IN MEMORIAM

CLARENCE EDWIN AYRES

Clarence Edwin Ayres was born May 6, 1891 in Lowell, Massachusetts, the son of Reverend William S. and Emma Young Ayres. The Ayres family moved to Springfield, Massachusetts a few years later and he graduated from Springfield High School in 1908. He attended Brown University from 1908 to 1912, receiving his A.B. degree in that year. After spending the year 1913 at Harvard, he returned to Brown and was awarded the M.A. degree there in 1914. His graduate major subject was Philosophy. He continued his graduate work in Philosophy at the University of Chicago, where he was a fellow in 1916-17, and was awarded his Ph.D. degree in 1917. He was immediately appointed an Instructor in Philosophy at Chicago, a position he held until 1920. In that year, he left Chicago for an appointment as an Associate Professor of Philosophy at Amherst.

He practiced the philosophy he taught and evidenced his total commitment to the philosophy of freedom of inquiry, which constituted the cornerstone of his many later significant contributions as a teacher and scholar, by resigning from his position at Amherst in 1923 in protest against what he saw as an infringement upon academic freedom embodied in the firing by the Amherst College Board of Trustees of the president of the college, Professor Alexander Meikeljohn, an established scholar in the field of philosophy. Ayres was immediately appointed to the position of Professor of Philosophy at Reed College of Portland, Oregon, a position he left in
1924 to become an associate editor of *The New Republic*. He next spent a year as a teacher of Philosophy at, and as an advisor to the President of, the Experimental College of the University of Wisconsin——the "Prexy" as Professor Ayres affectionately called him, being none other than the old friend of the Amherst days, Professor Alexander Meikeljohn. In 1930 Ayres was appointed Professor of Economics at the University of Texas (Austin), a position he held until he reached the mandatory retirement age in 1961. At that time he acceded to the unanimous request of the members of his department that he continue to teach on a Modified Service basis and did so until his doctor ordered him to discontinue his teaching activities in 1968. In 1969 upon the recommendation of the Budget Council of the Department of Economics, the Board of Regents designated him Professor Emeritus.

Professor Ayres was on leave from his position at the University in 1936, a year he spent working in Washington, D.C. as Director of the Consumer's Division of the U.S. Department of Labor, and again in 1940, when he held the position of Visiting Professor at the University of Washington (Seattle). From 1954 to 1959 he was a Director of the San Antonio Branch of the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, having earlier served as a Member of the Committee on the Southwest Economy from 1950 to 1953. Prior to coming to The University of Texas he had also held the positions of Professor of Principles of Education at the University of Ohio in the summer of 1927 and of Professor of Economics at New York State University in the summer of 1930.

In 1915 he and Anna Bryant were married; in 1925 they were divorced.
In 1926 Clarence Ayres and Gwendolen Jane were married. In the last of his many books he wrote, "My greatest debt, not only for the writing of this book but for everything I have accomplished, is too deep to be absolved..."
of an underdeveloped region of the United States: it was, of course, in Appalachia that the first Manpower Development Program was implemented about twenty-five years later. Dr. Bob was also much concerned with problems of regulation of industry and of monopoly and competition. His classes on corporation finance were so well attended that they were conducted in Hogg Auditorium, the largest meeting place, except for Memorial Stadium, available on the campus. Professor Edward Everett Hale patiently and firmly performed the combined duties of Chairman and Graduate Adviser while teaching courses in which he, not only explored the then-new ideas of an English economist named Keynes but also, related those ideas to the works of earlier economists.

These were the colleagues and coworkers of Clarence Ayres, social philosopher and economist. His interest in economics was stimulated by his close association with the late Walton Hamilton while at Amherst. A few years after he had come to Texas, Professor Ayres was nationally recognized as the leading spokesman of Institutional Economists. His original work on economic progress and development today stands validated by the consequences of actions taken and policies implemented the world around. This work was published in one of his many books, The Theory of Economic Progress, in 1944. It embodied ideas he had been presenting in his seminars for a decade. Fifteen years later, the more daring of the swimmers in The Mainstream had reached the point from which they could see what Clarence Ayres had there seen long before. In 1962, the book having gone out of print, Schocken Press, a specialist in the reproduction of classic works, reprinted both paperback and hardback editions. The
1962 reprint features a new Foreword written by Ayres himself containing the modest understatement: "Although this book was written and published before the onset of the current paroxysm of economic development, it does contain, at least by implication, certain basic principles." Characteristically, in keeping with his philosophy of freedom of inquiry, he responded to a request from the publisher of one of Cambridge's Joan Robinson's forthcoming books in 1961 for permission to quote from his book: "Please tell Mrs. Robinson to feel free to quote anything she wishes to from my book."

