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## Hans F. Sennholz — A Brief Tribute

by Dr. John A. Sparks

In the fall of 1962, as a freshman, I sat in an Economics class taught by Dr. Hans F. Sennholz. I remember his first appearance before the awaiting students. He marched in, held up two books — the two volume set by Murray Rothbard, **Man, Economy and State** — and in a thick German accent said simply but convincingly: "Read these books and know their contents." There were never any particular assignments that I can remember after that, just the lingering command — "read and know."

Following that brief opening assignment, Dr. Sennholz began to lecture about "acting man." That lecture was followed by approximately forty-four others (we had fifteen-week semesters in those days). Markets, prices, interventionism, wages, profits, interest and other topics were unfolded for us in his inimitable lecture style.

The lectures were always given without a single note — a Sennholz trademark. They were easy to understand, but, at the same time, never avoided difficult terminology. Neither were the lectures over-simplified. I still marvel that we so readily grasped the meaning of marginal utility, originary interest, personal risk premiums, and other topics.

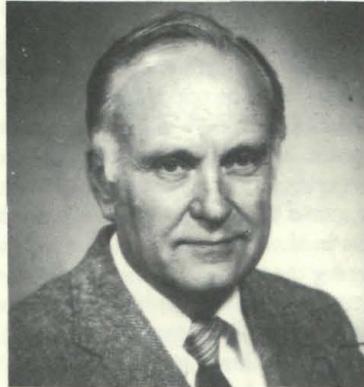
Perhaps what made Sennholz so clear was the logical orderliness of his presentation. Usually he offered the student a few main points and then gradually developed them. As he talked he revealed to the listener the outline that he was following. That orderliness helped hearers understand. As he often said of his own lecture style: "First I tell the listener what I am going to say. Next, I say it. Finally, I tell the listener what I have just said." Such a formula might create tedium in most audiences. Sennholz, however, managed to re-emphasize points without boring the hearers.

He also made ample use of examples. In a subject area known for abstraction, he always brought economic doctrine to life

by using illustration after illustration.

I should add that even though I write here of these traits in the past tense, students on our campus today verify that the Sennholz of old lives on today. He has lost none of his form even after almost thirty years of college teaching.

Hans F. Sennholz first entered a U.S. college classroom as a teacher in 1954 at Iona College in New Rochelle, New York. Following World War II service in the German Air Force as a fighter pilot, he had studied law and political science at the German Universities of Marburg (M.A., 1948) and Cologne (Dr. Rer. Pol. 1949). With degrees in hand, Sennholz im-



migrated to the United States, a country whose productivity and relative freedom had impressed him when he was a prisoner of war here. He obtained a second doctorate from New York University in Economics in 1955, under the renowned teacher-economist Ludwig von Mises. In 1956 he came to Grove City College as a professor of Economics.

Then began a career of writing and speaking which produced several important books, including: **How Can Europe Survive?**, **Death and Taxes**, and **Age of Inflation**. He has also written hundreds of articles in German and American publications which established him worldwide as a defender of the freedom of exchange, limited government and the moral order.

The breadth of Sennholz's accomplishments is startling. He has advised the leaders of foreign governments of South America. For example, just a few years ago he spoke on the floor of the Argentinian stock exchange, chatted with generals there, and advocated ways of freeing that sputtering economy. At the same time Hans Sennholz has advised professionals about the shape of economic things to come so that they could make better-informed investment decisions. He is much sought after as an investment seminar speaker. He has served as a member of the "Shadow Cabinet as the Secretary of the Treasury." He has been president and director of the Foundation for Economic Education north of New York City, as well as holding numerous advisory posts both in academe and business.

It is a tribute to him, as well, that many of his past students now hold academic posts, foundation presidencies, or prominent business positions nationwide.

Given all his contributions in the realm of scholarship, given his encouragement of students over three decades, many of whom hold influential posts in organizations furthering liberty, and given the many productive years ahead for this remarkable teacher; nevertheless, I think of him, and others join me in this view, first and foremost, as a man unshakably dedicated to the moral principles of private ownership and individual responsibility. He has refused many opportunities for personal advancement which would have meant the compromise of his principles. He has adamantly opposed those who encouraged theft by law. He has unrelentingly exposed the errors of thought so prevalent in modern redistributionist public policy.

It is for these reasons that **The Entrepreneur** carries this short tribute of gratitude to Dr. Hans F. Sennholz — economist, planter of the seeds of liberty, and man of principle.

*The more clearly we apprehend why freedom should be the rule, the more clearly can we point it out. That numerous others will have a look and see this truth for the first time is the lesser of two dividends. The greater dividend is personal growth in wisdom and understanding; nothing matters more than this — for this is our God-given assignment!*

Leonard Read

