

Mises's Suggested Research Topics: 1950-1968



Bettina-Bien Greaves took careful notes during Ludwig von Mises's New York seminar. Whenever he made a comment about a possible paper, book, or research topic, she jotted it down on a note card.

She kept all these note cards. She has generously agreed to share them with the public by sending them us. The Mises Institute is pleased to make them public for the first time.

Mises's Suggested Research Topics 1950-1968

November 9, 1950

Book suggestion:

Need book on evolution of economics from the science of wealth to science of human action. Popular opinion considers economics deals only with potatoes, manufacturing, etc., as an excuse that they don't deal with it. If they knew it was human action, they could not separate various activities of man.

January 11, 1951

Book suggestion:

Existing dictionaries of economics are very bad. Much more difficult to write than a full book.

September 27, 1951

Book suggestion:

Mises "awaits book on economic content of Sherman antitrust laws."

September 27, 1951, Mises Seminar

A student finds something unsatisfactory and it forces him to write a book. Two reasons for writing a book:

1. If you don't know anything about something, write a book and at the end you will know more.
2. You see some light and try to discover it and write it down.

October 11, 1951

Book suggestion:

Is it possible to have a condition where everything is a monopoly? Would it mean a drop in production? Write a book re Communist talk now about "monopolistic capitalism." See Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg, and Rudolf Hilferding.

November 8, 1951

Book or article suggestion:

Disappearance of medium size business is not a tendency of an unhampered economy. Good subject for book or article.

April 24, 1952

Book suggestion:

"It would make a good book if someone wants to study whether John Law really believed that such credit as he recommended could make the world richer. Law understood a good bit of economics and monetary theory. After him many sincere men believed it was possible to improve the conditions of mankind by such things—Solvay, etc."

May 15, 1952

English translation:

At University of Leipzig, Professor Pohle criticized many authors—with doctrines like those of the Webbs. Hopes for an English translation.

May 29, 1952

Book suggestion:

Ruritania and U.S. return to gold. Ruritania inflating faster than U.S., causing what is called a "dollar shortage." For Ruritania—stop inflation radically. No credit expansion for business. And U.S. doesn't stop. After some time dollar will increase, but Ruritanian will be rigid. There will be a drop in price of dollar in gold, then a cry of "deflation." Then may exchange the two currencies. Then the job is done.

It has happened before. Has nothing to do with debts. Ruritania has balanced budget. Refinance loans at better conditions. France is doing it now. First condition: no more deficits or inflation.

September 9, 1952

Irving Fisher "an excellent economist, except when it came to money—his approach to money was from the holistic point of view"

October 30, 1952, Mises Seminar

"Plans are good for PhD theses—not good for anything else. Good job for a thesis is to analyze a bad plan. This is the chief job of economists—to analyze bad plans."

October 30, 1952

Some people want to substitute another commodity for gold. Hayek is among those who ask for a new money consisting of other commodities—staples. They want these things to be the money of the future. These commodities should be bought by the government, stored, and the government should issue paper money representing a portion of this total amount. In answer to these arguments, I would say:

1. It is an illusion to believe that such a commodity as money would be more stable than gold.
2. There would be continual fighting for a change in the choice of commodities.
3. What is the meaning of such a dollar bill, which is not easily convertible?
4. This means that one wants merely to issue new money based on government subsidies.

These subjects are wonderful subjects for a doctoral thesis, but they are no good for any other purpose. A PhD thesis should be an analysis of bad plans.

February 26, 1953

Translation:

Dietzel, Heinrich. Die Nationalisierung des Kredits (?) Not translated but should be.

April 30, 1953

Book suggestion:

History of the abolition of free banking

April 30, 1953

Book suggestion:

History of payments in gold and specie

April 30, 1953

Book suggestion:

"There is no book that answers the question, 'What ideas were responsible for the fact that the 19th century liberals did not apply the liberal principles to banking?' This is one of the most important historical problems because this was in fact the problem that brought about the fall of the liberal policies, of capitalism, etc.

"Liberal policies were discredited in the eyes of the public because there was credit expansion, and then always, after a few years, an economic depression and a crisis....There was only one book that didn't consider the Currency School as a "school" of ignorant people."

February 18, 1954

Book suggestion:

"It would be interesting to write a book about how the turning point in the crises happened....The Various countries in which credit expansion took place were independent from one another....They all expanded credit but some expanded credit to a greater extent than other countries did....there happened that phenomenon that has been called an 'external drain.'...The central banks realized if this went on they would one day be in a position *not* to redeem their banknotes and they had to do something about it. The mildest thing they could do was for the president of the Reichsbank to make a speech. He seized some occasion to say, "Speculation goes too far."...On account of this speech, there was an immediate pressure on the banks to lend more money....The scapegoat was the gold standard.

April 14, 1955

A real history of (economic thought) would have to point out the development of the doctrines and not merely list every book.

September 29, 1955

Nothing is more useful for the beginning of an economic study than to write a book destroying one of these things (ideas* set forth in "silly publication published everyday...that [will] die even if nobody refutes them"). You need to familiarize yourself with what has already been written and employ one's keenness of mind and critical sense, etc.

