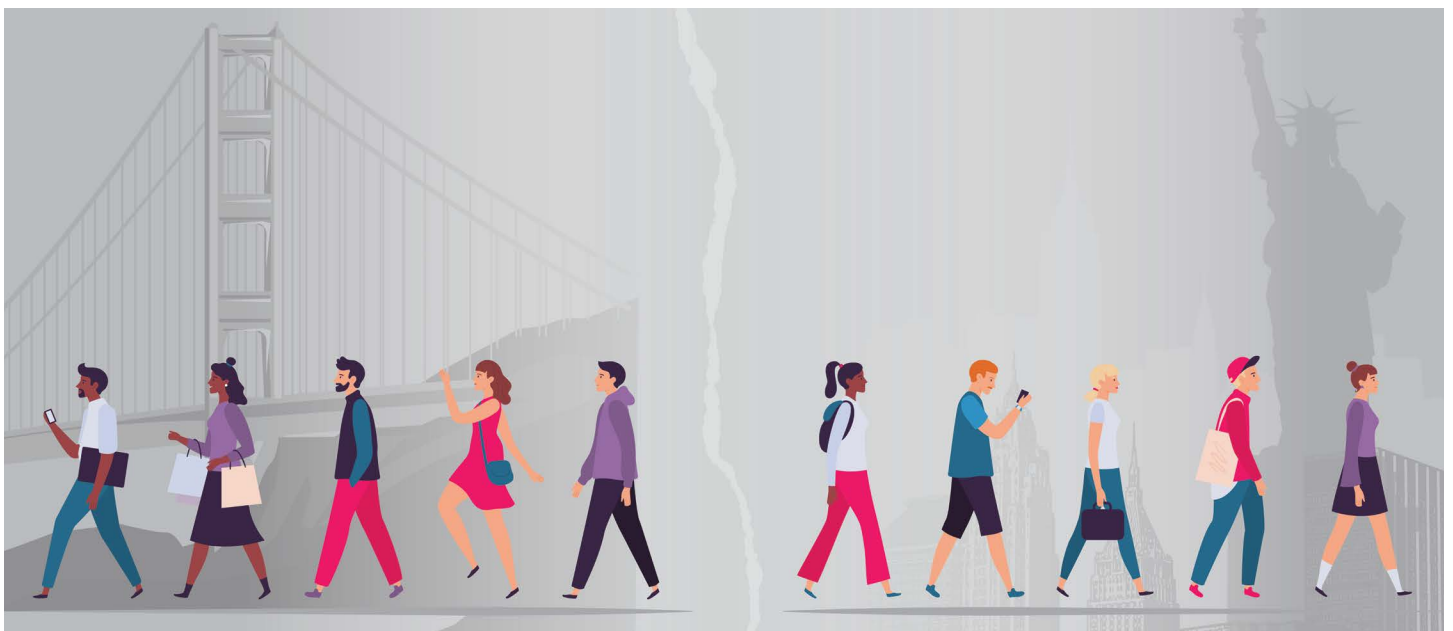
Like Murray Rothbard, Kreitner notes that ratification of the Constitution was a veritable *coup d’état* against the American people. “Celebrated as the most profound debate in American history...the ratification struggle was hardly a fair fight. Throughout the contest, those who favored the Constitution resorted to deceit, censorship, and force. They suppressed critical pamphlets and accelerated votes to keep their predominantly rural opponents from scrutinizing the text.... Ratification, though it occurred nearly two and a half

Like Murray Rothbard, Kreitner notes that ratification of the Constitution was a veritable *coup d’état* against the American people.

centuries ago, remains the one time the Constitution was ever put to a vote. Even then, it barely squeaked to passage, and it did so thanks only to a scorched-earth campaign of violence, trickery, and threats.”

Despite these underhanded efforts, supporters of the new order gained only a limited result: “Though the Constitution itself was silent on secession, contemporaries clearly believed ratification could be withdrawn the same way it had been tendered: by popularly elected delegates voting at a statewide convention. No state would have joined the Union had its citizens not believed that such a right was necessarily implied.”

