

SPEECHES DELIVERED AT THE FIRST CONVENTION OF THE
[PROPERTY AND FREEDOM SOCIETY](#), BODRUM, TURKEY, MAY 2006

[Notes compiled by [Robert Grözinger](#)]

The core program of the first convention of the Property and Freedom Society began with a talk by [Guido Hülsmann](#), Professor of Economics at the University Angers, France, and Senior Fellow of the Mises Institute, who reviewed the past history of classical liberal / libertarian societies. As classical liberal economists were usually not employed in institutions of higher learning (the teaching of economic science was not primarily organized within the universities), they built other institutions, from loose networks to political parties. By 1860 governments realized the danger to themselves that the classical economists posed. Their answer was to create their own economists and thus control the market of ideas. This strategy was first applied in Germany with the German Historical School or “Schmollerism” and soon spread to other countries, each with its own specific national feature. John Stuart Mill in Britain for example changed the meaning of liberalism into interventionism, while the Russian government thought that Schmoller was too tame and hired Marxist economists instead.

This trend continued into the 20th century, with Ludwig von Mises being one of the very few setting himself against it. After demolishing the case for socialism and putting the case for radical liberalism, he insisted that no “third way” was possible, as this would invariably lead to a loss of prosperity and in the end, socialism.

In the first half of the 20th century, a number of societies were founded by liberals to counter the trend towards socialism. By 1938, four schools of thought were represented:

Neoliberalism, i.e., practical and theoretical compromise with socialism; F.A. v. Hayek, for whom a small amount of intervention was permissible; Alexander Rüstow, who considered natural hierarchies as necessary for society; and Ludwig v. Mises, who stood for complete laissez faire.

Nine years and one World War later, these groups convened to form the Mont Pèlerin Society (MPS). At the same time, Leonard Read’s FEE in America was publishing leaflets explaining the ideas of Mises and organizing seminars and speeches for Mises and others. These activities were extremely important for spreading Mises’ thoughts, especially to young people. Ralph Raico, George Reisman and Murray N. Rothbard were among those influenced by the FEE papers. Without the FEE, the Chicago School would have totally dominated the field of free market ideology.

Mises was skeptical about the MPS right from the start; he was particularly concerned because of the participation of certain people. In 1947, he stormed out of a meeting, saying: “You’re all a bunch of socialists.”

Today, the MPS, a society of eminent scholars, mainly represents Neoliberalism. Therefore, the PFS could play the role that the MPS was originally designed to play: spreading the uncompromising intellectual radicalism of freedom.

In order to be successful, the PFS will have to learn lessons from the mistakes of previous classical liberal / libertarian societies:

Any libertarian organization must be private; it must be “intellectually puritan”; it must not be organized democratically, rather more “monarchical”; and it should not be political, at least not purely political.