*fallacious economic theories

November 3, 1955

Book suggestion:

A book might be written, with a theoretical part first and then an analysis of these alleged examples of laws.

Mentioned previously in this seminar were the following "alleged laws":

1. Grimm's or Verner's (?) law about the change of certain consonants in the Germanic languages. Grimm and Verner were philologists.
2. Pareto's "law of the circulation of the elite."
3. Pareto's statistical law concerning the pyramid of income.

December 15, 1955

Book suggestion:

A book—on Say's Law—the distinction between the demand and effective demand.

December 15, 1955

Report on some of the authors who have written on the so-called "unfavorable balance of payments"

Haberler

Ohlin

What do these people say about the unfavorable balance of payments? Where do they stop their analysis? If you don't complete a cycle, there is of course an unfavorable balance of payments. What did this man say about economic problems? Does he repeat? Or does he have some ideas of his own and if so what are these ideas? (Most writers don't say anything that has not been said before and if they say something new it isn't tenable.) Why do these people believe there is an unfavorable balance of trade? How does it develop? Why do these writers deal with nations and not with parts of nations—states, counties, etc.?

(No date given for the following quote—ed.)

"If we study the history of such cycles in the past, we can discover that in every case there was some instant, some unnecessary accident, that finally brought about the change, the turning point from good business, from the boom, into the depression.

"I think one would do a very good job, in this so-much-abused field of the historical study of the trade cycles, to compare conditions that brought about this change from good business to bad business in the various trade cycles in the past. What brought it about was mostly the fact that somebody lost their nerves...."

1955-6

What unions believe about how wages are determined. Unions don't have any economic theory.

Read:

Veblen

German and union literature

Marx's *Value, Price and Profits*

Schmoller Festschrift—contribution on wages.

Marx and unions

January 19, 1956, Mises Seminar

Book suggestion:

Most commendable subjects for a book or books—one or both of his (Pareto's) laws:

1. "circulation des elites"
2. income curve

"We need a book to stop econometricians or we will have more econometricians than those in useful occupations."

February 23, 1956

Translation:

Kelsen's book* should be translated. It deals with little known authors. It is a very keen critique of the Marxian "withering away of the state."

**Sozialismus und Staat: eine Untersuchung der politischen Theorie des Marxismus.*
Leipzig: C.L. Hirschfeld, 1923; 2nd edition. pp.viii–208.

February 29, 1956, Mises Interview

How are prices determined and how government officials think they are determined?

February 29, 1956

How unions think wages are determined, and how they are actually determined economically-speaking.

February 29, 1956

All theories of the trade cycle, except the monetary theory, are Marxian. Analyze them, one by one, and show how they are derived from Marxist ideas.

March 1, 1956

Does each civilization have its special character? Its special world view, mental and spiritual soul?

What is the character, soul, mentality of each nation?

How does civilization decay, disintegrate? This should be studied from the point of view of scientific economics.

March 1, 1956

Conservatives should study Savigny, leader of the historical school of jurisprudence.

March 8, 1956, Mises Seminar

Commenting on linguistic changes:

Publish from the archives of the Austrian authorities the records of name changes.

March 15, 1956, Mises Seminar

"Someone should study the relation between nationalist movements and economics. But this is a lifetime project, bigger than a book."

April 5, 1956

Mathematical and statistical problems.

April 5, 1956

History of sociology of knowledge, analysis and critique.

May 3, 1956

Book suggestion:

Ideology, growth of the myth of the land.

May 3, 1956

Book suggestion:

Decay of Rome a/c: Gibbon, Guglielmo Ferrero, Sorel, Sayck (Saik? Sake? Seek?) German who explained the decay of Rome through racial mixture.

May 17, 1956

Book suggestion:

What did the egalitarians and socialists say about the standard of living in the future state? See Bellamy.

May 17, 1956

Book suggestion:

Re "circulation des elite," Pareto's idea. See Paul Bloomfield's *Uncommon People: A Study of England's Elite*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1955.

May 31, 1956

Book suggestion:

Evolution of American big business. How it took over, step-by-step, what had been done before in the household—soap, soup, candles, dressmaking, etc.

September 27, 1956

Book suggestion:

Anticipation of the future in all kinds of business calculation, including accounting and bookkeeping.

September 27, 1956

Book suggestion:

Confusion between capital and capital goods, especially in the 19th century, and with regard to the concept of social and private capital. This confusion between private and social capital appears even in Boehm Bawerk.

September 27, 1956

Report suggestion:

Income concept of business firm and partners of business firm, contrasted with the concept of income tax legislation and with regard to other people (professions and employees). The government took over something from the feudal lord and the farmer's early accounting to establish "income." Income of profession vs. income of businessman. Income of the author of *Gone with the Wind*. Surgeons, movie stars, don't have the same privilege as book authors.

Stability (?) of monetary unit.

September 27, 1956

Book suggestion:

How the development of this state* of accounting up to the beginning of the 18th century influenced the use of the word "income" by the Classical economists and how many generations it took before this concept disappeared. (Israel Kirzner is writing about wealth in a similar way.)