Indeed, the Constitution is best viewed as a “peace pact.” “I [Kreitner] have been influenced by ‘the unionist paradigm,’ which holds union to have been the central problem...of the American founding. Its urtext is David C. Henrickson’s *Peace Pact: The Lost World of the American Founding*...[it] suggests the Constitution is best considered a treaty among quasi-independent nations that prevented them from falling into a ghastly and brutal civil war. I only doubt, given that the war did come, how successful that diplomatic breakthrough really was.”





Kreitner ably shows that even zealous proponents of the Constitution sometimes abandoned their quest for national unity. “Ever since the Revolution, Gouverneur Morris had been a strong champion of national government, a close ally of Hamilton and Washington....Like most of his business-minded brethren, Morris saw ‘Mr. Madison’s War [of 1812] as hostile to

The claim that the federal government exploits one section of the country to help others persisted, and it lay behind Southern opposition to Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal.

Northern interests’....Morris preferred to break up the Union rather than surrender it to the South. ‘The Union, being the means of freedom, should be prized as such,’ he wrote in 1813 ‘but the end should not be sacrificed to the means.’ He thought Northerners should ‘examine

the Question freely, whether it be...consistent with the Freedom of the Northern and Eastern States to continue in Union with the Owners of Slaves.”

John Quincy Adams is rightly regarded as an ardent nationalist, but in 1839, “the former president had suggested to the New York Historical Society that it might someday be better for ‘the people of the disunited states, to part in friendship from each other, than to be held together by constraint.’”

The claim that the federal government exploits one section of the country to help others persisted, and it lay behind Southern opposition to Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal. “In a 1937 book, *Divided We Stand*, Texas Historian Walter Prescott Webb attacked Roosevelt’s program as contributing to the massification of American life. Taking aim at everything from Wall Street finance to chain stores and industrial automation, Webb depicted Americans in the heartland as colonial subjects forced to pay tribute to coastal masters.”

The great anti-statist Albert Jay Nock emphasized another sort of sectional exploitation. “In a 1934 journal entry, Nock wrote that he had ‘asked several businessmen what actual good New England is getting out of membership in the Union, and they could not think of any, even though they tried hard. As for myself, I can think of none.’ Nock, however, was hardly a consistent


Kreitner concludes that secession is likely to grow in importance in our present dark times. “The twenty-first century has seen an unmistakable resurgence of the idea of leaving or breaking up the United States—a kaleidoscopic array of separatist movements shaped by the conflicts and divisions of the past but manifested in new and potentially destabilizing ways.”

advocate of Yankee nationalism: the only time he ever voted in a presidential election, he cast a write-in ballot for Jefferson Davis—on the principle, as he put it, that ‘if we can’t have a fine man who amounts to anything, by all means let’s have a first-class corpse.’ [!]

One of the ways that states have endeavored to thwart the federal government is nullification of laws deemed unconstitutional. Kreitner, who throughout the book displays a pronounced anti-Southern bias, is sometimes unsympathetic to it, but he admits that it can be used to support freedom. Several of the Northern states nullified the Fugitive Slave Act of 1851, and on this occasion it was the Southern states that sought an increase in federal power. “A massive extension of federal power,...[it] preempted Northern states’ ‘personal-liberty laws,’ which granted accused runaways the right to a jury trial and other legal protections. For slavery’s sake, Southerners dropped all pretense of caring about state sovereignty and local control.... Northerners were equally opportunistic in response. Once enthralled by Daniel Webster’s soaring odes to the glorious Union, many now took up the nullification doctrines he had denounced. After the fugitive-slave bill passed Congress, Northern states enacted even stronger personal-liberty laws, directly challenging the new statute. Vermont’s legislature extended the right of habeas corpus to accused runaways, essentially

voiding the law in the state. Northern juries refused to convict citizens of disobeying the act. While a pro-Southern paper in Washington denounced the North’s embrace of ‘Nullification and Disunion,’ the poet John Greenleaf Whittier proudly called himself a ‘nullifier.’”

Kreitner concludes that secession is likely to grow in importance in our present dark times. “The twenty-first century has seen an unmistakable resurgence of the idea of leaving or breaking up the United States—a kaleidoscopic array of separatist movements shaped by the conflicts and divisions of the past but manifested in new and potentially destabilizing ways. Earlier periods were defined by the ambitions of one or another region or the separatist impulses of this or that aggrieved minority. The new secessionism has appeared in multiple states at once, each pushing for departure from a Union that no longer functions. If the country as a whole is beyond saving, perhaps one’s own state is not.”

