



DEFENDING the DEFENDABLE

on Libertarianism, Hamas, and Israel

**Walter E. Block
Alan G. Futerma**

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Editorial on MEST Journal 2024 – Supplemental Edition

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July 15th, 2024

Dear readers,

We are delighted to present a “Supplemental Edition” of our journal, which features four articles by authors focusing on the topic of libertarianism and the conflict between Hamas and Israel. This special edition is being published alongside our regular July issue in response to the urgent need for in-depth analysis on the topic.

As an editorial decision, we have opted to create this Supplemental Edition due to the timeliness and significance of the content provided by the authors. While one of the authors already has two articles featured in our July issue, we believe that the inclusion of additional works in the regular journal may compromise the balance and integrity of our publication.

The Supplemental Edition offers a curated collection of works that delve deeper into the relevant and pressing issues surrounding libertarianism and the Hamas-Israel conflict. By publishing these articles separately, we aim to ensure that our readers have access to valuable insights without detracting from the overall thematic coherence of our journal.

The published papers represent the personal views of the authors and are classified as “Position papers”, they are not subject to mandatory peer-to-peer review, and the published views cannot be considered the views of the MEST Journal editors.

This Supplemental Edition serves as a supplement to the July issue of the MEST Journal and was specifically published as an online edition to enhance accessibility for our readers.

We appreciate your understanding and support as we navigate the complexities of academic publishing and strive to provide high-quality content that remains both informative and engaging. Should you have any questions or feedback regarding this Supplemental Edition, please let us know.

Sincerely,


Dr. Zoran Čekerevac

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MEST Journal Supplemental Edition

Defending the Defendable on Libertarianism, Hamas, and Israel

Walter E. Block
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Table of Contents

The following articles are included in this supplement:

- Zoran P. Cekerevac
Editorial on MEST Journal 2024 – Supplemental Edition SE1
<https://www.meste.org/ojs/index.php/mest/article/view/1417/1546>
1. Walter E. Block
MICRO AND MACRO LIBERTARIANISM: REJOINDER TO MCMAKEN SE1-7
<https://www.meste.org/ojs/index.php/mest/article/view/1418/1548>
DOI: 10.12709/mest.12.12.SE.01
2. Walter E. Block
**ANTI-WAR? A REJOINDER TO ANTIWAR.COM, LEW ROCKWELL,
TOM DILORENZO, AND THE MISES CAUCUS OF THE LIBERTARIAN PARTY** SE8-13
<https://www.meste.org/ojs/index.php/mest/article/view/1419/1549>
DOI: 10.12709/mest.12.12.SE.02
3. Walter E. Block
FROM FRIEND AND CO-AUTHOR TO MAD CRITIC SE14-29
<https://www.meste.org/ojs/index.php/mest/article/view/1420/1551>
DOI: 10.12709/mest.12.12.SE.03
4. Walter E. Block, & Alan G. Futerma
REJOINDER TO HOPPE ON ISRAEL VERSUS HAMAS SE30-86
<https://www.meste.org/ojs/index.php/mest/article/view/1421/1552>
DOI: 10.12709/mest.12.12.SE.04

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MICRO AND MACRO LIBERTARIANISM: REJOINDER TO MCMAKEN

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Abstract

Microlibertarianism concerns issues upon which the overwhelming proportion of libertarians agree: minimum wages, rent control, free trade, drug legalization. Macro libertarianism concerns issues upon which there is little or no consensus: voluntary slavery, immigration, abortion, covid vaccinations and the Israeli war with Hamas. The present paper is concerned with only the latter two controversies. McMaken (2024) takes the position that while Block's views on microlibertarianism are valid, and even, perhaps, commendable, his perspective on these latter two issues is nothing short of highly problematic, not to say abominable. The specific charge of McMaken's is the Block places his support for Jews in general, and Israel in particular, ahead of libertarianism. Thus, while he may be a good microlibertarian, he is no longer, if ever he was, a good macrolibertarian. The present paper offers a defense of the views of the latter vis a vis the charges of the former.

Keywords: Macrolibertarianism; microlibertarianism; forced vaccinations; Israel; Hamas.

MICRO AND MACRO LIBERTARIANISM¹

I will in due course be highly critical of my learned colleague's essay but shall start off on a very positive note regarding The Problem with Microlibertarianism by McMaken (2024).

This eminent libertarian starts off by dividing libertarianism into micro and macro fields. What is

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the former? It consists of analysis of and commentary on what might be called 101 libertarianism, or Economics in One Lesson by Henry Hazlitt (1946) type examples of this political economic philosophy. Rent control is a rights violation and leads to poor housing and homelessness. The minimum wage law is a snare and a delusion. It does not raise wages. Rather, it preys upon the least, the last and the lost of us, exacerbating the unemployment rate of the poor, the ones who can least afford this result. Free trade is the last best hope for human prosperity,

¹ Although we sharply disagree on this issue, I wish to thank Guriy Borodkin for several important suggestions which greatly improved this paper. All remaining errors

of omission or commission are of course my own responsibility.



and although protectionism superficially sounds like a good idea, it is anything but. Then, too, we should privatize the post office and the sanitation department and legalize marijuana, prostitution, and gambling. I have here added to the examples of microlibertarianism furnished by this very creative author, but I doubt he would disagree with any of my additions. What they all have in common is that it would be a very rare libertarian who disagreed with any of these conclusions. It is a no brainer to realize that tariffs, wage minimum, rent control, are a violation of what Nozick (1974, p. 163) has called “capitalist acts between consenting adults.”

What in sharp contrast is macrolibertarianism? Here, we address far more difficult and weighty matters. Our eminent libertarian theoretician mentions in this regard the governmental response to covid and the war between Israel and Hamas now raging in Gaza. Again, I add a few more cases. What they all have in common is that they are far more complex from a libertarian point of view, and, that libertarians are heavily divided on these issues. For example, abortion. Ron Paul is strongly pro-life, and Murray Rothbard is equally convinced of the pro-choice position. It would be difficult in the extreme, nay, impossible, to mention two more highly credentialed libertarians than them. Just as is the general public, the libertarian community is greatly divided on this issue. Then, there is the voluntary slave contract, with the present author and Nozick (1974) in support of its legalization, and a whole host of eminent libertarians taking the opposite point of view. What about immigration and open borders? This is so complicated, that Murray Rothbard who cannot be accused of anything other than sticking to his guns, actually changed his mind on this issue, so much so that I could write of a Rothbard I and a Rothbard II on this matter (Block, 2011).

If I can offer a friendly amendment to Mr. McMaken for the title he has chosen for his essay, it would be to change it from “The Problem with Microlibertarianism” to “The Problem with ONLY Microlibertarianism. For neither he nor I, nor indeed any libertarian worthy of his salt, has any real problem with microlibertarianism. It is the bricks and mortar of our philosophy. In contrast, he and I both agree that while microlibertarianism is necessary for our movement, it is not at all sufficient. Just as a bird needs two wings to fly,

libertarianism needs both elements. No analogy is a perfect one, and this one is wanting in that the two wings of a bird are virtually equal in power, while microlibertarianism is indeed far more important to followers of the perspective I share with Mr. McMaken, than is microlibertarianism. Heck, even the conservatives agree with the economic aspects of microlibertarianism as do the liberals with the ones having to do with personal liberty. Macrolibertarianism, in contrast, stretches to the furthest reaches of this philosophy.

What are we to make of McMaken’s distinction? There is a saying: “There is nothing new under the sun.” False. This essay establishes that author as a very creative libertarian. And an incisive one. It is very important, crucially important, that we make this distinction. I have been a libertarian, now, for more decades than I care to mention, and have never in all my lifelong days in the movement, heard of this distinction. It is a very important one, and I think I speak for all libertarians when I say we owe him a great debt of gratitude.

After all these enthusiastic encomiums, the reader will wonder whether I can make good on my initial announcement of criticism to follow. Unhappily, I can.

First, consider this statement of his: “In the case of pandemics, for instance, some microlibertarians even embraced vaccine mandates. Walter Block, for instance, has called for the death penalty for those who refuse a vaccine mandate, writing: ‘Would I compel the 60 percent to get the vaccination on libertarian grounds? You’re darn tootin’ I would. Not so much to save them. That would be paternalism. But, rather, in order to save the lives of the 40 percent who are vulnerable. If any member of this 60 percent refused this vaccination, I would execute him as threatening mass murder of 40 percent of the population.’”

But he conveniently left out this statement of mine:

“Suppose that I sneeze at you, and you will certainly die as a result.”

I further elaborated on that point here:

“Let me make the best case for forced vaccinations. Assume a minarchist libertarian government. Should it compel people to be

vaccinated against the XYZ disease? Here are it's (sic) characteristics:

'If you contract XYZ, there is a 100% chance you will die a painful death. 40% of the people on the planet cannot tolerate the vaccination against it. We know who they are through a test which is 100% reliable. The vaccine will not in any way harm the other 60% of the people. This majority will all with 100% probability, contract this disease. They will die from it unless they are vaccinated. Also, again with 100% certainty (there is no doubt in this example, none) the 60% will spread the disease to the 40% vulnerables. The drug costs nothing, works perfectly in preventing the XYZ disease and there are no side effects of it whatsoever, again for sure.'" (Block, 2020)

I am astonished that a scholar of McMaken's undoubted and numerous contributions to libertarianism and general scholarhip should make this error, and that any editor would allow it to pass. He completely drops the context in which I was "darn tootin" to compel a vaccination against the carrier's will. I made up a completely hypothetical, unrealistic situation, and McMaken treats this as if I was talking about the actual covid case. This egregious error of his parallels the New York Times quoting me as favoring actual slavery when in an interview with them² I supported, only, a voluntary slave contract.³ This is a very low point in internal libertarian debate. McMaken is truly guilty of a gigantic philosophical "howler."

Next, my critic asserts as follows: "When it comes to the war in Gaza, leading microlibertarian Block has encouraged the 'heroic Prime Minister Netanyahu' to be more aggressive in his efforts to 'pulverize' women and children in Gaza. Are there any limits on the Israeli state in this view? Not so long as the 'threat' needs to be stamped out by strong state action."

² Anderson, 2014; Beane, 2014; Block 2014A; Cavallo, 2014; DiLorenzo, 2014, 2015; Henderson, 2014; Landsburg, 2014; Lingenfelter, 2014; Rockwell, 2014; Rozeff, 2014; Wenzel, 2014A, 2014B; Woods, 2014

³ See on this Block, 1969, 1979, 1988, 1999, 2001, 2002A, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007A, 2007B, 2009A, 2009B, 2013, 2014B, 2015; Lester, 2000; Nozick, 1974, pp. 58, 283, 331; Philmore, 1982

I have indeed called Netanyahu "heroic." And I have no doubt that I at one point or other used the word "pulverize" when it come to the bestial murderous Hamas. But I defy McMaken to point to a quote from me where I called upon anyone "to 'pulverize' women and children in Gaza." Indeed, I am on record as regretting the collateral damage visited upon such innocents, based on Israeli need for self-defense and the fact that Hamas embeds itself amongst Arab civilians and uses them as shields (Block & Futerman, 2024B).

In the covid case, McMaken drops context. Here, he accuses me of writing the exact opposite of what I actually wrote. This is highly problematic. A scholar of McMaken's accomplishments ought to be ashamed of himself.

Mr. McMaken is attempting to paint me as some sort of apologist for Judaism, and not a libertarian at all.⁴ He states:

"Are there any limits on the Israeli state in [Block's] view? Not so long as the 'threat' needs to be stamped out by strong state action."

And again:

"On the other hand, to oppose rent control while also favoring the mass murder of 100,000 civilians is not simply a matter of having some minor 'blind spot.' It is an enormous contradiction."

Yes, indeed, I do oppose rent control.⁵ But from whence did he get the idea that I "favor... the mass murder of 100,000 civilians"? He does not vouchsafe his readership any such source or direct quote.⁶ To say that Israel is not entitled to attempt to root out Hamas is to say that it is not justified in defending itself. A country foreclosed from self-defense, especially when located in a dangerous area such as the Middle East, is a nation that can no longer exist. One does not have

⁴ This is a charge made by Hoppe (2024). For a refutation of the latter, see (Block & Futerman, 2024A).

⁵ Block, 2002B; Block, Horton & Shorter, 1998.

⁶ One would have thought McMaken would have quoted me saying this. He does not. It seems to me he is obligated to do so, and/or to take back this unwarranted charge against me.

to read within the lines, one needs only to use a modicum of logic, to conclude that this is McMaken's precise position. Further, it would be impossible, especially in the modern era, to conduct any sort of warfare without there being any collateral damage at all. This is particularly true when a fighting force, Hamas, embeds itself in its civilian population and uses its members as shields. So, again, McMaken is asserting in effect that the IDF may not legitimately engage in defense of its country. And that is compatible with any kind of libertarianism? This would appear to be McMaken's notion of what macrolibertarianism should be all about: Israel must surrender.

It is utterly false to claim that I am first a Zionist, or a Jewish supporter, and only a long way second, am I a libertarian. I am on record, more than once, of attacking my fellow co-religionists, mostly for occupying the extreme leftward sections of the political economic spectrum (Block, 2024). If a libertarian analysis of the Israeli – Arab situation based on Lockean homesteading theory had turned out the other way than in my view the way it actually did, I would be calling not for a separate Palestinian state but rather for the Jews to vacate that entire area on behalf of the Gazans. Property rights are property rights, and they are sacrosanct for the libertarian. But which was built on top of

which, indicating a Johnny come lately status: the Al-Aqsa Mosque, or the Second Temple?⁷ Obviously the Jews were there first, long before the Arabs. The Hebrews were busy mixing their labor with the land long before their Arab cousins arrived upon the scene (Block & Futerman, 2021).

Consider the following additional evidence that I have used my libertarianism to denigrate Judaism, not support it. Exhibit A might well be my views on circumcision (Testa & Block, 2014; Block & Fleischer, 2010; Block & Farber, 2014). In my view, this is nothing more and nothing less than child abuse. It should be legally indistinguishable from clitorectomy, which all decent people recognize as an unwarranted invasion.⁸ But the propriety of circumcision is a core, basic principle of Judaism; it is a practice that has been undertaken in this community from time immemorial. It is not a superficial attack on Judaism, such as attacking the bagel.⁹ Thus, to attack this practice is to demonstrate very basic anti-Jewish sentiments, but, my co-author and I argued, principles fully aligned with libertarianism.

I now criticize Israel for still being too socialistic, and for not pursuing its enemies with the greater force and alacrity I would have favored. Who say I don't disparage Israel and Jewry?

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⁷ (Weismann & Himeles, 2023).

⁸ An exception of course would be made if for example this body part were infected with a disease, such as cancer.

⁹ Anti-Israel protestors at UCLA asked for donations, and specifically said they do not want any bagels. See on this Donlevy (2024).

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ANTI-WAR?

A REJOINDER TO ANTIWAR.COM, LEW ROCKWELL, TOM DILORENZO, AND THE MISES CAUCUS OF THE LIBERTARIAN PARTY

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Abstract

To be opposed to war, to all war, sounds eminently reasonable. War is a horrible undertaking, not only for the soldiers who lose their lives pursuing it, but, also, even more tragic, for the civilians who are no part of it, and perish from it anyway. To be in favor of war sounds, at the outset, like the view of a particularly nasty misanthrope. And, yet, on the basis of libertarianism, properly understood, it is improper to oppose all wars. Rather, we must distinguish between proper and improper wars. If country A gratuitously, with no justification whatsoever, launches a military attack on country B, it is indeed unwarranted. However, if B engages in a defensive war in response to A's improper attack, B is engaging in a just war. The only people who oppose all wars, indeed, all violence, are pacifists, and libertarianism, the basis upon which the present essay is built, is not a synonym for pacifism.

Keywords: War; defense; offense; libertarianism

1 INTRODUCTION

Libertarianism is based upon three foundations. First, the non-aggression principle. The NAP declares it shall be illegal for anyone to initiate violence against anyone else. If they do so, they should be punished to the full extent of the law.

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Thus, only laws against murder, rape, theft, arson, kidnapping, slavery, fraud, et.al. are justified. Second, private property rights based upon initial homesteading of virgin land, and subsequently predicated on any voluntary interaction, such as buying, selling, renting, gambling, gift giving, investing, bartering, etc. Third, free association: no one should be compelled to associate with anyone else against his will. Thus, secession would always be justified, at least *ceteris paribus*.¹

¹ It is important to add the caveat that other things much be at least roughly equal. For, suppose, that the seceding provinces, or states, will be able to perpetuate great evil if they are freed from their masters, the central

state, whereas, as present, under the control of the latter, they are rendered impotent. Then reassessment must be called for.



What is the libertarian perspective on violence in general? If it is unleashed at an unwilling recipient, it constitutes assault and battery, and is a crime. If both parties agree to it, as in boxing or voluntary sado-masochism, it is not. What is the libertarian perspective on war? Whoever initiates it is a criminal; whoever fights back in self-defense, is not.

These comments seem pretty straight-forward. They are no more and no less than logical implications of the three basic principles of libertarianism, particularly the NAP. And yet, and yet. There are the leaders of several high profile and prestigious libertarian organizations, who ought to know better, who articulate views that are incompatible with these very foundations of this philosophy.

In section II we criticize antiwar.com for its mislabeling. Section III is given over to a censure the motto of LewRockwell.com. The burden of section IV is to condemn the Mises Caucus of the Libertarian Party for a similar violation of linguistic clarity. The thesis of section V is that Tom DiLorenzo is guilty of a similar error. We conclude in section VI.

2 ANTIWAR.COM

Consider, first, Antiwar.com. It is one of the most libertarian organizations on the face of the earth. In many ways, it is head and shoulders above any other libertarian establishment in that it focuses, solely, on just about the worst occurrence afflicting mankind. But it errs in an important manner. Its very name is incompatible with libertarianism. Followers of this philosophy cannot logically oppose war per se. They can only reject offensive war, not the defensive variety, thereof.

Antiwar.com if it wishes to be considered libertarian, is misnamed. Only pacifists are truly anti war. Some libertarians may well, also be pacifists, but this is hardly a requirement. To think so is to engage in thick libertarianism of a pacifist variety.

3 LEWROCKWELL.COM

This flaw holds true, also, for the motto of LewRockwell.com, another prestigious libertarian blog. Its adage is: “ANTI-STATE•ANTI-WAR•PRO-MARKET.” It is the second of these, “anti-war,” that is problematic. There is nothing wrong at all with anti-statism nor free markets, certainly not from a libertarian perspective.

What is wrong with that, pray tell? Opposing war will sound just fine, thank you, in the ears of most decent people. Who, after all, can favor war?

However, we libertarians are *not* anti-war. We only, properly, oppose *offensive* war. In sharp contrast, we favor defensive wars. For example, wars of secession.² This follows, directly, from one of our three basis principles, the third of them. What are they? First, is the non-aggression principle. It should be illegal to threaten or initiate violence. Second, private property rights should be based upon initial homesteading, and anything voluntary after that. Third, the law of free association; no one should be compelled to associate with anyone else against his will. So, if you want to separate from someone else, you have every right to do so. If they prevent you from so doing, by using coercion, it is legitimate to make war against them.

Ditto for LewRockwell.com’s motto opposing war, all war. Some wars, defensive ones, are fully justified, in this philosophy.

A supposed libertarian opposition to war, all war that is, strictly speaking is thus not the proper libertarian position. Only opposition to offensive war is compatible with this philosophy. As a matter of fact, libertarianism favors defensive war. The greatest libertarian of them all, Mr. Libertarian, favored two wars: that of the thirteen colonies to separate from Great Britain, and that of the South to seceded from the North in 1861.

But wars of secession hardly exhaust all just wars. Suppose that country A gratuitously, with no justification at all, invades country B. What should be the libertarian position on this matter? It is surely to favor B and oppose A. Only the pacifist rejects B’s right to defend itself. It cannot be

² No less a libertarian than Murray N. Rothbard, widely acknowledged as “Mr. Libertarian,” favored the war of secession of the 13 colonies against the England in

1776, and the secession of the South against the North in 1861. See Stromberg, 1979.

denied that some libertarians are also pacifists. However, it strains credulity to think that this must apply to all supporters of this political philosophy. Suppose that at the end of the war B occupies some territory that previously belonged to A. Must B then return to its previous borders, and give up this real estate it has conquered? Not if libertarian punishment theory is to be respected.

The proper libertarian position is thus not anti war. Rather, it is an anti-invasive war, and favors defensive war.

4 THE MISES CAUCUS OF THE LIBERTARIAN PARTY.

Consider the views on this matter of the Mises Caucus of the Libertarian Party. In a recent missive they have described themselves as follows: "... radical decentralists who oppose war, central banking, lockdowns, and globalism" (Harris, 2024)

But it cannot possibly be overemphasized libertarians need not at all oppose every possible war. Very much to the contrary, we can favor defensive wars, all of them. Defensive war is only and merely a type of self-defense writ large and thus is entirely justified. Yes, it is a nice sounding shorthand to be opposed to "war" but it is not compatible with this philosophy.

Here is a letter that I wrote to this group, in response to theirs to me:

From: LP Mises Caucus
<newsletter@misescaucus.com>
Sent: Saturday, April 27, 2024 5:47 PM
To: wblock@loyno.edu
Subject: Should the LP be "liberal" or libertarian?
4/27/24

Dear LPMC:

You say this, we are: "radical decentralists who oppose war, central banking, lockdowns, and globalism."

But that is not quite right. We are not necessarily pacifists, as "opposing war" would imply. Rather, we oppose offensive war, but favor defensive war. For example, in the war between the 13 colonies and the UK in 1775, we favored the defensive war of the former, correct?

Unhappily they vouchsafed me no response, at least not by the time of this writing, 5/17/24, almost one month later.

5 TOM DILORENZO.

Last but not least in terms of erroneous interpretations of libertarian theory is Dr. Thomas DiLorenzo, an eminent economist and historian. He is also the President of the Mises Institute, one of the pre-eminent thinks tanks which study, espouse and promote the libertarian philosophy.

Here is letter from him to the present author, followed by my response.

From: Tom DiLorenzo <tomd@mises.org>
Sent: Monday, April 15, 2024 10:03 AM
To: Walter Block <wblock@loyno.edu>
Subject: Senior Fellow

Walter:

Since your views on war have become so fundamentally incompatible with the mission of the Mises Institute you are no longer a senior fellow of the Mises Institute.

--

Dr. Thomas DiLorenzo
PRESIDENT, THE MISES INSTITUTE
tomd@mises.org | 334.321.2114
MISES INSTITUTE
518 West Magnolia Avenue
Auburn, Alabama 36832-4501

From: Walter Block <wblock@loyno.edu>
Sent: Monday, April 15, 2024 11:58 AM
To: 'Tom DiLorenzo' <tomd@mises.org>
Subject: RE: Senior Fellow

Dear Tom:

I greatly regret this. I have been a Senior Fellow at the MI for decades now.

I greatly regret that there is room at the MI for divergent opinions on several important issues, but not war.

For example, both Murray Rothbard and Ron Paul are welcomed, even though they had opposite views on abortion, the former prochoice, the latter prolife. Here is yet another case: Hans Hoppe and Gary North have very different views on homosexuality (the latter went so far as to call for their death, the former wants them back in the closet), while Ron

Hamowy, Ralph Raico and Justin Raimondo had very different views on this matter. All were always welcomed at the Mises Institute.

In any case, I regard you as a friend of mine and hope and trust this departure of mine from the MI will not in the slightest negatively impact that relationship. I hope that in future we can again co author something together on any subject in which we agree, which I think is everything under the sun except war.

Please clarify my new status. Does this mean I am disinvited from the Supporters Summit in October in Hilton Head? Can I still blog on LRC? Will I be welcome at future AERC meetings (I promised Lew I would keep a low profile on war at the last AERC meeting and I did keep my word)? What about Mises U? Etc.

A word of clarification. There is not a “dime’s worth of difference” between me and the MI on war. We all support defensive wars, and oppose offensive wars. All good libertarians must necessarily take this position. Our only divergence is with regard to the present, specific, war, between Israel and its enemies, concerning which is which.

Best regards,

Walter

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Unhappily, Tom DiLorenzo, too, has not seen fit to respond to my letter of response to this missive of his. I would only add that the dispute between us has, literally, nothing to do with “war” per se. I regard it as no more than a typographical error on his part to characterize it in that manner. All eminent libertarians, certainly including him,

oppose offensive war, but favor the defensive variety thereof.

Rather, the undeniable fact of the matter is that we seriously diverge on a specific war: the one between Israel and Hamas, which was begun on October 7, 2023, a day that shall live forever in infamy. Dr. DiLorenzo, along with many other leaders of the Mises Institute, maintain that Israel was in the wrong in this conflagration. I, in very sharp contrast take the very opposite position.³

6 CONCLUSION

What, then, should be done to ameliorate this mislabeling? It is simple. The organization antiwar.com should change its name to anti-offensivewar.com. The motto of the Mises Institute should be altered to ANTI-STATE•ANTI-OFFENSIVEMARKET•PRO-MARKET.” The Mises Caucus of the Libertarian Party should announce, instead of their initial statement, that they are: “... radical decentralists who oppose *offensive* war, central banking, lockdowns, and globalism.”⁴

Of course, there are arguments any such changes. For one thing, the plain “war” nomenclature is hoary with tradition. The anti-war phraseology has been used almost since time immemorial, at least in the libertarian community. Antiwar.com has been used since it first began and the Mises Institute has been calling for anti-war since its very inception. That is one reason in behalf of not disturbing the status quo. Another is that the alternative suggested herein is at best awkward, and at worst, perhaps, actually off-putting. Anti-offensivewar.com just does not ring well to the ear, or trip off the lips anywhere near as well as does antiwar.com. Ditto with changing the motto on LewRockwell.com, or asking the Mises Caucus to rephrase.

However, there are far more important considerations for libertarians than adhering to tradition or aesthetics. One of them is our unwillingness to commit fraud. If the foregoing analysis is true, and it is, then it is the case that the present situation constitutes mislabeling. So, unless verbiage that better complies with aesthetic

³ Block, 2024A, 2024B; Block and Futerman, 2021, 2023, 2024; Fischer and Block, 2021; Futerman and Block, 2023, 2024.

⁴ A careful analysis of “lockdowns” would take us far too afield from the topic of the present paper, but these people could profitably consult Block, 2013, 2020A, 2020B.

considerations can be concocted, I urge that this marketing proposal be adopted. No less than compliance with libertarian principle is at stake.

What suggestions do I have for Professor DiLorenzo? He might consider becoming a bit more clear on why he is throwing a staunch libertarian under the Mises Institute bus.

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FROM FRIEND AND CO-AUTHOR TO MAD CRITIC

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JEL Category: Z0

Abstract

DiLorenzo (2024A) is not a “more in sorrow than in hate” criticism of the present author. It is if anything the very opposite: “more in hate than in sorrow.” He charges that I am no longer a libertarian in good standing due to the fact that I champion Israel not in spite of its genocide, war crimes, apartheid, etc., but because of these very rights violations. This author is very strong on making such accusations. He is very weak on backing them up with empirical evidence, with direct quotes from my writing or public speaking. Instead, he contents himself with misinterpreting the actual record insofar as I am concerned. He is guilty of concocting straw men arguments and then deriding them. The present paper is an attempt to refute these unwarranted charges on the part of this old friend of mine. He makes such preposterous claims, and more than just a few others of a similar ilk. He does so in order to buttress his charge that I am no longer a libertarian, at least not with regard to important, or “macro-libertarian” issues.

Keywords: Friendship; co-authorship; libertarianism; war

1 FROM FRIEND AND CO-AUTHOR TO MAD CRITIC¹

DiLorenzo (2024) starts off his mad critique² of yours truly on a very positive note, recalling our past friendship. Even here, he errs. He says he co-authored “an article with me.” In point of fact, there were four such publications: Anderson, 2001; Block and DiLorenzo, 2000, 2001; DiLorenzo and

Block, 2001. Sloppy, sloppy. I am also grateful to his friendship for more decades than either of us can fully remember and his support during my imbroglia with the New York Times: DiLorenzo, 2014, 2015, 2018. Unhappily, I cannot say the same for his recent outbursts.

He also omits that not only was he a friend of mine, but he was also a family friend. My wife and I met him with our then young daughter, several times, and he was a mentor to her when she was studying at Johns Hopkins University and he was

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¹ I would like to thank the following for editorial help on what follows. Needless to say, but I will say it anyway, all errors herein are my own responsibility, not theirs:

Jim Davies, Mike Holmes, Christopher Cantwell and Marc Victor

² Mad in both senses: very angry, and also, troubled. As well, error-ridden, as I demonstrate.



a professor at Loyola University Maryland, both located in Baltimore.

But enough of our happy past. These are sins of omission on his part, not commission. Let us now consider some more serious difficulties with his several publications about Israel versus Hamas and my analyses of the war between them.