But even more important than his pioneering work in the field of economic development was Clarence Ayres's instrumental or "technological" theory of value, a structure built upon the philosophy of freedom of inquiry to which he had committed himself in leaving Amherst. His point of view has prevented more than one young scholar from being seduced and smothered by the open arms of Marxism and other chimerical embodiments of nirvana. His theory of social value involved a rejection of Absolutism and of emotional claims of personal access to ultimate wisdom, no matter what the directions or the sources of these claims: the East or the West, the North or the South, the Top or the Bottom, the Right or the Left. It involved a rejection of the mechanistic models of secular Natural Law philosophies and a rejection of the moral agnosticism of Logical Positivism. It led to a rejection of the use of force, a rejection of confrontation, and a rejection of boycotts and of refusals to settle differences according to rules of procedural due process. This theory was the subject encapsulated in the title of his last major book, Toward a Reasonable Society, published by The University of Texas Press in 1962. Sidney Hook
summarized clearly the theme of this mature work when he wrote in The New York Times Book Review section: "Since we have tried to resolve [social] conflicts of interests by almost every other method except by the use of scientific reason, a method which has been so fruitful in other areas of human experience, why not follow its lead here too? That is the way I would restate, more modestly, Mr. Ayres' position." In the years that followed, such a point of view was something less than an academic crowd pleaser. What Hook meant by "scientific method" was, of course, not the production of more verbal solutions to hypothetical problems but the instrumental philosophy of science which Professor Ayres shared with his friend, John Dewey. The details of when and how the Dewey-Ayres relationship originated have, unfortunately, been lost in time but the two men exchanged ideas frequently. It may be that the relationship originated while Professor Ayres served as an editor for The New Republic, to which Dewey often contributed; or it may have originated in conjunction with Professor Ayres's long-time and dedicated contributions to the work of the American Civil Liberties Union. Of greater significance is the fact that in one of his letters to Professor Ayres, Dewey remarked that Ayres's designation of their common point of view as "a technological theory of value" was superior to his own phrase "instrumentalism" and added that he wished he had thought of it himself. And in 1944, Fortune published a photograph of Dewey seated in his study (together with an accompanying essay), and on top of the stack of books by his right hand, so that there can be no doubt about its title nor its author, is placed a copy of Professor Ayres's The Theory of Economic Progress.
A few only of the many high points of Clarence Ayres's experiences at The University of Texas can be mentioned herebelow.

Professor Ayres was not exactly an avid reader of the Sunday Comics. But in 1954, someone in the University Administration apparently was. And so, on Monday, April 25, 1954, Professor Ayres was surprised to find in his mail a note from the President of the University congratulating him on having been quoted in the opening frame of the "Little Orphan Annie" comic strip of the preceding day. A copy of the frame was enclosed with the note. The frame contained the words, "A little inaccuracy saves a lot of explanation. C. E. Ayres."

Another singular tribute had earlier been paid to his influence (in the Spring of 1951) when the Texas House of Representatives voted 130 to one to call on The University of Texas to show cause why Professor Ayres should not be dismissed. Specifically the resolution read: "We call upon the Chancellor of the University of Texas...to verify the above statements [There were several legal length pages of statements] and, if same are correct, to advise the House of Representatives if the University of Texas proposes to continue the contract of employment of Dr. Ayres." An able reply and defence of Professor Ayres was supervised by the then Chancellor James Hart. And the Legislature dropped the matter.

Professor Ayres was on the Board of Editors of The American Economic Review from 1932 to 1937 and President of the Southwestern Social Science Association in 1939-40.

In April-May 1965 a conference oriented to the work of Ayres was held in Austin. The collected papers of the conference (edited by
Carey Thompson were published in 1967 under the title Institutional Adjustment by the University of Texas Press. Professor Ayres gave the principal address, and participants included Gunnar Myrdal, Kenneth Parsons, Wolfgang Friedman, Morris Copeland, and Gardiner C. Means. In the Introduction to the volume, the following comments about its inception appear:

"The members of the Department readily reached agreement that the conference should concentrate on matters which have long been the concern of their distinguished associate, Clarence Ayres. While through the many years of his service at The University of Texas, more diversity of approach and orientation has existed among his departmental colleagues than outsiders have recognized—even outsiders in the economics profession—those colleagues have shared and still share a unanimous conviction that the work of Professor Ayres has been distinctive and highly significant. His thoughts and writings have been concerned with many aspects of economics and, with matters beyond the traditional borders of the discipline, but his efforts have primarily centered on a study of the processes of and hindrances to change and growth. His work provides, we believe, not only the means toward a much clearer understanding of the nature of modern industrialized economies but also an enlightening approach to the problems of the less developed economies."
And in a similar vein, Joan Robinson, in her *Economic Philosophy* (1962) begins the section summarizing the theory Ayres had published in 1944 with the statement: "There is a less well-known theory that seems more promising. This is put forward by a disciple of Veblen, Professor C. E. Ayres. He poses the question: 'Why did the industrial revolution occur in Western Europe and in modern times....' He finds the answer in the fact that western Europe was the 'frontier region of Mediterranean civilization'...."