*Traders didn't include the money equivalent of their land, estate, nor of their private household goods, etc.... "Capital" included only the amount of goods dedicated to the enterprise of the business. This beginning is responsible for the distinction of the Classical economists between *land* and *capital*.

October 4, 1956

Book suggestion:

What about the new national income approach in teaching and explaining economics? Refute the idea of physical productivity of the early subjective economists. Is it possible to impute (ascribe) the result of any activity to the various individuals and various material tools, raw materials, etc., that were employed in its production? For instance, scissors—what part of the cutting belongs to the credit of each blade and also of the man cutting? Physical or economic imputation is different from the moral imputation. Is it possible to figure physical imputation (marginal physical imputation in recent textbooks)? This is preliminary to a discussion of the increase in productivity. How do you bring it about? It seems that the problem of physical productivity has long since been solved. But when you read what people say about productivity of labor, you realize that people don't have the least idea of what brings it about.

October 4, 1956

Book suggestion: History of attacks on savings. See the Russian, Tugan-Baranowsky, also the German, Lederer at the New School.

October 18, 1956

Book suggestion:

Source of wages—how much was due to labor and how much to capital investments, etc.

October 18, 1956

Book suggestion:

Frontiers of imputation. Re Henry George, land rent, imputation.

October 20, 1956, Meeting of Chamber of Commerce visitors at FEE in Irvington
History of U.S.—with an introduction dealing with an explanation of the Industrial Revolution in Europe—refuting economic fallacies.

October 25, 1956

Book suggestion:

Re period of falling prices, 1873-1896.

October 25, 1956

Book suggestion:

Re period of falling prices in Great Britain after the Napoleonic Wars.

October 25, 1956

Book suggestion:

Why nobody in Great Britain in 1926 (April 1925?) knew anything about this theoretical problem and about this aspect of the history of his own country? I.e. effects of deflation when England returned to prewar parity of gold for the pound after the Napoleonic Wars.

"If Winston Churchill* had studied history, instead of making it and writing it, he would have known what happened when Great Britain returned to the prewar parity in 1815.

The consequences of his acts in 1926** was that he created the situation which led to the policies Keynes tried to justify in his book."

*B. Winston Churchill as Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1924-1929

**England returned to prewar gold parity in April 1925.

November 8, 1956, Mises Seminar

Capital shortage is a real factor, while the shortage of investment opportunities is just a fancy of Mr. Keynes....You can expand credit, you cannot expand capital goods. You cannot save the world by the printing press.

November 8, 1956

Book suggestion:

More and more is required of an economist. You must be in a position to tell Congressman Wright Patman why his plans are wrong.

November 15, 1956

Book suggestion:

Point out the essentials of what these writers (of the 1920's and 1930's) said, and explain the difference between the monetary situation then and the situation today.

December 6, 1956

Book suggestion:

What did the countries' governments do in order to make credit expansion technically possible? Legal tender legislation? The ___ to free the banks from the obligation of redeeming banknotes, etc.?

January 10, 1957

Book suggestion: The unpopularity of interest and the consequences.

January 17, 1957

Article suggestion:

Facts that make European trade possible. Germany has protectionism. How could it operate in a free trade world? Steel, coal, iron under European cartel.

January 24, 1957

Book suggestion:

Analyze the idea of the managerial system and the service system and the possibility of operating an economy according to the service system.

Service motive against profit motive....There are people for whom the service motive controls—nurses for contagious diseases, etc. But heads of large corporations operate under profit motives—seldom aware of service motives. He profits most who serves most is opposite of Mises's use of the service principle.

March 7, 1957

Book suggestion:

Ideas of statistical imperialism—Buckle, Quetelet, the school of Comte, etc. They refer to statistics in order to support all round determinism. The ignorant people say that there is something about morals involved in crimes, suicide, etc., but they say it is just a law of nature.

March 7, 1957

Book suggestion:

About sentence in Neumann: There is irregularity; there is ___ in the individual cases and only through the law of great numbers does there appear regularity in the total event.

March 14, 1957

Book suggestion:

The method of double-entry bookkeeping didn't refer to real estate. In the 19th century, step-by-step, farming began to use accounting methods. The first step was that only the current operations of the farmers were controlled in this way. Only later was the price and value of the farm itself included.

April 4, 1957

Book suggestion:

Historical evolution of the concept of capital.

April 11, 1957

Book suggestion:
Concept of the numeraire. Study Walras.

April 11, 1957

Book suggestion:
Robber barons.

May 16, 1957

Book suggestion:
How concept of profit as in 18th century Classical economists was dissolved into its components:

1. Interest
2. Profit
3. Management.

September 19, 1957

Book suggestion:
The substitution of the idea of all round monopoly idea for the concentration idea of Marx has never been investigated. Add to this an analysis of monopoly.

September 19, 1957

Book suggestion:
Trend to monopoly (book or doctors dissertation). In the old economists there is little discussion about monopoly which is not a legal monopoly—legal, versus effective market monopoly—but they said little about monopolies that develop without such legal foundation.