He (2024A)³ starts off on a very condescending note by describing me as “indeed very libertarian when it comes to such topics as the legalization of drugs and prostitution, ride sharing, privatization of government-run soccer fields and swimming pools, rent control, and myriad other mundane topics.” But I have hardly been limited, in my long libertarian career, to such “mundane topics.” Au contraire, I have attempted to apply the libertarian philosophy to a myriad of less mundane, more complicated and controversial⁴ topics such as abortion (Block, 2021), immigration (Block, 2011A, Gregory and Block, 2007), reparations (Alston and Block, 2007; Amos and Block, 2022; Block and Yeatts, 1999-2000; Crepelle and Block, 2017; Nouveau and Block, 2020), inalienability and voluntary slavery (VandenBerg and Block, 2022), argumentation ethics (Block, 2011B), anarchism and libertarian theory (Block, 2010).

He states that I “used to be very libertarian on the issue of war as well, emailing a number of us at the outset of the Iraq War that ‘this will separate the men from the boys,’ with the ‘boys’ being faux libertarians who would support the bombing, invasion, and occupation of Iraq.”

He continues: “But in the past eight months Walter Block has abandoned the principles of libertarianism with regard to war with his full-throated support of the *war crimes* committed by the Israeli government by intentionally targeting and killing tens of thousand (sic) of civilians, including women, children, and babies in Gaza.”

There are very severe problems here. First of all, my support for Israel dates far longer than merely “eight months ago.” My coauthored book Block and Futerman (2021) was published three long years ago. Why is this “severe?” It is so, because when you launch a bitter attack on someone you

are morally⁵ obliged to base it on the best he has to say, not a mere op ed in a newspaper. In this case that would be that 2021 book of which he is completely ignorant.

Even more egregious, he does not offer any proof, not a scintilla of evidence, to the effect that I am guilty of these outrageous charges. Where did I ever say or write that the Israeli government intentionally targeted civilians? I might well have implied such claims in his fevered imagination, but I certainly never articulated them, either in writing nor in my numerous publications nor interviews nor debates on this issue. If I actually even implied any such thing this author is obligated to specifically mention and cite such statements of mine. He does no such thing.

Not only is Professor DiLorenzo a world class historian, he is also an eminent Austrian economist. In this former capacity of his he should have known that scholars who make such condemnations must back them up with evidence. In his latter role he should have known that intentionality cannot be demonstrated by mere actions; for all we know, *if* the IDF engaged in such actions,⁶ they need not necessarily have been purposeful; they could have been accidental, for all he knows.

Speaking of the U.S. war against Iraq, it is a straightforward libertarian position to oppose this foreign adventurism. For the latter country never invaded the former. Iraq never came within a million miles⁷ of attacking the U.S., so that nation cannot possibly justify its foreign war on libertarian grounds. It was an invasive, offensive war on the part of the U.S., not a defensive one, and thus cannot be justified on the basis of the libertarian philosophy. Matters are the exact opposite of course in the Middle East. On October 7, 2023, a day that will live in infamy forever, Hamas invaded Israel, not the other way around.

Now consider the specifics of my supposed “full-throated support of the *war crimes* committed by the Israeli government by intentionally targeting and killing tens of thousand (sic) of civilians, including women, children, and babies in Gaza.” The Israeli government does not at all

³ Unless otherwise specified, all references to his publications will be in regard to this one essay of his. Ditto for all quotes lacking any source.

⁴ On the part of libertarians

⁵ Not legally

⁶ They did no such thing and DiLorenzo offers no evidence that they had done so

⁷ Well, 10,000 miles

“intentionally target” civilians. The very opposite is the case. Rather the IDF does more than perhaps any other military in the entire history of warfare to save children and civilians. Which other country drops leaflets first, warning of later bombings? Not too many others, if any. In contrast, does Hamas do any such thing? To ask this is to answer it.

Next, my learned friend states: “A real American libertarian would argue that Israel’s war, and Ukraine’s war with Russia, are none of our business, period.” In my view, it all depends upon who the “our” is, in this claim. If it is the U.S. government, he is entirely correct. From the libertarian perspective if this organization exists at all⁸ its sole function internationally should be to ensure our country is not invaded by foreign armies, period.⁹ This conclusion would emanate from the viewpoint of a more moderate interpretation of this philosophy, such as minarchism or classical liberalism (Block and Futerman, 2021)

But if the “our” refers to scholars such as the two of us, not only is he wrong, he is wrong out of his own mouth. For the good professor, too, and quite properly so, has made the Israel – Hamas war part of his own “business.” He writes about it, does he not, in the very essay I am now criticizing. Indeed, it is the obligation of intellectuals such as ourselves to comment on the events of the day. Based on his own words, if he wanted to be a “real American libertarian,” which I presume he does, he should have, instead, maintained a dignified silence about the occurrences in the Middle East, since they are “none of our business.”

It is simply false, not only contradictory to his own libertarian principles¹⁰ to say that “real libertarians” are somehow precluded from studying, commenting upon, discussion, *anything*. Everything under the sun, and above it too, at least potentially, are “our business.”

The president of the Mises Institute supports McMaken’s (2024A, 2024B) claim¹¹ that I am

“sound” on micro libertarian issues¹², but when it comes to “... the big, paramount issue of war he has become an outspoken advocate of *war crimes* committed by the Israeli government. Walter Block has always been ‘pro-Israel’ and no one at the Mises Institute, named after the son of a Jewish Rabbi and co-founded by Murry (sic) Rothbard, a New York Jew, ever gave it a second thought. He is no longer an unpaid senior fellow at the Mises Institute *not* because he is ‘pro-Israel,’ as some uninformed or dishonest commentators have asserted. It is because the Mises Institute cannot be associated with such a well-known, prolific, public advocate of the intentional targeting and killing of Palestinian women, children, and babies” (DiLorenzo, 2024A).

Does he quote me as saying any such appalling thing, perhaps in an interview or a public speech? He does not. If his charges were true, he should have been able to do this with ease, since, after all, I am a “well-known, prolific, public advocate.” Does he quote me as writing any such abominable statement, perhaps in an op ed or a law review or maybe even in a refereed scholarly journal, of which I have many? He does not. If his charges were true, he should be able to do this with ease, since, after all, I am a “well-known, prolific, public advocate.” Where oh where did I ever come out and maintain that the Israeli “intentional targeting and killing of Palestinian women, children, and babies” actually occurred, and that I favored this. Nowhere, that is where. I defy Mr. DiLorenzo to proffer an actual quote from me where I say that. He cannot do so, he did not do so, because this accusation is totally false.

This is not kosher. This is not acceptable. This is not reasonable. This is a disgraceful charge made by an eminent scholar who should have known better. Did I not support the libertarian analysis of libel and slander, namely that these despicable acts should nevertheless be legal, I would sue him for making this statement.¹³ When an eminent

⁸ It would not, from the perspective of the strictest version of libertarianism, anarcho-capitalism. See on this Rothbard (1973, 1982); Hoppe (1993, 2001).

⁹ At present, the U.S. government has some 800 military bases located in roughly 140 foreign countries (the numbers keep changing) and has the temerity to characterize this as “defense.” See on this: http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/BSR_2007_Baseline.pdf

¹⁰ Which I share

¹¹ I respond to McMaken in Block (2024D)

¹² Such as the minimum wage law, rent control, free trade, welfare, victimless crimes, etc.

¹³ I did sue the New York Times for writing that I supported slavery but did so since I claimed there were part of the ruling class, and all bets were off insofar as they were concerned. But my old friend Dr. Tom

academic such as he makes such “Mad” charges, it is incumbent upon him to document his claim, if he wishes to adhere to the principles of scholarship. He utterly fails to do so.

How would he feel if I publicly claimed that Tom DiLorenzo was guilty of making such an egregious statement? I would not quote him as saying or writing any such thing. I could not honestly, of course, do any such thing because he has never even come close to averring such a despicable statement. But I bruit this about anyway. He would not be a happy camper.

My renowned debating partner¹⁴ graciously acknowledges that Israel has the right to defend itself. But never, ever, with no exceptions allowed, if this self-defense involves collateral damage to innocent persons. He is insisting that if even one civilian is killed in collateral damage as a result of acting on the basis of this right, that would constitute a war crime.¹⁵ How can Israel or any other country for that matter, defend itself compatibly with libertarian theory under such stringent conditions. None can do so. DiLorenzo’s view in this regard thus constitutes pacifism, which would constitute mass suicide for Israel.¹⁶

Next out of the batter’s box is this statement:

“Israel has every right to defend itself against future barbaric attacks by the gang of murderous thugs known as Hamas— and anyone else — but that’s an entirely different matter than having a ‘right’ to commence a campaign of genocide against the *civilian* population of Gaza, as has been occurring in recent months — accompanied by the almost apoplectically enthusiastic support of Walter Block. Walter ‘justifies’ the mass killing

DiLorenzo, happily for him, cannot be characterized in this manner. See on this Block (2014).

¹⁴ Well, this is only partially true. I challenged him to a public debate. He has not condescended to even reply to this challenge. Our “debate” consists, only, of our alternating publications: DiLorenzo (2024A, 2024B, 2024C) and my responses: Block (2024A, 2024B); Block & Futerman (2024); Futerman & Block (2024A).

¹⁵ At this point it behooves me to quote him making such a nonsensical claim. I shall not do so. Why not? Because he never said or wrote any such thing! However, were I to follow the pattern he follows in his unfair lambasting of my views, I should leave matters as they appear in the text at this point, and not write the present footnote. If I merely wanted to excoriate him, that is exactly what I would have done. But my goal, mawkish as it sounds, it to get to the truth. This cannot be accomplished by falsely attributing straw men

of civilians by invoking a theory of collective punishment, something that was outlawed by the Fourth Geneva Convention.”

The same applies here. I do not “invoke” any such thing. If I did, I have no doubt my critic would have mentioned it. He cannot, because I never came within a million miles of justifying “the mass killing of civilians” on the basis of “a theory of collective punishment.” A critic ought to be ashamed of himself for falsely attributing to an intellectual opponent material of this sort for which he is not at all responsible. Very much to the contrary, I and my co-authors have been intent to demonstrate the very opposite: that Israel undertakes all reasonable efforts, and some unreasonable ones¹⁷, to protect the lives of Gazan civilians. It bends over backwards to attain these ends, and does so successfully, in the main.

States Spencer (2024): “The Israel Defense Forces conducted an operation at al-Shifa hospital in the Gaza Strip to root out Hamas terrorists recently, once again taking unique precautions as it entered the facility to protect the innocent; Israeli media reported that doctors accompanied the forces to help Palestinian patients if needed. They were also reported to be carrying food, water and medical supplies for the civilians inside. None of this meant anything to Israel’s critics, of course, who immediately pounced. The critics, as usual, didn’t call out Hamas for using protected facilities like hospitals for its military activity. Nor did they mention the efforts of the IDF to minimize civilian casualties.”

Here is yet another gem emanating from my former colleague’s word processor:

arguments to one’s intellectual opponents, and then making fun of them. The entire paragraph to which this footnote refers is thus illicit, illegitimate, improper. I dedicate this paragraph to Tom DiLorenzo. How far he has slipped, intellectually since the time he and I were co-authors.

¹⁶ This entire paragraph constitutes a good disparagement of anyone foolish enough to have offered this as his view. However, it is an invalid for the minor detail that he never said this, to the best of my knowledge. Would that he would treat me in the same manner: only attributing to me views I actually hold, or held, instead of making up stupid, crazy, weird, “mad,” foolish ones, and then attacking me for supposedly uttering them. His critique must constitute a new low in false attribution.

¹⁷ At the cost of the deaths of all too many of its own soldiers!

“Writing in the *Wall Street Journal*, he and a coauthor lectured us that ‘The West’ must support ‘an overwhelming, unprecedented use of military force’ and that ‘ Hamas is and will be responsible for any civilian casualties.’ It’s not the bombs supplied by the U.S. government to Israel and dropped on civilian-populated areas that are responsible for civilian deaths, they write, but Hamas. Israel must do ‘whatever it takes,’ to defeat Hamas, and their subsequent writings prove beyond all doubt that that includes the war crime of targeting and killing civilians.”

Apart from the very last sentence¹⁸ he accurately quotes something I actually wrote. But this claim of mine about who is responsible for the bombing (Block and Futerman, 2023) is actually true. Hazlitt (1946) has taught us, if he has taught us anything, to look beneath surface appearances. I fear that my erstwhile colleague, DiLorenzo, has not yet fully incorporated this “one lesson” of this eminent economist, Hazlitt. Yes, from a superficial surface appearance, Israel is indeed “responsible” for civilian deaths in Gaza. It cannot be denied that the IDF, after all, is the one who is indeed dropping bombs on that beleaguered territory.¹⁹ However, let us dig a bit deeper beneath these surface “realities.” If Hamas had not engaged in its atrocities of October 7, 2023, the IDF would not now be dropping any bombs on Gaza. If Hamas surrendered today, and released all its hostages, one minute later there would be no more deaths, civilian or otherwise, in Gaza.²⁰ If Hamas did not use Gazan civilians as shields, there would not have been virtually any civilian deaths, except on a collateral basis, which invariably occurs in modern warfare.

DiLorenzo takes umbrage at this statement of ours (Block and Futerman, 2023): “The West, they say, has a ‘moral duty’ to ‘support Israel’ in its effort to ‘do whatever it must to finish this war in the fastest way possible, with minimum civilian and military casualties *on its side*” (emphasis added). That is, minimum *Israeli* civilian casualties, but to hell with

worrying about Palestinian civilian casualties. This is moral?”²¹

My critic is a native speaker of the English language. It is thus more than passing curious that he so erroneously misinterprets this quoted material. Is it not an entirely justified goal on the part of Israel to minimize civilian deaths on its own side? Does pursuing this objective logically imply that Israel would not also “worry” about such deaths on the part of its enemy? We all worry about our own children.²² This is just how we are built. Does this mean we do not give a damn about the progeny of other parents? That we will run roughshod over all of them? Yes, if you acquiesce in DiLorenzo’s failure to understand plain English. No, if you embrace ordinary logic.

Here is yet another philosophical howler, which again stems from this author’s failure to understand ordinary English. He states as follows:

“Walter has written several belligerent articles on an Israeli Web site called Israel Hayom. One is entitled ‘Open Letter to the “²³Children of Gaza’ in which he conflates the Hamas murderers with ALL parents in Gaza. ‘Your parents,’ he writes, ‘launched a despicable, unwarranted . . . attack on October 7’ where ‘Many Israeli children were mangled, just as you now are; many more have been slaughtered, the fate of all too many of you Gazan children.’ In saying this he sheds an ocean of crocodile tears.

“Of course, it is complete nonsense and a lie to say that ALL parents in Gaza participated in the murderous attack on Israel on October 7, 2023. It is heartless and cruel and sociopathic to tell these children that it is not Israeli/American bombs that are maiming and killing them but their own parents. In a ‘moral, just society’ writes Walter Block, our new self-appointed pope of morality and justice, ‘you would be taken away from your evil mothers and fathers.’”

Consider the following sentences:

¹⁸ Which “subsequent writings” He does not say.

¹⁹ Well, a not insignificant number of these deaths are due to the misfiring of Hamas rockets aimed at Israel, but which explode in Gaza, but we can safely ignore this phenomenon. Most other commentators do so, why not me?

²⁰ In sharp contrast, if Israel surrendered to Hamas, there would be no Israelis. October 7 would have been multiplied until there were none left.

²¹ Who says DiLorenzo never directly quotes us? Not !! Here, again, is a rare occasion upon which he does exactly that.

²² Well, virtually all of us. I do not want to be further criticized for making such an outrageous statement. See the next section of this paper.

²³ Sic on this misplaced quote

“Children nowadays don’t respect their parents.” Does that mean that *all* children are disrespectful? Of course not. That claim is certainly compatible with referring to most children, or an overwhelmingly high proportion of them.

Here is another one: “Men are taller than women.” Does that mean that *all* males have greater height than *all* females? Of course not. It is of course true on average, but there are indeed exceptions to this general rule.

I could go on forever in this vein, but please excuse just one more example on my part. I don’t know how else to drum it in that DiLorenzo is off base here, way off base:

“Your parents love you,” said to an auditorium full of children. Does the author of this claim quite literally mean that every last parent of all those children, without a single solitary exception, love their progeny? Of course not, unless he is an irrational.

In like manner, DiLorenzo to the contrary notwithstanding, when I asserted to the Gazan children that “your parents” have abused you by using you as shields (Block, 2024C), it is only by a heroic and utterly mistaken interpretation that this author can accuse me of maintaining that this applies to *all* such parents. Why would he make such an obvious rookie mistake, way below his often-demonstrated acuity for language? He is suffering from Israel Derangement Syndrome (Futerman and Block, 2024B) is my best guess as to an explanation.

Moreover, it would appear that Dr. DiLorenzo did not read the entire op ed to which he refers, short as it was. For this appears in the midst of it:

“Parents should put the lives of their children ahead of their own. To say the least, this is not at all the way your parents treat you. Rather, they mistreat you.

“This of course does not apply to all Gazan parents. Many I have no doubt love their children just as much as do good parents all around the world. However, under totalitarian Hamas rule

they are not free to protect their progeny (they may get killed if they tried to do so).”

How DiLorenzo can conclude from Block (2024C) that I maintain that *all* Gazan parents are shield-using child abusers is simply incomprehensible. Evidently, he did not read this material. Had he done so, presumably, he would not have lashed out at me for being so cruel and heartless as he did in fact do.

Nor is it at all “heartless and cruel” to tell the truth. It is, rather, “sociopathic” to tell lies to children.²⁴ It is absolutely true that it is child abuse on the part of Gazan parents, all too many of them if not all of them, to use them as shields, as they do. Of that, there can be no question. Is truth no longer a defense against error? Unfortunately, virtually all if not all Gazan parents hate the Israelis more than they love their own children. The latter are maimed and killed in Israel’s defensive war against Hamas. If that is not child abuse, then nothing is child abuse. Yes, of course, the bombs used to obliterate these poor children are launched by the IDF. But whose fault is this? Who is ultimately responsible for this carnage? Hint: it is not the Israelis.

And what is it with these “crocodile tears?” Does DiLorenzo offer even the slightest evidence, even a scintilla of support, for such an outrageous claim? It is not incumbent upon an exceptionally brilliant scholar such as this author to limit criticisms to those for which he has some backing? Note, I do not return the “favor.” I have no indication that he does not greatly regret the depredations of Hamas against innocent Israelis on October 7. Thus, I launch no such underhanded attack upon him.

My many times co-author characterizes me as “our new self-appointed pope of morality and justice...” This sarcastic name calling is inappropriate for an intellectual of his undoubted accomplishments. However, let me run with this for a bit. First, I would have appreciated “rabbi” instead of “pope.” Second, someone associated with the Mises Institute²⁵ has to step up and counter the relentless support of Hamas and

²⁴ Not, of course, in all cases. Surely, there are some occasions in which child welfare can best be promoted by doing the very opposite. Sorry, I had to say this, lest DiLorenzo come after me with further misinterpretation of the English language.

²⁵ I am no longer a Senior Fellow at this institution, but I am still associated with it at least as of the present date. I still publish there; I still am invited to give speeches for the Mises Institute.

attack upon Israel that emanates from that quarter. Someone has to counter this undoing of that hitherto fine institution. I know of no other person than myself who can be considered, at least for a time, a long time, part of its inner circle, who has come forward to try to save the Mises Institute from itself. When the history of this war, and the participation in it of this institution is fully written, it will show that at least one person, yours truly, at least attempted to do so.

I stand by my “Open Letter” (Block, 2024C) to the effect that were there any justice in the world, all children whose parents treat them as shields would be forcibly taken from them and given to better parents. DiLorenzo responds: “Yes, and placed under the tender loving care of the IDF and the Mossad in a concentration camp built just for you.”

Let us take seriously this sneer of his. Where, indeed, would Gazan children be better off? Under the “tender loving care” of Israel, or, right where they are now, being maimed and killed by IDF bombs, which, in turn, are being released in Gaza solely due to October 7, to Israel’s need for self-defense, to ensure that the Hamas Covenant (1988) to murder all Jews wherever they are, is not carried out. Note that when there was peace, Israeli hospitals, some of the best in the entire world, were open to needy Arabs. Note that this country, the only almost fully civilized one in the Middle East, is known for its generosity, its soft-heartedness. Yes, it has the death penalty on its books, so, at least so far, it has executed only one person, Adolf Eichmann. No, it is not at all a stretch to think that youngsters in Gaza would be better off, far better off, under the “tender loving care” of Israel, then with their²⁶ despicable parents.

Yes, if I were a Gazan child, and I wanted to be safe, I would certainly entrust my safety to the

“tender mercies” of the Israelis rather than to my own (mostly) abusive parents. The proof is in the pudding. As of this writing, sadly,²⁷ many innocents, including children are being seriously injured or killed. This is all due to the heinous actions of not all but most adult Gazans.

Professor DiLorenzo claims it is “despicable” to address such comments to children. First of all, the title of the essay was “Open letter to children.” But the readership targets were of course not youngsters, as he full well knows. How many twelve year olds read essays of this sort? Second, for children old enough to read such material,²⁸ do we or do we not owe them the trust, the absolute truth and nothing but the truth?²⁹ If that is “despicable” I welcome this characterization of his of me.

DiLorenzo conflates “collateral damage” with “the intentional killing of children.” The two are as alike as are chalk and cheese, oil and water, fish and bicycles. On the basis of this false equation, my critic claims “Walter then writes that ‘Your injuries and deaths are what is called collateral damage. This is vey (sic) regrettable, but is the only way Israel can defend itself’ and is therefore justified in the mind of Walter Block. Walter Block is therefore an enabler of the worst kind of war crimes: the intentional killing of children.”

But he shows no evidence that the IDF is guilty of “the intentional killing of children” nor that I support any such acts. I now in like manner, with just as much claim to truth, accuse this author of being a Nazi, a Communist, and not only a killer of small children but a torturer of them.³⁰

If I am a supporter of “the intentional killing of children” then so is anyone else, up to and including Tom DiLorenzo himself, who supports *any* war. For *all* wars, at least in the modern era³¹ involve collateral damage. If this is indistinguishable from “the intentional killing of children” then only

²⁶ No, not *all* Gazan parents are child abusers (I have to spoon feed language to some people); but all too many of them precisely fit this bill

²⁷ Here come my supposed “crocodile tears.” Why all these low blows? What evidence does DiLorenzo have that I do not greatly regret and sorrow over this loss of life?

²⁸ Are youngsters aged 16 still children? When I was of that age, comic books were more my style

²⁹ No, no, no, I can just hear DiLorenzo saying that I am not a libertarian since we have no legal obligation to always tell the truth; lying is not always a crime.

³⁰ He is so literal, upon occasion, that I hasten to assure him that this “charge” of mine against him is merely arguendo. In actual fact I of course do not mean this seriously. I am merely demonstrating, replicating, the extreme intellectual hysteria of which he is guilty. This is my attempt at a *reductio ad absurdum*.

³¹ During the era of knighthood, these soldiers would fight each other and rarely if ever was any civilian physically harmed.

pacifists can escape this type of condemnation. DiLorenzo is not a pacifist, so he is tarred with the same brush.

Nor can I but note his reference to “a concentration camp.” This is a scandalous, hidden, sneaky way of saying that the Israelis are akin to Nazis. Yes, the Third Reich placed Jews in concentration camps. But the Hebrews do no less to their enemies. Therefore, these people are themselves Nazis. Nice try, Tom. Thigh slapping.

It is strange that a historian of vast learning such as this writer does not realize that war inevitably involves the killing of innocents, including children, unfortunately, amongst them. In inveighing against the very regrettable damage to youngsters in this way, calling that a “war crime” he is perhaps inadvertently, but devastatingly from an intellectual point of view, taking away his claim that Israel has a right to defend itself. To repeat, he forthrightly and quite correctly stated: “Israel has every right to defend itself against future barbaric attacks by the gang of murderous thugs known as Hamas— and anyone else...” He at the same time entertains two logically incompatible claims. One, Israel has the right to defend itself against attacks of the sort that took place on October 7, 2023; and the only way to accomplish this task is to launch its military against its perpetrators, Hamas. Two, if any Gazan children or other such innocents perish in this defensive war, Israel is guilty of war crimes.

Murray Rothbard, the mentor of the both of us, favored two wars of secession: the thirteen colonies from Great Britain, and the South from the United States in 1861. I think I speak for myself as well as my present debating partner when I say we both agree with Rothbard on this matter.³² Yet, of course, even with the best will in the world on the part of the righteous in these two wars, there was collateral damage. Children and other innocents were killed. But that does not vitiate the justice of these defensive wars of secession. In other words, DiLorenzo is guilty of a blatant self-contradiction in supporting Rothbard’s non-pacifistic position on these two wars, and, also, accusing Israel of war crimes for defending itself, as he himself concedes.

³² When it comes to this latter war, DiLorenzo is my guide. I have learned more from him about “honest Abe” and his minions than from anyone else.

Here is another gem from DiLorenzo, which he calls a “real knee slapper” of a joke:

“And then he [me, that is] ends with the hoary Holocaust-ish line, ‘Never again,’ as though it is Israel and not Palestine that is being subjected to an attempted genocide. Good one Walter!”

I pride myself on a good sense of humor. I appreciate a joke as well as the next man. But I don’t find “Never Again” funny at all. Rather, I, along with many other Jews, take that statement very seriously. As for “attempted genocide” that is precisely what Hamas was trying to attain on October 7, 2023. Had they not been stopped, thank goodness by the IDF, that is exactly what they would have accomplished. On the other hand, if Israel were in the genocide business, there would not have been a single Gazan still alive in hours, not days, after this atrocity of October 7 had occurred.

I do not appreciate Professor DiLorenzo’s attempt to underestimate the ferocity, the despicableness, the viciousness of the Hamas October 7 attack on Israel. Talk about targeting civilians? This applies only to the former, not the latter. Did Hamas distribute leaflets amongst Israeli civilians, warning them to vacate territory that would soon be entered into by its military? To ask this is to answer it.

In the view of my disparager: “It now appears, by the way, that there is only proof of one Israeli child being killed on October 7 — in a crossfire — during the bloody Hamas attack on Israel.”

It may appear that way to this author, but, unfortunately, he provides no evidence for this claim of his, as is his wont. Why mention “in a crossfire?” DiLorenzo (2024B) also attributes several Israeli civilian deaths to “friendly fire.” This is yet another attempt on his part to lessen the guilt the must be borne by Hamas and increase that which can laid at the hands of Israel. But this will not do. Why was there crossfire or friendly fire in the first place? It was due to the Hamas massacre of October 7. If that had not taken place, if Hamas had lived up to previous peace agreements, there would have been no such occurrences.

My detractor has a good belly laugh at this one, he with the great sense of humor: “Many – probably many thousands – of civilians were in fact killed in Rafah and ... a million refugees were created. Not to worry about that, however, for Walter Block has a solution! ‘[T]his country has recently come by some 40,000 tents, which hold a dozen or so people each. They can in this way house more than half a million people in refugee camps in the Negev Desert.’ The other half a million can presumably sleep in the open desert. One wonders how long 83-year-old Walter Block would last in a tent with eleven other people in the Negev Desert in the middle of summer.”

Hearty har, har. However, DiLorenzo reckons, here, in the absence of one of the major building blocks of the dismal science, opportunities forgone. Hazlitt is now spinning in his grave at this oversight on the part of this highly credentialed economist. No, this is not much of a “solution”, but it beats, by a country mile, the alternatives. What are they, in turn? One, Israel stands down and allows Hamas to win the war they started on October 7, 2023. Then, some eight million Jews are tortured and put to death in Israel, and multitudes more around the world. Two, the Gazans stay right where they are, and suffer from massive collateral damage, as Israel pursues its enemies in a defensive and hence justified war. Those are the only two other options. Contrary to DiLorenzo, moving to the Negev even during the summer renders is far better than those two other options.³³

DiLorenzo mentions cartoons that I (Block, 2024C) published. One of them featured a Hamas fighter who proffered a sign saying: “Demand: Death to all Jews.” On his lap was seated a young child, presumably his son, who looked scared. And with good reason: strapped around this boy’s body was dynamite, indicating that this child would soon be used as a suicide bomber. If that is not child abuse, then there is no such thing as child abuse. Are *all* Gazan parents guilty of this sort of abomination? Of course not. However, Hamas supports such criminal activities and is very popular in Gaza. I “should rot in a Hague jail cell for (writing things like) this” is a statement supported by DiLorenzo. “Are you beginning to

see why Walter is no longer an unpaid senior fellow of the Mises Institute?” asks the President of this organization. I cannot believe he is purposefully trying to undermine the think tank to which he has just been awarded the presidency, but it is difficult to understand these statements in any other way. Any organization that allows only one side of a debate to be represented risks embracing Randian cultishness.³⁴

Our essayist does not much like another statement of mine. He avers as follows: “Walter’s fangs really come out in another *Israel Hayom* column entitled ‘No More Pauses.’³⁵ This time he criticizes *the Israeli government* for agreeing to a humanitarian pause in all the bombing and killing. He praises the actions of the U.S. military in World War II in *not* pausing but firebombing civilian-populated Dresden, Germany, having ‘Dresdened them into smithereens,’ suggesting that that is what the Israeli government should do in Gaza. He concludes with the dogmatic demand of: ‘No more pauses. No more food. No more medicine. No more electricity. No more water.’ And much more death in the civilian population, especially infants and the elderly, apparently the fondest wish of our new self-appointed pope of morality and justice.”

