

Extreme-Anti-Public Intellectuals: Hans Herman Hoppe and the ‘Physical Removal’ from the Libertarian Order

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ABSTRACT

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In his 2001 book titled *Democracy: The God that Failed*, German philosopher Hans Herman Hoppe wrote: “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. [...] They—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* (p. 218).

These sentences have made Hoppe one of the, if not the main leader for the paleolibertarian political current that runs particularly strong in the Californian tech industry as well as in the paramilitary commune, nativist, and white power movements (Belew, 2018). As 2016 saw the rise of Donald Trump together with the *alt-right* (Hawley, 2017; Neiwert, 2017; Wendling, 2018; Ridley, 2020) Hans Herman Hoppe became a major inspirational figure for reactionary politics, with memes to his glory, and that of the *physical removal* of political opposition, taking center stage in the online culture-war (Nagle, 2017; Dafaure, 2020).

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This proposal seeks to ask who, beyond the figure of the *Hoppe Snake*, is Hans Herman Hoppe? How was he educated, and where do his ideas come from? Where did he find his inspiration, and who in turn has he influenced and inspired?

In order to do so, we shall first seek to examine the debates within libertarianism itself about Hoppe's line of thought. We shall then see how Hoppe's strain of illiberal thought articulates both with more conventional conservatism as well as with more neo-reactionary alt-right and far-right movements that espouse more authoritarian, totalitarian, and outright fascist views. Examining Hoppe as a figure for what we shall call the "extreme anti-public intellectual" will help us build an ideal type that should lead to a better understanding of the ways in which illiberalism weaponizes liberal methods – chiefly freedom of speech – as a vector for anti-democratic extremism. Therefore, we will seek to examine what space Hoppe has taken up in academia, how he is portrayed and diffused by the media, and why he has become such a cultural figure for the alt-right.