September 19, 1957

MA or PhD thesis suggestion:
Post Office must necessarily be a government monopoly. (See history, Prince Metternich, and other with love for freedom.) Black cabinet (associated with Metternich?)—Princes wanted to ship letters at no charge. So they gave monopoly to private letter carriers so that they would make lots of money from their private business and would carry government letters free of charge. There is only an historical explanation of the post office monopoly. Vittorio Torasis (?) became very wealthy.

[No date given, perhaps September 1957?—ed.]

Report suggestion:
Basing point system in steel.

September 26, 1957

Book suggestion:
Austrian legislation to prevent development of shoe and clothing factories. It was a crime for a man who wasn't an artisan to produce something that was reserved to the handicrafts.

September 26, 1957

Report suggestion:

On ridiculous results to which this doctrine (balance of payments) leads.

October 10, 1957

Book suggestion:

Idea of income as developed in tax legislation and association that publishes books on income and wealth.

October 17, 1957

Book suggestion:

History of American cartel legislation.

October 31, 1957

Analysis of the idea that the technological economics of big scale production are a factor that pushes the economic system toward monopoly and monopoly prices. This idea was developed by the school of Marx. The most dangerous of Marxian students was Keynes.

November 21, 1957

Analyze objections/explanations of other trade cycle doctrines: Jevons' sunspots, acceleration principle, durable goods doctrine, stupidity doctrine.

January 16, 1958

Historical study suggestion:

History of foreign investments in last 100 years and what happened to them.

January 16, 1958

Book suggestion:

Somebody important makes a speech, cautioning against further credit expansion and saying that the banks must begin to restrict. This speech precipitates the crisis.

January 1958

PhD thesis suggestion:

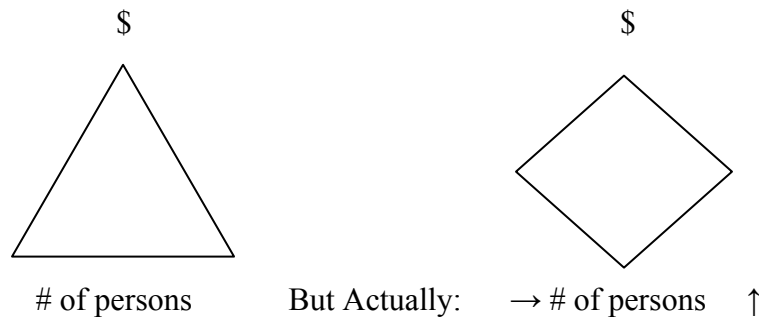
Futile attempts of John Stuart Mill to save the idea of experience for economic theory. In Mill's opinion, mathematics also was an experimental science based on experience. Locke, down through present day logical positivists, epistemologists and philosophers who know only one source of knowledge—experience—consider the human mind as an empty white sheet on which experience writes its story. You know there was one philosopher who opposed Locke in this connection. In response, Leibniz added, except the mind itself.

February 27, 1958, Mises seminar

Book suggestion:

In order to show that research cannot bring about results that people expect, analyze those rare instances in which these epistemologists of the inductive school tell us something more positive, in which they give us some result of their studies. The two laws of Pareto

are practically the only instances of attempts to develop laws through a posteriori research: (1) Pareto's "law of the circulation of the elites" (2) Pareto's law about the pyramid of income distribution....According to Pareto:



February 27, 1958

Book suggestion:

A posteriori laws? Fact that one starts mathematical curves, etc., to show deviations from the "normal" shows that there is some kind of a "norm."

February 27, 1958

Max Weber (1864-1920) once discussed the possibility of a doctor's thesis on the subject of Goethe's teeth—could be interesting from several points of view:

1. history of dentistry;
2. food and diet of that time;
3. effect on the writings of Goethe.

Perhaps Professor Floyd Zulli in his morning TV lectures (New York Sunrise Semester, 1957-8) would find it helpful.

The historian chooses the facts in which he is interested. No historian takes all the facts. This would bring about only a model without any interest.

April 17, 1958

Report suggestion:

Mathematical theory of games. Assuming that it is sound, does it have anything to do with economics? Is what is going on in economics a "game"? What is a "game" and is it permissible to compare the economic activities in a market economy or in general with a "game"? Morgenstern, together with the late John von Neumann, wrote the book on the *Theory of Games and Economic Behavior*, 1944.

May 1, 1958

Book suggestion:

Contempt of theory—people think they are doing something without theory.

May 8, 1958

MA or PhD thesis suggestion:

German experience with potash bonds.

May 8, 1958

Book Suggestion:

Businessmen pay for forecasts because (1) they want all available information in order to better judge their own judgment, and (2) thousands of big enterprises have departments that tell about the state of the market which will subscribe to the newsletters and economic forecasts. This department is the "library or filing cabinet" for the company. Compare forecasts with what happened.

May 22, 1958, Dinner

PhD suggestion:

People are voting according to what they *believe* their interests are. Every housewife knows a higher price of bread is worse than a lower price, but on election day they do not know this fact. What is necessary is to find some people in a position to tell these things to voters so they will remember them on election day.