Yes, I concede, this sounds horrible, on a superficial reading. But just let us suppose this policy was implemented. No more trucks, no more Biden-inspired platforms to enable US food, medicines into Gaza either. How long do you think this war would have lasted past October 8, 2023? My guess: a day or two at most. Ok, maybe three or four tops. If this policy were followed at the outbreak of the war, alright, alright, call it six days³⁶ the war would have been over by October 14. How many Gazans, innocent or not, would have perished during that time, less than a week? Very few, at least compared to the almost 40,000 deaths Hamas claims in the course of this war which has lasted more than half a year, as of the present date. Under these stringent, typical, war-time measures, Hamas would likely long ago have surrendered, and released all of its hostages, saving many more of their lives, too.

From time immemorial, starvation was the technique used to conquer an enemy. It is

³³ By the way, at the time of his writing, I was 82, not 83, and in pretty good shape for a young man of that age.

³⁴Rothbard (1987); Walker (1999)

³⁵ Block (2023)

³⁶ There is precedent for that number of days

relatively fast acting since we cannot exist for more than a few days in the absence of food. The Biden plan, supported by DiLorenzo, thus merely prolonged this war, leading to many more deaths, not fewer. Thus, I am justified in returning the “compliment” he bestows upon me: the President of the Mises Institute is guilty of supporting war crimes in opposing the starving out of Hamas. I know, I know, this sounds paradoxical; starvation is a bad thing, not a good one. But so is unnecessarily prolonging a war something that all men of good will cannot support.

If Israel stops the hostilities before Hamas is vanquished, it will be inviting one, two, three, four, more, repeats of October 7 and thus its own suicide. I speak now as the new pope of morality and justice, a title I owe, and embrace with appreciation, to Dr. DiLorenzo.

Next consider that little matter of backstabbing. My detractor states that I “complain ... bitterly about the Biden administration’s pause in sending more bombs to Israel to be dropped on the Gazan population, calling it ‘treachery.’ He therefore is fully in favor of using the U.S. government’s powers of legalized theft (aka taxation) to pay for more bombs for Israel.”

Let us focus on but one word in this quote: the “therefore.” There is more wrong with that deduction than you can shake a stick at. First of all, I oppose all U.S. foreign aid³⁷ to any and all countries and this certainly includes Israel. Would such a policy hurt Israel? Yes, but only in an absolute sense. The more money and military aid from the US this country has, the better able it will be to defend itself. And, also, Israel receives the most such US largesse of any single country in the world.

However, relatively speaking, if the US stopped all foreign aid to all nations Israel would actually benefit. This is because the Arab countries, all of them put together, receive more from the US treasury than does the one almost fully civilized country in the Middle East.

³⁷ Apologies to Bauer (1984).

³⁸ Happily, with the Abraham Accords, promulgated by Donald Trump, fewer and fewer of Israel’s neighbors can be characterized in this manner.

Secondly, it is one thing to oppose foreign aid. It is quite another to stop it to Israel alone, while keeping the spigot open to the enemies of this nation.³⁸ DiLorenzo opposes, only, my rejection of government transfers of funds from the US to Israel. He says nothing, not a word, about the US continuing to finance the enemies of this country. Why not take the even handed libertarian approach which would reject all such payments?

Third, it is even more egregious to stop the foreign aid that had been promised to a recipient country such as Israel. Yes, it is true, from an anarcho-capitalist point of view that all such government contracts are invalid upon their face. However, from the classical liberal perspective from which I often write about Israel,³⁹ they are valid, and the US is derelict in this regard.

Fourth, it is even a greater denigration of obligation to cut off supply in the hour of need of a client state of the US. That country has a long history of cutting and running from allies when the going gets tough and they are heavily dependent. For example, Viet Nam, Afghanistan.⁴⁰ And, now, once again, Israel.

Fifth, this cessation is counter-productive to the espoused goals of the US as articulated by Biden, and presumably agreed upon by DiLorenzo: namely to save Gazan (not Israeli!) lives. The bombs held back by the US constitutes precision weaponry. Its use can save innocent lives, on the assumption that the IDF is not purposefully targeting civilians but rather aiming at Hamas fighters cowering and skulking in their tunnels. That nation of course has other weapons. But they are less precise. In other words, the Big Satan deprived the Little Satan of a scalpel. And the latter, instead, relies upon a sledgehammer to do the necessary work.

No, that “therefore” is thus totally and completely unwarranted.

However, I must concede, there is indeed one benefit that flows from this backstabbing cessation of armaments: the US will further solidify its reputation for international unreliability. This is all

³⁹ For example, see Block and Futerman (2021). I do so to satisfy Rothbard’s (1967) plea to libertarians, that they not fall victims to “sectarianism.”

⁴⁰ I do not say the US should not have done so in these cases. Only that it is garnering a reputation of leaving allies in the lurch.

to the good since on net balance and here I expect my opponent will agree with me, the interference of the US in world affairs has been a detriment to peace and prosperity, and thus its limitation will be a positive. Even bitter enemies of Israel will note that the US has pulled the rug under its ally in its hour of need, and cannot but infer that the same can easily occur to them, should they be so foolish as to rely upon the US.

Here is a final statement of DiLorenzo's (2024A) to consider:

"As a final aside, Walter Block fanboy Jordan Schachtel, an internet pundit, said to me in an email that he had read everything Walter Block had written on the issue of the current Israeli war and that there was not a single instance of Walter supporting or condoning the killing of civilians. Either Schachtel has a serious reading comprehension problem, or he is lying through his teeth."

One would have thought that DiLorenzo would have followed up this statement with proof that I did indeed "support... or condone... the killing of civilians." If one thought that, one would be wrong. My detractor neither here nor anywhere else supplies any such quote from yours truly. He does not so much as even exhibit any indication that it is incumbent upon a person such as he who makes such a serious charge to back it up in any way, let alone with a direct quote from his target, that is, me, in this case, saying or publishing any such sentiment. If there is anyone in this little vignette who "has a serious reading comprehension problem, or ... is lying through his teeth" it is certainly not Schachtel (2024).

Here is a quote from the latter, addressed to the former: "Can you point me to an article or statement he has made in favor of 'war crimes and the mass killing of civilians'? This seems to be *your interpretation* of *his* words, and not his actual words. Can you also point me to where he

won't distinguish between Hamas and civilians? The same rationale seems to apply here. I've followed his writing on this issue closely, and find no such declarative statements. I fear your gross exaggerations and outright falsehoods (the accusation of 'carpet bombing') is much more 'unhinged' than Block's defense of Israel's actions against Hamas."⁴¹

Here is some historical analysis from DiLorenzo (2024B):

"By the mid nineteenth century international law had evolved to the point where everyone understood that intentionally targeting civilians was a war crime that deserved the severest of punishments, and such punishments did occur. Lincoln single handedly turned all of that on its head by waging total war on the civilian population of the South from the very beginning of his war."

I regard my famous belittler as the foremost authority on "Honest Abe," as he characterizes this sixteenth president of the United States. Certainly, he is my own guide, mentor, advisor on this issue. I have learned more from him on this historical episode than from any other scholar. It would then occasion no surprise that DiLorenzo would bring his knowledge of Lincoln to bear on the present conflagration in the Middle East. His argument in this publication is that Lincoln was a mass murderer of Southern civilians, and this applies, also, to Netanyahu in the twenty-first century. But this is not at all true. Yes, it applies to the former, but not to the latter. It would appear that DiLorenzo has Lincoln on the brain, and promiscuously analogizes the two. DiLorenzo (1998, 2002, 2006, 2007) dots his I's and crosses his T's with regard to the occurrences of 1861. He is not at all behindhand in establishing Lincoln as a war criminal. His books positively drip with evidence on behalf of that contention; he is meticulous in demonstrating the truth of his claims.

⁴¹ Schachtel (2024) reports that according to DiLorenzo: "(Block) also advocated executing people who refused to take the covid shots." This is yet another unmitigated falsehood on the part of the latter. Did I say anything like that, such that DiLorenzo could misinterpret what actually occurred? Yes. I was asking would there be any circumstances under which the proper authorities could compel people to be inoculated, under penalty of execution if they refused. I came up with the following: someone has the XYZ disease (not covid!). Every time

he exhales, he kills 1000 people. There is a perfectly safe cure for this ailment, which he refuses to take. Then and only then would it be justified to compel him to take this drug, and execute him if for some reason that goal could not be attained. For my actual analysis of this completely manufactured, artificial, hypothetical scenario, see Block (2013), which was published long before the advent of covid, with Mises Institute imprimatur (LewRockwell.com)

However, as we have seen, he provides not a jot or tittle of any demonstration that intentional targeting of civilians takes place, nowadays, on the Israeli side⁴². Rather, he confines himself to misunderstanding and misconstruing my publications on this matter and failing to provide any evidence whatsoever regarding his malicious charges against the IDF. Would that he had devoted 0.000001% of the time, effort, intelligence he utilized in the one case to the other, we would not now be having this debate.

I cannot end this essay without commenting upon DiLorenzo (2024C) which is entitled: "Jordan Schachtel Has Literally Been a Paid Pro-Israeli Government Activist." The latter author has several times insisted that your humble servant never, ever, called for, or applauded, the purposeful targeting of Gazan civilians on the part of the IDF. He complained that DiLorenzo made this charge on more than just a few occasions without offering so much as a shred of evidence in support of this claim. DiLorenzo gives the back of his hand to Schachtel, once again, in this essay. But the title says it all: it is an exercise in the ad hominem logical fallacy.

The paradigm case of that logical error is this syllogism:

1. Jones says $2+2=4$
2. Jone is a crook
3. Therefore, it is not true that $2+2=4$

Here is DiLorenzo's version:

1. Schachtel says that Block never wrote in support of the IDF targeting Gazan children.
2. Schachtel Has Literally Been a Paid Pro-Israeli Government Activist.
3. Therefore, it is true that Block wrote in support of the IDF targeting Gazan children.

Don't they have any good editors at the Mises Institute? This essay of DiLorenzo's is a disgrace, an affront to basic logic. It never should have been

published. It is also an aspect of the Decolonizers' Assault on Science (Njoya, 2024). In that view, there is no such a thing as objective truth. The door is wide open to opinions. If you do not like what reality requires, you can make thing up as you go along. If you do not like it that there is no evidence "out there" indicating that Israel engages in purposeful genetic cleansing, you can accuse this country of that atrocity in any case. If you do not like it that there is no evidence "out there" indicating that Walter Block supports such an abomination, that should not stop you from claiming the truth of this monstrous lie regardless of the facts.

It is time to conclude this essay. I confess, I am disappointed in the quality of the criticism of my position offered by Tom DiLorenzo. I expected better from a scholar of his undoubted past accomplishments. I wish for an improvement for him in his future career. My only explanation for his poor present showing is that he has been overtaken by Israel Derangement Syndrome (Futerman and Block, 2024B) and has as a result been temporarily mentally incapacitated. His critique in the main consists of his manufacturing straw men arguments, attributing them to me, and then gleefully knocking them down. Al, pathetic as it is, could have done a better job in criticizing my defense of Israel.

All throughout this essay I refer to Tom DiLorenzo in the most glowing terms I can think of. Is this sarcasm on my part? Not at all. I still regard him as a world-class intellectual, on every other issue he has ever addressed, with the exception of this one. Just because he is for some reason or other out to lunch on Israel does not detract in the slightest for his magnificent contributions in these many other areas of political economy and history. Nor do I confine these complements to "micro-libertarianism" (Block, 2024B). They apply across the board.

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⁴² There is a stupendous amount of evidence that Hamas engages in such acts, but this seems to have escaped our author.

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REJOINDER TO HOPPE ON ISRAEL VERSUS HAMAS

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Abstract

Block and Futerman argue that the classical liberal political economic philosophy, when properly understood, strongly aligns with the Israeli perspective in their defensive war against Hamas in 2023-2024. However, Hoppe (2024) vehemently disagrees with this view and offers sharp criticism of the work by the two authors. This paper serves as our rebuttal to Hoppe's critique. We present three primary criticisms of Hoppe's essay. Firstly, we contend that he fundamentally misinterprets the conflict between Hamas and Israel by misunderstanding and distorting Israel's claims while uncritically accepting Hamas's assertions. He also overlooks the role of Hamas hatred of Jews and Israel in originating the ongoing conflict. Secondly, despite Hoppe's esteemed contributions to Austrian economics and libertarian theory, we find his understanding in these areas to be lacking. His view of libertarianism as a conservative enterprise leads to problematic conclusions regarding property rights and social issues like homosexuality and holding alternative belief systems. Lastly, while Hoppe is a respected scholar, his use of language does not align with scholarly standards aimed at advancing knowledge and understanding. Unlike past disagreements among Austro-libertarian scholars, Hoppe's language detracts from scholarly discourse rather than facilitating meaningful dialogue. This departure from academic norms undermines the pursuit of truth and intellectual progress.

Keywords: Hamas; Israel; Classical Liberalism; war.

"The truth is that if Israel were to put down its arms there would be no more Israel. If the Arabs were to put down their arms there would be no more war" Benjamin Netanyahu (August 14, 2006, quoted in Globes, 2006).

"We can forgive the Arabs for killing our children. But we can never forgive them for forcing us to kill their children. We will only have peace with the Arabs when they love their children more than they hate us," Golda Meir (Jewish Virtual Library).

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"I accept that decent people can have a different opinion from my own." Dalrymple (2024).

“Professor Kahneman saw such a dynamic as ‘angry science,’ which he described as a ‘nasty world of critiques, replies and rejoinders’ and ‘as a contest, where the aim is to embarrass.’ As Professor Kahneman put it, those who live in that nasty world offer ‘a summary caricature of the target position, refute the weakest argument in that caricature and declare the total destruction of the adversary’s position.’ In his account, angry science is ‘a demeaning experience.’” Sunstein, (2024).

INTRODUCTION

It is probably grandiose to claim that the present debate on Israel, Hamas, and libertarianism now unfolding starting with Hoppe (2024)¹ is a fight for the very soul of the libertarian movement. But maybe not too grandiose. After all, ranging against that country are Hoppe himself, plus Lew Rockwell, Murray Rothbard and Ron Paul, and a host of other libertarian leaders. There are of course numerous other libertarians who support Israel vis a vis its enemies, apart from the present authors, but we will allow them to speak for themselves.²

The present paper is dedicated to the notion that Hamas is barbaric, Israel is civilized, and that libertarianism, properly understood, supports the latter, not the former, the views of many leaders of this philosophy to the contrary notwithstanding.

But, before we get to the specifics of this controversy, here is a word about our debating partner Hans Hoppe. He has made crucially important contributions to libertarian theory.³ Certainly nobody can deny that his analysis of anarcho-capitalism is crucially important (Hoppe, 1991). Some commentators⁴ even consider that his argument ethics places the entire libertarian edifice on a solid foundation. Others will claim further that it is devastating, brilliant, exquisite, “over the top” as the President of the U.S. famously said in a very different context.⁵

However, this former professor of economics at the University of Nevada Las Vegas sadly misconstrues libertarian theory on a whole host of issues, so much so that one can seriously wonder whether he can effectively speak on behalf of this

political economic philosophy on any complicated and complex issue such as that concerning Hamas and Israel. Given that he presents himself as in effect the guardian of pure libertarianism, this is highly relevant. What are the specifics of this very serious charge? Why the animosity toward the Israeli case on the part of this eminent libertarian theorist? This can only be speculative but one reason might be that his grasp of this philosophy is not 100% accurate. To begin with, we refer to this passage of Hoppe’s (1991 [2007], p. 218):

“There can be no tolerance toward democrats and communists in a libertarian social order. They will have to be physically separated and expelled from *society*... the advocates of alternative, non-family and kin-centered lifestyles such as for instance, individual hedonism, parasitism, nature-environment worship, homosexuality, or communism – will have to be physically removed from *society* too, if one is to maintain a libertarian order.” (emphasis added)

At one time we did not for a moment think he meant that gays should be removed from *society*. We regarded it as akin to a typographical error on his part. He should have mentioned removal from the extreme right wing condominium community, not from “society” as a whole. Nor did we think he really meant that homosexuals would also in the free society be removed from *society*. We were of the opinion that he really meant that they would be excluded only from condominiums opposed to that lifestyle.⁶ And yet, and yet. He has been often over the years criticized for this misuse of languages,

¹ Unless otherwise mentioned, all subsequent references will be to this one publication of Hoppe’s.

² Perhaps the most famous of them is Javier Milei, President of Argentina. See on this <https://www.reuters.com/world/argentinas-president-milei-visit-israel-display-support-2024-01-26/>. Other libertarians also reject Hoppe’s attack on Block, such Huebert, 2024.

³ The same goes for Austrian economics and praxeology, but as this school of thought is not as fully

germane to the issues under consideration, we content ourselves with merely noting this important fact.

⁴ Including the first mentioned of the present authors.

⁵ Joe Biden referred to the response of the Israeli military to the Hamas atrocities of October 7, 2023, as excessive, a sentiment with which Hoppe would agree.

⁶ We were giving him the benefit of the doubt, something about which he does not reciprocate.

or deviation from an accurate portrayal of libertarianism if you will (Block, 2004). He has not seen fit to publicly admit this error of his. Maybe what we once regarded as an error on his part was not and he really meant it literally? Nor is it the case that he speaks so incompatibly with libertarianism only once.

It is hard to dismiss this charge against Hoppe since he repeats his opposition to the following, on supposedly libertarian grounds (1991 [2007], p. 206): people who use “vulgarity, obscenity, profanity, drug use, promiscuity, pornography, prostitution, homosexuality, polygamy, ...”

Nor is he finished with his attack on what he is pleased to call the “abnormal and perverse”.

Had enough? Here is yet another one in this vein (Hoppe, 1991 [2007], p. 212) avers as follows:

“Left-libertarians and multi- or countercultural experimentalists even if they were not engaged in any crime, would once again have to pay a price for their behavior. If they continued with their behavior or lifestyle, they would be barred from civilized society and live physically separate from it, in ghettos or on the fringes of society, and many positions or professions would be unattainable to them. In contrast, if they wished to live and advance within society, they would have to adjust and assimilate to the moral and cultural norms of the society they wanted to enter. To thus assimilate would not necessarily imply that one would have to give up one’s substandard or abnormal behavior or lifestyle altogether. It would imply, however, that one could not longer ‘come out’ and exhibit one’s alternative behavior or lifestyle in public. Such behavior would have to stay in the closet, hidden from the public eye, and physically restricted to the total privacy of one’s own four walls. Advertising or displaying it in public would lead to expulsion.”

It is curious that on the basis of these thoughts that Hoppe presumes to lecture the present authors on the niceties of libertarian theory. This passage reads more like the thoughts of a fascist or a conservative totalitarian dictator than anything even remotely resembling Rothbardian libertarianism. It sounds like, even to our own ears,

that we are making all this up in order to humiliate Hoppe. Gays back into the closet, people being separated into Ghettos, indeed. We assure you he actually published these words, and never took them back.

Let it be said once and for all, loud and clear, it is *not* compatible with libertarian theory to exclude people from *society*, or violate their rights in any manner, shape or form, for engaging in what Hoppe is pleased to call “perversity.” Who Hoppe calls “perverts” have rights too. Their rights are the equal of those of anyone else. To call for homosexuals to get back into the closet, forsooth, sounds more like critic of this philosophy misconstruing what libertarianism stands for. But here is Hoppe calling for this very rights violation. It is unbelievable. Yet, he does indeed write these very words. It is difficult to see how he could more seriously misconstrue libertarianism than he actually does in this case.

The late Ralph Raico (1977; 1995; 2010; 2012), Ron Hamowy (1961; 1977; 1978; 1979; 1984) and Justin Raimondo (1992; 1993; 1996; 2000; 2007; 2008) were all eminent libertarians in their own right, and staunch friends and followers of Murray Rothbard. All three were homosexual. Does Hoppe really mean to stand there and tell us that these three important contributors to the freedom philosophy were all “abnormal and perverse” to be “be physically removed from society”. Would he also exclude them from the libertarian movement? We find even the contemplation of this possibility to be highly problematic.

The present authors are hardly politically correct wokesters. But the idea that gays would have to slip back into the closet seems rather off-putting. Is *this* libertarianism? It is also rather incompatible with the individualism of Austrian economics, the individualism used by Hoppe as a stick with which to beat up on the present authors vis a vis his attack on collectivism. Who is a collectivist now?

As well there is this failure to fully comprehend the libertarian philosophy (Hoppe, 1991 [2007], p. 173):

“A member of the human race who is completely incapable of understanding the higher productivity of labor performed under a division of labor based on private property is not properly speaking a person (a persona), but falls instead in the same

moral category as an animal – of either the harmless sort (to be domesticated and employed as a producer or consumer good, or to be enjoyed as a ‘free good’) or the wild and dangerous one (to be fought as a pest).”

Wait! Say what? Is Hoppe saying we can treat such people like we treat animals? Surely, he is not serious. But this appears, blatantly, in his book, in black and white. He has never cancelled this statement of his. But such people include children, the mentally handicapped, adult economic illiterates, etc. If there were only one statement of this sort in the book, maybe, perhaps, we could dismiss it as inadvertence, a mere editorial error. But when they start to pile up, this excuse begins to look more and more problematic.

Here is yet another philosophical howler (Hoppe, 1991 [2007], p. 189): “Let me now come to an evaluation of contemporary conservatism, and then go on to explain why conservatives today must be antistatist libertarians and, equally important, why libertarians must be conservatives.” He emphasizes this point (Hoppe, 1991 [2007], p. 208): “In other words, libertarians must be radical and uncompromising conservatives.”

How does Hoppe describe “conservatives”? He states (Hoppe, 1991 [2007], 190): “Most self-proclaimed contemporary conservatives are concerned, as *they should be*, about the decay of families, divorce,⁷ illegitimacy, loss of authority, multiculturalism, alternative lifestyles, social disintegration, sex, and crime. *All of these phenomena represent anomalies and scandalous deviations from the natural order.* A conservative must indeed be opposed to all of these developments and try to restore *normalcy*.” (emphasis added)

One can only wonder how Hoppe connects all of these “scandalous deviations,” and what kind of concept of “normalcy” he has in mind, or how that is all related with libertarianism. In our view, in sharp contrast, libertarians are concerned not with mores, culture, but with justice in law. Violating

conservative norms might well be vices, but they are not at all crimes. Hoppe really should consult Spooner (1875), and in particular Rothbard’s splendid introduction to this quintessentially *libertarian* (not conservative) publication so as to learn the difference between these two sharply different political philosophies.

It is true that there are examples of libertarian and conservative overlap, and cooperation between adherents of these two very distinct viewpoints. The Federalist Society is a strong case in point. Also, it is undeniably the case that when it comes to economics, conservatives are much more nearly aligned with libertarians than are left liberals. Not for those on the right any appreciation for Marxism, whether cultural or economic.

However, much the same can be said for our friends on the left. They resemble libertarians much more nearly than do conservatives when it comes to legalizing drugs, gambling, pornography, prostitution, polygamy, and other such victimless crimes. Hoppe, in calling for sanctions against such behavior, is much more of a conservative than he is a libertarian. There are even institutions in which libertarians and left-liberals cooperate. The Peace and Freedom movement in opposition to the US participation in the Vietnam War is a case in point. It was comprised of Progressive Labor, a communist organization, the Trotskyites, a semi communist group, and, wait for it, a corporal’s guard of libertarians, under the leadership of none other than Murray Rothbard.

Hoppe partially entitles chapter 11 of his 1991 book: “On the errors of Classical Liberalism.” We join him in this. We, too, are anarcho-capitalists not classical liberals. However, for reasons explained below⁸, the desire to become more relevant, to avoid sectarianism, to analyze and judge in a comparative basis a real-world issue, we have adopted this perspective in our analysis of the Jewish - Arab controversy. Thus, Hoppe and the present authors pass each other as “ships in the night.” We do not connect. He denigrates us for not living up to the more stringent principles of pure libertarianism; for embracing officials he

⁷ Hoppe is himself divorced. This, presumably, renders him “abnormal and perverse.” Also, this is hypocrisy. One can only wonder that he leaves himself open to such a critique. It is difficult to deny that our author, here, accurately assesses conservatism. But we are

libertarians, not conservatives; there is a gigantic chasm between the two, one that seems to have escaped this commentator.

⁸ And in our book, Block & Futerman (2021, Chapter 6).

regards as “gangsters” such as the political leaders of Israel. Hamas has governmental attributes, to be sure, but is not clearly a state. In the absence of the two state “solution” it is not a typical government. Thus, Hoppe’s not totally wrong-headed anti-state proclivities incline him in the direction of this maniacal and genocidal terrorist organization. Or maybe is it because the Hamas regime in Gaza closely aligns with the restrictive and freedom-killer system advocated by Hoppe in the above quotes of his? Food for thought.

Here is yet another instance of this author’s failure to comprehend even the most basic elements of the philosophy he seeks to defend. Hoppe (1991 [2007], p. 182) maintains that: “... abortion ... [is] no one else’s business [It is] to be judged and arbitrated within the family by the head of the household or family members.” But without getting into this complex debate,⁹ even on the pro-abortion side the decision should lie with the mother, not with any so called “head of the household or family members.” Again, perhaps Hoppe has in mind a system similar to that of Hamas where a woman needs a man’s permission in order to live?

Here is also Hoppe (1991 [2007], 177, fn. 11) discussing Jewish Ghettos:

“Incidentally, the much maligned Jewish *Ghettoes*, which were characteristic of European cities throughout the Middle Ages, were *not* indicative of an inferior legal status *accorded* to Jews or of anti-Jewish discrimination. To the contrary, the *Ghetto* was a place where Jews enjoyed complete self-government and where rabbinical law applied.” (emphasis in the original)

Wait, what? “...the *much maligned* Jewish *Ghettoes*” (emphasis added)? Ghettos “...were *not* indicative of an inferior legal status accorded to Jews or of anti-Jewish discrimination”? Although the Middle Ages Jewish Ghettos appear humane *in comparison* to the Nazi version, they were far from being ideal as Hoppe surprisingly, shockingly, implies. In the Middle Ages (and beyond), Jews were not only compulsory confined

in Ghettos because their legal status was indeed *inferior* to non-Jews, but they also were often *specifically* subjected to all kinds of regulations (for example, on professions, clothing, etc.), restrictions (on banking, property, commerce, etc.), forcefully overcrowded (due to the area the Ghettos were allowed to comprise), curfews, etc. If that was not indicative of an “inferior legal status” or “anti-Jewish discrimination” we do not know what is. Moreover, in the light of the latter, it is hardly valid to talk about “complete self-government” (although *obviously* if they are confined to a specific place, they will establish some sort of internal order and since they are Jews the norms will be Jewish). But, also, what is that business of talking ironically about Ghettos as “much maligned”? Does Hoppe consider the Jewish Ghetto as a model for any free society’s urban development and governance?¹⁰ Or perhaps a model only for Jews? We look forward to his reply and clarifications. All we can say at this point of time is “Oy vey.”

Given this plethora of issues upon which Hoppe’s connection with proper libertarian theory is seriously severed, one can only wonder if this blatant failure to fully understand this viewpoint could also lead him astray in the present Israeli-Hamas context. We shall demonstrate that it has.

Professor Hoppe, who is so adept to “extreme rationalism,” should perhaps thoroughly dissect the logic of his propositions. Let us analyze the very second paragraph of his essay of 2024:

“...in this position, it becomes near-imperative to always stay on guard and take notice if a person closely associated with your own name goes astray and falls into serious error, and you may be compelled to publicly distance and dis-associate yourself from this person in order to protect your own personal and intellectual reputation (along with Rothbard’s and that of the entire libertarian intellectual edifice). Such is the case with Walter Block.”

Well, Professor Hoppe is not being personally defamed by Futerman-Block. Moreover, an individual’s “intellectual reputation” is a bestowed

⁹ See on this Block (1977A; 1977B; 1978; 2001; 2004D; 2008; 2010D; 2011A; 2011B; 2012; 2014A; 2014B; 2014C; 2018C; 2021), Block and Whitehead (2005), Dyke and Block (2011).

¹⁰ Given his above quote (Hoppe, 1991 [2007], p. 212) mentioning Ghettos, he does not appear to consider these in high regard...

attribute, it is not claimed. Hoppe (like, surprise, Hamas), is presenting himself as the victim, while he is in fact the aggressor vis a vis us.

Since reputation consists of other people's regard for that person, where does Rothbard's reputation come from? Mainly, from his work on economics, not political philosophy. Thus, a position on Israel by some of his disciples would be irrelevant for his regard by others. Unless the ones making the reputational assessment are libertarians, in which case there is no need to protect Rothbard from anything, they already know of his stance and eminent stature in the movement. Moreover, any reasonable person would understand that a disciple of someone is not that someone, and that Rothbard has no responsibility over his disciple's perspectives. Perhaps Professor Hoppe thinks that Rothbard was the leader of a cult, and we should follow him as a religious authority, and as such our deviations from Dogma are a blemish on his persona itself. Well, libertarianism is not a cult.

Regarding the "libertarian intellectual edifice," it is, as Hoppe himself says, an "intellectual edifice," not a specific organization. So, no expulsion could be performed, since nobody could be expelled from ideas themselves. One either conforms to them or not, but there is no need or even possibility to excommunicate anyone from a nonexistent organization. Or, perhaps, Hoppe regards himself as the leader of an organization of which he has excommunicating power a la Torquemada. By the way, there is hardly a more collectivistic approach than to arrogate the title of being the libertarian representative in order to decide on an expulsion from a movement.

