

run by a ruling class, the people running the State, and one of their interests is to extend as well as maintain the power and wealth arising from that rule."

On intellectuals as servants of power: "Since...the existence of any State regime rests on public opinion, it becomes important for the State to engineer that opinion with the aid of the professional opinion-moulding group: the intellectuals. This cozy coalition benefits the State rulers—kings, nobles, political parties, whatever—because the public is persuaded to obey the king or State; the intellectuals benefit from a share in the tax revenue, plus their 'market' being guaranteed by the government."

On hope for the dissolution of statist regimes: "The situation is not irreversible.... [G]overnment intervention is beset by 'inner contradictions,'...breakdowns are inevitable and are coming faster in response to the stimulus of intervention—here the rational expectations people have some good points. Progressive and synergistic breakdowns in domestic and foreign intervention might lead to crises and fairly rapid and even sudden reversions to freedom. Note, for example, the remarkable, even if gradual, shift from Stalinism to free markets in Yugoslavia, the developing shift out of Maoism in China, and at least the public sentiments if not the reality underlying conservative regimes in the U.S. and England, growth in free-market and libertarian views in Western Europe, etc. And remember that the public choicers are wrong that revolutions can never occur."

These characteristic senti-

ments exemplify Murray's unflagging optimism. More than once he observed that my prognosis was "too pessimistic." Well, temperament is tough to slough off. I doubt that I shall ever acquire Murray's optimism, which I believe goes far to explain how he was able to keep slugging away until the day he died, always convinced that eventually those who favor a free society will win the great struggle.

It is not likely that we shall ever have another scholar of Murray's breadth. In his letter he referred to well over a hundred sources, many by exact author, title, publication date and publisher, even though he apologized for "not having access to the bulk of my books here in Las Vegas, nor to any decent library, so I will have to wing the citations from time to time." The references include many obscure or exotic books and articles (e.g., Etienne de La Boetie, *Discourse on Voluntary Servitude*; Alfred De Grazia, ed., *The Velikovsky Affair*; Colin Simpson, *The Lusitania Affair*; Eugene N. Golob, *The Isms*; and R. Palme Dutt, *Fascism and Social Revolution*).

Murray also had extensive knowledge of the religious history of the United States, upon which he expounded with great gusto in his historical lectures, in which the diabolical doings of the postmillennial pietists figured prominently.

Many of us may remember Murray most fondly for his fabulous sense of humor. He was a truly entertaining conversationalist and lecturer, and his letters contained priceless witticisms and hilarious descriptions. In the letter I've been quot-

ing, he told the following "lovely—and true!—story about one of the great social philosophers of our century, W. C. Fields. Fields was asked, among other celebrities, by the *Saturday Evening Post*, during World War II, to write a plan about how to end the war. W. C. sat down, quite seriously, and proposed his plan, which was to get the leaders of the warring nations together, bring them to the Hollywood Bowl, and 'let them fight it out with sackfuls of dung.' Needless to say, the *SEP* did not publish the article."

I was honored to know Murray Rothbard and privileged to work with him in a number of conferences and programs organized by the Mises Institute. I hold him to have been one of our century's great intellectual figures, whose neglect by mainstream academicians is inexcusable. He stimulated my thinking and enlarged my knowledge. My personal association with him brought me much pleasure. I do not expect to encounter another like him, and his passing grieves me greatly. ■

David Gordon

Senior Fellow
Ludwig von Mises Institute

One of the greatest joys of my life was listening to Murray Rothbard. A conversation with him might take you anywhere. The last time I spoke to him, about a week before he died, he talked about a problem in Schumpeter's economic theory, a recent book on Jewish theology, the fallacies in philosophical defense of back-

wards causation, the O. J. Simpson case, and Hegel's relation to the tradition of German mysticism. On every topic, he had illuminating things to say, all delivered in his rapid voice, accompanied by that unmistakable laugh.

Murray could grasp the essentials of an argument as fast as anyone I have ever met and at once bring to bear on whatever the point at issue his immense learning. On one occasion three years ago I had to give a joint seminar with him at the Ludwig von Mises University summer program. He had just read an article by Milton Friedman, highly critical of Mises, which he viewed with less than complete enthusiasm. He proposed to devote the seminar to an analysis of the article and, with barely a pause for breath, demolished each paragraph of the piece. Another year, he began his seminar with a brilliant hour-long discussion of political power that ranged from Lao-tse through Hobbes and Locke to the public choice school.

His books resembled his conversation: they were packed with matter, as if he could not wait to convey to his readers the results of his prodigious reading. His *Man, Economy, and State* ranks as one of the foremost works of 20th-century economics, in the opinion of two judges of no mean caliber—Ludwig von Mises and Henry Hazlitt.

The two volumes of his *History of Economic Thought* which, sadly, he did not live to see in print, show that he was a great intellectual historian as well as a great economist.

Murray Rothbard was my friend for sixteen years. I find it

hard to believe that I can no longer give him a call, to ask him about a new book and to experience his never-failing warmth and kindness. "I shall not look upon his like again." ■

Burton S. Blumert

President
Center for Libertarian Studies

It was the late 1960s and I was a struggling entrepreneur in a brand-new industry for the United States. I was a gold dealer. Gold had been demonetized thirty years earlier and as certain governmental trading restrictions were lifted, it was as if a new element had been found in nature.

American banks and brokerage houses knew nothing on the subject and I embarked on a crash program to learn the history and economic theory of the "new" commodity. I ran through the roster of Hard Money luminaries: Harry Brown, Jerome Smith, Robert Preston, Harry Schultz, and in the area of political theory, Morris and Linda Tannehill.

And then I stumbled upon Murray N. Rothbard. No more middlemen needed to apply. I devoured everything of Murray's I could find and comprehend: *What Has Government Done to Our Money?*, *America's Great Depression*, and *The Case for a 100% Gold Dollar*. *Man, Economy, and State* and the more scholarly papers would come later, but *Power and Market* had a tremendous influence on me, and although I didn't realize it at the time I was destined to be a lifelong Rothbardian.

Then I met the great man. Murray and Joey were spending a summer in the San Francisco Bay Area. At that time Murray did not often venture far from New York City. He was speaking at the Olympic Club and after his dazzling presentation, I built up sufficient nerve to introduce myself. It was like a ten-year-old kid meeting Mickey Mantle.

Could this cherubic, funny, warm man possess the encyclopedic bear-trap of a mind I had encountered in his writings? You bet!

I was too nervous to retain much of what we talked about, but several weeks later Joey invited me to dinner at their apartment in Palo Alto. Thus began one of the most important relationships in my life: my friendship with Murray and Joey Rothbard.

Some say the measure of a man's life is the mark he makes for his time, and I suppose I have made a tiny, tiny impression as a precious metals dealer, but my most singular identity is as a Rothbardian. This suits me fine! Only a handful of people make a contribution for the ages; Murray N. Rothbard is one of those cherished few, and I was graced to be close to him.

Can you imagine the honor to actually play a role in publishing a portion of Murray's unbelievable output; to have the pleasure of seeing a Rothbardian first draft and shake your head in wonderment at his craft and invention?

Economist, historian, essayist, political observer, and true patriot, an "American original" as Tom Fleming noted, Murray is gone but his power remains all about us. He is the beacon and the