In Europe, Germans go to Holland, from Aachen, and to Denmark, from Flensburg, for cheaper butter. People say something should be done about this. They say to stop it not just to adjust things so prices are lower in Germany. Good [to know?] how this could come about. How urban populations could so misconstrue this situation on their most important foodstuffs.

December 11, 1958

Study suggestion:

There were interesting beginnings to accounting in ancient Greece and ancient Rome. A study of accounting in the last European Roman Empire would very interesting. There was a mental condition for the development of capital. This mental condition was the system of accounting in double entries, the system that creates the category of capital as different from capital goods. Capital is just a category, an idea, in economic calculation. But it is a possibility merely in a system based on market exchange and money. It is possible to compare the various actions by their monetary effect.

December 11, 1958

Book suggestion:

On development of accounting from the point of view of businessmen. they can't take any steps without the information that accounting provides and this is based on money. The central point of economics, therefore, is the way in which different adjustments of activities to the demands of consumers are brought about.

[No date given, probably in 1958—ed.]

Write a paper on inflation in the stock exchange. Compare the figures in Germany in 1923. See Bresciani-Turoni's *The Economics of Inflation*. Enormous differences. Compare with contemporary France.

January 8, 1959

Report on the ideas before history of economic thought (English too short). Othmar Spann + how Pribram tried to make them the basis of economic thought.

January 15, 1959, Mises Seminar

First of all trade was not local and then developed over more distances. Trade developed *first* as *foreign* trade. There was no reason for one farmer to trade with another farmer. Trade first developed among commodities that couldn't be produced at all in the importing countries. A man first thought whether he could produce it himself. Cato said no reasonable man would buy something that could be produced at home. This is precisely the opposite idea of capitalism. Silk, spices (especially important because they didn't have deep freezes) were among the first imports in northern Germany.

January 15, 1959

In the 18th century, all over the world, the greater part of the population was employed in agriculture. Until the middle of the 19th century, most of the countries east of the Iron Curtain were still predominantly agricultural. A considerable part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire was practically all inhabited by self-sufficient farmers. One of the greatest problems (for a farmer) was now to buy salt, which was a government monopoly, and he had to buy it. Another great problem was how to pay the insignificant taxes that the government asked to be paid in money. The farmers sold very little, just enough to cover their few money expenses.

January 15, 1959

The feeling of prestige among civil servants was never imported to the United States. European reverence for government employees never transferred here. On the Mayflower, there were no civil servants. We can't understand the status of government employees—royal functionaries, colleagues of the great, considered themselves intellectuals. Selling postage stamps was "intellectual," but selling groceries proletarian. When wages of workers (even a simple worker) get higher than a government employee, the intellectuals, colleagues of professors, ask 'why should we get such small pay?'

March 12, 1959

PhD thesis or book suggestion:

Only way to maintain parity is to be able readily to redeem at any time. The British (1947) went back on redemption without knowing what the result would be, nor understanding the problem when the collapse came in a few days.

May 1959

Mises's definition of *inflation*: "an increase in the money supply exceeding the demand for cash holding."

October 1, 1959

Book suggestion:

Fashion of considering the theory of games (certainly very interesting mathematically) is something that has no reference to economics.

October 8, 1959

Thesis suggestion:

Critical analysis of the way Karl Marx explains the accumulation of capital.

October 22, 1959

MA thesis:

Marx and the Iron Law of Wages

October 29, 1959

MA or PhD thesis suggestion:

Analysis of international government attempts to make prices go up, to limit surpluses ("surplus" from whose point of view?) and to bring "more regularity" into international trade.

January 28, 1960, Mises Seminar

Book suggestion:

Re patents—brand names—from other point of view than that by a former student (Penrose?).

May 5, 1960

Book suggestion:

Realistic book on the corporation. Point out that the corporation is neither (1) a self-acting automaton, nor (2) something operated by hired bureaucrats, but (3) subject to the control of the consumers because it is forced to make profits and avoid losses. Deal with the corporation from the point of view of the market, realizing that the changes in the market are based on the conduct of the consumers. See Ford Foundation, Fund for Republican Literature.

October 6, 1960, Mises Seminar

Book suggestion:

Use of the term "social" and "social sciences" in the 19th century, and the almost religious fervor with which the term "social" was almost always used.

November 10, 1960

Book suggestion:

Influence of the collectivistic idea on the writing of history. They not only misunderstood the meaning of the Industrial Revolution, but some historians also misunderstood the meaning of collectivism and tried, to some extent at least, to write history according to the principle of history without names.

December 8, 1960

Problem of balance of payments.

December 22, 1960

PhD thesis suggestion:

Action of the British government several years ago. The United States had given the British government a considerable loan, one of the conditions of which was that Great Britain should resume payments in gold at \$4.80. After some time the British government tried it, with the result that there was demand only for foreign exchange. The pound was less valuable and there was profit in buying pounds and selling them to the British government for \$4.80. The British government didn't realize that you cannot determine exchange.

January 12, 1961

Book suggestion:

Union doctrine of wage rates, or how unions explain the determination of wage rates.

January 12, 1961

Book suggestion:

Modern objections to saving.