Consider this very long quote from Rothbard (1967). We offer it because pretty much all of our publications on this matter can be viewed as our response to the challenge this author lays at the feet of libertarianism. We do not want to be libertarian sectarians! Here is Rothbard, in one of his most important and as usual brilliant statements:

"The trouble with sectarians, whether they be libertarians, Marxists, or world-governmentalists, is that they tend to rest content with the root cause of any problem, and never bother themselves with the more detailed or proximate causes. The best, and almost ludicrous, example of blind, unintelligent sectarianism is the Socialist

Labor Party, a venerable party with no impact whatsoever on American life. To any problem that the state of the world might pose: unemployment, automation, Vietnam, nuclear testing, or whatever, the SLP simply repeats, parrotlike: 'Adopt socialism.' Since capitalism is allegedly the root cause of all these and other problems, only socialism will whisk them away, Period. In this way the sectarian, even if his spotting of the ultimate root cause should be correct, isolates himself from all problems of the real world, and, in further irony, keeps himself from having any impact toward the ultimate goal he cherishes. On the question of war guilt, whatever the war, sectarianism raises its ugly, uninformed head far beyond the stagnant reaches of the Socialist Labor Party. Libertarians, Marxists, world-governmentalists, each from their different perspective, have a built-in tendency to avoid bothering about the detailed pros and cons of any given conflict. Each of them knows that the root cause of war is the nation-State system; given the existence of this system, wars will always occur, and all States will share in that guilt.

"The libertarian, in particular, knows that States, without exception, aggress against their citizens, and knows also that in all wars each State aggresses against innocent civilians 'belonging' to the other State. Now this kind of insight into the root cause of war and aggression, and into the nature of the state itself, is all well and good, and vitally necessary for insight into the world condition. But the trouble is that the libertarian tends to stop there, and evading the responsibility of knowing what is going on in any specific war or international conflict, he tends to leap unjustifiably to the conclusion that, in any war, all States are equally guilty, and then to go about his business without giving the matter a second thought.

"In short, the libertarian (and the Marxist, and the world-government partisan) tends to dig himself into a comfortable 'Third Camp' position, putting equal blame on all sides to any conflict, and letting it go at that. This is a comfortable position to take because it doesn't really

alienate the partisans of either side. Both sides in any war will write this man off as a hopelessly 'idealistic' and out-of-it sectarian, a man who is even rather lovable because he simply parrots his 'pure' position without informing himself or taking sides on whatever war is raging in the world.

"In short, both sides will tolerate the sectarian precisely because he is irrelevant, and because his irrelevancy guarantees that he makes no impact on the course of events or on public opinion about these events. No: Libertarians must come to realize that parroting ultimate principles is not enough for coping with the real world. Just because all sides share in the ultimate State- guilt, *does not mean that all sides are equally guilty*. On the contrary, in virtually every war, one side *is far more guilty than the other*, and on one side must be pinned the basic responsibility for aggression, for a drive for conquest, etc. But in order to find out which side to any war is the *more guilty*, we have to inform ourselves in depth about the history of that conflict, and that takes time and thought--and it also takes the ultimate willingness to become relevant by taking sides through pinning *a greater degree of guilt on one side or the other*. So-let us become relevant; and, with that in mind, let us examine the root historical causes of the chronic as well as the current acute crisis in the Middle East; and let us do this with a view to discovering and assessing the Guilty." (emphasis added by present authors)

Note, we have italicized material in which Rothbard avers greater or lesser guilt. He repeats this several times. He evidently thinks it important. Our main claim against Hoppe is that he writes as if this passage simply does not exist. Hoppe contents himself with pointing out flaws on the Israeli side of this conflagration. Are there any such? Of course there are. And, in due course, we shall ourselves engage in a bit of Israeli bashing.

¹¹ They are far from being true, as we demonstrate below and in our many writings on this subject.

¹² And indeed, all rational commentators, if we can extrapolate from his remarks.

¹³ In our view, if batting scores can depict the justification of governmental action, this country is

But it simply will not suffice to point out the errors on one side, and content oneself with so doing. For as Rothbard emphasizes, over and over again, we are now engaged in a *comparison*, and it will hardly suffice to show weakness only on one side, as Hoppe enthusiastically does.

It is as if Hoppe were a sports journalist, and is comparing the prospects of two baseball teams who will soon compete with one another. He might say something along these lines: team A will beat team B, since the batting average of the latter is only .100. But this is incomplete to say the least. Baseball is a competitive, comparative, sport. In order to make any such determination, one must also know the batting average of Team A. The best that can be said about this perspective is that it is radically incomplete.

Futerman and Block are *comparing* Arab and Jewish land claims, battle tactics, treatment of civilians, etc., and finding in favor of the latter. Hoppe, in sharp contrast, is contenting himself with saying that Jewish land claims are weak; that the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) have made this, that and the other egregious mistake; that Israel is guilty of ethnic cleansing, genocide, apartheid, etc. Our defense of Israel, along the lines set out by Rothbard (1967), is that even if all of his charges were true,¹¹ his charges would fail. Yes, Israel deviates from perfection in all sorts of dimensions, as any real entity living in the real world such as Hans Hoppe himself, in contrast with the Platonic world of ideal forms. But that is irrelevant. As we never tire of articulating, Rothbard (1967) is not asking for any such analysis. Rather, he is calling for libertarians,¹² to compare one side with the other. Even if the Israelis are batting only 0.100, that does not mean they lose this contest.¹³

The fundamental problem with the sectarian view of Hoppe is that he is, in fact, forgetting the fundamental goal of libertarianism as a political philosophy: to defend individual liberty. As such, real circumstances in a terrain may not allow for a viable alternative to a government to defend the

batting an astounding .950. Our main criticisms of this country is that it is still too socialistic, and does not sufficiently forcefully defend itself against its enemies. It is too beholden to public opinion in Europe and the US.

life of real human beings. For instance, in 1938 Jews had no place to go, as Chaim Weizmann explained after the Evian Conference, the world was divided between places where Jews could not live and places where Jews could not go. Where was the anarcho-capitalist paradise to defend Jews then? Nowhere. Only a Jewish state could defend real life Jews. The same thing goes for the present situation. Does Hoppe think that the disappearance of Israel would guarantee peaceful cooperation and thriving in the area? If he believes so, then he should better look at reality. Instead of free market anarchism, Jews would get October 7 on steroids. Hamas does not oppose Israel because it is a *state*, it opposes Israel because it is a *Jewish state and it is full of Jews*. The disappearance of Israel would not make the hatred of Jews (the real cause of war) disappear. Instead of reading the phenomenon with his own glasses, to fit his own narrative, Hoppe should look at what Israel's enemies actually say and do.

As Steve Horwitz (2012) put it:

“One problem with too many libertarians, and this is true of a variety of issues, is that they are ‘anti-state’ before they are ‘pro-liberty.’ What I mean by that is that their intellectual-political reflex is to oppose vigorously anything governments do without doing the double-entry moral bookkeeping required to know whether opposing this state action will actually, over time, forward the thing we supposedly care about, which is liberty... In the context of the Middle East, I think it plays out in vigorous condemnations of Israel without ever asking both the comparative questions and exploring possible unintended consequences.

“Let me be blunt: there is one and only one state in the region that rests on broadly classical liberal values and that is Israel. It has the rule of law, an independent judiciary, a more or less market economy that protects private property, not to mention a higher degree of ethnic/religious inclusiveness in its political

institutions. It is far from perfect, but it is the most classical liberal game in town.

“Libertarians who demonize it as if all the states in the area were equally bad, and who think that the solution to the conflict does not include Israel, need to be asked one simple question: if Israel disappears, what will we be left with? The Rothbardians and others can light fireworks and celebrate the demise of a state, but does anyone *really* think that what emerges from its rubble will be *equally or more liberal* in the classical liberal sense? Even the most cursory glance at Israel's neighbors should tell you the kind of repressive, authoritarian, medieval state you are likely to get, and it will be even worse for women.

“Ending a state is not the same as creating the institutions of liberty. When all we do is root against states, we will sometimes end up destroying liberty in the process.” (emphasis in the original)

Let us offer one more analogy; it is so important to make this point. If even a scholar as brilliant as Hoppe can so completely and blatantly misunderstand Rothbard (1967) on this point, then anyone is vulnerable to this error.

In their book (Gwartney, Lawson and Block, 1996), the authors were attempting to compare and contrast the economic freedom that prevailed in over some 100 countries. They divided their definition of this concept into four categories: money, regulation, taxation and international trade; each nation was awarded from 1 to 10 points for the score it registered in each of these subcategories. Under monetary freedom, not unnaturally, the authors' focus, all of them free market economists, first turned to gold.¹⁴ If a political entity was on the gold standard, it would earn a 10. If it completely abjured this metal, a zero. If it partially implemented gold, then it would earn an intermediate score.

Was gold ever included in the calculations in the event? It was not. Why not? That is due to the fact that every country would have earned a big fat zero, and this variable would not have done any

¹⁴ This metal is of course just a proxy for economic freedom. If the market turned to silver or platinum or, voluntarily, to any other means of conducting trade, that would have been equally in the direction of economic

freedom. Free enterprisers harken to gold only because when market participants were free to choose, they often chose gold.

work in *distinguishing* one nation from another. The point is, every variable utilized was required to *discriminate* between one political entity and the others. If it did not do so, the authors could not use it, for that was their only purpose in selecting variables. In like manner, if we are to be responsive to Rothbard's (1967) rejection of sectarianism, we must compare, contrast, distinguish, discriminate between the actions of Hamas and Israel. We cannot merely point out, as does Hoppe, the supposed flaws in the latter.

Sorry, we cannot resist mentioning one further analogy: that between perfect and imperfect competition in economics. In the former, the firm faces a flat demand curve, earns no profits, is infinitesimally small, has full information at its fingertips and there are an unlimited large number of these entities. Real world companies are entirely different in all dimensions. For mainstream economists, any deviation from this perfect competition renders the firm potentially vulnerable to anti-trust penalties. According to his statement on the economic illiterates as being in effect animals, we can conclude that Hoppe regards himself as far too good an economist to be guilty of any such irrationality – in the dismal science. But, we fear, this is just the sort of error in which he enmeshes himself in his analysis of Hamas and Israel.

How so? Before we answer that question, we do well to examine just what is libertarianism, with a view of avoiding the sectarianism that Rothbard denounces. As we see matters, there are two foundational axioms of this political economic philosophy: the non-aggression principle, and private property rights based upon initial homesteading and then on any subsequent voluntary interaction. There are also four levels of this perspective, based on how congruent they are with these two principles. At the top of the heap comes anarcho-capitalism, which is totally and completely compatible with these fundamentals. This is because all governments engage in two practices which are incompatible with them. First, they compel people to render financial assets to them even though they are not contractually obligated to do any such thing. When someone

forces someone else to pay monies, this is called theft. Second, states demand a monopoly over the protective services they claim to have provided the citizenry. The scholar who has done more than anyone else to make the case for this being the highest level of libertarianism is Murray Rothbard, of whom Hans Hoppe is a recognized disciple.

Immediately below this level are three more all of which embrace statism to different degrees. First to be mentioned in this regard is limited government or minarchism. Here, the government has three and only three legitimate functions: armies to protect us from foreign enemies, but not to export “democracy” or anything else for that matter, to the rest of the world. And, this safeguarding applies only to domestic residents; once you go abroad you are on your own.¹⁵ Second, police to stop local crime, not to prevent victimless crimes. And third, courts. The leading exponents of this view are Ayn Rand and Robert Nozick.

Next comes US constitutionalism. Not as interpreted by any particular Supreme Court; rather, by a leading exponent on a libertarian interpretation, such as Ron Paul. This level comes below the previously aforementioned one because it adds two functions not included above: public roads and post offices.

Last, and indeed least is classical liberalism. Here, a whole host of other so-called “legitimate” functions are added. For example, Milton Friedman's Federal Reserve, negative income tax and school voucher program,¹⁶ and Hayek's numerous compromises¹⁷ with strict *laissez faire* capitalism, to mention its two most famous adherents.

The present authors have chosen to defend Israel on classical liberal grounds,¹⁸ the weakest category of libertarianism, since the most far removed from the purest version of this viewpoint, anarcho-capitalism. Why? Well we most certainly could not have chosen anarcho-capitalism, even though we are staunch supporters of the Rothbard version of this perspective. Why not? To do so would have enmeshed us in the sectarianism against which Rothbard (1967) himself so

¹⁵ There is debate on this point among the minarchists.

¹⁶ See Rothbard (2002).

¹⁷ See Block, (1996, 2006B, 2006C).

¹⁸ The title of our 2021 book is *The Classical Liberal Case for Israel*.

eloquently and strongly warns against. It is quite remarkable, since Hoppe pretends to defend Rothbard and by his essay of 2024 he is in fact out-Rothbarding Rothbard. For all the contending parties are in effect governments, whether officially and de jure as in the case of Israel, or at least de facto with regard to Hamas. Using anarcho-capitalism as our bench-mark, we would have had to condemn both equally, and, thus, fallen into the trap against which Rothbard (1967) warns. One of our main rejections of Hoppe's criticism is precisely this point. He is forever and continually castigating governments as "gangs." For him, here a "gang" there a "gang," everywhere a "gang." This gets us absolutely nowhere in avoiding the trap Rothbard (1967) inveighs against. Instead, Hoppe falls headlong into it. All political actors in that neck of the woods, indeed, all around the world, are "gangsters." If we want to determine who is *more* guilty, we cannot possibly use a criterion to which all fail to adhere.

Why choose classical liberalism instead of the other two elements of libertarianism which would have allowed us to adhere to the Rothbard (1967) mandate? Well, our computer would not accept "minarchism;" it continually tried to change this word to "monarchism" and that would never do. But perhaps Hoppe (2001) would have agreed to the latter, which apparently is a "second-best" he does indeed prefer to defend with respect to real world political systems as opposed to democracy. It is strange that he defends an "imperfect" political system, given his strong adherence to what he regards as pure libertarianism. With regard to monarchy, he is certainly not a "sectarian," as Rothbard would put it. Or maybe it depends on the particular subject?

On a more serious note, while Nozick to be sure is a technical scholar of note, Rand is usually not considered such in academia; further, the views of Hayek and Friedman are far more well-known not only in the narrow professional philosophical community, but certainly in the world as a whole. US Constitutionalism was rejected for being too US-centric. Classical Liberalism, then, was not only in effect historically applied, but was also in this respect an appropriate standard by which to

eschew "sectarianism" and judge real world events on a philosophy close enough to the ideal.

Next point, collectivism. Hoppe accuses us of supporting this doctrine, engaging in it, basing our analysis on it. In a sense, he is correct. What is our justification? Again, Rothbard (1967).

Where does collectivism come in? Levels 2-4 of libertarianism support taxation. Taxation is collectivism. Taxation separates the community into two distinct groups: net tax-payers and net tax beneficiaries (they don't really gain since taxation weakens the entire economy, but they do receive more in subsidies than they pay in taxes). Another aspect of collectivism is egalitarianism. Friedman (1962) with his negative income tax is certainly guilty of this.

Why this excursion into collectivism? If we apply strict anarcho-capitalism to the Hamas versus Israel comparison we must say "A pox on both your houses." Neither comes anywhere close to adherence to the non-aggression theorem and the private property rights of anarcho capitalism.¹⁹ But to do so is to precisely engage in the sectarianism against which Rothbard warns. Our major book title thus specifically disavowed anarcho-capitalism. It purposefully takes on the perspective of classical liberalism. Its very title reflects that perspective. Yes, in many ways it is also a libertarian book, but which of the four levels of this philosophy does it represent: anarcho-capitalism? No. Minarchism, again we answer in the negative. Constitutionalism? Not even that. No, we embrace classical liberalism and the limited collectivism which comes along with that system. We are very explicit in this. We say (2021, p. 370): "In order to assess which states are relatively farther from the non-aggression principle than others, we must depart from strict libertarianism and analyze a conflict in terms of groups ('tribes,' in our words) rather than individuals. There is simply no other way to rationally analyze these sorts of relative claims." Has Hoppe read this part of our book? Perhaps. But he writes as if he has not. Yet this is crucially important from our perspective.

National sovereignty, too, is a collectivist concept. As writing on the basis of classical liberalism, we must, perforce, embrace this type of collectivism

¹⁹ Although in Israel the people who Hoppe regards as "perverts" can indeed remain alive. Not the case in the

Gaza strip under Hamas. In this respect, the reader can judge which society is closer to the libertarian ideal.

as well. However, all of this must be sharply distinguished from the claim that individuals are the only ones who can legitimately own property rights. Hoppe lambastes us again and again for supposedly not adhering to what he regards as this absolute Rock of Gibraltar of all four versions of libertarianism, but we claim, below, he is mistaken in this criticism.

With this introduction, we are now ready to consider and refute the specific errors committed by this author. Our procedure will be to quote material from Hoppe (2024) and intersperse it with our responses. We shall emulate the format used by Hoppe in this, our paragraph by paragraph response to him. In our section I we reply to the comments he offers in his exhibit I. In our section II we reply to the comments he makes in his exhibit II. In our section III we reply to the comments he articulates in his exhibit III. After that follows our concluding section.

Hoppe starts off by mentioning the he and Block have “a common standing as ... public intellectual(s) and both our names are mentioned frequently in one breath as prominent students of the same teacher, Murray N. Rothbard, and as leading intellectual lights of the modern libertarian movement founded by Rothbard.” True enough. But then he asserts that it is “near-imperative” to distinguish his anti-Israel perspective from Block’s support of this country lest his “own personal and intellectual reputation (along with Rothbard’s and that of the entire libertarian intellectual edifice)” fall into disrepute. This claim does not appear to have the ring of truth. It cannot seriously be maintained that Hoppe’s fellow Hamas supporters will denigrate him for being in this way very loosely associated with Block. Surely, if anything, they will commiserate with him for this association, not blame him for it. In our conclusion we speculate as to what truly motivated Hoppe to write this hateful note, and this will not be one of our suggestions. Moreover, given the quotes by Hoppe we included above (of which he never showed any regret), it may be a bit difficult to believe that he is so worried about having his, “along with Rothbard’s and that of the entire libertarian intellectual edifice” reputation to fall in disrepute.

At this point Hoppe begins his invective calling Block²⁰ “an unhinged collectivist taken in by genocidal impulses...” These words, in our view, are not the words of a scholar. Yet, what more do we scholars have at our disposal other than language? To so seriously misuse it, as Hoppe does all through his essay, we think, detracts from his message.

RESPONSE TO HOPPE’S EXHIBIT I

Our author, who following Murray Rothbard himself has devoted his life’s work to elucidate, defend and explain the libertarian (Lockean, 1689) theory of private property rights, inexplicably starts off with a rookie mistake. He asserts:

“All property is always and invariably the property of some specific, identifiable individual(s)...”

One type of counterexample are partnerships, condominium and homeowners associations, corporations. Ownership in these sorts of arrangements is by no means as clear as Hoppe would have it. But, note, that our author uses the plural of the word “individual.” This turns his claim not into a synthetic apriori statement but into a tautology. It would be impossible to mention any property whatsoever, anywhere in the world that is owned, and not by “individual(s).” A more serious flaw in this claim, is the case of Indian tribes who existed in the continental US before the advent of the Europeans. They owned at least some land in common, and collectively, as collectivists. Hoppe, of course, is using this assertion of his to undermine the claim of the Jews to land in the Middle East under dispute.

There are three possible responses, each of which, alone, are sufficient to refute this assertion of his.

First, we are not arguing from an anarcho-capitalist strict libertarian point of view. Rather, we reject this perspective on the ground that in the view of Rothbard (1967) it leads to a sectarian rejection of the claims of both contending parties. We want to be able to enter the modern day fray in this debate, and can do so, only, by adopting

²⁰ And, presumably, also Alan Futerman, although much of his criticism is focused on the former. However, in our

view, both authors are equally “guilty” of supporting Israel vis a vis Hamas.

classical liberalism.²¹ So, even if no tight relationship exists between any presently living Jew and those of 2000 years ago, even for the *Kohanim*, the form of collectivism entailed by Classical Liberalism is not necessarily ruled out of court as Hoppe contends.

Let us concede, only arguendo, that the 2000 year old connection is exceedingly weak, comparable, perhaps, to a Jewish baseball team with a batting average of only .100. What, pray tell, is the batting average of the other, Arab, team. It was not a flat zero; they did not even register that lowly batting average. Why? They simply were not in existence in the area then. The Muslims, we estimate, have been in existence for only 1423 years.²² The Jews? About 3000.²³ That is, the latter have been in existence for slightly more than twice as long as the former. They were not merely twiddling their thumbs for the additional centuries they had occupied the areas now under dispute. No, they were actively mixing their labor with this terrain, engaging in homesteading it, a la John Locke.

The point is, Hoppe looks at the case of one of the contending parties, finds it wanting, incomplete, and concludes that the other side is correct.²⁴ But he does not so much as even consider the merits of the alternative perspective. He ignores this entirely. Rothbard would denigrate this as “sectarianism.” In that view, both sides are equally guilty, and whatever else we may charge Hoppe

with, it is certainly not that. However, Rothbard does call for an analysis which asks which side is *more* guilty. How can Hoppe possibly address himself to that issue, when he focuses almost all his attention on (the alleged shortcomings of) just one side and virtually totally ignores the other? Answer: he cannot.²⁵ Moreover, he implicitly assumes that the other side is correct without ever bringing single evidence for it. The land is, Hoppe implies, all but fully Arab-owned.²⁶

Let us consider the following case. Right now, all is at peace between Canada and the US. But, all of a sudden, out of the blue, the military of that country, located in British Columbia, launches a surprise attack. They engage in rape, torture and murder in their sneak attack. They kill 1% of all Americans, mainly located in Montana, Idaho, Oregon, California and Washington State, a total of some 3.3 million people. After reeling from this onslaught for a small period of time, the US fights back. At the end of the war, they have fully occupied all of British Columbia.

How would Hoppe analyze this situation? If we can extrapolate from what he writes about Hamas’ despicable invasion of Israel on October 7, 2023, he would presumably excuse much of the killing on the grounds of “friendly fire.”²⁷

Second, we do indeed have evidence that many of the Arab land titles in the contested areas are

²¹ Or at the very least, even one of the limited government libertarian positions mentioned above.

²² Block and Futerman (2021; see Section 6.6).

²³ Ibid

²⁴ Hoppe also claims that “...Jews lived for hundreds of years in Egypt and when they finally reached their ‘promised land’ this was by no means empty. According to Deuteronomy and Joshua quite a bit of killing, pillaging and raping had to be done before taking over the land. Ancient Jews were not just homesteaders, they were also perpetrators...” But Professor Hoppe fails to see that ours is not a religious argument, of the type that would involve considering the Biblical text as authoritative on whom the land belongs to on theological grounds; rather, ours is a historical argument (our use of the Talmud follows the same path, that is, not because it has religious authority, but rather because it has historical significance to understand certain aspects of how the Temple Mount in Jerusalem was built): Were the Jews in Judea 2,000 years ago? Yes. Are there modern-day Jews? Yes. Conversely, are there any modern day representatives of the peoples that the Biblical Joshua fought that are demanding the land of Israel? Not to our knowledge (nor Hoppe’s nor anyone else’s).

²⁵ States Rothbard on this point: “No: Libertarians must come to realize that parroting ultimate principles is not enough for coping with the real world. Just because all sides share in the ultimate State- guilt, does not mean that all sides are equally guilty. On the contrary, in virtually every war, one side is far more guilty than the other, and on one side must be pinned the basic responsibility for aggression, for a drive for conquest, etc.” We realize that we quote Rothbard on this matter not once but twice. Our only excuse is that it is so important, and that Hoppe fails to respond to Rothbard on it. In contrast, virtually all of our contributions to this subject are an (attempt to) answer to it.

²⁶ Hoppe, along with Rothbard, concedes that Jews rightfully own some 7% of what they claim. We discuss this below.

²⁷ One wonders whether or not Hoppe would extrapolate from this to the mass rapes engaged in by Hamas? If so, the Israeli soldiers were intent upon raping Arab women. However, they got confused, and perpetrated this crime on Israeli women. No, Hamas uses rape as a war tactic; the IDF does not. Nor did the IDF shoot masses, hundreds, of its own citizens on that day of infamy, October 7, 2023. Even the UN, no friend of Israel, acknowledged this; see Kampeas, (2024).

improper. They are not based upon Lockean, libertarian, homesteading. Rather, these lands were considered uncultivable, and hence uncultivated. They consisted for the most part of desert and swamp. How, then, did title to this terrain arise? It was based upon government largesse; that is, the various governments, over the years, Ottoman, British, artificially and improperly granted such title. This, then, constituted invalid private property rights on the very grounds that Hoppe sets forth. Yes, the presumption, as Hoppe maintains, is always in favor of the extant occupant. Possession is indeed nine tenths of proper law. However, when massive rights violations underlie Arab land titles, the presumption, the expectation, can take a 180 degree turn.

Third, Hoppe claims we offer no evidence? Au contraire, we offer quite a bit of evidence for our thesis. Our entire book (Block and Futerman, 2021), practically features evidence from one end of it to the other. We highly recommend chapters 1, 2, 3, 6 and 7 in this regard.

Hoppe writes as if dispute over land titles is the preeminent sticking point between Arabs and Jews. It is not. It is, rather, the unbridled hatred of the former for the latter.²⁸ As Hamas declares in its original charter (1988) by quoting Islamic sources:

"The Day of Judgement will not come about until Moslems fight the Jews (killing the Jews), when the Jew will hide behind stones and trees. The stones and trees will

say O Moslems, O Abdulla, there is a Jew behind me, come and kill him."

Hoppe also claims that Hamas was "Explicitly directed not against Jews qua Jews but specifically against Zionists..." But, in this subject as well as in numerous others, Hoppe simply does not know what he is talking about. Hamas does not intend to wage war against Israel alone, but Jews in general, as its own charter says (Article 28):

"Israel, Judaism and Jews challenge Islam and the Moslem people. 'May the cowards never sleep.'"

Consider the Hebron pogrom of 1929 launched by the Arabs against the Jews, when almost 70 of the latter were massacred.²⁹ This was long before the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. There was no question, then, of any land theft. There was no question, then, of any "apartheid," "ethnic cleansing," "genocide," "collective punishment," etc. Not the bitterest critic of the Jews made any such complaint. And, yet, there was mass murder. Yes, legitimate land titles must form an important part of the basis of any libertarian analysis, but this hardly demonstrates that as a matter of fact they played the inordinate role to which Hoppe assigns them. Or does Hoppe believe that the enemies of Israel and the Jews act on the basis of their adherence to strict Rothbardian libertarianism rather than to a genocidal hatred based on the most violent interpretation of Islam?

We cite these views of Rose Wilder Lane explaining the genesis of hatred for Jews.³⁰ Or Ludwig Von Mises.³¹ This is an important part of

²⁸ The word "hate" appears nowhere in his remarks.

²⁹ See "The Hebron Massacre" at <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-hebron-massacre-of-1929>

³⁰ Rose Wilder Lane (1943, 79-80) said on this subject: "Today the people called Jews [...] have in common only one thing, a tradition. It is the tradition that Americans have—an inheritance from men who once asserted, against the whole world, that men are free. With reason, the Old World hates the Jews. Four thousand years ago, a Jew said that men are free. Two thousand years ago, a Jew preached that men are free. In medieval Europe, the Jews came from Spain, knowing that men are free. That knowledge will destroy the whole Old World concept of the universe and of man, it will break up the foundations of Old World nations and States, and shatter the very basis of their subjects' lives. So they are afraid of the Jew. They ward him off; they shut him out; they build walls around him; they kill him. Their actions show that they are afraid.

Every attack upon Jews, from exclusion from this country's public universities to the ghettos and the massacres in Poland today, are the acts of men who are afraid. And who leads these attacks? A tyrant. Wherever tyranny is strongest—in 15th-century Spain, in Czarist Russia, in Nazi Germany—attacks upon the Jew are most mercilessly atrocious. All over the Old World, again and again, for two thousand years, hatred of the Jews has flared up. It is always the hatred that comes from fear, and always—every time, in every instance—it is begun and fostered by men who are afraid of the knowledge that men are free."

Presumably, in Hoppe's view, her credentials as a libertarian are now suspect.

Ludwig Von Mises (1944, 184-185): "Nearly all writers dealing with the problem of anti-Semitism have tried to demonstrate that the Jews have in some way or other, through their behavior or attitudes, excited anti-Semitism. Even Jewish authors and non-Jewish opponents of anti-Semitism share this opinion; they too

our defense of Israel, yet Hoppe comes nowhere near to even understanding it. Or, perhaps, he approves of the alternative position.