Clarence Ayres was the first president of the Association for Evolutionary Economics (AFEE) which was organized, after a long period of gestation and conscientious effort by people such as John Gambs and Allan Gruchy in 1966. And Ayres took the initiative in the creation of the Association's review: the *Journal of Economic Issues* (JEI) which first appeared in June 1967 with a lead-off article, "Ideaological Responsibility" written by him. AFEE is now a flourishing organization, and the JEI is having an impact on the minds of those who study and teach Economics. At the annual meeting of AFEE in December 1969 Professor Ayres was presented the Association's Veblen-Commons Award for his contribution to Institutional Economics. The presentation was made by the then-president of AFEE, a former Ayres student, Professor Joseph Dorfman of Columbia University.

The influence of Professor Ayres's ideas on economists is recognized each year at the annual meetings of AFEE at a special "Clarence E. Ayres Memorial Session" at which papers seeking to carry forward the work he began are presented. The December 1974 copy of the *Journal of Economic*
Issues was a dedicatory issue published "In Commemoration of the Work of Professor Clarence E. Ayres." There was a distinguished group of contributors to this issue.

Ayres's work was recognized, also, at a special memorial session of the Southwestern Economics Association of the Southwestern Social Science Association in Dallas in April 1976, at which the papers presented were concerned with his value theory and his theory of economic progress.

A collection of essays dedicated to Clarence Ayres and edited by William Breit and William Culbertson will be published by the University of Texas Press in the Fall of 1976. Since many, if not most, of the contributors to this volume are men who hold views which Professor Ayres strongly criticized, publication of this volume constitutes that highest form of recognition which speaks for itself. Another volume containing reprints of significant journal articles written by Professor Ayres is currently being prepared by Professor Louis Junker, a leading authority on the work of Clarence Ayres, for publication by the Western Michigan University Press.

Professor Ayres also served on numerous committees at The University, always with faithfulness to the responsibilities entrusted to him. Particularly significant was his service on committees elected by the faculty. For years he served on the Faculty (now the Administrative) Council and the Committee on Academic Freedom and Responsibility. On the latter in its formative years he emphasized the responsibilities that go with freedom, at the same time that he battled for freedom.
In the numerous forums of discussion in the period following the dismissal of President Rainey, Professor Ayres's voice was heard repeatedly. He spoke with deep conviction that freedom was the issue, with more articulateness than any colleague on his side of the controversy, always with cautious reasoning and often with eloquence. Friends feared that the vigor of his statements and the leadership he exercised would endanger his own position.

His devotion to freedom of inquiry and his search for understanding sometimes led to positions that surprised his colleagues. For example, Professor Ayres once argued before the faculty that a card-carrying Communist had no valid claim to the protections for academic freedom because his Communist commitment had closed his mind to a philosophy of freedom of inquiry.

Professor Ayres was decisive and positive in his views but tolerant of those who searched for wisdom and disagreed with him. He could not tolerate sham in scholarship or public statement and detested also obtuseness or mere conventionality. Those who conversed with him were astonished continuously by the breadth of his knowledge, the sharpness of his thought, and the incisiveness of his statements. And by his fervent loyalty to friends who were willing to go down the path of reason and integrity with him.

No student or colleague who has ever experienced Clarence Ayres's breadth of scholarship, his vocabulary, his love of music, his sense of humor, and the sight of his tall, strong physical appearance, or who has admired his strength of character and his commitment to a philosophy
of freedom of inquiry will ever forget this great teacher. In a little book called, *Prophets Unawares* describing the Meikeljohn incident at Amherst, Lucian Price provided a picture of the youthful Clarence Ayres, an Associate Professor of Philosophy at Amherst in 1920, who became Clarence Ayres, Professor of Economics at The University of Texas in 1930. At Amherst there was "a gray stone house set in a grove of black pines, built in 1853 by an Englishman." Its "obvious name was Dour House." And in 1920

... it was occupied by a most buoyant and resolute soul, [Associate] Professor Clarence Ayres of the Philosophy Department. In his day the house was haunted, and never was there a merrier troop of ghosts than that band of young men who camped on his door-step to talk philosophy out of academic business hours and wore on their watch-chains little silver spades in emblem of the hot air they rejoiced to shovel.