February 9, 1961

Book suggestion:

Analysis of imperfect and monopolistic competition. Monopoly=private ownership. Early 1914, monopoly competition developed by LaFaye (?), a German banker. 1930s, E.H. Chamberlin and Joan Robinson.

March 9, 1961

Book suggestion:

"Numeraire" doctrine was the assumption that you could calculate without money prices.

March 16, 1961

Book suggestion:

Neutrality of money led to the idea that the trade cycle should be explainable in a society where there is no money.

April 13, 1961

PhD dissertation suggestion:

That the Modern Theory of Value has something to do with psychology and with the Law of Weber-Fechner.

May 25, 1961

Why was the problem of entrepreneurship confused with the problem of the ownership of capital? Why were not interest and capital separated from one another? Why did the Classical economists, as well as their followers, neglect the problem of capital as such? What makes capital accumulation possible? What prevents people from consuming

capital? What is the distinction between the advanced capitalistic society of the west and the backward people of the east?

May 25, 1961

PhD suggestion:

1. Study of capital.
2. Investigation of anti-savings idea. See Hayek "The 'Paradox' of Saving" in *Profits, Interest, and Investments* on Foster and Catchings. This anti-saving idea is, of course, very closely related to the problem of inflation. For those people who are not in a position to acquire common stock or to go directly into business, the only method of saving is the acquisition of bonds and other claims, saving deposits, payable in legal tender money, etc. Inflation is the greatest obstacle for the common man to economic improvement.
3. Inflation from the point of view of savings of the masses. Effect of inflation on savings.

May 25, 1961

Book suggestion:

Treatment of savings and capital accumulation. How doctrines from the 17th century are considered as pro-capitalistic, literature by the socialists, as well as the socialists themselves, neglected to deal with the problem of capital. The peak of this neglect was the doctrines that in our age declared saving as the worse of all evils. (This was already fashionable before Keynes. In the 1920s in this country there was a group—Foster and Catchings—that pointed out how nonsensical savings were.) Even authors who realize the importance of raising the productivity of workers with tools didn't see the importance of capital accumulation. Land reform idea shows complete lack of understanding of importance of capital accumulation.

October 5, 1961

Book suggestion:

Development of monetary errors in the 18th and 19th centuries.

October 19, 1961

Book suggestion:

History of the gold exchange standard and monetary reforms in Europe leading to the gold standard.

November 2, 1961

PhD suggestion:

The nineteenth century attempts to bring about an international monetary agreement. Why they failed and the lessons to be drawn from this for our present conditions. Of course, the authors must be familiar with languages—French, German, English, Italian, and a little bit of Latin—also history.

November 30, 1961

PhD thesis suggestion:

Karl Marx and the unions.

November 30, 1961

PhD thesis suggestion:

Historical dissertation on the treatment of foreign investments.

December 7, 1961

Book suggestion:

Historical book on the struggle for free banking.

December 7, 1961

Book suggestion:

The one pound note in British history.

January 4, 1962

Book suggestion:

500+ pages, on the "left" vs. the "right." How did they change in meaning?

January 25, 1962, Mises Seminar

The inflation *could* be fought here if people would first of all admit that there is inflation. But they have changed the terminology and use "inflation" to apply to the consequences. And when you don't have a term for a thing you can't fight it.

February 1, 1962

Topics of discussion:

1. Progress idea in general as developed in the 18th century and maintained through the 19th century—according to Lincoln.
2. The Marxian version of the progress idea.
3. The progress idea interpreted as progress toward more government "welfare."
4. The progress idea in regard to an increase in wages and increasing reduction in the amount of unearned income.

February 8, 1962

Book suggestion:

The idea of development concerning the equal distribution of farm land. Start reading two volume German book (translated into English) by Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*. It gives the communist movements that developed under the idea that the Gospels require farm equality. These sects were declared heretical by the church, but this is important because this is the connection that these ideas have to the past.

March 8, 1962

Thesis suggestion:

Interesting study to make re "contributions of money policies and money disorders of the last 50 years to the spread of anti-capitalistic ideas and policies."

March 29, 1962

To Discuss:

How far did the authors of the 17th to the 19th century—authors of freedom, political freedom, free enterprise—bring something new to philosophy of western civilization? Were they in conflict, or were they continuers of earlier ideas? The ancient authors had a tremendous influence on the development of these ideas....

What about the readiness of our contemporaries to abandon everything which has been called individual freedom, the opportunity granted the individual to develop himself differently from other people? Why did authors on political problems of the 17th and 18th centuries put such emphasis on freedom of thought, press, speech? How often did 17th and 18th century authors write things that went into the press? There was a very small group which was interested in the freedom of the press. Only a very small group were speakers. Why, therefore, did they consider this so important for other people?

April 5, 1962

Criticize Buckle's idea—write down criticism of all of the ideas we have discussed and their implication for penal law, religion, free will, philosophic discussion.

May 9, 1962

A history of deflations. There has been a great deal written on inflation, but deflation has received much less attention.

October 18, 1962

Book suggestion:

The war of the banks.

November 29, 1962

Book suggestion:

History of index number doctrine.

