
A Legacy of Value

A man of means and goodwill said: "But, if we put into office men who believe in private property and the sanctity of the individual, would not the trend toward statism be stopped? After all, it is only a matter of the right legislation."

The legislation is the product of the general will. What with the common passion for confiscation, contrary-minded men could hardly be elected to office; and, if they happened to slip in, they would be ousted if they tried to oppose the trend.

"Is the case for the free development of the personality in a free society hopeless?"

Yes—unless a demand for it can be generated. Statism is a state of mind, not an historical necessity. There was a time when Americans were opposed to the income tax, to conscription, to public doles, to political intervention in private affairs. They believed in themselves, not the government. They came to collectivism by way of education. The socialists reshaped the mind of America by hard work, by self-sacrifice, by looking always to the future.

"A Legacy of Value" appeared in analysis (August 1950) and perfectly represents many key elements of Frank Chodorov's thought.

“Then, it is a matter of education?”

Only education. And the education must be directed at the mind of the future. The present generation is the product of collectivist thought propagated during the past thirty years. The job of reeducating it is well nigh impossible. It would be far more profitable to work on the mind of the future.

“Where would you start?”

In the kindergarten, if possible. Surely at the college level, where there is an avid market for “something new and different.”

“But, the professors and their textbooks seem to lean to the collectivist philosophy.”

True. The professors and their textbooks are the product of their times, like the rest of the population. Fifty years ago the campus was singularly free of collectivist doctrine. Nevertheless, and in the face of official opposition, the socialists invaded it. They worked on the students.

“There is nothing ‘new and different’ in individualism; it is as old as man.”

It is quite new and quite different these days. And it is, in the true sense of the word, revolutionary. If it is presented that way, as an ideal worth fighting for, it will capture the imagination of youth.

“You are advocating a long-term project.”

What’s your hurry? You have only a few years to live and cannot hope to remake society in so short a time. Nobody now living will see a free society in America. But, in fighting for it one can have a lot of fun. Consider the effort as a legacy to your great-grandchildren. What else can you bequeath them? You know that confiscatory taxation will increase, not diminish. You will leave your children part of what you have accumu-

lated. Have you any doubt that your grandchildren will get a smaller part, or that their children will get nothing? In the circumstances, what better heritage could you bestow than some understanding of the principles of freedom and, perhaps, a will for freedom?