

# The Star Columnist of Liberty

## A Henry Hazlitt Brevier



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## One-Sentence Summary

This comprehensive anthology presents the essential economic and philosophical writings of Henry Hazlitt (1894-1993), demonstrating how one of the 20th century's most effective advocates for economic liberty developed a coherent framework for understanding the perpetual struggle between sound economic principles and interventionist fallacies.

## About This Book

### Publication Details:

- **Author:** compiled and edited by Michael von Prollius
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### Genesis and Methodology:

This Brevier originated in the recognition that Henry Hazlitt, despite his enormous influence on Anglo-American economic literacy, remained virtually unknown in Germany. His writings—clear, accessible, penetrating—provided generations of readers with tools to resist the economic fallacies of interventionism and collectivism.

The Brevier follows a chronological path through Hazlitt's oeuvre, beginning with his non-economic writings of the 1920s and 1930s, then presenting his major works of the postwar period, and concluding with his philosophical and economic reflections of the later decades. It is accompanied by a biographical and analytical essay that situates Hazlitt within the liberal tradition and highlights his significance as a public intellectual.

### Author's Note:

Hazlitt exemplifies the rare power of the self-made intellectual. Without formal academic credentials, he became one of the most widely read economic writers of his time. His books sold in the millions, his columns reached millions more, and his voice was heard on radio and television. He played a crucial role in building institutions such as the Foundation for Economic Education, welcomed Ludwig von Mises to New York, and anticipated the inflationary crises of the 1970s. To present Hazlitt in the Meisterdenker series is to honor not only his intellectual legacy but also the force of public persuasion in the struggle for liberty.

# **The Star Columnist of Liberty**

## **A Henry-Hazlitt-Brevier**

### **Introduction**

This thematic compilation draws from Hazlitt's extensive corpus of books—spanning journalism, economic analysis, and moral philosophy—to present a systematic exploration of liberal economic thought as articulated by perhaps its most gifted popularizer. Unlike purely academic treatments, von Prollius organizes Hazlitt's insights around enduring questions of economic methodology, policy analysis, and the institutional requirements for human flourishing organized chronologically according to the books publications.

### **I. The Methodological Foundation: Economics as Long-Term Thinking**

#### **I. From Literary Critic to Public Economist**

Henry Hazlitt's career began not in economics but in literature. His first books—Thinking as a Science (1916), The Way to Willpower (1922), and The Anatomy of Criticism (1933)—reveal a mind devoted to clarity of thought, self-discipline, and intellectual honesty. These works, written before Hazlitt turned to economics, testify to his belief in personal responsibility and rational inquiry.

From these beginnings as book reviewer and critic, Hazlitt transitioned into economic journalism. By the 1930s and 1940s he had become one of America's most prominent commentators, writing editorials for The Nation, The New York Times, and later Newsweek. His style combined precision with accessibility, enabling ordinary readers to grasp the essence of complex debates.

#### **II. Economics in One Lesson – A Classic of Liberal Clarity**

Hazlitt's 1946 book Economics in One Lesson distilled the core principle of sound economics: the long-term effects of policies on all groups matter more than short-term benefits to some. From this "one lesson" he derived critiques of tariffs, subsidies, price controls, minimum wages, and deficit spending.

The book became a bestseller and remains one of the most successful introductions to economics ever published. Its impact was enormous: countless readers first

encountered economic reasoning through Hazlitt's lucid pages. In an era dominated by interventionist policies, Hazlitt armed citizens with intellectual self-defense.

### **III. Rebuilding after the War – Dollars and World Order**

In 1947 Hazlitt published *Will Dollars Save the World?*, a short but timely book addressing the challenges of postwar reconstruction and international economic policy. He warned against illusions of easy salvation through monetary aid and emphasized the need for sound institutions, free trade, and responsible fiscal policy.

This work exemplifies Hazlitt's method: applying timeless liberal principles to urgent contemporary problems. It also shows his ability to intervene in global debates at moments of historical transformation.

### **IV. The Critic of Keynes and Defender of Sound Money**

Hazlitt's most ambitious confrontation with prevailing orthodoxy came with *The Failure of the "New Economics"* (1959). In this massive line-by-line critique of Keynes's *General Theory*, Hazlitt exposed contradictions, vagueness, and dangerous policy implications.

Though marginalized in academia, the book displayed intellectual courage and remarkable foresight. Hazlitt warned of the inflationary consequences of deficit spending and monetary expansion—warnings vindicated in the crises of the late 1960s and 1970s. His stance confirmed his reputation as one of Keynesianism's most formidable public opponents.

His later books *What You Should Know About Inflation* (1960) and *The Inflation Crisis, and How to Resolve It* (1978) further elaborated these themes, providing ordinary readers with accessible guides to the dangers of unsound money.

### **V. Imagination and Philosophy – Beyond Economics**

Hazlitt's intellectual range extended beyond economics. In 1952 he published the novel *Time Will Run Back*, a thought experiment envisioning a totalitarian society that, through trial and error, discovers the necessity of private property and free markets. The book demonstrates Hazlitt's creative power and his ability to dramatize abstract principles in narrative form.