December 6, 1962

Book suggestion:

Balance of payments.

December 13, 1962

Book suggestion:

War of the central banks, 1870 and following.

January 24, 1963

Book suggestion:

Re "Circulation des elite" and income distribution.

May 23, 1963

Book suggestion:

Re great conflict (Classicals vs. advocated of distribution of produce to workers). Point out general acceptance of fundamental idea that necessary is capital accumulation. Is it

possible to improve the situation by intervention? This is a different question from socialism.

September 26, 1963

PhD thesis suggestion:

How much does the increase in money have to be, according to the opinions of various authors?

October 10, 1963

Book suggestion:

A book never written correctly, a history of the quantity theory of money.

October 17, 1963

MA or PhD thesis suggestion:

Netherlands—effect on foreign trade of changing conditions on the foreign exchange market.

October 24, 1963

PhD thesis suggestion:

Requires German and French. There were attempts to bring about a world currency.

November 21, 1963

PhD thesis suggestion:

Numeraire=absolutely neutral money. Neutral money is impossible. A neutral money would be a medium of exchange that didn't affect the exchanges in any way.

December 5, 1963

Book suggestion:

Translation of German ventures of the gold standard and of the central bank. Ludwig Bamberger, Napoleon III or the French government had wanted in the 1860s to bring about a world unit of the monetary system. Napoleon wanted the French franc to be acknowledged by all of the world. Bamberger criticized this by saying that all countries should be on the gold standard. Then all countries would have a stable exchange ratio. IN spite of the Latin Monetary Union, some countries had inflation. What was needed was stable exchange rates and these rates could be attained without a complicated ratio of exchange. Bamberger criticized the Bancor 50 years before Keynes.

December 12, 1963

Book suggestion:

Refute the claims of logical positivism as far as they apply to economics.

December 19, 1963

Comte is overrated but his influence was enormous. Write about Comte's school of sociology.

February 20, 1964

Term paper suggestion:

Write an answer to Weiner's statement (U.S. News and World Report, 2/24/64) concerning automatization and production.

February 20, 1964

Paper suggestion:

Time preference

February 20, 1964

Paper suggestion:

Knight's position on the question of maintenance of capital.

March 5, 1964

MA thesis suggestion:

The fallacy of technological unemployment. There is such a thing as the loss of a job, but that has been going on for years. No problem or mention of automation in laissez faire.

March 5, 1964

Thesis suggestion:

Biological metaphors in economics—infant industry, growth, mature economy, cycles, circulation of money (like the circulation of blood).

March 5, 1964

Thesis suggestion:

Wage doctrine of the unions. What do the unions consider as the source of funds from which wages are paid?

April 2, 1964

PhD suggestion:

Investigation of the reasons why in 1933 the American citizens were prevented from owning gold.

April 16, 1964

MA, PhD, or book suggestion:

Alleged conflicts of economic interests.

April 16, 1964

Book or PhD suggestion:

Difference of opinion among officials as to whether a high or a low rate of interest is in the public interest. Why do people say it is in the interest of people to have inflation? Dollar savings of the masses by far exceed the amount of consumer credit. A low rate of interest cannot be said to be something which is to the advantage of the people.

May 14, 1964

Book suggestion:

Dumping: appearance of the idea and the history.

September 24, 1964

Revisionists should rewrite history to show that poets caused war.

October 22, 1964

3 direct lines from Classical School to Marxism:

1. Pro-labor bias + 3 classes of factors
 - a.) land b.) labor c.) capital.
2. Neglect of the human mind
 - a.) in directing labor
 - b.) in deciding WHAT to produce
 - c.) in deciding HOW to produce—thus capitalists were thought to be mere bookkeepers, inspectors, like salaried employees.
3. Neglect of TIME, with respect to
 - a.) production of factors
 - b.) consumption.

February 25, 1965

An historian should describe why, before economics was barely developed, an opposition against it developed, even on the part of sincere historians and sociologists.

February 25, 1965

Article suggestion:

Mathematical economics.

March 4, 1965

Book suggestion:

Two books: Balance of payments:

- (a) from the point of view of economic theory
 - (b) from the point of view of the influence of political prepossessions and political ideas on the political problems.
1. Re war indemnities (France in 1871)
 2. Keynesian problem

April 8, 1965, Mises Seminar

Book suggestion:

Criticize logical positivists of Vienna, Mach, Wittgenstein, etc.

April 8, 1965

Poverty against which we are at war? Or the poverty we are fabricating by reducing the purchasing power of the dollar?

May 6, 1965, Mises Seminar

How inflation brings about deterioration of a country's monetary situation as against other countries. Criticize balance of payments idea.

October 7, 1965

Book suggestion:

Free banking and its disappearance.

November 4, 1965

A history of the free banking movement. Research in this area would probably involve French and German sources.

December 16, 1965

Book suggestion:

A study of the shift in foreign trade policies in the large countries of Europe (1878-1914) resulting from their domestic policies of government intervention which increased production costs and made it more difficult to sell abroad. Germany led in this movement because of Bismarck's social policies and it was there that cartels became important.