Those of us who wish to advance the ideas of Mises, Rothbard, and Ron Paul can take heart from this rich and detailed book. 

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

SUPPORTERS SUMMIT

JEKYLL ISLAND
OCTOBER 2020



One hundred and ten years ago, six of America's most powerful men secretly gathered at Jekyll Island to lay the foundation for the creation of the Federal Reserve. This October, the Mises Institute took over what was once JP Morgan's club for our annual Supporters Summit in celebration of ideas explicitly hostile to those that motivated this conspiracy of the elite.

On Thursday night, we began with an unmasked toast to end the Fed on the lawn along the beautiful Jekyll Creek. Afterward we were joined by Amity Shlaes, fresh off her book on the Great Society. Shlaes discussed the monetary failings of the 1960s in her after dinner talk.

Friday featured a full slate of speakers dissecting and condemning the hubris of those who, like the Fed's founders, dismissed the liberty and independence of their fellow men in favor of their designs. Dr. Patrick Newman applied the Rothbardian lens of liberty vs. power to highlight the anti-crony motivations of Andrew Jackson's war on the Second Bank of the United States, while Judge Napolitano exposed the tortured logic used to justify the creation of any central bank within America's constitutional framework. The weaponization of the coronavirus for the purpose of tyranny was the focus of talks by Dr. Peter Klein and Dr. Tom Woods. Dr. Tom DiLorenzo and Jeff Deist both offered their scathing

analysis of America's political environment, with talks on socialist destructionism and the Left's desire to use the guise of democracy to impose their will on the politically vanquished.

In an important and positive contrast to damage imposed by the state, the Institute's newly launched Economics for Business was represented with a panel on practical Austrian economics for entrepreneurs and small businesses.

At a time when so many institutions seem determined to leave us isolated and miserable, there is no greater act of rebellion than enjoying quality time with allies.



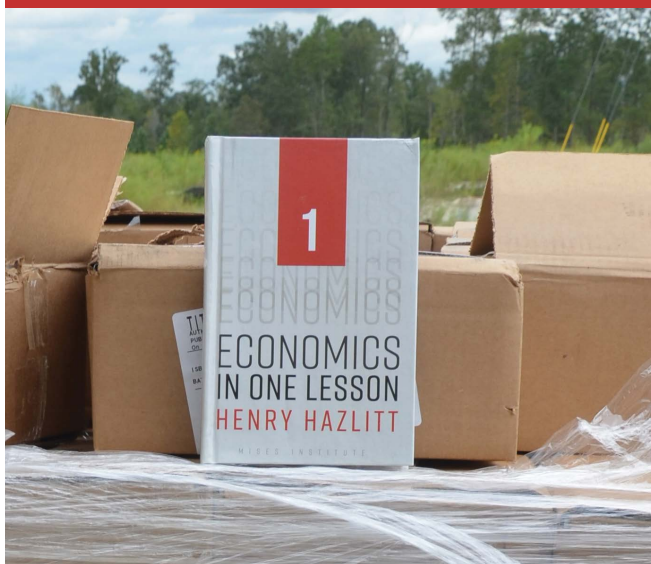
AUDIO AVAILABLE ONLINE AT [MISES.ORG/SS20](https://mises.org/ss20). 



Special thanks to our Host Committee for making this 2020 Supporters Summit possible and so successful: Andy Hord, Bill Haynes, Jeff Leskovar, Greg and Joy Morin, Mark Murrah, Mark Walker, Danny Ajamian, Harvey and Mei Allison, Leanne Baker and Stan Eden, Chris Condon, Hunter Hastings, Bob and Maria Luddy, and Gary and Ruthanne Schlarbaum. Speaker sponsors were: Carl and Karen Bowen, Remy Demarest, Howard and Teri Dittrich, and Dr. Don Printz.