Then there is the fact that the British radically reduced the number of European Jewish immigrants into the Holy Land (while at the same time *ignoring* Arab immigration). Had they not done so, their property titles to much more land would have been justified. Hoppe (2001, ch. 7) is on record as claiming that the proper libertarian perspective supports such restrictions, but he is in error regarding this contention of his.³²

Let us stipulate *arguendo*, that 3000 years ago the Jews unjustifiably conquered the territory now under dispute. They were now the sole owners of it, but improperly so. Anyone apart from them would have a better claim to this territory, since they took it by force. But, as long as no one else claimed it, their entirely innocent children would eventually become legitimate owners. And so, they did by eventually homesteading much of the land, as is recorded in historical accounts until we get to 2000 years ago (that is, 1000 years after the Biblical Joshua that Hoppe mentions).

Why does not the same consideration apply in the modern era, when Arabs improperly (according to Lockean, i.e., libertarian standards) owned land? Because they had titles to some of it but without

search for Jewish faults driving non-Jews toward anti-Semitism. But if the cause of anti-Semitism were really to be found in distinctive features of the Jews, these properties would have to be extraordinary virtues and merits which would qualify the Jews as the elite of mankind. If the Jews themselves are to blame for the fact that those whose ideal is perpetual war and bloodshed, who worship violence and are eager to destroy freedom, consider them the most dangerous opponents of their endeavors, it must be because the Jews are foremost among the champions of freedom, justice, and peaceful cooperation among nations. If the Jews have incurred the Nazis' hatred through their own conduct, it is no doubt because what was great and noble in the German nation, all the immortal achievements of Germany's past, were either accomplished by the Jews or congenial to the Jewish mind. As the parties seeking to destroy modern civilization and return to barbarism have put anti-Semitism at the top of their programs, this civilization is apparently a creation of the Jews. Nothing more flattering could be said of an individual or a group than that the deadly foes of civilization have well-founded reasons to persecute them". Presumably, in Hoppe's view, his credentials as a libertarian are now also suspect. Any libertarian interested in the nature of Anti-Semitism would do well in reading Mises' Omnipotent Government, Part III, Chapter VIII. By the

homesteading it.³³ This is due to the fact that during these epochs there were governments, especially British and Ottoman, that improperly supported these land titles.

Hoppe is barking up the wrong tree with his emphasis on the weakness of property titles for Jews based on what took place or did not take place 2000 years ago. Our justification for land titles is far from limited to such considerations. An important case in point concerns the Temple Mount³⁴ and other such territories, as concerns the *Kohanim*, which even this author does not fully reject. Much more acreage, in our view, is based upon considerations of more recent events. In other words, the concrete homesteading of vast tracts of virgin land by modern day Jews, which Hoppe ignores altogether.

Hoppe maintains that the Jewish claim to the Temple Mount, based on the many centuries ago building of it by the *Kohanim*, is "questionable." But he does not condescend to explain why this should be the case. He offers not a "shred" of evidence in behalf of this claim of his, of the sort that he demand of the present authors. This is perhaps the strongest case for ancient Jewish property based upon historic claims. If the Jews do not properly own this territory, they own nothing whatsoever in the Middle East. Moreover, what

way, Mises was dealing here with Nazi Anti-Semitism. The same Nazis who were allies of Amin Al-Husseini, the father of the Palestinian Arab national movement. And who to this day is also an inspiration for the Hamas murderers.

³² Block (1998; 2004B; 2011D, 2011E; 2013A; 2016A; 2016B; 2016C; 2016D, 2017A; 2018), Block and Brekus (2019), Block and Callahan (2003), Deist (2018), Gregory and Block (2007).

³³ It consisted to a great degree of un-homesteaded swamp and desert, most of it regarded as uncultivable. That is, for the Arabs at that time. However, the Jews were able to make "the desert bloom" in those lands they could purchase and thus could properly own such terrain, because they homesteaded it.

³⁴ The Temple Mount is Judaism's most holy site. The Al Aqsa Mosque is one of the most revered buildings for the Arab Muslims. Which was built on top of the other? Answer: the Temple Mount is located below the Al Aqsa Mosque. This is about the most positive proof that the Jews were there before the Arabs, that emanates from the field of archeology. This is why there have been all sorts of attempts to erase evidence of previous Jewish presence from that area (see Block & Futerman, Chapter 1).

evidence does Hoppe propose for the alternative, that is, that Arabs are the *proper* owners? Nothing.

Suppose we were now to assert that Hoppe's claim to be an Austrian economist were "questionable." That it was also "questionable" that he really favors free enterprise. That his connection with libertarianism were "questionable." Needless to say, we would offer no evidence whatsoever to back up any of these obviously false proclamations. How would our level of scholarship be assessed if we were to do any such thing? Not too highly. The same may be said of this author in the present case.

Our debating partner next avows as follows: "The claim of present-day Jews to a homeland in Palestine, then, can only be made if you abandon the methodological individualism underlying and characteristic of all libertarian thought: the notion of individual personhood, of private property, private product and accomplishment, private crime and private guilt. Instead, you must adopt some form of collectivism that allows for such notions as group or tribal property and property rights, collective responsibility and collective guilt."

Here, Hoppe confuses value free Austrian economics with value laden libertarian theory. As Austrians ourselves, we fully support his emphasis on "methodological individualism." Only individuals can engage in human action. When all of the individuals in a group depart from it, there is nothing, no one, remaining. There is no such thing as a group, apart from the individuals who comprise it. Yes, Austrian "methodological individualism" is indeed a valid and important concept. Methodological collectivism is fallacious. But this is altogether different from political individualism versus political collectivism. Here, both concepts are legitimate.

Hoppe digs himself into a bit of a hole on this matter: "But homesteading is done by some specific Ben or Nate, not by 'the Jews,' and likewise reparations for crimes committed against Ben or Nate are owed to some specific David or Moshe as their heir, not to 'the Jews,' and they

concern specific pieces of property, not all of 'Israel.' Unable to find any present David or Moshe that can be identified as ancient Ben's or Nate's heir to some specified piece of property, however, all reparation claims directed against any current owner are without any base."

Hoppe is in error here; he misconstrues libertarian homesteading theory, to which, paradoxically, he has himself contributed. Yes, private property rights are typically justified for individuals, such as Ben or Nate, David or Moshe.³⁵ This is certainly sufficient, but it is hardly necessary. Consider the Indian tribes who were located in the U.S. before the Europeans arrived in droves. They did not homestead land on an individual basis. Rather, they did so as a *group*. When one of them departed, for greener pastures, he was not able to sell "his" share of the common territory. Rather, he merely emigrated to distant shores. The Indian Ben or Nate or David or Moshe did not own any land on an individual basis. The entire tribe did so. They did so on a collective basis.³⁶ Is collective ownership optimal? No. Would Hoppe be right to deny that collective homesteading exists? No. Both things are true. In this respect and for the very same reason it would be ridiculous to assert that the present-day Jewish heirs of those who built the Temple Mount have no rights to it but somehow the Islamic Waqf does.

Now, it is one thing to deny that the Indians properly owned the entirety of the continental United States. This is certainly correct. In the modern era, 330 million have still not filled up this country. If you take an evening plane from New York City to Los Angeles, and look out the window, you will see many lights, east of the Mississippi, that is. But west of this river, apart from Denver and Las Vegas, until you arrive at the west coast, nary a lit bulb will be espied. The best estimate for the number of Indians before the Europeans arrived on the shores of the east coast is around one to twelve million.³⁷ No matter how liberal an interpretation of homesteading is employed, they cannot possibly be considered, at least not on

³⁵ Or by extension to voluntary groups such as condominiums, cooperatives, voluntary homeowners' associations, corporations, etc.

³⁶ Collectivism should not be the four-letter F word that Hoppe makes it out to be. There is, after all, such a thing as voluntary collectivism. For example, the Kibbutz.

³⁷ Figures diverge and there is controversy among historians, but see for example <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1171896/pre-colonization-population-americas/>

libertarian grounds, to have homesteaded it all, and thus be its proper owners.

But it is entirely a different matter to maintain they properly owned not one square inch of this territory, since not one single individual Indian Ben or Nate or David or Moshe was an owner, on his own; that since the Indians practiced “collectivism” they, all together, owned no property at all.

Yet, this is the very corner into which Hoppe has painted himself. He has done so, we surmise, because he regards libertarianism as an essentially right wing or conservative enterprise, and collectivism in any form is anathema for this realm of the political economic left right spectrum. It is indeed paradoxical that a scholar who has made contributions to homesteading theory should have made such an elementary mistake. There is not one single individual Ben or Nate or David or Moshe who owns land outright in condominiums, cooperatives, homeowners’ associations, corporations, and other such forms of “collectivism.” Yet, surely, it would not be within a million miles of libertarian theory to reject titles to land or real estate on such grounds.

Well, if true for the Indians, this must also apply to the Jews or to anyone else for that matter. Hoppe’s requirements for licit land titles are thus far too stringent. At first glance, his focus on an individual Indian Ben or Nate or David or Moshe sounds eminently reasonable. But a moment’s reflection will soon put paid to this requirement not as a sufficient condition, but as a necessary one.

No less an authority on homesteading and proper ownership of land agrees with our assessment of this matter of “collectivism,” not Hoppe’s. Rothbard (1975) himself states:

“Williams proceeded to strike another fundamental blow at the social structure of Massachusetts Bay. He denied the right of the king to make arbitrary grants of the land of Massachusetts to the colonists. The Indians, he maintained, properly owned the land and therefore the settlers should purchase the land from *them*. This doctrine

attacked the entire quasi-feudal origin of American colonization in arbitrary land grants in the royal charters, and it also hit at the policy of ruthlessly expelling the Indians from *their* land. Williams, indeed, was the rare white colonist courageous enough to say that full title to the soil rested in the Indian natives, and that white title could only be validly obtained by purchase from its true owners. The whites, charged Williams, lived ‘under a sin of usurpation of others’ possessions.’” (emphasis added by present authors, mainly focusing upon use of the plural)

There was no Indian Ben or Nate or David or Moshe involved in the sales for which Williams was calling. Hopefully, we will not be accused on any argument from authority. Just because Rothbard says so, does not make it so. But Hoppe’s interpretation can be seen to be invalid totally apart from this bit of support. It implies that since the Indians were collectivists, they properly owned no land at all, and this is exceedingly difficult to reconcile with what we know of libertarianism, John Locke, and homesteading theory.

But what about claiming that “Arab ownership” due to government conceded land titles is compatible with the same acceptable collectivist ownership as the Indians in the lands they homesteaded in the US or the Jews with the Temple Mount? Not so. Because most of what was regarded as Arab land was in fact *never* homesteaded by them, or at least there was no such evidence. Most of it was regarded as uncultivable, hence uncultivated, thus un-homesteaded. ‘Twas not the same as the case with the Temple Mount or any other Jewish property such as the swamps that these turned into agricultural fields and enterprises. These were indeed properties that were either now or previously *owned* by Jews as individuals or as a group. Did Arabs legitimately own any land at all? Of course they did, but only a fraction of it (borrowing an expression from Hoppe, not least “meager” than the Jews in relation to the entire terrain),³⁸ as it was the case for the Jews. Or as it

³⁸ At most, roughly 20% (again, nominally), while Jews owned between 7% (as even most fanatic Anti-Zionists would agree) and roughly 10% (according to some estimates, a bit more). For those interested in learning more on the real situation of land ownership in the area

before the establishment of the State of Israel, see Chapters 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7 of our book (Block & Futerman, 2021). Chapter 3 also deals in length with the myth of the ethnic cleansing of Arabs, to which Hoppe seems to subscribe to (he talks about “...the expulsion of

was the case for the Indians in the US. But this does not imply complete ownership of the entire terrain, as Hoppe implicitly assumes for the Arabs. In other words, land titles are legitimate only insofar as they are titles to ownership of a specific property, that is, if there is ownership by some party in the first place. The title, by itself, says nothing, and ownership is gained through homesteading (whether individual or collective), not by government decree. In other words, philosophically (on the Lockean perspective), a title *recognizes* ownership, it does not *grant* it. If no ownership exists, because no homesteading has taken place, the title is invalid according to libertarianism.

And what about land purchases by Jews before the establishment of Israel? Not only was it the only way to legally buy land at the time, but it was also the only way to homestead it. Of course, if

Jews would have been able to simply sit on empty land and homestead it, they would have done so. But they first had to buy titles to land in order to work legally and build on them. This, however, does not imply that Jews *recognized* the philosophical legitimacy to the sellers of most of these titles,³⁹ nor the purchases themselves gave these titles any such philosophical legitimacy. In fact, Zionists regarded both the Ottoman and the British as illegitimate occupiers.⁴⁰ And many Arabs themselves voluntarily sold land to Jews as well.⁴¹ In short, that is what Jews were forced to do by the circumstances in the terrain at the time: pay for titles that were not mainly based on homesteading but on government concessions. The key, though, is that they *homesteaded* what they purchased. In that fundamental sense, they did not steal anything, as Anti-Zionists falsely claim, but they bought and built Israel.⁴² Is this compatible with

hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arabs immediately before and in the aftermath of the founding of the state of Israel in 1948"). Chapter 2 and 6 deal with most of the fallacies that Hoppe mentions on Zionism and the Jewish presence in the area. Given what Hoppe claims in his letter, we seriously doubt that he read our entire book, but he may not despair, we have a summary forthcoming where we also briefly present the case of land ownership for Professor Hoppe, or anyone, to clearly understand it (Futerman & Block, Forthcoming).

Also, a brief description of what happened in 1948, written by the most important of the "New Historians" himself, can be seen at Morris (2008).

³⁹ Nevertheless, this does not also imply that every Jewish purchase was made from illegitimate Arab owners. There certainly were legitimate Arab owners who voluntarily sold their property to Jews. And, in such cases, the property was now owned by its Jewish buyers according to libertarian standards. But we refer here to most of the land that was nominally owned by Arabs (which was by itself only a fraction of the entire land, owned by the Ottoman government first and the British later), which was certainly not homesteaded by them and consisted mainly in government concessions.

⁴⁰ The British not only placed restrictions on Jewish immigration, but also on land purchases, which added difficulties to the Zionist enterprise.

⁴¹ Again, for a full account of the land situation see Block and Futerman (2021, see Chapters 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7).

⁴² But could most of the land that was nominally owned by Arabs but not homesteaded at the time (as well as most of the land as a whole which was owned by the government in charge) have been later on homesteaded by them, thereby granting legitimacy to their property? Yes, but it was not the case then, which is all that is relevant to our Lockean analysis. It could have been later on homesteaded by the Japanese, or the Peruvians as well. Or anybody else for that matter,

including Jews, as long as they homestead it. And after 1948 the latter in large part did so.

What about the philosophical status of most of the land in the area that was owned by the government (Ottomans first, British later)? No libertarian case could be made on that land as it was un-homesteaded. The State of Israel, as the political entity that followed these other governments in the area (which won its lands in self-defensive wars), inherited this same status for such land. In this respect it is interesting to note: libertarian Anti-Zionists appear to be confused regarding land ownership in modern Israel. It is true that the state nominally "owns" most of the land, as this is the model inherited from the British and before from the Ottomans. But it is not true that this implies a fully statist system where no private property factually exists. It is only a different nominal mode of ownership that does not affect property rights for those who in fact own the land (or come to own it through homesteading), as the state grants it for a century or in perpetuity (with renewal). This in practice is no different than the real property right system of other Western countries' civil codes. And this includes land owned by both Jews *and* Arabs in modern Israel (as can be easily seen in multiple Arab towns throughout Israel). Is it optimal? Of course not (we favor full privatization). Is it, in reality, full statism or communism as some libertarian Anti-Zionists appear to imply? Absolutely not. Real estate in Israel (or agricultural endeavors for that matter) are not precisely a denigrated industry, and this sector of the economy does not exactly boom in countries that do not respect property rights (particularly in land). Perhaps libertarian Anti-Zionists should abandon their purely rationalistic categories for subjects that demand attention to empirical evidence instead of only following simplistic definitions according to their limited understanding of the phenomenon in question. What essentially matters philosophically, in the end, is *homesteading*, not the specific formal legal status of it (although of course this

classical liberalism? Of course. What is not compatible with classical liberalism (and libertarianism as such for that matter), is titles to property *without homesteading*, as was the case with most of the lands regarded as Arab.

Professor Hoppe maintains that:

“The claim of present-day Jews to a homeland in Palestine, then, can only be made if you abandon the methodological individualism underlying and characteristic of all libertarian thought: the notion of individual personhood, of private property, private product and accomplishment, private crime and private guilt. Instead, you must adopt some form of collectivism that allows for such notions as group or tribal property and property rights, collective responsibility and collective guilt.”

This claim is extraordinary because it shows Hoppe’s implicit major premise: Even when he later accepts that modern day Jews owned land in their ancient homeland (“At best, only a meager 7 percent of the present Israeli territory was regularly acquired or purchased by Jews before 1948, and could thus be claimed as legitimate Jewish property.”), which by itself should be enough to justify “The claim of present-day Jews to a homeland in Palestine” (in principle, irrespective of Israel’s size today), he claims in the above quote that only collectivism can support their legitimacy. And what about Arab ownership, then? Not a word. That is because Hoppe implicitly assumes that the entire land was owned by Arabs, that no Jewish homesteading *really* took place, and that their purchases were all illegitimate, *because* they were Jewish. Otherwise, he could not have made the above mentioned claim. If *that* is not collectivism, we do not know what is. And what is his evidence for his implicit assumption? None whatsoever, because none exists.

But there are other concepts in play here that seem to have escaped our otherwise sophisticated debating partner. One of them, the main one, is sovereignty. Perhaps this escapes his

is relevant and creates incentive mechanisms of many kinds).

⁴³ We enthusiastically support him in this, as fellow anarcho-capitalists (assuming that is, that he has not yet successfully excommunicated us from that category; oy

notice since he is so busy denigrating governments as “gangs.”⁴³

Hoppe throws cold water on our theory that “... property rights and reparation claims can ... also be justified by genetic and cultural similarity.”

Hoppe labels as “plain absurd” our contention that genetics and cultural similarity can play any role whatsoever in the determination of justice in property rights under dispute. Here is our contention (2021, p. 50) in this regard:

“We are not making the case that the entire land mass of what is now the State of Israel belongs to all the Jews of today simply because of cultural continuity with a distinct group that happened to have homesteaded parts of the same land 2,000 years ago. What we are saying is that if it can be proven that 1) at least some Jews of today are both culturally and (or especially) physically descended from people who homesteaded land in Palestine (Judea) during the Roman period, and that 2) these modern Jews actually lay claim to these previously-homesteaded lands, and that 3) evidence of that previous homesteading still exists today, then according to classical liberal and libertarian law, that specific previously-homesteaded land belongs to the heirs of those Jews who originally worked that land. The status of legal heir would be determined by the nearest of kin that could be determined genetically as well as culturally. If a plot cannot be attributed to a single heir, it would theoretically go to a group that could apply for equal shares in said land.”

In rereading what we wrote in Block and Futerman (2021, p. 50), these contentions do not leap out as “absurd” at all. Hoppe concedes that there is no libertarian justification for a statute of limitations. There is always a natural statute of limitations, insofar as the further we go back in history, the more difficult it is to demonstrate anything, and, in addition, that the burden of proof always rests with the plaintiff. But, note, we are very careful to

vey, if he has). But, again, we follow Rothbard’s (1967) guidelines here.

include in the list of provisos that “What we are saying is that *if it can be proven that...*” and then list a series of provisos. Hoppe does not do us the honor of quoting our actual words, and then responding to them, as we are doing herein. Rather, he “summarizes” our positions to his own satisfaction, and then comments on his straw man version of what we are actually saying.

As to his claim that “Interestingly, it appears that the closest genetic similarity to ancient Jews could be found among indigenous Christian Palestinians” this is merely evidence that conversions have taken place. Assume this is correct, *arguendo*, it does not lay a glove on our libertarian contention in behalf of Hebrew land claims.

Our case is also impervious to this contention of Hoppe’s: “Any genetic linking of present-day Jews to ancient Jews, then, becomes an impossible task.” Well, if it is impossible to prove our contention, which we do not for a moment regard as correct, see our evidence to the contrary in our book, our thesis is still not rendered false. For, remember our proviso: “What we are saying is that if it can be proven that...” Hoppe should indeed be more careful in his attributions to us of our claims.

Hoppe claims that, “At best, only a meager 7 percent of the present Israeli territory was regularly acquired or purchased by Jews before 1948, and could thus be claimed as legitimate Jewish property”. We explain in our book (2021, pp. 367-368) that:

“Suppose Israel had started in 1948, with exactly 7% of the land that Rothbard, and following him, Mosquito,⁴⁴ concede was legitimately-owned Jewish land. Let us now engage in a bit of contrary to fact history. What would the Arab reaction have been to this ‘legitimate’ state of Israel? It is not too great a leap into the dark to posit that they

would have reacted under this science fiction type assumption in exactly the same manner they actually did at that time. That is, the nations of Syria, Egypt, Transjordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Yemen would have attacked this fledgling new nation. Perhaps, even more avidly, since this ‘legitimate’ nation would have been even weaker. The Arabs regarded the Jews as a viper in their bosom.⁴⁵ Evidence for this contention lies in the numerous riots and pogroms staged by the former against the latter long before the creation of the Jewish state in 1948.”

Further, suppose that just as in the actually occurring war of 1948, the Jews had won the altercation. Given that even the bitterest critics of Israel must concede that the Jews legitimately owned *some* land, that they have as much right to form a government on this basis as anyone else, and that the attacking Arab armies were in the wrong. What, then, pray tell? Continuing this scenario, should the Jews be compelled to relinquish the additional land they would have occupied at the war’s end? Not if libertarian punishment theory⁴⁶ can be allowed to come into play. For here, the perpetrators of injustice, the criminals, must be compelled to pay a price, a serious one, for their initiatory violence. This, alone, can justify a far larger “greater Israel” than the territory previously occupied by the Jews.

Next, Hoppe employs a *reductio ad absurdum*. He states: “... what if this fanciful new theory of property acquisition and inheritance via genetic similarity were generalized to all tribes and ethnicities? There are countless cases of expropriations and expulsions of one group or tribe by another in human history, of victims and of perpetrators, involving non-Jews as well as latter day Jews.”

⁴⁴ Hoppe falls into this category as well. On Mosquito, see Farber, Block and Futerman (2018).

⁴⁵ They are far from the only peoples to have done so. This occurs, alas, at present as well.

⁴⁶ In the view of Rothbard (1998, p. 88, ft. 6): “It should be evident that our theory of proportional punishment—that people may be punished by losing their rights to the extent that they have invaded the rights of others—is frankly a retributive theory of punishment, a ‘tooth (or two teeth) for a tooth’ theory. Retribution is in bad repute among philosophers, who generally dismiss the concept

quickly as ‘primitive’ or ‘barbaric’ and then race on to a discussion of the two other major theories of punishment: deterrence and rehabilitation. But simply to dismiss a concept as ‘barbaric’ can hardly suffice; after all, it is possible that in this case, the ‘barbarians’ hit on a concept that was superior to the more modern creeds.” See also Block (2009A; 2009B, 2017B), Dalrymple (2020), Kinsella (1996A; 1997; 1998-1999), Loo and Block (2017-2018), Olson (1979), Rothbard (1977; 1998), Whitehead and Block (2003).

First, “our fanciful new theory” is merely the application of Lockean homesteading theory, to which all libertarians, and even classical liberals, adhere. If genetic connection can be proved, and *only* if it can be proven, and only *in conjunction* with our other provisos, then reconstituting property rights would be justified.

Second, of course this cannot be limited to Jews in the Middle East. If a member of an Indian tribe in the US can demonstrate ownership to property not now his own, it should be granted to him. If a black person in Harlem can establish that his great-great-grandfather worked on a specific plantation in Louisiana, he, too should be granted ownership of whatever property, in justice, should have been given to this ancestor of his in 1865.⁴⁷ Hoppe does not appear open to this possibility. He seems to side with the conservatives, not the libertarians, in his opposition to any and all reparations for injustices that have taken place in the distant past.

The portrayal of our position as a “fanciful new theory” of “property acquisition and inheritance via genetic similarity” is nothing more than an attempt to ridicule our position that not only ignores the context in which we claim the genetic factor could enter into play, and to what extent, but also ignores the fact that a genetic test is only one of many ways to prove a connection so as to sustain inheritance rights. In other words, the relevant part is not “genetic similarity,” but rather the claim to property that is sustained by that method along with several other considerations. In very much the same way such a method is used in other contexts for similar inheritance claims. But the fundamental element is the ownership claim, not the method used to sustain it. Or, better put, the relevant aspect is not the genetic similarity, but the inheritance which can be identified by it along with other factors. If Hoppe has any alternative to decide who is the proper owner of the Temple Mount we invite him to present it.⁴⁸ This is the case unless he maintains that the Islamic Waqf should be the owner of the entire place by fiat.⁴⁹

In other words, we are just applying a possible method to identify the owners of a specific property in the case of the Temple Mount because it is an extremely complex matter that is an important (if not the most) source of controversy for both Jews and Arabs. Is this the only or the best method one may use to identify ownership in any case? Of course not. But what is the alternative in *this* very complex case? We invite Hoppe to present one. If that author finds a problem with this method per se, he should oppose all genetic testing whatsoever for any conceivable case. But, again, genetics is not the key here, ownership is.

We claimed and still assert that a specific group of Jews, the *Kohanim*, are entitled to that very specific piece of property because they are both genetically *and* culturally linked to the builders, *in the absence of any other group or individual with better claims to it*. It is a case in point because Palestinian Arabs continually talk about how “Zionists” stole “Al Aqsa” from them. In fact, it was Arabs who stole the Temple Mount from the Jews 1,400 years ago. So, our case is not that it is just for Jews to exercise violence in order to seize this property because they owned it 2,000 years ago, but *because we can prove that Kohanim exist* and no other group or individual has better claims to such property than themselves, thus it should go to them. What would the alternative be? That the Arabs retain it by fiat through the Islamic Waqf? Is that not collectivistic for Hoppe? We believe that this writer ignores the issue of the importance of this historical site altogether because he opposes Israel as such, not because he is interested in justice in property rights or any other rights in the area for that matter. And he uses this very brief 2-page example as if it would be the main feature of an argument that took us 500 pages to fully develop. His essay is a deliberate distortion of our position. And it implicitly assumes the truly collectivistic premise that Arabs owned virtually all

⁴⁷ For the libertarian case in favor of reparations to present day blacks for the slavery imposed upon their genetic predecessors see: Alston and Block (2007), Amos and Block (2022), Block (1993; 2001; 2002; 2014; 2019A; 2020A; 2020B), Block and Yeatts (1999-2000), Creppelle and Block (2017), Nouveau and Block (2020).

⁴⁸ There is nothing in his open letter explaining his alternative theory, if he has one.

⁴⁹ Perhaps Professor Hoppe agrees with Article 11 of the Hamas charter: “The Islamic Resistance Movement believes that the land of Palestine is an Islamic Waqf consecrated for future Moslem generations until Judgement Day...”

of the land,⁵⁰ where in fact there was evidence of homesteading of only a small fraction of the land *titles* they had (not to mention those that they did *not* have, involving more than 70% of the entire area).

We did not talk about Jews in general as having a right to every piece of land nor is this genetic and cultural similarity case a general principle to be applied everywhere to identify property rights owners, of course. This is only an innovative way to solve a specific problem from a classical liberal/libertarian angle. How would Professor Hoppe solve it? To whom does the Temple Mount belong in his view?

We also believe that if Jewish groups such as the *Kohanim*,⁵¹ or Muslim groups (if there are any that qualify), or any group, can show similar claims on other specific properties, *in the absence of better claims by other groups or individuals*, that should go to them. It is the best that could be done to solve the problem of contested property titles with such historical complexities attached to them. At least this is true from the classical and libertarian perspective, which is certainly not the only one that exists, but is the one we use.

However, our learned colleague insists that “The result would be legal chaos, interminable strife, conflict and war.” Here, he exposes himself not as a deontological libertarian, but as some sort of utilitarian or pragmatist. Not for him the concept of “Justice though the heavens fall.” It is a basic premise of libertarians that “no justice, no peace;” that the best way to avoid “legal chaos, interminable strife, conflict and war” is *not* by abrogating private property rights, but by upholding them, through thick and thin, if need be.

Our diplomatic colleague ends this section of his paper on this note: “If this collectivistic nonsense is not enough to disqualify Block as a libertarian, the following exhibit, demonstrating its monstrous consequences, should remove even the slightest

remaining doubt that he is anything but a libertarian, a Rothbardian or a sweet and nice person.” We will see if that is the case in the next section of this rejoinder of ours.

RESPONSE TO HOPPE’S EXHIBIT II

Exhibit two:

Our distinguished colleague charges that Block and Futerman (2023) reveals (the present authors) as ... unhinged, bloodthirsty monster(s), rather than a(s) libertarian(s) committed to the non-aggression-principle as the second, complementary foundational pillar of the libertarian doctrine.”

Hoppe is a supporter of “evidence.” This is all to the good. Yet, he makes controversial claims completely in the absence of any such documentation. For example, he avers, “...a considerable portion of such casualties [the ones imposed by Hamas⁵² on October 7, 2023] were actually the result of ‘friendly fire,’ per helicopter, by the Israeli Defense Forces” (emphasis added). This is an extraordinary claim, in view of the films that have been widely bruited about upon that despicable occasion, by the Hamas assassins *themselves*. Among evidence of every other kind. And this apart from the fact that the “helicopter” claim is a complete hoax that has long been debunked (Czopek, 2023), in fact way before Hoppe published his open letter⁵³... But the latter shows another important lesson of Hoppe’s approach.