Re change in the *function* of government interventions, the import duties. Reason for the change in the *function* of government interference. The interferences are needed to counteract the effects of government intervention.

January 6, 1966

Book suggestion:

Government enforcement of monopoly prices, although they spent a great deal of time and effort fighting the "monopolies" of the "bad people."

January 27, 1966

Book suggestion:

Compare proposals for the organization of a socialist system made before the establishment of the Russian system with what happened later in Russia and with what is now suggested. See Lenin's *State and Revolution* and Marx's Brackenburg (re earlier and higher stages).

February 3, 1966

Book suggestion:

Equation of exchange.

March 17, 1966

PhD thesis suggestion:

How far is the average American interested in common stocks and not only in savings, investments, bonds, etc.?

March 31, 1966

PhD thesis suggestion:

Latin/Medieval Spanish king's oath that he would not devalue. But then he did. Discussion later of the oath but not of the economic effects of devaluation.

April 14, 1966

A history of shoes and stockings, indications of improved living standards, in Europe and the British Isles, which accompanied the "Industrial Revolution," etc.

April 21, 1966

PhD thesis suggestion:
Free banking.

April 28, 1966

Book suggestion:
Re world bank problems

May 5, 1966

Book suggestion:
Re the change due to institutions, making it possible for small savers and investors to invest. Compare the U.S., Europe and Latin America.

May 5, 1966

Book suggestion:
Who are the creditors and the debtors on the U.S. loan market?

May 26, 1966, Mises Seminar

Book suggestion:
The "Industrial Revolution" brought about by the acts of small merchants and entrepreneurs.

May 26, 1966

Book suggestion:
What the great men of England in the 18th century thought of the millions of starving beggars, and how some men, concerned only with their own welfare, solved the problem, step-by-step, in division of labor for mass production. Trading cotton goods to Poland, East Germany and the Baltics for grain. Can't name a great man who had the idea. Men sent or exiled to Australia became valuable and made wool available to the masses.

May 26, 1966

Book suggestion:
The emigration of the wool industry from Europe to Australia—an "Industrial Revolution" topic.

May 26, 1966

The attitude of famous persons, writers and government officials to the small merchants and entrepreneurs who offered work to the millions of starving beggars and, in the process, produced the "Industrial Revolution."

October 6, 1966, Mises Seminar

Book suggestion:

Re the fight against alleged over-saving, especially in the U.S. There is an enormous literature written by people who considered saving as something bad. Keynes was only one of the epigones of this school. For instance, there was Foster and Catchings.

October 27, 1966, Mises Seminar

MA or PhD thesis suggestion:

Inflation experiences in various countries.

October 27, 1966

Book suggestion:

A biography of Ludwig Bamberger, who was responsible for the German gold standard, a most eminent German liberal who was to have been Chancellor, but Frederick III dies (1888), after a reign of only three months, of cancer. Then came Wilhelm II, a very different character.

October 27, 1966

Book suggestion:

French action in favor of a world gold standard in the 19th century, leading to the Latin Monetary Unit.

November 17, 1966, Mises Seminar

MA or PhD thesis suggestion:

Detailed studies concerning the effect of inflation on wages, the standard of living and the political ideas of certain groups.

November 17, 1966

MA thesis suggestion:

The "experts" consider the monetary crisis a necessary outcome of the balance of payments. They think an outflow of money from one country to another country is the effect of conditions which they call "an unfavorable balance of Payments." Take one point. How do domestic attempts to lower interest rates affect international payments?

November 17, 1966

Carl Menger, before 1878, told somebody who dies in 1878, "the European countries are preparing for a great war and all the European currencies will become very bad. The best investment is to buy Swedish government bonds."

November 17, 1966

Read and report on the 1892 hearings held in Vienna on money.

March 9, 1967

Book suggestion:

Story of attempts to get foreign loans and relation to inflation.

May 4, 1967

Russia did NOT go off the gold standard during the Japanese War, 1904.

May 4, 1967

Adam Smith was under the influence of the ideas that interest was bad, so he considered laws limiting the height of interest rates to be necessary. He presented his views in correspondence with Jeremy Bentham, who wrote a brilliant response. Smith's views, which have been widely held over the years, could be discussed and criticized from the point of view of Austrian economics.

May 18, 1967

A study of the effects of inflation on accounting.

June 1, 1967

A study of the effects of inflation on life insurance. A study of the effects of inflation on the depreciation of inventories.

November 11, 1967, Mises's Lecture in Irvington on "Our Money Problems"

There is no neutral way to introduce new money into the economy.

April 25, 1968

A study of the situation in France before World War I, when its currency was sound, contrasted with the situation after World War I down through the post-World War II inflations.

April 25, 1968

There should be a short analysis written of the Keynesian error, the fundamental fallacy. Keynes criticizes various points of Say and Adam Smith and these could be explained in a comparatively small and very interesting booklet. Because they are precisely the things that are again and again expressed. For instance, wage rates and unemployment. Also the idea that movies are not produced because people pay admittance but because wealthy businessmen are exploiting the consumers.

May 16, 1968

The economic ideas of Keynes are not consistent, but were revived again and again, recurring off and on again throughout history.