

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The Mises Institute is honored to be taking over the publication of *The Journal of Libertarian Studies*, one of the most important scholarly journals to appear in the history of ideas. In a market too often dominated by conventional wisdom, academic log-rolling, and risk-averse research with no practical application, the *JLS*, from its inception in 1977, has been committed to providing an outlet for cutting-edge thought that engages the world we live in. The table of contents of back issues is the best proof.

Its first issue appeared at a time when Robert Nozick's *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* was considered the defining limit of libertarian thought. But the *JLS* featured a number of pieces arguing that Nozick had made unacceptable and unjustifiable compromises with statist ideology; he had imagined the possibility of a limited state, when no such thing is possible, as rigorous theory and centuries of history have shown.

Holding out the ideal of the stateless society based on private property and freedom of contract has always been the very soul of this journal. But that is by no means its only purpose. The animating concern has been to uphold scientific integrity above all else, which means that a line of thought must be followed through to its logical conclusions, no matter how much those conclusions may contradict received opinion. It also means revisiting the historical evidence with an eye toward truth-telling about the development of ideas and the depredations of statism in all its many manifestations. Only this mode of argument holds out the possibility of shifting academic and public opinion toward liberty.

The success of the *JLS* was made possible by the visionary genius of Murray N. Rothbard, who inspired several generations of scholars—in economics, history, politics, philosophy, and law—to turn their attention to the problems of statism and the celebration of human liberty. It was Rothbard who first conceived of a fully

integrated science of liberty that would unite the traditions of the Austrian School of economics and Thomistic natural law with a radicalized version of classical liberalism into a workable and compelling whole. The ideals he upheld attracted the young and caused intellectual energies to be unleashed in untold numbers of scholars—the results of which can be seen so clearly in the archives of the *JLS* at www.mises.org/jlsdisplay.asp.

I cannot exaggerate the thrill of the day the archives first appeared, now available at the click of a mouse to anyone in the world. Often I thought of Murray laboring so hard to produce this journal with no support from the academic establishment, doing his best, with little funding, to put out an expensive journal in a time when technology required that it be done the old-fashioned way: typewriters, the mails, pen-and-ink edits, and Linotype machines. He enjoyed no guaranteed distribution and had to rely on tireless promotion among the friends of liberty in America and abroad. He never stopped to wonder whether his efforts would pay off, for he had boundless confidence in the power of ideas—even when advanced in a small circle—to change the world.

The Center for Libertarian Studies, under the leadership of Burton S. Blumert, provided the framework. But CLS operated on a shoestring budget and it was quite often the case that printers and mail houses had to be paid out of Burt's own pocket. But he, like all of us, had been infected by Murray's boundless optimism and faith in ideas; we had no assurances that we would change the course of history by pursuing this kind of research, but we did know that the prospects for liberty would be seriously diminished if we did not do the necessary work. Once copies of the journal were shipped, we could only wait and hope that the ideas would be picked up by a handful of students who would gravitate toward the tradition of thought the *JLS* represented.

That did indeed happen, but there was one discouraging dimension to the job. We knew there were students and young faculty all over the world who would benefit immensely from back issues of the journal, but who did not have access to them. Burt did his best to keep them circulating on a subscription basis and to send back issues on request. But, in time, his stock ran out and it seemed that some of this important research would end up dying on the vine. In 1999, however, web technology had advanced to

the point that we could make all back issues available, and suddenly it didn't matter that the largest research libraries didn't subscribe or were missing issues.

Availability became instant and universal. How thrilled Murray would have been to see it! And yet, even without seeing his written legacy come back to life, he died knowing that it was in good hands. For the decade before his passing, Rothbard had been teaching with a brilliant young economist and philosopher at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, who became a Rothbardian while doing his Ph.D. work in Germany. Hans-Hermann Hoppe appeared in America in the mid-1980s, and quickly published his treatise, *A Theory of Socialism and Capitalism*, the first full-scale comparative systems text from an Austrian perspective. What followed—a series of innovative pieces on economic theory, ethics, and politics—quickly established him as a leading Austro-libertarian thinker, not only in America but around the world.

But Hoppe is not only an innovative thinker in his own right, but one who, like Rothbard, seeks to cultivate younger scholars. Therefore, he is the ideal editor to continue the work of *The Journal of Libertarian Studies*.

And though the journal is coming up on its 25th anniversary, I feel confident in saying that its best years are ahead. The journal has never felt itself encumbered by prevailing opinion, but today's intellectual environment—which offers far more possibilities for scholarship in a radical tradition—is much more suited to the Rothbardian project. We can look forward to the full flowering of the world's most exciting journal of liberty.

Llewellyn H. Rockwell, Jr.