In Futerman & Block (2023B), we try to explain the Anti-Zionist mentality, of which Hoppe is certainly a good example. The Anti-Zionist mental process shares the same structure as a tautological proposition that claims that “Israel is the source of all evil.” According to *refusenik* Natan Sharansky, Anti-Zionism can be identified by the 3 Ds: Delegitimization, Demonization and Double

⁵⁰ Minus that 7% he concedes is properly owned by Jews.

⁵¹ It is quite strange that Hoppe opposes this second-best method to identify property rights owners by ours, but at the same time prefers monarchy over democracy. After all, both these systems are inferior in relation to anarchism, so why choose among them? Why not be a “sectarian” on this issue? A “pure libertarian” such as Hoppe should reject all second, third, fourth, *n*th, bests, always and instead favor the ultimate libertarian utopia.

Or is Hoppe only opposed to second-bests if Jews are involved?

⁵² Curiously, Hoppe refers to this terrorist criminal organization as “so called Hamas.”

⁵³ Will Hoppe take back his offensive and false claim of the “helicopter”, that implies that Jews are the ones responsible for much of the Hamas mass murder? If the disgraceful quotes of his we included at the beginning of the paper are of any guidance, likely not.

Standard. The first implies that Israel, as the national home of the Jews, has no right to exist as such, in any form. The second means that Israel is the source of all evil, hence the language used to describe it should not fail to include the worst slanders such as “Apartheid” or “Nazis.” The third is to place an obsessive focus on Israel’s actions and apply to them a different standard than the one applied to the rest of the world.

We further explained that: Futerman & Block (2023B)

“Hence, it is not only the case that when something good is done by Israel (for instance, helping during a natural disaster in Haiti) it in fact has nefarious intentions (such as stealing the organs of those affected by the disaster), but Israel *cannot* do good. Conversely, when evil appears anywhere in the world, it is only logical that Israel is *behind* it. Of course, this is nothing less than the same ‘Logic’ that was once applied to the Jews and is now applied to the Jewish state. By the way, this is the same logical structure of conspiracy theories, whose proponents cannot help but see them everywhere” (emphasis added).

Even if Hamas committed atrocities, Hoppe implies, “a considerable portion” of the victims were killed by the IDF itself. That is, when evil against Israel cannot be ignored due to the abundance of evidence, it can (and must, according to Anti-Zionists) still be blamed on Israel anyway. Even if, *arguendo*, Israeli victims would have died due to IDF “friendly fire,” Hoppe should still extend the causal sequence beyond the seconds involving the fire exchange to identify that such sequence began when Israel was invaded by thousands of Hamas genocidal murderers, for which such helicopter would have been flying in the area. Hoppe’s point and implication can only be explained by reference to the above Anti-Zionist mentality, that is, that ultimately he is obsessed with blaming Israel, even when Israelis themselves get killed.

Saith Hoppe: “What is a libertarian supposed to make of this (October 7, 2003) event? First, he must recognize that both, Hamas and the State of Israel, are gangs financed and funded not by voluntary membership contributions but by

extortion, taxation, confiscation and expropriation. Hamas does so in Gaza, with the people living in Gaza, and the State of Israel does it with the people living in Israel as well as the Palestinians living in the West Bank.”

If there were a prize for false moral equivalence, this would take the cake. Move along, here, folks, there is nothing much to see. There is no real moral difference between these two political entities, Hamas, and Israel. Both run afoul, equally, of anarcho-capitalist libertarian law. Both engage to the same degree, with the same intent, in terms of raping helpless women, killing babies? It is difficult to believe that any serious scholar in this area, and Hoppe pretends to qualify, would write any such material. Yes, the IDF kills innocent Gazans, but this is a matter of collateral damage, to be regretted, and the Israeli military does everything possible to limit such carnage. There is no intent by IDF soldiers of deliberately killing innocent civilians or raping women or burning alive entire families as Hamas did in October 7 and as an end in itself. To place these two groups as equally distant from libertarian law is unbelievable; it beggars the imagination.

In the view of Hoppe, “... the State of Israel, subsidized long-lastingly and heavily by the world’s mightiest and wealthiest of all gangs, the USA.” First, what is with all this “gang” business? Of course, Hamas, Israel, the US, Switzerland, and every other state on the face of the earth are indeed “gangs.” But this gets us nowhere. To characterize matters thusly is to ignore Rothbard’s (1967) plea against sectarianism. Rothbard challenges libertarians to avoid this irrelevant perspective. We assiduously follow Rothbard in this regard; Hoppe writes as if Rothbard (1967) does not exist, in this matter. Even though he himself claims to be doing this precisely to defend his along with “Rothbard’s and that of the entire libertarian intellectual edifice” reputation.

Second, yes, the US should leave the Middle East. It does far more harm than good. Specifically, it ties the hands of Israelis, compelling them in effect to fight its enemies with one and three quarter hands tied behind its back. Politicians from this country are forever looking over their shoulders, lest Uncle Sam become annoyed with them.

Third, yes, Hoppe has a point: Israel is the single most important “beneficiary”⁵⁴ of US foreign aid. However, if you compare how much of tax money mulcted from US citizens goes to that one country, compared to all of its enemies put together, a very different picture emerges.⁵⁵ And more so because in fact the aid is really a subsidy to the US weapons industry (which Israel receives in kind, in exchange for advanced military technology, a return that nobody can deny Israel indeed develops), and not an economic aid transfer to Israel as is the case with an important part of the aid to, for instance, Ukraine.

Hoppe refers to Gaza “as an open-air concentration camp.” Here, he exceeds the usual anti-Israeli characterization of this territory “as an open-air prison.” One wonders at this escalation of verbiage. The Anti-Zionist mentality we mentioned above may ring a bell. But there is a more serious criticism of this learned scholar’s description: Hoppe does not mention why Gaza has been “subject(ed) to a rigorous land, air and sea blockade by Israel;” nor why, in addition, that country has imposed a welter of other restrictions and regulations on this territory. We will give Hoppe a hint: it is due to the fact that with its vast foreign “aid” Hamas has chosen to build tunnels with which to raid Israel; has created rocket launchers in order to bomb Israel; has instilled hatred for Jews in its schools. If Israel had had its way, it would have helped the Gazans in the direction of becoming the Hong Kong of the Middle East. It could have instead created desalinization plants; luxury hotels along its beautiful beach-laden coast; high tech factories, etc. The point is, these Israeli interferences were of a defensive, not an offensive nature. One would have thought that would have satisfied the concerns of Hoppe for libertarian law. Evidently not.

Moreover, the Gaza “blockade” was of weapons, not of goods.⁵⁶ After the despicable events we

have recently seen it should be sufficiently clear why there was a blockade of weapons in the first place. More so, even those measures were far from sufficient, as shown by the abundant arsenal that Hamas was able to amass all these years. Egypt also has a border with Gaza, and enforced a similar blockade, but since Israel was not involved nobody, including Hoppe, seems to care. Or are we going to expect a declaration by Hoppe that the Gaza “concentration camp” is due to Egypt’s fault as well as Israel’s? We doubt it, otherwise he would have said so in his letter. Moreover, the charge is even more absurd due to the fact that thousands of residents in Gaza had permits to work in Israel. Some of these, it is suspected, schemed with the assassins to prepare for the October 7th pogrom.

But it is a complete fabrication that no aid has entered Gaza. Since October 7, 2023, and by March 15, 2024, the IDF allowed the entrance of 319,110 tons of aid (17,186 trucks) to Gaza, including 215,160 tons of food, 27,040 tons of water, 19,180 tons of medical supplies, 187 fuel tanks and 350 cooking gas tanks, among others.⁵⁷

Hoppe recognizes that Hamas has been guilty of “acts of terror such as on October 7th.” This is all to the good, since even he has not characterized the IDF incursions into Gaza in quite that manner. But given this, one wonders about the conclusions he draws to the effect that Hamas was in the right and Israel in the wrong.

Our learned friend harkens to “... the increasingly influential extremist Israeli factions which sought to derail the peace process, and succeeded in doing so by increasing their building of Jewish settlements that split up the West Bank into non-contiguous open-air prisons controlled by Israel, rendering a Palestinian state essentially impossible.”

Well, at least he substitutes, here, “prisons”⁵⁸ for “concentration camps”. However, there are

⁵⁴ Scare quotes in honor of Peter Bauer, who insisted, time and again, that this concept was a pejorative, since it was all too often harmful, not the opposite. He favored the far more neutral and thus correct in this context phrase, “government to government transfers of funds.”

⁵⁵ The data is available here: <https://www.foreignassistance.gov>

⁵⁶ Even considering UN statistics the most fanatic Anti-Zionist is forced to recognize that there was movement of both goods and people in and out of Gaza since

Hamas took over in 2007 (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2023). See also Bard (2021-B).

⁵⁷ Israel National Digital Agency - Govextra. 2024. “Most recent update: Mar. 15, 2024.” March 15. Available at <https://govextra.gov.il/cogat/humanitarian-efforts/home/> For more on this subject, see Magid & AFP (2023).

⁵⁸ Was Gaza an “open-air” prison? Not according to the evidence. See on this Zivotofsky (2023). The only sense

difficulties with his analysis. For one thing, Hoppe now seems to be supporting a two-state solution as implied by the phrase “the peace process.” This holds true unless Hoppe was perhaps aware of a negotiation process among the parties involving turning the area into an anarcho-capitalist system. If so, the present authors have never heard of anything like that. Not from the Palestinian Authority, less so from Hamas. So, it seems Hoppe buys into the “two-state solution.” However, based on the laws of higher mathematics, two is greater than one. He is continually inveighing against governments; one would think he would favor the exertions of the “extremist⁵⁹ Israeli factions” who are acting, certainly not purposefully, so as to reduce the number of these evil institutions by one. But this is all by the way. The difficulty with this passage of our Middle East expert is that he has matters exactly backward. The Israelis, particularly the left wing elements thereof, before the advent of the Likud, have been *yearning* for peace with the Arabs. They have offered many “land for peace” treaties. These proposals have been invariably rejected by their Arab counterparts. But apparently for Hoppe the thousands of criminal attacks by Palestinian Arabs throughout the last two decades that left hundreds of Israelis murdered are not related to the “derail[ing of] the peace process” either.

Hoppe also places blame on “Jewish settlements.” But the intent to destroy Israel predates the time Israel achieved control of Gaza from Egypt in 1967 and persisted after Israel delivered Gaza to the Palestinians in 2005, at the cost of expelling its own population. Hatred also long predates Israel winning Judea and Samaria after the Six Day War in 1967. Moreover, most Palestinian Arabs in Judea and Samaria live under the administrative control of the Palestinian Authority, not Israel. There are now no “Jewish settlements” in Gaza

in which it was a prison is that it was controlled by a totalitarian Islamist regime, Hamas.

⁵⁹ It is hardly understandable that an eminent libertarian such as Hoppe should criticize “extremism” as such. He, along with the present two authors, have often been castigated for holding the position of market fundamentalism, that is, extremism in favor of economic liberty. It is strange, but for this subject it appears that Hoppe abandons his pure libertarianism when he sees fit, in the same essay in which he himself attacks us for not holding such high standards.

and that did not stop Hamas either, it rather encouraged this terrorist organization. And the ones that exist in Judea and Samaria were built by Jews from scratch; they homesteaded these areas. These are the *Jews* in *Judea*. Why would the pure anarchist Hoppe oppose these settlements, since they allegedly result in “rendering a Palestinian state essentially impossible”? This is beyond belief. Why would he, the radical libertarian anarcho-capitalist, support a Palestinian *State*? Would that entity not constitute a “gang?” Does he not oppose gangs?

In any case, our esteemed colleague should oppose these settlements if they were occupying another owner’s property, but these are essentially un-homesteaded lands. Are Jews not supposed to be allowed to homestead virgin territory *because* they are Jews? Even when some constructions by Jews were made on Palestinian Arab property, Israel’s Supreme Court supported the latter and not the former. Does Hoppe know this? Of course, since our learned professor implicitly assumes that every inch of land is owned by Arabs by fiat, that explains his stance. However, that is not derived from any libertarian standard or empirical evidence, but rather from his own imagination. Moreover, why would Jewish Settlements *in principle* prevent the establishment of a Palestinian Arab state? Does Hoppe believe that such State should be *Judenfrei*? Israel has 20% Arab population and that does not prevent the existence of the Jewish State, nor denigrates any rights of its Arab citizens. Perhaps the implicit idea *behind* the assumption that a Palestinian Arab state should have no Jews (or it cannot exist *with* Jews) is the real reason for war.

As Daniel Doron (2009) explained:

“The claim that ‘Illegal settlements’ are an obstacle to peace is absurd too. Jewish settlements *occupy less* than 4% of the West Bank territory,⁶⁰ mostly constructed

⁶⁰ And even so, these Jewish “settlements” (that, borrowing an expression from Hoppe in a different context, comprise such a “meager” part of Judea and Samaria) are not an obstacle to any Palestinian Arab state because it is possible (as it was proposed in actual peace offers by Israel) to swap lands to leave the Jewish settlements in Israeli control in exchange for lands in Israel to the Palestinian Arabs. For instance, when Ehud Olmert was Prime Minister of Israel roughly fifteen years ago, he “...promised to withdraw all presence of the Israel defense Forces from Judea and Samaria; he

on deserted government land. The reason the Arabs want them removed (but not Arab settlements in Israel) is that their radical leadership cannot tolerate any Jews living among them. All Arab lands were ethnically cleansed after 1948, forcing more than one million Jews to flee countries in which they had lived long before the Muslim occupation.⁶¹ (emphasis added)

Now comes a particularly low blow, a punch way below the belt, at Israel. Hoppe opines: "There has been speculation as to the motive for this seemingly strange Israeli decision of lending support to Hamas. Quite plausibly: because events such as those of October 7th, can and are indeed currently being used by Israel as a dramatic proof and public demonstration of its long-held contention that there can never be any two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian problem, and Israel, for the sake of regional peace, must be still further expanded and restored as one single State to its alleged original, biblical size."

In other words, he is asserting, if we read correctly not only his lines but in between his lines as well, that Israel really welcomed the despicable attack on the part of Hamas on October 7, 2023. Does

the Anti-Zionist mentality we discussed above ring a bell? Hoppe is essentially saying that maybe that "friendly fire" he mentions was not all that friendly. In other words, Hamas would not be the only group in the neighborhood to use its people as shields; to sacrifice them on the altar of its ambitions. Israel too would be guilty of such heinous, appalling, dreadful and vicious behavior. The only thing wrong with October 7, 2023, according to Hoppe's logic, was that the body count of Jews was so "low." Double or triple the number of victims, the number of rapes, the number of babies killed, the number of hostages taken, and Israel would have been sitting even more pretty. What evidence does Hoppe present for even mentioning such "speculation"? None. So, where does it stem from? The Anti-Zionist mentality once again.⁶²

Now, there is nothing wrong with making such accusations if one can point to something resembling evidence in support of them. If the shoe fits, wear it, after all. But our esteemed colleague is on record as demanding "a shred of evidence" for our own claims. He waxes eloquent when such is missing. Does he provide a shred of evidence for this speculation, even a teensy bit of it? To ask this is to answer it: no, he does not. He

conceded sovereignty over east Jerusalem and the Old City – including the Western Wall! He offered 94% of the territory of Judea and Samaria, and the remaining 6% would be given to the Palestinians with land swaps in central Israeli areas, including a tunnel that would connect Gaza to the West Bank. Olmert implored Abu Mazen: "The Palestinians won't get an offer like this even in another 50 years!" (Baratz, 2017). Hoppe either does not know this (likely) or ignores it (worse yet). Given that this eminent libertarian theorist blames Israel for the lack of peace, and "extremist Israeli factions" for derailing "the peace process," it would be good for him to mention what *is* the Palestinian Arab counteroffer. Hoppe never mentions it, because there is none. The only offer is for Israel to cease to exist. But despite this Anti-Zionist demand, that is not going to happen.

In fact, if any party took steps to establish a Palestinian Arab State, that is Israel. It not only signed the Oslo Accords in the 90's, thereby creating the first administrative autonomous Palestinian Arab entity in the area in history (especially in Gaza and in "Area A" of Judea and Samaria), but also delivered 100% of the Gaza Strip to the PA in 2005. What happened on the other side? The Second Intifada, the election of Hamas in Gaza, the payment of wages to mass murderers, massive indoctrination of Jew hatred, and many other steps that could not be interpreted by any reasonable person as promoting peace. Only the Anti-Zionist mentality could focus primarily on Israel in this situation.

⁶¹ Let us stipulate, *arguendo* only, that there was massive land theft of Palestinian property in 1949, when Israel would not allow the return of Arabs who had departed (Let's always keep in mind that if the "right of return" should be allowed, Israel would be inundated with people who would undermine their country and murder as many Jews as they could get away with, in other words, they would perpetuate many times their atrocities of October 7). But what about the roughly 1,000,000 Jews who did not voluntarily depart from their property in Arab countries such as Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq. Hoppe never condescends to mention them, not even once. Are their properties less licit than those of the Palestinian Arabs? (There are disanalogies here: the Jews were guilty of no crime and posed no threat to their host countries. The same cannot at all be said for many Palestinian Arabs; but let these pass.) Here, we note a curious myopia on the part of Professor Hoppe. He is concerned with (supposed) land theft on the part of Jews vis a vis Arabs, but not at all about the reverse. Hazlitt (1946) urged us to embrace his one lesson, that "The art of economics consists in looking not merely at the immediate but at the longer effects of any act or policy; it consists in tracing the consequences in that policy *not merely for one group but for all groups*" (emphasis added by present authors). Our esteemed professor Hoppe has not yet learned that lesson. See also Block & Futerman (2021, Chapter 3).

⁶² See also Wistrich (2014).

does not even come close. Seemingly, he does not recognize how serious a charge he is leveling. We take back what we said before about his “taking the cake” for moral equivalence. No, this present charge of his is even more brutal. Let it be said loud and clear, once and for all, there is only one party to the present conflict that uses its people as expendable shields. And it is not Israel.

What about the “lending support to Hamas” accusation? This charge has been going on since the October 7th pogrom (and even before that). Anti-Zionists such as Hoppe cannot have it both ways. First, he cannot logically claim that Israel is guilty of trying to destroy Hamas and also guilty for supporting Hamas, at the same time. The truth is that what Anti-Zionists have been labeling as Israeli “support” for Hamas was in fact Israeli reluctant *toleration* for Hamas. That is, to engage in defensive operations every two years or so since the 2007 Hamas takeover of the Strip as to attempt to reduce the latter’s capabilities instead of completely destroying it. Why? To avoid the very same circumstance that Anti-Zionists are now complaining about, to wit, a full scale IDF operation in Gaza to definitively destroy Hamas.

Given that the Palestinian Arabs themselves elected Hamas in 2006 (Hoppe may do well in ask himself why they did so and if that has anything to do with the present imbroglio), and that Hamas was in fact running Gaza, what else was Israel realistically supposed to do apart from doing everything in its power to stop weapons flows to Hamas in the strip? Among other things forced upon Israel by the concrete political situation in the area, it had to continue providing electricity to the strip, healthcare to Gazans in Israel, allowing a flow of goods, giving work permits to thousands of Gazans (Luttwak, 2023), and of course tolerating financing flows to Hamas from Qatar and others. It did these things so it could function as a semi-government (including allowing the functioning of UNRWA facilities and personnel. Hamas used these as its own infrastructure and even some of

its members actively participated in the horrors of October 7).⁶³

It is part and parcel of the Anti-Zionist mentality to consider that all of the above equals “supporting” Hamas. But if, say, Israel ceases to provide electricity or water to Gaza, or does not allow further work permits for Gazans in Israel, or refuses to deliver healthcare to Gazans in Israel, the same Anti-Zionist will charge Israel with denying Gazans access to essential needs. In other words, damned if you do, damned if you don’t. Similarly, when Israel currently encourages northern Gazan civilians to leave for the south of the Strip in order to get them out of harm’s way, for the Anti-Zionist mentality that is “ethnic cleansing”; but if they stay and die as collateral damage as a result of Hamas using them as human shields then that is “genocide”. In other words, to do no wrong the only escape for Israelis would be to do nothing, i.e., to commit suicide.

But let us assume, arguendo, that we can ignore all of the above, that the status quo was not the only option politically feasible and that somehow Israel could have got rid of Hamas in Gaza without a full-scale invasion involving civilian casualties as collateral damage (presumably by magic). Another anti-Zionist argument in this regard is that Israel preferred Hamas to the PA, to *prevent* the creation of a Palestinian Arab State. But that ignores the fact that the PA is not a peace partner either. It is only *compared* to Hamas that the PA looks anything resembling peaceful and “moderate”.⁶⁴ Quite the opposite is the case. Not only they had rejected any peace offers offered to them, indoctrinate their children to hate Jews, and pay salaries to mass murderers, but their history is itself full of violence and murder. This is why the PA has even partnered with Hamas in the past. The main reason why they are seen as different (apart from their particular ideologies) is because they had a civil war in Gaza and Hamas pushed the PA out with extreme violence to gain complete control of the Strip in 2007 (a fight between two “gangs” indeed). To assume that without Hamas

⁶³ On UNRWA, see Joffre (2023), Goldenberg, Jobain & Jeffery (2024), Kingsley & Bergman (2024B), Reuters (2024), Fabian (2024). Also, “Hamas has been in a position to totally ignore the needs of people living in the enclave. Essential needs as food, education and health care are covered by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), over 100 NGOs from some 30 countries and

frequent donations from countries wishing to show solidarity with Palestinians. In some cases, (sic) foreign donors even pay the salaries of the personnel in the local administration” (Taheri, 2023).

⁶⁴ In very much the same way that the Nazi SA was moderate in comparison to the SS. The PA is, in reality, a dictatorship.

there would be peace and a Palestinian Arab State is to ignore history since the Oslo Accords.⁶⁵

Was delaying the destruction of Hamas a mistake? Of course. What was the alternative? To destroy Hamas. Anti-Zionists don't like either option, because they assume that the only reasonable path would be for Israelis to commit suicide. Well, Israelis respectfully decline to do so.

The truth is that Hamas is a genocidal, murderous Islamist group founded in 1987 by followers of the Muslim Brotherhood that has controlled the Gaza Strip since 2007. It was not founded by Israel, as Anti-Zionists imply⁶⁶ (Bard, 2021-A, 2021-B) nor was it sustained by it. It is funded and supported by Iran (Abu-Toameh, 2023A; 2023B), Qatar, and Turkey. And it has been at war against Israel since 2007, with several operations by the IDF during the intervening years. It did so in order to stop its continual rocket attacks, of which there were tens of thousands.

Apart from the complete fabrication that the goal of Israel is to be restored to its "biblical size" (for which Hoppe provides no evidence but his own claims, as per usual), observe the Anti-Zionist mental mechanics once again: It is not Hamas and its motivations, according to Hoppe, which are to be blamed for war, but it is instead Israel that *promotes* Hamas because it wants war. As is usually the case for Anti-Zionists, even when Palestinian Arabs such as Hamas intend to promote mass murder and war, it is Israel that is ultimately to blame. For the Hoppean mentality, Palestinian Arabs have no agency, only Israeli Jews do. Hamas did not achieve rule in Gaza because Palestinian Arabs themselves *elected* it (and a large portion of them still supports it), but because Israel "promoted" it. The same goes for

the idea that Israel created Hamas: For the Anti-Zionist mentality that Hoppe represents so well, even when Palestinian Arabs create a medieval genocidal organization, *that is Israel's fault as well.*

Hoppe's next foray is as follows:

"In any case, then, before this background, how is a libertarian to react and evaluate the 10/7 events? First off, he would want to wish the pox on the leadership of both gangs and on all gang-leaders of foreign states that have lent and continue to lend support to either one of the two warring gangs with funds stolen from their own subject population. As well, he would acknowledge that the Hamas attack on Israel was no more 'totally unprovoked' than the Russian attack a little while ago on the Ukraine. The attack on Israel was definitely provoked by the conduct of its own political leadership, much like the Russian attack on the Ukraine had been provoked by the leadership of the Ukraine."

We wish he would stop with his continual anarcho-capitalist sorties. All three of us, Hoppe as well as the present authors, strongly agree with this position.⁶⁷ It gets us nowhere, and is a strong rejection of Rothbard's (1967) plea to leave off on this type of sectarianism. Is Hoppe hoping for a Nobel Prize in moral equivalence? Given his continual wishing a pox on the heads of both Hamas and Israel, we stand ready to nominate him for this honor. As for his mention of "provocation" Block agrees with Hoppe on the Russian – Ukrainian war, Futerman does not. But both present authors sharply diverge from our debating partner on whether or not Israel

⁶⁵ Moreover, let's assume, arguendo, that there would be a Palestinian Arab State under the PA in Judea, Samaria and Gaza. What guarantee does Israel have that Hamas would not take over as it in fact did in Gaza in 2007 displacing the PA, but with control of the larger territory of Judea and Samaria allowing it to commit October 7 several times worse? The fact that most Palestinian Arabs support Hamas, and that the above is what *actually happened* in Gaza with Hamas gaining control there, makes anyone reasonable seriously consider that a Palestinian Arab State would imply a very real probability of attempting genocide against Israelis, and therefore a war much worse than at present. The Anti-Zionist does not even mention this scenario. It assumes that the lack of a Palestinian Arab State is what creates the hatred that fuels war, when it

is in fact Jew hatred that promotes war which made it impossible for Palestinian Arabs to accept peace offers, or to fully govern a specific area such as Gaza without turning it into a source of massive aggression.

⁶⁶ Including Hoppe, who says that Hamas "...actually received funding also from Israel in its beginnings, in order to build it up as a counterweight to the growing influence of the larger, more moderate and better funded secular underground resistance group Fatah, and its PLO leadership in exile in Tunisia." In fact, Israel did not pay attention to Hamas initially because the PLO was the main enemy, and not because it intended to create a more crazy and evil enemy than the PLO itself.

⁶⁷ For which we are all followers of Murray Rothbard, despite Hoppe's attempt to "expel" us.

“provoked” Hamas into its brutal attack on that day which will forever live in infamy. So, Israeli leadership was in effect totally responsible for the rapes, purposeful murders of civilians, and all the rest of that unconscionable day? This is the precise position of some 31 student groups at Harvard.⁶⁸ Where is the “shred of evidence” that Hoppe goes on and on about, eloquently, in support of this unwarranted contention. It is nowhere, that is where. For Hoppe, as with Anti-Zionists in general, when something horrible is done to Israelis, *everyone* is to blame (as Hoppe initially claims) but really *only* Jews are to blame (as Hoppe ends up implying). How could Hamas be really blamed of anything? It was Israeli leadership all along according to Hoppe that is responsible. In this respect, Hoppe implies something else, far worse, that Israelis *deserved* it.

Hoppe also adds that “...in both cases, that of Israel as well as that of the Ukraine, their provocations had been encouraged, backed up and supported big time by the predominantly Jewish neo-con gang-leadership in charge of the US government.” *The Jews* run the US government? Where have we heard that one before?...

Continues our author: “Apart from this, there is little a libertarian can do except raise his voice in favor of peace, talks, negotiations and diplomacy.” He calls for an “immediate truce...”

A cease fire while Hamas has still not been conquered? While they still hold Israeli hostages?⁶⁹ It is all too easy to forget that this terrorist⁷⁰ organization has on numerous occasions promised a repetition of its pogrom of October 7.⁷¹ After numerous murders of its citizens, thanks to those massive tunnels, literally tens of thousands of rockets fired from Gaza, the IDF has finally acted. It is now as we write on the verge of fully conquering Hamas. What kind of libertarian would wish for the continuation of this group of genocidal terrorists? Does Israel not have any right of self-defense at all? Perhaps this is too

“collectivist” for the sensibilities of Hoppe. Maybe individual Israelis, instead of the collectivist IDF, should pursue Hamas? No, that would not do either, since he calls for an “immediate truce.” Our learned friend does not seem to realize that we may deduce the right of self-defense from the twin libertarian pillars of the non-aggression principle and homesteading of private property. It will be a sad day for justice if the Israeli military ever ceases and desists before Hamas is fully ended and its members brought to justice. There is nothing to negotiate when one party wants the other exterminated. That is, unless Hoppe is in favor of the side that supports extermination. In other words, there is no cease fire possible with a pyromaniac.

Hamas leaders have declared over and over again that they intend to repeat the events of October 7, and more. Member of the Hamas political bureau Ghazi Hamad said on October 24, 2023 on Lebanese TV that Hamas is prepared to repeat the October 7 depredations (MEMRI, 2023):

“We must teach Israel a lesson, and we will do this again and again. The Al-Aqsa Flood is just the first time, and there will be a second, a third, a fourth, because we have the determination, the resolve, and the capabilities to fight. Will we have to pay a price? Yes, and we are ready to pay it. We are called a nation of martyrs, and we are proud to sacrifice martyrs.”

Ismail Haniyeh, one of Hamas’s leaders, said the following at a conference of the International Union of Muslim Scholars (IUMS) in Qatar (January 9, 2024) (MEMRI, 2024A):

“We should hold on to the victory that took place on October 7 and build upon it.”