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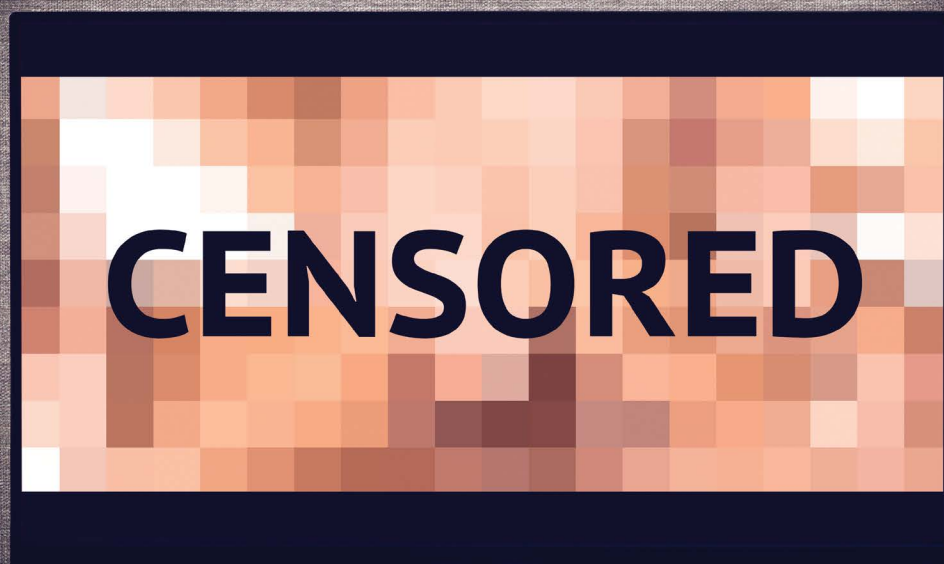
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Censorship Hits Home


On October 5, Ryan McMaken’s *Mises Wire* article “Police Officers Threaten to Quit If the Public Keeps Demanding Accountability” managed to hit the top spot on the popular social media platform Reddit. Within hours it was removed from the platform under very suspicious circumstances.

For those not familiar with Reddit, it is a news aggregation site with content rating and discussion, all driven by submissions from its members. Within the site are various categories on particular topics and themes called “subreddits.” The best-performing posts within a subreddit are then highlighted on the front page. In this case, the subreddit was one titled Not the Onion, which features “true stories that are so mind-blowingly ridiculous that you could have sworn they were from The Onion.” The headline of Ryan’s article seemed like a natural fit; users of the subreddit agreed, but the thought police of Reddit disagreed.

Despite Reddit’s actions against the article, the piece managed over 100,000 views before being taken down.

Unfortunately, Reddit hasn’t been the only Big Tech actor seemingly interested in downplaying Mises Institute content. In recent weeks, Google has made changes to its search engine that makes Mises Institute articles harder to find. This seems particularly true for articles on Big Tech and social media. The content itself doesn’t seem to be the issue—links to websites that republished our articles still appear on the front page—but the *mises.org* link has been buried.

While disappointing, none of this is surprising given today’s invasive and doctrinaire environment. No matter how the landscape of future politics and power unfolds in America, the ideas of the Mises Institute will not be silenced so long as there are those interested in finding the truth.

The Mises Institute isn’t going anywhere. 



Mises Institute Research Fellows with Senior Fellows Joe Salerno and Mark Thornton, 2020

To find out more about the Mises Fellowship program or how to sponsor a Mises Fellow, visit mises.org/fellows

Mises Research Fellows

Even amid the craziness of 2020, we welcomed a new class of Research Fellows eager to work on their PhD research, books, and articles, and learned that they were more important than ever, to the future. These Research Fellows worked closely with our Academic Vice President Joseph Salerno and Senior Fellow Mark Thornton.

The Research Fellows program forms the cornerstone of long-term relationships between Mises Institute faculty, Austrian faculty, and students worldwide.

We look forward to these Research Fellows joining the likes of Philipp Bagus, Gabriel Calzada, Lucas Engelhardt, David Howden, Peter Klein, Robert Murphy, Martin Stefunko, Timothy Terrell, and Thomas E. Woods, Jr., as Distinguished Former Research Fellows.



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Institute YouTube Channel Reaches Milestone



In September, the Mises Institute's YouTube Channel received the "Silver Creator Award" for surpassing the 100,000-subscriber milestone (currently sitting at more than 115,000 subscribers). We launched our YouTube channel on February 22, 2006, as a convenient and economical way to feature our video content online. Since that time, we have uploaded over

sixteen hundred videos, which have received 17 million views. "Money, Banking, and the Federal Reserve"—our most popular video—has nearly 1.1 million views. Our second most-watched video—"The Fact-Free Lockdown Hysteria," presented by Tom Woods at Mises University 2020—has received over 830,000 total views. Since 2014, we have also broadcast nearly four hundred live feeds of Mises Institute lectures, seminars, and other unique events.