It was a question if Ayres did not teach as much philosophy out of curriculum hours as in. Gaunt and baronial as the builder of Dour House had designed it to be, this genial (and somewhat youthful) philosopher lived in it with a simplicity and an openness of heart which befit the sage; and if you grew tired of philosophizing you could sit beside his white marble fireplace in front of a cheerful blaze of logs and listen to Beethoven sonatas played, as they should be played, by a philosopher-pianist.
When Clarence Ayres came to Austin, he brought along both his knowledge of how to build a fire in a fireplace and how to enjoy sitting by it as well as his knowledge and love of music, together with his unpretentious and open lifestyle.

And he very soon commanded the respect of, and was regarded with warm affection by, his students and colleagues at the University. He and Mrs. Ayres were familiar sights at musical performances on the campus and at the performances of the Austin Symphony Orchestra. He was an early and loyal supporter of Austin's classical music station, KMFA. And when the word that he had died in New Mexico reached Austin, the station broadcast a recorded performance of Bela Bartok's Concerto for Orchestra as an appropriate memorial. The particular recording played was the one Clarence Ayres himself preferred. And his friends listened and remembered much: Along with Beethoven, Brahms, and Bartok, many of the works of Charles Ives (long before Leonard Bernstein popularized Ives) and Roy Harris' Symphony No. 3 had also been among his favorites.

The mind and ideas of Clarence Ayres had a lasting impact, not only upon those of his students, but also upon those of most of his colleagues. And through them his ideas have been, and will continue to be, passed on to their own students in turn. Indeed, Professor Louis Junker, a leading authority on the work of Clarence Ayres, is a former student of Professor Fagg Foster; the latter studied with Professor Ayres in the 1940's.

But although his impact and his influence upon the minds and ideas of his students was great, Professor Ayres was not interested in producing disciples; he rejected any thought of doing so. An instance in point
occurred in the summer of 1941. During the second six weeks session in
the summer of 1941 Professor Ayres served as Acting Chairman of the De-
partment of Economics and conducted one of his seminars. One day, during
the discussion following a particularly forceful statement of his point
of view, Professor Ayres was asked by one of his students:

"Professor Ayres, how can I be sure that what you have been
preaching doesn't boil down to just a new religion?"

Professor Ayres paused for a moment and then with a grandiose
gesture smilingly replied in a booming voice:

"Ah, there's the danger! But the fact that you have asked the
question validates the philosophy of free inquiry I have been expounding."

After the seminar had ended, Professor Ayres stopped the student in
the hall outside Garrison Hall 307 and invited him to apply for an
"Instructorship, Half-time" for the forthcoming long session.

Clarence Ayres was not interested in producing disciples; he re-
jected any thought of doing so. He was a great teacher who practiced
his philosophy of freedom of inquiry.

He is survived by his wife, Gwendolen; three children, Catharine
Ayres; Muriel (Ayres) Towle; Kenneth Richard Ayres; and his sister Edith
(Ayres) Cooley.
Lorene L. Rogers, President of
The University of Texas at Austin

Bill D. Francis, Secretary
General Faculty

This Memorial Resolution was prepared by a Special Committee consisting of Wendell Gordon, H.H. Liebafsky (chairman) and Emmette Redford.
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1950 Alfred Franklin Chalk: "The Impact of Natural-Law Theory on the Formation of Political Economy"
1965 Thomas R. DeGregori: "Sub-Saharan Africa: A Technological Frontier"
1946 John Fagg Foster: "Theoretical Foundations of Government Ownership in a Capitalist Economy"
1958 William C. Frederick: "Introduction to a Cultural Theory of Money"
1951 David Boyce Hamilton, Jr.: "Newtonian Classicism and Darwinian Institutionalism: A Study of Change in Economic Theory"
1957 Lewis Edgar Hill: "The Frontier: An Economic Analysis of a Historical Concept"
1937 John R. Hodges, Jr.: "An Historical and Critical Study of the Capital Concept"
1964 J. Fred Hofheinz: "The Evolution of Economic Philosophy"
1970 Milton D. Lower: "Institutional Bases of Economic Stagnation in Chile"
1940 Rosser B. Melton: "Theory of Value in Economics as a Rationalization of Social Status"
1948 Louis Milton O'Quinn: "A Historical Analysis of the Supposed Gulf Between Positive and Normative Concepts in Economics"
1958 John E. Perkins: "Theories of Economic Development Considered in Relation to Agricultural Growth"
1941 Virginia Bishop Sloan: "Social Attitudes toward Poverty and Class Distinctions Implied in Classical Economic Literature"
1953 Clemens B. Thomas: "Capital-Formation Theory in Transition"
1953 Walter Charles Wagner: "The Theory of Economic Equilibrium: A Reflection of Social Reciprocity"