Ali Baraka, another Hamas official, said on a January 30, 2024, on Lebanese TV that (MEMRI, 2024B):

“We can repeat October 7 many times, because once you storm, they collapse.”

⁶⁸ See Koenig (2023).

⁶⁹ It does not occur to Hoppe that maybe a “libertarian” could demand *first and foremost* the return of the hostages.

⁷⁰ Even one of the most fervent supporters of Hamas, Hoppe, agrees with this characterization.

⁷¹ The present authors have accused Hamas of many heinous acts. However, we trust them as truthful when they make such threats. So, let it not be said that we are critical of them 100% of the time...

It is difficult to understand Hoppe's position that the IDF should cease and desist from its attempt to totally eliminate scum of this sort. It is impossible to reconcile this with the libertarian philosophy which places great emphasis on defense against aggression.

In order to appreciate the magnitude of the destruction perpetrated by Hamas, the equivalent number of people killed in relation to the population for the US would be around 40 thousand (several other thousands kidnapped, and even more injured). But that's not all, because a key element is *how* they were killed. Children, women, and elderly murdered, dismembered, burned alive, along with many more sadistic depredations. And all of this in a *single* day. The *celebration* by Hamas and its supporters during and immediately after October 7 shows what are their real intentions.⁷² What truce is Hoppe talking about?⁷³

Nor is Hoppe yet finished with his advice to the Israelis. It is as follows: "What must be avoided, however, in any case and at all costs, is an escalation of the armed conflict through a massive retaliatory strike by the Israeli military against the Hamas housing and hiding out in Gaza. This even more so, because Israel, with some 10 million inhabitants, including (sic) a minority of some 2 million Arabs,⁷⁴ is surrounded exclusively by some less-than-friendly or even openly hostile neighboring states with a total population counting in the hundreds of millions, and any escalation of the conflict between Israel and Hamas may well expand and degenerate into an all-out war, engulfing the entire region of the Near- and Middle-East."

Here, Hoppe shows his pragmatic, utilitarian colors, but the hue is not libertarian. What about justice? Self-defense? Hamas has promised more episodes such as had occurred on October 7,

2023. Hoppe need not shed any crocodile tears about the safety of Israel, vis a vis its multitudinous surrounding enemies. They did quite alright, thank you very much, in 1948 (and several times thereafter), when they were far weaker than at present, against several invading armies.

What about that claim regarding "at all costs"? What does that mean, Professor Hoppe? You severely objected to our claim that Israel has a moral duty to do "whatever it takes" to destroy Hamas (which we further explain below). But, given that for you "whatever it takes" apparently means genocide, does your "at all costs" (which is clearly the same expression with a different wording) mean the destruction and subsequent expropriation, torture, and mass murder of the entire Jewish population of Israel (and of its Arab citizens as well, who would be regarded as traitors by the Hamas assassins, as they clearly showed on October 7 when they murdered many)?

The only hope for peace in the Middle East is not that Israelis passively accept mass murder or suicide (as would apparently satisfy Hoppe), but when the Arab nations (and especially the Iran regime) finally come to realize that Israel would be a far better friend than enemy, for their own prosperity and even self-preservation; when they come to love their children more than they hate Nate and Ben and David and Moshe. In other words, when they pursue the spirit behind the Abraham Accords, as some of the Arab countries already have done.

In Hoppe's assessment, Netanyahu "has exactly done what Block has been asking for." Well, yes and no. Yes, because he has decidedly and bravely embarked in the honorable endeavor of defending the people of Israel. No, because there are now over 200 IDF soldiers who have needlessly perished in the hand to hand fighting in the tunnels and houses of Gaza. Every one of

⁷² Also, more than 250,000 Israelis who lived close to Gaza had to be evacuated from the area. More than 700,000 were unable to work due to this situation or to military service. Hamas has also launched more than 13 thousand rockets aimed at Israeli civilians since October 7th. There were yet other consequences of October 7, namely how it psychologically affected those victims involved and civilians in Israel in general (Kuttler, 2024). The Hamas attack was of enormous consequences for Israeli civilians.

⁷³ For an analysis of the "Peace Process" and how the strategy of negotiating with Israel's enemies (and

granting concessions to them) has gone so far (summary: not good), see Chapter 4 of our book (Block & Futerman, 2021).

⁷⁴ It is nice of Hoppe to acknowledge that Israel has 20% Arab citizens. Perhaps it would be good for him to also look at the Jewish population in the territories under the Palestinian Authority, Hamas, and the Arab world in general. Since he won't be able to find many (or none at all), it would be indicative for him that perhaps *that* has something to do with the entire situation in the first place, and from whence the hatred and aggression truly emanates.

those lives is precious. If Netanyahu were not fighting with one hand behind his back due to severe diplomatic pressure among others from the US, many of those young soldiers would still be alive. We of course regret the collateral damage suffered by innocent Gazans. But that is entirely and totally the responsibility of Hamas. As soon as they surrender and release all their kidnap victims, those losses will cease. If there were no hostages, if there were no massive rocket launchings from Gaza, if there were no October 7th, there would be no Israeli incursion in Gaza whatsoever. Hamas is responsible for the destruction it created and unleashed. Why is Hoppe not talking about the need for Hamas to surrender and free the hostages and instead urges a truce and negotiations? Negotiate what? With whom? The same people that kidnapped and murdered women, babies and the elderly?

One wonders what Hoppe's view on an analogous situation would be. Does he advocate a "truce" between the cops and the robbers? Between the police and the rapists? Does he favor the California law which in effect legalizes theft of less than \$950? If not, why not? In what relevant way does Hamas differ from ordinary murderous criminals? We anxiously await Hoppe's response to this query. We do not expect to receive one.

Yes, the New York City cops and the marauders in that city are both part of "gangs." But to see no difference between these two "gangs" is highly problematic. As it is to call for a truce or a pause or peace between them, while the latter still continue their depredations.

Now comes a series of questions/challenges, our esteemed colleague puts to the present authors. We list them here, very slightly edited,⁷⁵ along with our responses:

Hoppe: "Does (your call for) support (of Israel) also include taxes forcibly taken by the various gangleaders in charge of Western States from their own population?"

Block and Futerman: When we wrote this book of ours (2021) we had not in mind financial support; rather we were focusing on emotional support, support at the UN (for instance with the US veto power), etc. But, let us consider actual transfers of funds from the US to the Israeli government. As

anarcho-capitalists, we must of course condemn not only such transfers, but, also, mulcting these monies from US or European residents in the first place. However, as we have announced from time to time, on more than one occasion, and this seems to have slipped the mind of our critic, we are not writing from the anarcho-capitalist perspective. Rather, as the title of our main contribution, our 2021 book indicates, we deal with these issues from a classical liberal point of view, in which not only are taxes justified, but so is foreign "aid." Why do we do so? Why do we leave off an exquisitely true philosophy, and embrace, instead, a vastly inferior one? We do so in order to be responsive to Rothbard's (1967) challenge to all libertarians not to become mired in sectarianism. Hoppe would push us in that direction, be we are not moving. Both Israel and Arab states receive aid, that is simply a fact, and it is not only used as "aid," but it is a foreign policy tool in order to influence the country that receives it. It is not as simple as saying "thank you but keep it."

Even so, do we oppose US aid to Israel? Yes, just as we reject aid to its enemies. It would do Israel no harm to stop receiving it (Siegel & Leibovitz, 2023), rather it would empower it to do as it sees fit to defend itself. Aid is a tiny fraction of its GDP. The same thing could not be said of Hamas or the Palestinian Authority, that literally run based on aid and have been doing so for decades, as their political and economic models guarantee nothing short of stagnation and decay. Perhaps Hoppe is not aware, but these organizations have not exactly been promoting laissez faire capitalism in the territories they control. Israel, on the other hand, is an example of entrepreneurial capitalism, even though not an anarcho-capitalist ideal. Perhaps Hoppe, embracing the "sectarianism" that Rothbard (1967) warned about, won't see a difference between both. Luckily, both Jews and *Arab citizens of Israel* certainly do.

We then call for Hamas "to be destroyed for the same reason and by the same method that the Nazis were."

Hoppe: "Does 'Nazis' refer to all Germans living in Germany at the time, including all non-Nazis, Nazi-opponents, and all German babies and children; and does the method of their destruction

⁷⁵ For continuity; our added material is in parentheses

include also the carpet bombing of entire cities such as Dresden, filled with mostly innocent civilians?”

Block and Futerman: Short answer: No.

Long answer: The bombing of Dresden was a method used by the Allies to harm the Nazi regime through deliberately punishing the German civilians, Nazi and non-Nazi alike. In that sense it was collective punishment. But it was not the *primary* method to destroy the Nazis themselves, which was the war itself. So, there is no *necessity* to link our statement with that particular bombing or the deliberate killing of civilians, unless Hoppe believes that the destruction of the Nazi regime as such *equals* the bombing of a civilian population instead of really entailing the destruction of the Nazi war machine... We talk about destroying Hamas as the Nazis *were* destroyed, not of punishing Palestinian Arabs as an independent goal.

Moreover, World War II was not primarily won by bombing of Dresden, but through the complete destruction of the Nazi regime war waging capabilities. Why does Hoppe bring the bombing of Dresden as his first thought for the destruction of the Nazi regime? Does he think that the destruction of the Nazi regime consisted *mainly* in the bombing of an innocent civilian population instead of the military destruction of the war machine operated by a historically unprecedented genocidal regime? We have another question for Hoppe: Apart from the bombing of Dresden, does he think that the Allies were in the right when fighting the Nazis (who, by the way, enthusiastically engaged in the bombing of civilian populations and mass murder on an industrial scale)? Should have the Nazis won?... In any case, we would not favor the bombing of, say, Ramallah in Judea and Samaria just because polls showed that most Palestinian Arabs supported the depredations of October 7th.⁷⁶ Bombing Ramallah⁷⁷ would do nothing to destroy Hamas. The method to destroy Hamas is the *same* that really destroyed the Nazis. Only

attacking Hamas infrastructure, tunnels, and assassins would achieve so. Which is precisely why the IDF operation was focused on such infrastructure and war waging capabilities, and not in the genocide of a civilian population of which only Hamas monsters (or Nazis) would proudly promote. If the opposite were the case and Israel's goal would be genocide, the Gazan population would be no more at this point.

But continuing with the Nazi comparison, Hamas, unlike the Nazis, did not try to hide its mass murder of Jews, but proudly showed it to the entire world by recording and transmitting the destruction. Moreover, Hamas actually shows a similar regard for its own population as the Nazis did in Berlin in 1945, by refusing to surrender until much infrastructure (which it deliberately used as a staging ground for its attacks and operations) was destroyed. If from our statement Hoppe interprets the deliberate attack of a civilian population instead of the focus to destroy the offensive capabilities of the enemy, then that is on him, not on us. One more point: Given the wide support for Nazis that Hamas have shown (as proven by their predilection for *Mein Kampf* and their maniacal depredations during October 7th, only comparable with that of the *Einsatzgruppen*), the comparison with them is more apropos.

What do we mean when we say that Israel is entitled to do whatever it takes to destroy Hamas? What it means is that Israel, within the philosophical framework of classical liberalism instead of the sectarian anarchist view that would take us nowhere (following Rothbard, 1967), has a moral right and a moral duty to protect its citizens and end this threat once and for all. It means complete, total, Israeli victory. Saying otherwise is not a humanitarian position but means advocating for the only *real* alternative: supporting the genocide of Jews and theocratic dictatorship of the Arabs. As long as Hamas exists, Jewish and non-Jewish lives in Israel are in very grave danger.⁷⁸ This must be stopped, and any decent human being should support this course of action.

⁷⁶ For instance, a poll by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (2023) found that there was “wide public support for Hamas’ offensive on October the 7th, but the vast majority denies that Hamas has committed atrocities against Israeli civilians.”

⁷⁷ Even a senior Fatah official Jibril Rajoub (Pacchiani, 2023), “secretary general of Fatah’s Central

Committee... justified the October 7 massacre by Hamas that killed over a thousand people in Israel, mostly civilians, as an act ‘in the context of the defensive war our people are waging.’”

⁷⁸ This applies, too, to Jewish lives anywhere in the world.

In the light of the approach that Professor Hoppe implies with his question on Dresden and German civilians during World War II, we have a few further remarks. In a brief autobiography of his, Hoppe says that:

“I was born shortly after the end of World War II, in 1949, in the British occupied zone of West Germany. My parents were both refugees, endangered at or forcibly expelled from their original homes in Soviet-occupied East Germany. As countless others of my generation, then, I was raised by a generation of parents and teachers who had just experienced some horrific military defeat and were then subjected to harsh and often brutal treatment by hostile foreign occupiers. Humiliated, abused, and intimidated, then, the generation of my parents kept largely quiet and obediently went with the ‘flow’ as increasingly dictated in the West by the US. Hence, the ‘education’ of my generation was to a large extent the result of Anglo-American propaganda and indoctrination” (Hoppe, 2023, 179).

We cannot help but observe that Professor Hoppe does not present his teachers, or his parents for that matter (as opposed to his above question to us where he talks about “non-Nazis, Nazi-opponents...”) as Germans *liberated* by the Allies. Rather, he describes them as “a generation of parents and teachers who had just experienced some horrific military defeat and were then subjected to harsh and often brutal treatment by hostile foreign occupiers.” Obviously, those non-Nazi Germans and the Germans who were opposed to the Nazi regime were not *defeated* but *freed* from the latter. For anyone opposed to the Nazis, the real “occupiers” were these, and not the allies (the liberators). Moreover, according to Hoppe they were “Humiliated, abused, and intimidated,” instead of now being allowed (in West Germany) to the same degree of freedom that other Western nations enjoyed (unlike East Germany) and in contrast with the previous totalitarian Nazi regime. Furthermore, the Germans who were part of the Nazi war Machine did not experience “some horrific military defeat,” but got what they deserved as a consequence of what they initiated: engulfing the entire European continent and the world in a mad orgy of mass murder and destruction.

In the same respect, our esteemed colleague claims that his education “was to a large extent the result of Anglo-American propaganda and indoctrination.” Based on the words he uses, Professor Hoppe does not seem to regard the liberation of Germany by the Allies as a positive occurrence. Perhaps that is why talking about the defeat of the Nazis engenders the idea of Dresden being bombed instead of primarily the Nazi war machine being destroyed. Perhaps he considers the Nazis as the victims? If so (and we certainly cannot know, unless he grants us the benefit of replying), we beg to differ. The Nazis then, as Hamas and its supporters now, had agency. And they brought their own destruction on themselves.

Hoppe: “How about Israeli Jews opposed to war? Silence them, too, whatever it takes?”

Block and Futerman: Where did we ever say anything remotely like that? It is truly remarkable how Hoppe derives invalid conclusions from our writings and builds straw-men on the basis of them. We are in favor of freedom of speech, and of freedom in general. Unlike Professor Hoppe, we do not advocate that people we disagree with “to be physically separated and expelled from society...”, and we certainly do not favor that their freedom of speech be abrogated. Speech is not a crime, however mistaken or false it might be.

But since Hoppe is so adept in defending and representing Rothbard, let us turn this around, and consider the position of the man all three of us greatly admire: Murray Rothbard. Our mentor favored two wars: one of these was that of the 13 colonies in their successful attempt to secede from Great Britain in 1776. How would our mentor have dealt with Loyalists to the UK during the Revolutionary War? Well, whatever the answer to that question would have been, to be good Rothbardians we would have to advocate for Israeli pacifists who opposed the defensive war of their country against Hamas, the same treatment, no? Presumably, as gentle as possible. At least, given his purely Rothbardian credentials, Hoppe surely would not object.

Moreover, in this respect, and regarding the idea that hundreds of thousands of Arabs must be allowed to return to Israel after the Arab attempt to destroy Israel failed in 1949, consider the following about the Loyalists who wanted to return after the American Revolutionary war ended:

“A parallel can also be drawn to the time of the American Revolution, during which many colonists who were loyal to England fled to Canada. The British wanted the newly formed republic to allow the loyalists to return to claim their property. Benjamin Franklin rejected this suggestion in a letter to Richard Oswald, the British negotiator, dated November 26, 1782:

‘Your ministers require that we should receive again into our bosom those who have been our bitterest enemies and restore their properties who have destroyed ours: and this while the wounds they have given us are still bleeding!’” (Bard, 2012, 161).

Hoppe: “(What is your view) on the sort of apartheid practiced in Israel?”

Block and Futerman: Professor Hoppe could also add to this question what are our views on the four sided triangle, on the three sided square, and on unicorns. Simply because there is no such thing as Apartheid in Israel. Quite the opposite, Professor Hoppe would do well in checking what is the penalty for selling land to Jews in the Palestinian Arab towns under PA control. That would be compatible with Apartheid indeed. Or let him examine the status of Jews in Arab countries before and after 1948. Or the status of Jews in Arab countries today (hint: there are almost none remaining after 1 million were expelled and expropriated). We touched upon this Apartheid slander on our book, for instance in Chapter 3 (2021, 112-113). We truly wonder if Hoppe read the book.⁷⁹ See also on this Block (2024A).

Hoppe: “So, there is no need whatsoever to distinguish between members of Hamas and inhabitants of Gaza generally? They all, including all babies and children, are indiscriminately guilty, part of a depraved culture and a collective evil that must be rooted out once and for all?”

Block and Futerman: Hamas must indeed be “rooted out once and for all.” As for their shields,

what would you do, Professor Hoppe, if some maniac were running at you, screaming “kill the libertarian” that is, you, brandishing a knife or a gun, but holding his child in front of him, and the only way you could defend yourself, the only onliest way, was to shoot right through his baby to kill him, in self-defense. If you did not kill that baby, and his father, you would die. What would you do, Professor Hoppe? We know what the libertarian answer is. It is to defend yourself. Merely on a pragmatic level, if it was improper to but a bullet through such shields, criminals, more and more, following the precedent laid down by Hamas, would engage in such dastardly acts.⁸⁰ Suppose further, to make the scenario Israel is facing even more realistic, Professor Hoppe, that you had your own “babies and children,” right in front of you, and that if you didn’t shoot both this maniac and his child, that not only would you die, but so would your own progeny. Do not ignore this question, we plead with you.

That was a micro challenge. Let us extrapolate to the macro level. Right now, as of this writing, Hamas still holds more than 100 captured Israelis as hostages. Posit that they execute them, every last one of them, women and children at the top of their list, as is their wont. Then, they put their heads on pointed sticks, and march around with them in a parade. Are these folk that Hoppe defends capable of such bestiality? To ask this question is to answer it. Certainly they are. Further, they are perfectly capable of filming this parade, and others of their ilk would cheer on these proceedings.⁸¹ Three options are now open to the Israelis in response. First, complain to the U.N.⁸² Second, do absolutely nothing more than they are now doing, trying to conquer Hamas. Three, follow the “advice” actually, implicit threats, of people like Biden (what Netanyahu is doing is “over the top”) and Schumer (get rid of the Prime Minister of Israel, declare peace with Hamas, hope they release all hostages without demanding too many of their people in return in Israeli jails and pray for no more October 7s.)⁸³

⁷⁹ Is it possible that his entire denigration of our position is based upon his reading of one or two of our op eds in the *Wall Street Journal*? Enquiring minds want to know.

⁸⁰ For a libertarian analysis of shields, see Block (2010E; 2011; 2019B).

⁸¹ This, presumably includes those 31 infamous Harvard student organizations which claimed Israel solely

responsible for the slaughters of October 7 that Hoppe is logically required to support.

⁸² We have to establish we have a sense of humor, do we not?

⁸³ Block (2024B).

The point here is that Hoppe is missing the point. He does not realize how extremely powerful a demagogic tool it is that Hamas is employing, the shields. Even an acute commentator such as himself is taken in by this ploy. Of course it sounds horrid, beyond the pale, cruel and unusual, to advocate killing “babies and children.” This is precisely the conclusion Hamas is hoping for, and Hoppe has fallen into their trap, root and branch. But matters are the other way around: It is rather *Hamas* that condemns innocent babies and children to die by using them as shields against Israel’s self-defense. Why is not Hoppe’s outrage directed to Hamas? These monsters are not only *deliberately* murdering innocent Israeli babies and children, but also using *their own* as shields? How could that not be the main focus in this scenario? Only the Anti-Zionist mentality can explain it.

But, more importantly, why is it that professor Hoppe does not ask the real question implied by his missive? Such question is not if “there is no need whatsoever to distinguish between members of Hamas and inhabitants of Gaza generally” or if “They all, including all babies and children, are indiscriminately guilty”, but *why* is there such a scenario that makes the question to arise in the first place. In other words, why are innocent children’s lives in danger? And that is because Hamas built its entire infrastructure, including a tunnel network the size of the London underground (Bell, 2023), below residential areas, and moreover, it uses mosques (Fabian, 2023B), schools (Falk, 2023), hospitals (Israel Defense Forces, 2023A) and civilian buildings as rocket launching grounds, arms deposits, and bases. Hamas does so because their regard for human life is zero, whether its victims are Jews *or* Arabs. Furthermore, they welcome death and utilize it as a propaganda tool, to fool people like Professor Hoppe to turn their negative attention on the side that is defending itself instead of the side that is aggressing (and by so doing it is sacrificing its own population).

The fact that it is not the goal of Israel to commit genocide is implicitly recognized by Hoppe himself. He writes: “Gaza is a tiny, poor, and densely populated territory, and Hamas is accordingly a small, low-budget gang, with only some rag-tag army and little and mostly low-grade weaponry. Israel is a much larger, significantly more prosperous, and less densely populated territory, and the State of Israel, subsidized long-lastingly and heavily by the world’s mightiest and wealthiest of all gangs, the USA, is a big and high-budget gang, with some large, well-trained professional army, equipped with the most sophisticated and destructive weaponry available, including atomic bombs.”

How can Hoppe then account for the fact that at the time of this writing, Israel is still engaged in fighting Hamas after five months? That is because the IDF is doing whatever it can to prevent civilian casualties (Magid, 2023)⁸⁴ while Hamas is doing whatever it can to promote them, while operating from a network of tunnels of a scale larger than the London Underground.⁸⁵ As can be seen, neither Hamas is a “low-budget gang,” since its infrastructure, weaponry and operations cost billions of dollars provided by their puppet masters in Iran and Qatar (among other organizations). Israel is in reality fighting a proxy war with Iran (Nakhoul, 2023; Said, Faucon & Kalin, 2023; Abu Toameh, 2023B) when it faces Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Hamas Deputy Chairman Saleh Al Arouri declared in an interview with Al-Quds TV on December 30, 2017 (MEMRI, 2017):

“Our relations with Iran are based on the fact that Iran is the most [hostile] country in the world toward the Zionist entity. Iran is the only country that says that this entity is cancerous and should be uprooted from the region. This is Iran’s official position, and it is willing to provide real and public support to the Palestinian and other resistance movements fighting that entity. Brother, if

⁸⁴ Since October 7, 2023, the Israel Defense Forces made tens of thousands of phone calls, sent millions of recorded messages, dropped millions of leaflets and sent millions of text messages to Palestinian Arab civilians with evacuation warnings (Fabian, 2023A), precisely in order to reduce civilian casualties. What other military has ever done anything remotely resembling this practice? None.

⁸⁵ There was once a six-day war engaged in by Israel. This would have been a five day war if the Israeli military unleashed its full power against Hamas, and was concerned not at all for collateral deaths, as Hoppe’s correct analysis of the relative strength of the two armies amply attests. Our author, here, is caught in a logical contradiction.

any official body gives us support – and I'm not talking about military aid because nobody but Iran gives us any military support. If anyone gives us aid, it makes us swear a hundred times that we won't reveal this, because it fears the world order.

"The Iranians, on the other hand, provide aid to the Palestinian resistance, and are not worried about the consequences. There is an important point I would like to make. We tell our people and our brothers that the aid Iran provides to the resistance is not merely symbolic. This is real aid, which is essential for the resistance to continue and be effective. Secondly, many people say: What has Iran ever done for the Palestinian cause? [They say:] Show me where it has ever confronted the Israel entity. I am not an Iranian defending my country. I am a Sunni Arab Palestinian from Hamas, but I'm talking about the reality. On the one hand, there are countries that support Israel, conspire with it day in and day out, and sacrifice Jerusalem and the holy places, and on the other hand, we have [Iran], which provides us aid against the Israel entity.

"To the people who question Iran's confrontation with Israel, I say: Who supported the resistance in Lebanon until it drove out the Israeli entity? It was Iran. Who supports the resistance in Gaza and Palestine? Iran. It is Iran and Hizbullah that confront that entity along with us."

Iranian official Mohammad Mehdi Shariatmadar said on a January 26, 2024 interview on Saudi Arabia, Asharq News TV (MEMRI, 2024C):

"From where would the [Qods] Force come to confront the Zionist entity? Will Jordan allow this? Will Syria allow the Iranian fighters to pass through so they can fight in the occupied lands? What is the difference between fighters who have a different nationality, and who are supported by Iran in the confrontation, and sending [actual Iranian] fighters? Obviously, Iran did do this. Iran sent forces in the past to South Lebanon and to Syria. Today, if Iraq, Jordan, Egypt, Syria, or Lebanon allow for a direct Iranian military presence. I believe that as part of Iran's plan, and in line with its

strategic patience – which has not been properly understood so far – there will be a confrontation. In any case, the confrontation is ongoing. It is not limited to the borders of the Golan (sic) Heights, Jordan, Palestine, or Syria, and so on."

What about our contention that there is an evil, depraved culture residing next to Israel? It is quite obvious that this is the case, where children are indoctrinated to kill Jews, where suicide bombers are considered role models, and where violence is praised. As Elan Journo (2023) explains:

"Wherever Palestinian factions attained any semblance of self-rule and territorial control, they established militant dictatorships: in Jordan (1968–1970), in Lebanon (1970–1982), in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (1993 onward). The immediate victims were Palestinians themselves. Despite claiming to fight for that community, Palestinian leaders ruled with an iron fist, eradicating free speech, carrying out arbitrary arrests, expropriating property, persecuting atheists, Christians, gays.

"And while subjugating their own people, Palestinian leaders fomented hostility toward Israelis and waged war on them. In speeches, radio programs, television shows, news media, classrooms the Palestinian cause glorifies the slaughter of Israelis. And it committed deliberate atrocities to terrorize them.

"...Factions within the Palestinian cause competed for prestige and recruits, by carrying out horrific attacks (even inflating their number of kills). The more militant, the greater their honor and legitimacy. Essentially, they jockeyed to prove who is more murderous.

"Later, the signature tactic became suicide bombings — in discos, buses, shopping malls, restaurants. At a Jerusalem pizzeria, a Hamas 'martyr' detonated a 5–10kg bomb, hidden inside a guitar case with nails, bolts, and screws to inflict maximum carnage. The explosion gutted the restaurant. Lying in the wreckage were strollers and baby carriers. Such attacks were part of how Hamas rose to prominence. It out-martyred its rivals.

Through brutality, this Islamic totalitarian group demonstrated its commitment to destroying Israel.”

Hamas, then, is a clear expression of such depraved culture capable of such depraved acts (Abu Toameh, 2023A):

“In 2002, Hamas committed one of its deadliest massacres during the Jewish holiday of Passover in the Israeli city of Netanya. Thirty civilians were murdered and 140 wounded when a Hamas terrorist, disguised as a woman, detonated a suitcase filled with powerful explosives in the dining room of a hotel where Jews were celebrating the Passover holiday. Most of the victims were senior citizens (70 and over). The oldest victim was 90 and the youngest, 20.”

This glorification of death is defended in the Hamas charter in Article 8:

“Allah is its target, the Prophet is its model, the Koran its constitution: Jihad is its path and death for the sake of Allah is the loftiest of its wishes.”

Is glorifying death, establishing dictatorships, committing horrible acts of mass murder, not the sign of a depraved, evil culture? Conversely, what kind of healthy, peaceful culture reveres death and destruction in this fashion? Perhaps Professor Hoppe in effect regards these acts positively and calls for murder as the features of the opposite of an evil culture, but we do not.

Hoppe: “How about dropping an atomic bomb on Gaza, then, as the US did about eighty years ago on the civilian population of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as collective punishment for the crimes committed by the Japanese government-gang?”

Block and Futerman: Stop with the government-gang business, please. We are all anarcho-capitalists here. We will not again mention that this continual emphasis leads directly into the sectarianism against which Rothbard (1967) warned. Hoppe should listen to his mentor, since his entire point is supposedly to defend his

reputation from the likes of us. The very fact that Hoppe raises this atom bomb question indicates how deeply he has fallen for the Hamas shield scheme. He thinks it constitutes a *reductio ad absurdum* against our position. It does not. The fact that Israel will never use an atomic bomb on Gaza is precisely *why* the shield tactic by Hamas is effective both at the military and propaganda levels. It is exactly because Israel does *not* target civilians directly, and furthermore, attempts to reduce civilian casualties. Otherwise, it would not make any sense, since Israel could drop the “atom bomb” or its equivalent and destroy and kill everyone in minutes. And if Professor Hoppe asks if we would support such a thing, we have already replied with the Dresden example.⁸⁶

Hoppe then takes us to task for this statement in the *Wall Street Journal*:

“Mere victory isn’t enough. Israel has won every war it ever fought. This time, the triumph must be so thorough and conclusive that there will never be any other war for this country.”

