

Murray Rothbard, libertarian, dies at 68

Never 'joined the government party'

By Rod Dreher
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Murray Rothbard, a political iconoclast, economist of the Austrian school and founder of the modern libertarian movement, died Saturday in New York City of heart failure. He was 68.

"As a libertarian figure, he's one of the giants of the postwar era," said Pat Buchanan, the conservative commentator and erstwhile presidential candidate. Mr. Buchanan called him "as good a friend as I've ever had in politics."

"It's like a hundred of the smartest guys you ever imagined died," said Llewellyn Rockwell Jr., Mr. Rothbard's friend and colleague at the Ludwig von Mises Institute.

Mr. Rothbard was a prolific writer, having authored 25 books and thousands of articles on economics, philosophy, social science and a host of other topics. He was a student of Austrian economist Ludwig von Mises and became the foremost advocate of radical free-market economics. "Man, Economy and State," a 1962 treatise devoted to establishing a philosophy of liberty, is perhaps his most influential work.

An eccentric to his enemies but a hero and a visionary to his friends, Mr. Rothbard became a singular figure of the American right for his uncompromising, and often unpopular, stands.

Mr. Rothbard's isolationist foreign policy beliefs led him to denounce the Vietnam War and helped shape his opposition to the massive Cold War military buildup.

"He warned that the 'warfare state' would go hand in hand with the welfare state, that if the U.S. tried to run the world, it would inevitably try to run our lives," said Mr. Rockwell.

Mr. Rothbard considered himself a member of the "Old Right" and had sneering contempt for much of the conservative intellec-

tual establishment (the feeling was mutual). He once called William F. Buckley "the self-appointed pope of the conservative movement" and accused the National Review editor of having "purged the conservative movement of the genuine right."

Though he was not religious, Mr. Rothbard had great sympathy for Christianity, particularly Roman Catholicism, which he believed was largely responsible for creating and preserving Western culture. He had a nasty falling out with libertarians who believed in a laissez-faire approach to morality.

"These people are monsters," he said in 1992. "They are crazed, demented activists who care only about things that affect their personal life, like the right to smoke dope and screw around."

Thomas Fleming, editor of *Chronicles* magazine, called Mr. Rothbard "a party of one."

"Whether he was attacking the government's war machine or its money machine, he was the one person who never sold out and joined the government party," he said. "He never became a big-government conservative."

Mr. Rothbard, the son of Jewish immigrants, was remembered as a "happy warrior" for libertarian principles. "He was one of the most incorrigibly cheerful men I've ever known," said Mr. Fleming. "He was something that's rarer and rarer: a made-in-America original."

Mr. Rothbard was a professor at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas at the time of his death. He continued to work until the end. His last published piece, an opinion article attacking Rep. Newt Gingrich, Georgia Republican, for being insufficiently libertarian, appeared in *The Washington Post* on Dec. 29.

He is survived by his wife of 41 years, JoAnn. A memorial service will take place in New York City within a month, the family said.

Wash. Times 1/10/95