

Murray Rothbard

1926-1994

In 1949, just as Mises' *Human Action* was coming out, Murray began attending the Mises seminar. It was there I met him. He was then a young graduate student at Columbia University working on his doctorate. As a result of his study, he introduced Mises' explanation of business cycles into his thesis on *The Panic of 1819*, thus delaying its acceptance by his board of advisors at Columbia. It was only after Columbia professor, Arthur F. Burns, went to Washington to become ^{CHAIRMAN} ~~Chief~~ of then President Eisenhower's Council of Economic Advisers, that Rothbard was able to get his thesis past his remaining advisers.

Murray had a tremendous amount of energy and enthusiasm for the pursuit of ideas. He was a night owl, worked, read, and studied all night long when most of New York was sleeping. Night after night his Manhattan apartment became the meeting place for young people with whom he shared his enthusiasm, debating and discussing with them until dawn. Murray would then go to bed, while his loyal wife Joey stood guard over the telephone and protected his sleep from disturbances.

Murray had a tremendous amount of energy and a joie de vivre, which judging from his lifelong output never lagged. He refused to stay sheltered in the ivory tower of academia, but entered the realm of political debate, taking delight at attacking statist and statist programs. I can hear him now, cackling with delight as he "smashed" some politico or interventionist program.

Rothbard differed from Mises on several points -- notably government (Rothbard was an outspoken anarchist), praxeology

(Rothbard believed in natural law), the possibility of scientific Wertfreiheit, and banking policy (Rothbard would require 100% gold backing for banknotes). Yet Mises respected Rothbard and Rothbard's many profound theoretical works, books, papers and articles reflect sincere and profound respect for Mises and his teachings, and make real contributions to economic understanding.

With his restless mind and intellectual curiosity Murray must have led his parents a merry chase as he was growing up. Always an independent thinker, he was a loyal spokesman for his beliefs and a relentless critic of ideas with which he disagreed. Through his many writings, the world will long reap the benefit of his great mind. The intellectual world is richer for his having lived.

Bettina Bien Greaves