Hoppe: “Haven’t we heard this before: the war to end all wars?!”

Block and Futerman: What? We thought it was original with us. On a more serious note, shouldn’t we hear it at least once again? No, many, many more times. After all, who wants war? Surely, all men of good will yearn for a situation where no one engages in any war any more.

When will peace come to the Middle East? As soon as, and not a minute before, Israel’s neighbors learn it is not to be trifled with. It is not to be attacked. It is not to have rockets thrust at it. Its citizens are not to be raped⁸⁷ and murdered. Its ships are to be unmolested on the high seas. It is to be treated as any decent folk would treat a civilized neighbor. Some have already learned this lesson, for example, those countries which have signed on to the Abraham Accords, and kept their peace during the present altercations. The IDF is now in the process of teaching some of its neighbors this very important lesson. Then, and

⁸⁶ For a libertarian analysis of atomic weaponry, see Block and Block (2000).

⁸⁷ On Hamas rapes of Israeli women, see Botbol (2023), Gettleman, Schwartz, & Sella (2023), Frey (2024), UN Meetings Coverage and Press Releases (2024),

Nichols (2024), BBC (2024), Times of Israel Staff (2024), Kingsley & Bergman (2024A), Sky News (2024).

only then, can there be peace. No justice, no peace.

Moreover, it is not “the war to end all wars,” only those of Israel. Or does Professor Hoppe think that the only war around is that which involves Israel? Perhaps that would explain his obsession with this one country. Or is our world class economist and philosopher in favor of eternal war against Israel? It would be interesting to know. One wonders if he will condescend to respond.

We continue: “Israel has a moral right to finish the job, and the West has a moral duty to support it. Let Israel do whatever it must to finish this war in the fastest way possible, with the minimum civilian and military casualties on its side.”

Hoppe: “How considerate, and totally meaningless, even shameful, after everything said to the contrary before about the irrelevance of civilian casualties!”

Block and Futerman: We do not mind debate. We are honored that so eminent a libertarian as Hans Hoppe condescends to set us straight on these important matters. When he criticizes what we have actually said, all is well. We can respond. We can defend our position. But when he puts words into our mouths, despicable words, we are justified in taking umbrage. We never in a million years said or wrote or published anything remotely resembling “the irrelevance of civilian casualties.” We ask this leader of the libertarian movement, with all due respect, to back up this improper charge against us; to mention the exact site wherein these horrid words appear from our pen. What we did write is that “Hamas is and will be responsible for any civilian casualties” and that is true indeed, not that civilian casualties are “irrelevant.”

Civilian casualties are not “irrelevant.” Quite the opposite. They are very relevant, which is why

Hamas promotes them with their shield tactic. And which is why Israel operates in such a way as to minimize them.

At this point Hoppe leaves off this back and forth format of his, and resumes his more traditional presentation. We shall again follow him in this format.

What is the next claim of our libertarian champion? Trigger warning here: it is not very nice:

“Whatever these outpourings of Block’s are, they have nothing whatsoever to do with libertarianism. In fact, to advocate the indiscriminate slaughter of innocents is the total and complete negation of libertarianism and the non-aggression principle. The Murray Rothbard I knew would have immediately called them out as unhinged, monstrous, unconscionable and sickening and publicly ridiculed, denounced, ‘unfriended’ and excommunicated Block as a Rothbardian.”⁸⁸

We are tempted to regard these as hysterical claims and ignore them. We shall not give into this temptation. We do not “advocate the indiscriminate slaughter of innocents.” Instead, we charge, Hoppe pays insufficient attention to the demagogic power of Hamas’ use of shields. This is a very powerful tool on the part of Hamas, and Hoppe has fallen victim to it. What Hoppe does not seem to realize is that in virtually *all* wars, numerous innocents perish. His condemnation of this almost necessary and unfortunate state of affairs renders him in effect a pacifist. But, note, Rothbard did not oppose all wars. Does Hoppe not realize that copious numbers of innocents died in the wars of 1776 and 1861 which Rothbard supported? Does this eminent professor of economics not support any wars? Even *defensive* ones?⁸⁹ If so, he is in effect a devotee of murder,

⁸⁸ It seems more than just a bit presumptuous, maybe, even, just this side of arrogant, to speak in behalf of someone who is in no position to speak for himself. Rothbard, after all, did change his position on several important issues during his maturity. He moved from a position of limited government libertarianism to anarcho-capitalism; he gave up on his natural rights justification for libertarianism and adopted Hoppe’s argument from argument. At one time, he favored an open borders libertarian position but then later, justified governmental limitations on immigration. Who knows, if he had witnessed the savage treatment meted out by

Hamas to innocent women and children, he might have reversed his position on that group of terrorists. Intellectual modesty is not one of Hoppe’s strong suits. Murray Rothbard once told one of the present authors (Block) that it was difficult having Hoppe as his colleague at UNLV since he would often and publicly lash out at fellow professors there, many of whom were otherwise inclined to be friendly to and supportive of the two of them.

⁸⁹ Apparently, Professor Hoppe does not distinguish between *aggression* and the *use of force*. The former implies the latter but not necessarily vice versa.

since innocents perish in every such altercation, at least if we take seriously the erroneous logic he employs.

By the way, as if it is entirely of no moment, who started this present war that began on October 7, 2023? Was it Israel? Maybe Hamas? Reading Hoppe, one would be hard pressed to discern how he would address that question. Reluctantly, perhaps, he might concede it was Hamas? Then, we ask, does he not support defensive wars against those who initiate them? On the other hand, we might be speaking far too quickly. For, reading the material he puts forth in his Open Letter, one might well interpret him as saying Israel really started this war before October 7, 2023, with its “blockade” of Gaza, the “open-air concentration camp,” etc. But, *arguendo*,⁹⁰ who began the need for that? Israel, lest Hoppe forget, pulled out of that area in 2005, leaving the Palestinian Arabs fully in charge. What did they do with that sovereignty granted to them? They built tunnels and rocket launchers based in schools, hospitals, playgrounds, markets, etc.

Hoppe continues to wax eloquent: “Indeed, unforgivably, with his WSJ piece Block has made a contribution to the horrors actually following the events of October 7th and still unfolding: the near complete destruction of Gaza and its reduction to little more than some huge pile of rubble and a vast field of ruins, the slaughter of tens of thousands of innocent civilians by the Israeli military, and the continuous widening of the armed

conflict, including by now also the Lebanon and Yemen...”

We are extremely grateful to Block’s several times co-author⁹¹ for ascribing such power to our little selves. First of all, Block, alone, cannot take full credit for this “unforgivable” op-ed.⁹² Futerman has earned at the very least a full half credit. Second, we are together the co-authors of not one but two *Wall Street Journal* op eds (Block & Futerman 2023A; Futerman & Block, 2023A). One wonders why he focuses on only one of them.⁹³ He didn’t like ze uzzer vun? Third, although we appreciate the “compliment,” we doubt that we had all that much to do with actual events in the Middle East (although apparently we are so very important for Professor Hoppe!). Yes, the *Wall Street Journal* constitutes a gigantic megaphone, but we are hardly the only ones writing for this newspaper. Fourth, his continual repetitiveness is getting a bit tiring. We have already responded to all of his substantive charges, so we will move along to the next charge he wishes to hurl at us.⁹⁴

This next claim we are charged with, is yet another we have not made. Hoppe maintains that “Essentially, [our argument] boils down to this: The Jews in Israel have made more and better use of the territory under their control than the Arabs made or are currently making with the territories controlled by them; and hence, the Jews have a better claim to some territory-in-dispute than the Arabs do.”

Moreover, the latter can and should be advocated in defensive cases, for the very same reason that the former should be repudiated.

⁹⁰ We do not agree in any way with the use of such concepts for the Gaza situation. Unless, that is, Professor Hoppe would refer to an area under the control of an Islamist totalitarian group such as Hamas as an “open-air concentration camp,” in which case he would certainly have a good point.

⁹¹ Hoppe, Hulsmann and Block (1998), Block, Kinsella and Hoppe (2000), Hoppe and Block (2002).

⁹² As if Professor Hoppe would be the libertarian Pope, who can grant (or not) forgiveness for our sins.

⁹³ The Jewish mother buys her son two shirts. He races up to his room to change into one of them. He comes down to show his mother how it looks on him. Her response, “Ze uzzer vun, you didn’t like?” Other works of ours on Israel are Block, Futerman & Farber (2016; 2021), Block & Futerman (2023B; 2023C; 2023D; 2024A; 2024B), Futerman & Block (2023A; 2023B; 2023C; 2023D; 2023E; 2023F; 2023G; 2023H; 2023I; 2023J), Futerman, Block & Farber (2016; 2020).

⁹⁴ Regarding Hoppe’s claim that the IDF slaughtered tens of thousands of innocent civilians, apart from the fact that the IDF does everything in its power to reduce such casualties while Hamas intends to promote them, we ask: What about members of Hamas? Was not a single one killed according to Hoppe? The IDF has so far achieved the death of about 10,000 Hamas murderers, including members of its political leadership, brigade commanders, battalion commanders and company commanders. 30,000 Hamas targets have been attacked by the IDF in Gaza and more than 3,000 Hamas military sites were found and destroyed. Hundreds of tunnels were caved in of the more than one thousand that were found. And regarding civilian casualties numbers, Hamas numbers cannot be used as a serious source (Wyner, 2024). The case of the Al-Ahli Hospital, bombed by the Islamic Jihad, is another case where not only was Israel initially unjustifiably (and automatically) blamed (UN News, 2023) but also the number of casualties was inflated (Israel Defense Forces, 2023B).

Again, we do not mind, we actually appreciate, criticism of what we actually said.⁹⁵ But it is a bit overboard to attribute material to us we have not published, and then to lay into us for that. Here, Hoppe is confusing us with Coase (1960). This is exactly the sort of argument that would be made by this economics Nobel Prize winner. For him, maximizing wealth is pretty much all there is that we should consider, and, certainly, Israelis have been far more productive than their Arab neighbors. As it happens, Block is highly critical of Coase on transactions costs and supposedly maximizing GDP at the expense of justice in property rights.⁹⁶ Hoppe's entirely justified credentials as a world class economist are slipping just a bit here for not being able to distinguish the views of these two, one from the other.

RESPONSE TO HOPPE'S EXHIBIT III

We now move on to Hoppe's "Exhibit three: This concerns Block's (2023x) reply to a short piece by Kevin Duffy (2023)."

Duffy (2023) maintains that Block and Futerman (2023A) cannot be reconciled with Rothbard (1973).

Hoppe accuses the present authors of "advocacy of total, unrestricted war." We have already put paid to that charge, so we will move on.

This otherwise excellent libertarian theoretician then avers as follows: "What Rothbard had in mind [to support]⁹⁷ was defensive violence used by secessionist movements against some central occupying powers trying to prevent them by means of war from leaving, i.e., something obviously a world apart from the total war advocated by Block."

Hoppe is in error here. Yes, Rothbard's support of the 13 colonies in 1776 fits this bill perfectly. But it is only a small part of the story. To the extent that Rothbard was a libertarian, and indeed that is to a very large albeit not full extent,⁹⁸ he must necessarily support *all* truly defensive wars, not merely those of "secessionist movements" as Hoppe would have it. Yes, Taiwan wishes to remain separate from China, so it is easy to extrapolate that Rothbard would have supported the former, vis a vis the latter. But there have been numerous examples of wars throughout human history which had nothing whatsoever to do with secession, as Hoppe, again, would have it, and, yet, there was a clear aggressor, and also a clear victim-defender. To say that a Rothbard libertarian, such as the present authors, could not support the latter, merely because secession was irrelevant, is highly problematic.

We are of course very open to the possibility that Rothbard would have supported Hamas, not Israel, in the present confrontation arising out of the despicable events of October 7, 2023, but the reason for this cannot be even remotely relevant, as Hoppe would have it, to secession. Let us put this into other words. Hoppe contends that Rothbard could not possibly have supported Israel vis a vis Hamas since the only time Mr. Libertarian ever favors any side in any war is if it is engaging in secession. This is clearly false. Rothbard would very likely have supported Hamas not Israel, but it would be due to what we regard as his historical misconception of justice in private property rights⁹⁹ and would have nothing at all to do with secession, or lack of secession, a la Hoppe.

Hoppe needs a lesson in basic libertarian war theory. Rothbard favored only two wars *in which the United States was involved in*: the

⁹⁵ In our view, there is no such thing as bad publicity. We are extremely grateful to Hoppe for his Open Letter; we have no doubt this will massively promote awareness of our 2021 book on the subject.

⁹⁶ Barnett and Block (2007A; 2009B), Block (1977, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2003, 2006A, 2010A, 2010B, 2010C, 2011F, 2013B, 2014, 2015-2016), Block, Barnett and Callahan (2005).

⁹⁷ Material in brackets supplied by present authors. All throughout, we have slightly edited Hoppe's remarks for purposes of clarification. We trust he will not "pile on" and accuse us of plagiarism or changing the meaning of what he is saying, or any such thing. However, with him on the warpath, we cannot be certain of this.

⁹⁸ As nobody can perfectly fully embody a philosophy (including Hoppe, although he may think he himself does, as shown by his Open Letter; although he does not as we explained in the first part of this response). For criticisms of Rothbard's Austro-libertarian theses, from an Austro-libertarian perspective, see Barnett and Block (2004; 2005; 2005-2006; 2007B; 2009B; 2012), Block (1998; 2003; 2004A; 2011A; 2011B; 2022), Block and Futerman (2021), Block, Barnett, and Salerno (2006), Block, Klein and Hansen (2007). But Hoppe need not despair, we will not expel neither him nor Rothbard from libertarianism.

⁹⁹ And also because he does not give due weight to inveterate hate of Jews on the part of Arabs.

Revolutionary War of 1776 and the Southern side of the Civil War of 1861. But the US was involved in dozens of other wars in its long history. This means that Rothbard favored dozens of other wars, but *against* the US? Not necessarily. What we know for sure is that Rothbard opposed what he regarded as the *offensive* side of a war, but favored the *defense*. And in the case of many wars, he did not pass judgment.

Stipulate that Country A invaded Country B, and not the other way around. Then, Rothbard, and all those who take seriously the non-aggression foundational principle of libertarianism (NAP), unlike Hoppe, would have supported Country B, not Country A. Posit that during the Russo-Japanese War (1904–05) the former attacked the latter, and not the reverse. Thus, if we can extrapolate from the NAP, libertarians should favor Japan and oppose Russia. There is little doubt that in the Israeli war of independence of 1948, Rothbard would have favored the invading Arab armies, but this is because he viewed the Israelis as stealing Arab land and thus having in effect started this war, thus taking the position of the offense. We diverge from this assessment because we depart from Rothbard on proper land titles and the historical developments surrounding the founding of Israel and the Zionist movement; we also claim he did not give proper weight to the pogroms against the Jews initiated by the Arabs long before 1948 and he certainly did not have his facts right on the situation in the area before 1948. What of the war of 2023 between Hamas and Israel? For a proper libertarian analysis, we must ask who started it? Who was the initiator of it? Which group was offensive, which defensive?¹⁰⁰ It will come as no surprise that we regard Hamas in the wrong in this matter.

Continues Hoppe: “Yet in stating that Rothbard ‘does not at all oppose war, period,’ Block tries to create the deceptive impression that his deviation from Rothbard, then, is merely a minor one, only a matter of degree.” No, there is no deviation at all

here. Duffy says that Rothbard opposed all wars. Block merely corrected Duffy on this point.

Now we get to the crux of the matter with Duffy. This writer claims that because Block and Futerman diverge from Rothbard on this one particular point, they are both absent without leave, AWOL. In the military, this is a crime. From Duffy’s perspective, it means that such persons can no longer consider themselves libertarians. But libertarianism is not a religion, with an acknowledged leader, such as the Pope and Catholicism.¹⁰¹ Yes, Rothbard is certainly the leader of this philosophy. It is not for nothing that he is widely and properly hailed as “Mr. Libertarianism.” However, this AWOL business is as sensible as is “settled science.” There is no such thing in either field of endeavor.

Block (2023) attempted to refute Duffy by mentioning that other leading Austro-libertarians also went AWOL, and it is just plain silly to think that they, too, should be excommunicated, Duffy-style. He mentioned Joe Salerno, Peter Klein, and Hans Hoppe himself, in this regard. Hoppe is quite correct in maintaining that “Indeed, Rothbard embraced some of these deviations (such as mine, for instance).”¹⁰² Block also mentioned Rothbard, for going AWOL vis a vis Mises, in chapter 9 of his magisterial *Man, Economy and State*, where he took a very different view of monopoly theory.

But Hoppe is not having any of Block’s defense against Duffy. He characterizes it as “Grotesque.” He continues: “If anything, this assessment of Block’s only indicates that he has lost any sense of measure and proportion. None of the other ‘deviationist’ writings mentioned by him in comparison to and as an excuse and justification for his own deviationist position on the war question is, or can be interpreted by any stretch of the imagination as a break with or renunciation of the fundamental principles of the Austro-libertarian intellectual edifice. But his call for total and unrestricted war and the indiscriminate slaughter of innocent civilians is actually the

¹⁰⁰ See on this Block (2024C).

¹⁰¹ Even in that case, there is dissension on the part of other leaders of this religion. There are schisms, from time to time.

¹⁰² This refers to Hoppe’s notable contribution regarding the argument from argument. If Rothbard had followed the pattern set out by Duffy, he would have booted

Hoppe out of the libertarian movement for making this vital contribution (as if he could do any such thing, which he cannot; neither can Hoppe, come to think of it). For more on this crucially important insight of Hoppe’s, see Block (2004C; 2011F), Gordon (1988), Hoppe (1988; 1993; 1995), Kinsella (1996B; 2002), Meng (2002), Rothbard (1998).

complete and uninhibited rejection and renunciation of the non-aggression principle that constitutes one of the very cornerstones of the Rothbardian system. To believe that Rothbard would have given serious consideration to his WSJ piece is simply ridiculous and only indicates that Block's understanding of Rothbard is not nearly as good as he himself fancies it to be.¹⁰³ The Rothbard I knew would have denounced the piece in no uncertain terms as monstrous and considered it an unforgivable aberration and disgrace."

Here, once again. Hoppe engages in language that has no place in scholarly debate. To boot, he is also yet again in error on matters of substance. This in two ways. First, Block did not at all respond to Duffy "as an excuse and justification for his own deviationist position on the war question." The "war question" was only peripheral to that debate. It concerned, rather, the concept of AWOL: excommunicating libertarians such as the present authors from the libertarian movement.

Second consider Hoppe's claim that war and peace are more important than the deviations from Rothbard that he, Salerno and Klein engaged in. Well, yes, the former are matters of life and death, the latter, not. But this is to entirely change the subject. Duffy and Block were debating deviations per se, and whether or not they could justify excommunication. These two authors were not discussing severity of deviations. It is as if Duffy and Block were debating who was the best baseball player of all time, and Hoppe comes along and criticizes the latter for not discussing something more important. Block, and all men of good will, certainly share Hoppe's assessment that war and peace are more momentous than theoretical discussions of anti-trust legislation (Rothbard), specialization and the division of labor (Klein), and the relationship between wealth or income and time preference (Salerno). Duffy and Block simply were not arguing over issues based on importance. Their only dispute was over AWOL.

We might as well criticize Hoppe (e.g., Hoppe, 2001) for wasting most of the pages of his books for not focusing on war and peace to a greater degree. That would be just as germane as this particular Hoppean critique of Block vis a vis Duffy.

CONCLUSION

We now want to engage in a bit of meta-theorizing. How is it that Hoppe, one of the undeniable leaders of the entire Austro-libertarian movement, a movement known for its reasonableness, its rationality, its calm deliberation, its strong adherence to private property rights based upon homesteading, should have deviated from these characteristics to such a gargantuan degree.¹⁰⁴

Hoppe, to be sure, does not accuse the present authors of actual initiatory violence. He does not charge us with deliberately killing any innocents. Rather, in his view, we are guilty of aiding and abetting such alleged rights violations on the part of the IDF. And here we thought we were merely trying to apply libertarian theory to a complex issue. Another explanation for Hoppe's behavior in this regard is thus that although he is no longer an American academic, he is now adopting "the hyperbolic style" (Gutkin, 2024) that is now popular in those groves.

Hoppe is quite correct to fear the besmirchment of libertarianism. He is entirely justified in criticizing those who undermine it in the public eye in any way. That puts us all in a very bad light. Libertarianism is but a faint glow. When it is doused, the prospects for a civilized order are greatly lessened. He accuses the present authors of just such egregious behavior. We hereby return the favor. His analysis equates the barbarity of Hamas with the civilized behavior of Israel. No, scratch that. In his view, the latter is far worse than the former in this regard. His policy announcements imply nothing more and nothing less than the actual suicide of the state of Israel, and of all Jews who would foolishly choose to remain there; in effect, in the minds of most commentators, this will be interpreted as a call to the Arabs to complete the job started by the Nazis.

¹⁰³ Which one of Rothbard's two followers, Hoppe or Block, did he co author any publication with? Hint, it was with the latter, not the former: Rothbard and Block (1987). This may sound irrelevant, but it is an indication that perhaps Rothbard knew better than Hoppe about Block's understanding of his own thought.

¹⁰⁴ Gordon and Njoya (2024) are as highly critical of our thesis as is Hoppe. Yet, their presentation, not his, is fully in accord with these tenets of Austro-libertarianism. See our rejoinder to this calm, deliberate treatment: Futerman and Block, forthcoming. Other authors, such as Senatore (2023), favored our position.

It is difficult in the extreme to see how this sort of analysis would protect the good name of libertarianism in the eyes of the general public.

How could Hoppe have gone so far off the beaten track of libertarianism. Let us consider several explanations.

One of them is that although he has made important contributions to this philosophy—his handle on libertarianism is not all that firm. He has erred with regard to the proper libertarian perspective on immigration, abortion, individualism vis a vis collectivism in homesteading,¹⁰⁵ its proper placement on the political economic spectrum,¹⁰⁶ removing people from “society” for their views (among others), not their actions.

In many ways he is a notable theoretician. But a careful researcher he is not. Apart from the over the top language he employs, he does not condescend to directly quote his targets, such as in this case, the present authors.¹⁰⁷ Had he done so, he would not have so seriously mischaracterized our positions on several important issues, such as individualism versus collectivism or anarcho-capitalism vis a vis limited government libertarianism.

Consider the vitriol employed by Hoppe against the Block-Futerman thesis, but which mainly involves the former of this pair.

What might account for this almost, nay, actual, hysteria?

There are several hypotheses that might explain such demagogic, non-scholarly, behavior. Hoppe allows that he has with Block “a common standing as a public intellectual and both our names are mentioned frequently in one breath as prominent students of the same teacher, Murray N. Rothbard, and as leading intellectual lights of the

modern libertarian movement founded by Rothbard.”

In a sense, Hoppe is tied with Block for the title of successor to the mentor of both, Rothbard. This essay of his we are now responding to might then serve as an attempted tie breaker. If the former can gain “street cred” at the expense of the latter, there might be only one successor to the libertarian throne occupied for so long and so well by Rothbard. On the other hand, in our view, no such accomplishment has been attained by Hoppe. The very opposite has occurred, instead.

Hoppe says this: “The Murray Rothbard I knew would have immediately called them¹⁰⁸ out as unhinged, monstrous, unconscionable and sickening and publicly ridiculed, denounced, ‘unfriended’ and excommunicated Block as a Rothbardian.”

However, the Murray Rothbard that Block knew, and Block knew him for more years than Hoppe,¹⁰⁹ would have reacted differently. He would have agreed with Hoppe (we strongly suspect), substantively, but would not at all have broken his friendship with Block or any other libertarian over a difference of opinion on a highly complex libertarian issue. What is the evidence for this claim? First Murray never broke with any Austro-libertarian over a philosophical disagreement. Yes, he criticized more than just a few of his followers when he thought they deviated from the truth of the matter, but he never “cut them dead” in the vernacular. Rather, they reacted in that manner to him. Second, Block has criticized Rothbard on numerous occasions.¹¹⁰ Yet, the two were friends until the day of his untimely passing in 1995.

Then, there is the language employed by Hoppe: “unhinged, bloodthirsty monster,” “an unhinged collectivist taken in by genocidal impulses,” “shameful,” “unforgivably.” Is this sort of thing

¹⁰⁵ He maintains, by implication, that for instance the American Indians can own no property whatsoever to the extent that it was homesteaded collectively, not individually.

¹⁰⁶ He maintains libertarianism is “conservative” when, actually it is neither of the left nor the right, but rather unique and sui generis.

¹⁰⁷ That is, he ignores our full-length treatment of this issue (Block & Futerman, 2021) and contents himself for the most part with excoriating one op ed of ours published in the Wall Street Journal.

¹⁰⁸ Block’s (along with Futerman’s) “outpourings.” That is, their publications in defense of Israel and the Israel Defense Forces (IDF).

¹⁰⁹ Block first met Murray in 1966.

¹¹⁰ See Barnett and Block (2004; 2005; 2005-2006; 2007; 2009; 2012), Block (1998; 2003; 2004A; 2011A; 2011B; 2022), Block and Futerman (2021), Block, Barnett and Salerno (2006), Block, Klein and Hansen (2007).

really necessary? It seems to us that this undermines, not strengthens, his critique of our views on Israel. Kirzner and Rothbard, too, disagreed with one another on matters of economics. Neither came anywhere close to employing such language. Rothbard and Ron Paul occupied polar opposite positions on the abortion issue. Yet, for either of them to employ any such language against the other would be unimaginable, and this issue is also one of life and death.¹¹¹

Hoppe wishes to exclude Block and Futerman from the libertarian movement. We will not reciprocate by calling for his removal. Rothbard used to say, “every dog gets one bite.” We see him, and raise him too: “every dog gets a half of a dozen bites.” We think Hoppe’s views are incompatible with libertarianism on several other issues, besides this one on Israel-Hamas. We still regard him as a preeminent libertarian theoretician on the subjects that qualify him as such.

We note that neither Rothbard nor Kirzner ever tried to exclude the other as Austrian economists, even though that they seriously departed from each other on several issues in the dismal science. Ditto for Murray Rothbard and Ron Paul.

Here is another possible explanation for Hoppe’s overheated, nay, hysterical opposition to Israel; again, it stems from his misunderstanding of libertarianism: he thinks it is part and parcel of the right. In his view, libertarianism is essentially a conservative enterprise.

Could it be jealousy over the fact that while both Hoppe and Block are prominent members of the Austro-libertarian movement, the former has never been published in the prestigious *Wall Street Journal*, while the latter has almost a dozen publications there? This hypothesis is strengthened by the fact that Hoppe’s rage at the Block-Futerman position is based on one op ed published there. That is more than passing curious, in that one would have thought that when an intellectual enemy has an entire book out on

the subject, that would be a more fitting target than a single op ed.

There is another possibility: Hoppe cannot accept Jews defending themselves. Any act in self-defense on the part of Israel would be interpreted by him as an outrage. Perhaps he prefers the only alternative to Jewish self-defense, that is, Jewish suicide. To allow their enemies to mass murder them, as it happened between 1939 and 1945. Or on October 7, 2023. But Jews today will not accept, borrowing expressions of Professor Hoppe, to be “physically removed from society” by their enemies, nor to “be barred from civilized society and live physically separate from it, in ghettos...” No, although Hoppe could object, and could regard our views as “unhinged, monstrous, unconscionable and sickening”, Israel will defend itself. Jews will live and thrive. They will fight their enemies, and despite Hoppe’s objections, they will win. Jews are human beings who will not accept mass murder, rapes, and destruction. Never again. Professor Hoppe should get used to it.

We conclude that the case in behalf of Israel, vis a vis Hamas and other enemies, can be defended upon libertarian grounds, despite Hoppe’s views to the contrary. We base this on three considerations. One, individual private property rights based upon homesteading; two sovereignty; three, Hoppe’s failure to take into consideration the undeniable and ineradicable hatred of Jews held by Hamas and other such terrorist groups.¹¹²

Suppose we were trying to undermine Hoppe’s credentials as an advocate of anarcho-capitalism. We were attempting to exclude him from the ancap movement on the ground that in his 2001 book, “Democracy, the God that Failed,” he favored monarchism. We could call him “monstrous” for so doing; for trashing our common inheritance from Murray Rothbard. This would be fallacious on our part. This learned scholar was not at all only supporting monarchy. Rather, he was merely pointing out that in many regards according to his assessment it was closer to anarcho-capitalism than is democracy. We are in

¹¹¹ Should Hoppe ever take it in to his head to bone up on good manners, he could do worse than consult with Caplan (2015).

¹¹² Our response to Hoppe is quite a bit longer than his initial foray into these dangerous intellectual waters. Our defense of this state of affairs is that it is often easier to

espouse fallacies in the first place than to correct them. It can be said very succinctly that $2+2=5$. It takes quite a bit more verbiage to show why this is wrong. As our good friend Professor Gustavo Perednik usually says, some people sometimes write a few sentences and paragraphs and we can find more mistakes than words.

our 2021 book “guilty” of much the same thing. We analyze Israel on a *comparative* basis, following Rothbard’s (1967) anti-sectarian guidelines and resorting to classical liberalism by so doing.

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