In 1964 he published *The Foundations of Morality*, his most ambitious philosophical work. Here Hazlitt argued for a cooperative form of utilitarianism, grounding liberal order in reciprocity, justice, and long-term harmony. He thereby affirmed that economics cannot stand without ethics, and that liberty is inseparable from moral responsibility.

His later books continued this broad scope: *The Conquest of Poverty* (1973) analyzed the roots of wealth and the failure of collectivist poverty programs, while *The Wisdom of the Stoics* (1984), co-authored with his wife, testified to his lifelong engagement with classical philosophy and its lessons for modern life.

## **VI. Public Reach and Institutional Impact**

Hazlitt's significance lies not only in his books but in his public presence. In the 1940s and 1950s he achieved extraordinary prominence. His columns in major newspapers shaped national debate; his radio addresses and television appearances brought economic reasoning into living rooms across America. He became, in effect, the public economist of mid-century America.

Beyond journalism, Hazlitt was an institutional entrepreneur. As a founding figure of the Foundation for Economic Education (FEE), he helped create a lasting center of liberal education. His support for Mises was decisive in establishing the Austrian economist in New York, ensuring continuity of the liberal tradition in exile.

## **VII. Contemporary Relevance and Critical Assessment**

Hazlitt's enduring contribution is economic literacy. By exposing fallacies in clear language, he gave citizens tools to resist illusions of state intervention. His method—tracing the unseen consequences of policy—prefigures modern institutional economics and public choice theory.

His warnings about inflation, deficits, and welfare dependency remain timely. In a world facing renewed monetary instability and populist economic policies, Hazlitt's clarity is urgently needed.

Critics note his limitations: Hazlitt was more critic than original theorist, more journalist than academic. Yet this is also his strength. He reached audiences that academic economics could not. His influence lay not in constructing new models but in defending old truths with unmatched clarity.

## **VIII. Conclusion: Hazlitt as Meisterdenker**

The decision to include Hazlitt in the Meisterdenker series reflects his dual significance: a thinker of permanent relevance and a communicator of rare effectiveness. In Germany, where his name is little known, this Brevier introduces him as one of the central liberal voices of the twentieth century.

Hazlitt's life and work illustrate the power of intellectual self-discipline, the role of journalism in shaping public opinion, and the enduring need for economic literacy in defense of freedom. His lesson is simple yet profound: liberty requires clarity of

thought. Without it, societies fall prey to fallacies; with it, they may preserve freedom.

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Wille	Will
Wissen	Knowledge
Wahrheit	Truth
<b>Der Weg aus dem Elend: Reformen nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg</b>	<b>The way out of misery: reforms after the Second World War</b>
Diagnose	Diagnosis
Grundsätze	Principles
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Privat als Lösung	The private sector as a solution
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Begriffsklärung und Ursachen	Definition and causes
Richtigstellungen	Corrections
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Politikversagen	Political failure
Konsequenzen	Consequences
<b>Gute und schlechte Wirtschaftspolitik</b>	<b>Good and bad economic policy</b>
Irrtümer dominieren das Wissen über Wirtschaft	Errors dominate knowledge about economics
Denkfehler, Fehlschlüsse, Halbwahrheiten	Fallacies, false conclusions, half-truths
Interventionismus als Kardinalfehler	Interventionism as a cardinal error
Arbeit durch Fortschritt	Work through progress
Freihandel statt Manipulationen	Free trade instead of manipulation
Preispräferenzen oder Bürokratenwillkür	Price preferences or bureaucratic arbitrariness

Gewinne sind gut	Profits are good
Gewerkschaften auf Irrwegen	Trade unions on the wrong track
Inflationäre Kurzsichtigkeit	Inflationary short-sightedness
Gute und schlechte Ökonomen	Good and bad economists
<b>Gute und schlechte Wirtschaftstheorie</b>	<b>Good and bad economic theory</b>
Irrtümer	Errors
Fehlleistungen	Mistakes
Fiasko	Fiasco
<b>Armut, Wohlfahrt und Entwicklung</b>	<b>Poverty, welfare, and development</b>
Armut	Poverty
Wachstum und Wohlfahrt	Growth and welfare
Historische Lektionen	Historical lessons
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Marktwirtschaft ist sozial gerecht	Market economy is socially just
Gewerkschaften mindern Wohlfahrt	Trade unions reduce welfare
Staatliche Hilfe ist keine Dauerlösung	State aid is not a permanent solution
Marktwirtschaft überwindet Armut	Market economy overcomes poverty
Interventionismus ist voller Widersprüche und schädlich	Interventionism is full of contradictions and harmful
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Kooperation als Essenz der Moral	Cooperation as the essence of morality
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## About This Abstract Series

**MvP Book Abstracts** provide comprehensive English summaries of Michael von Prollius's German publications for international readers. Unlike promotional summaries, these abstracts offer substantial intellectual engagement with research findings and analytical frameworks.

### Series Coverage:

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- Political and Ideological Development
- Contemporary Policy Analysis
- Institutional Studies

Each abstract prioritizes detailed content over marketing, enabling meaningful engagement with the original research conducted in German scholarship.

## About the Author

Michael von Prollius is a German historian, economist, and author specializing in the intersection of ideas, institutions, and historical development. He holds degrees in history and economics and has conducted extensive research spanning ancient history, economic thought, political philosophy, and contemporary policy analysis.

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