VISIT [YOUTUBE.COM/MISESMEDIA](https://www.youtube.com/misesmedia) AND SUBSCRIBE TODAY.

Austrian Alumni Updates

FACULTY, ASSOCIATED SCHOLARS, AND MORE

Dr. Karl-Friedrich Israel, a former Mises Research Fellow, was named assistant professor of economics at Université catholique de l'Ouest in Angers, France.

Dr. Jim Kee, a former Mises Research Fellow, was named assistant professor at Baylor University. He'll teach strategic management and entrepreneurial leadership.

Krisoffer Hansen, a 2020 Mises Research Fellow, has received a position at the University of Leipzig. He will be defending his dissertation at the University of Angers later this year.

Dr. Peter Klein was named a coeditor for the prestigious *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal*.

Mises Fellow **Patrick Newman** was awarded the 2020 Gary G. Schlarbaum Prize for excellence in research and teaching for a promising young scholar.

Mises Senior Fellow **Roger Garrison** was named as a top economist by "The Best Schools." He was the only Austrian economist on the list.

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Alice, beautiful baby of Mises Institute Members Joshua and Naomi Byers. Congratulations, Byers Family!

In Memoriam 2020

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

Eldon Andrews

Plymouth, MI

Leonidas Beane

Gretna, LA

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Chairman's Gold Club
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Chairman's Silver Club
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UPCOMING 2021 EVENTS

MARCH 19–20 Austrian Economics Research Conference, Auburn, AL

APRIL 10 Mises Meetup, Birmingham, AL

JUNE 6–11 Rothbard Graduate Seminar, Auburn, AL

JUNE 17 Medical Freedom Summit, Windham, NH

JULY 18–24 Mises University, Auburn, AL

Student scholarships are available for all events! [Details at mises.org/events](https://mises.org/events).

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The Mises Institute
518 West Magnolia Avenue
Auburn, AL 36832-4501



2020

Thank you to our generous Members
for making all of this possible!

Accomplishments

- The Mises Institute welcomed its first cohort of graduate students this fall. The long-awaited and much-needed **Graduate Program** is a fulfillment of Mises's and Rothbard's dreams of a rigorous graduate school dedicated to the study of Austrian economics and free market principles.
- In July, we launched **Economics for Beginners**, a series of videos designed to show that economics is not a complicated subject fit only for people with college degrees. Visit mises.org/begin.
- **Mises seminars and conferences** were held live, in person, and face to face in Orlando, FL, Birmingham, AL, Jekyll Island, GA, New Orleans, LA, and Angleton, TX, and both the Rothbard Graduate Seminar and Mises University were held on our campus in Auburn.
- 2020 saw traffic to mises.org increase by 46.08% with more than 19 million unique page views.
- "We must substitute better ideas for wrong ideas." To do this we printed 100,000 copies of **Economics in One Lesson** and are sending them out for free to all who ask. Visit mises.org/onelesson.
- For the fourth straight year we achieved the highest rating, a **4-star rating**, from Charity Navigator for being good stewards of our donations.
- We launched **Audio Mises Wire**, narrated versions of our daily *Mises Wire* articles. We received a record number of requests to reprint articles from *Mises Wire*.
- We have expanded our **podcasts** with *Economics for Entrepreneurs*, *Radio Rothbard*, and the hugely popular *Human Action Podcast* with Jeff Deist.
- We launched **Economics for Business** with the emphasis on building a bridge from economics to innovative new business models.
- Published **Anatomy of the Crash: The Financial Crisis of 2020** edited by Tho Bishop, on the the background of the 2020 crisis and *Reflections on the Failure of Socialism* by Max Eastman, about his journey from communism to the free market.
- Received the **Silver Creator Award** for surpassing the 100,000-subscribers on YouTube.
- **Remastered** and made available for the first time online, lectures by Murray Rothbard from 1972, 1987, and 1990.
- Produced **Quarantine Chronicles: A Shelter-at-Home Series** to help people learn at home during the unprecedented lockdown.
- Tom Woods's talk "**The Fact-Free Lockdown Hysteria**" from Mises University went viral with 837,799 views on YouTube.